



Ixchel
Spanish School

Welcome to
Antigua Guatemala,

Welcome to Ixchel





Introduction

Antigua Guatemala is a captivating city located in the central highlands of Guatemala. With its rich history, stunning architecture, and vibrant culture, Antigua offers an enchanting experience that will leave you mesmerized.

With this booklet Ixchel Spanish School aims to provide you with essential information to make the most of your stay in Antigua. You'll find useful expressions, cultural insights, tips on local customs, and much more. It's our hope that this guide will enhance your experience, foster cross-cultural understanding, and make your time in Antigua truly unforgettable.

We can't wait to embark on this incredible journey with you!

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1 Weather and Climate

Antigua Guatemala is blessed with a mild and pleasant climate year-round. The city's elevation of approximately 1,500 meters (5,000 feet) above sea level contributes to its comfortable temperatures and refreshing breezes. It's always a good idea to check the weather forecast before your visit and pack accordingly.

January

January is part of the dry season in Antigua. The weather is generally cool and crisp, with average temperatures ranging from 10°C (50°F) to 22°C (72°F). It's advisable to layer clothing to adjust to temperature variations throughout the day.

February-March

These months are considered the peak of the dry season, with sunny days and cool evenings. Temperatures start to gradually increase, ranging from 12°C (54°F) to 24°C (75°F). It's a great time to explore the city's outdoor attractions, such as the ruins and picturesque landscapes.

April-May

As spring arrives, temperatures begin to rise, and Antigua experiences pleasant warmth during the day. Average temperatures range from 14°C (57°F) to 26°C (79°F). Light layers are recommended, as the evenings can still be relatively cool.



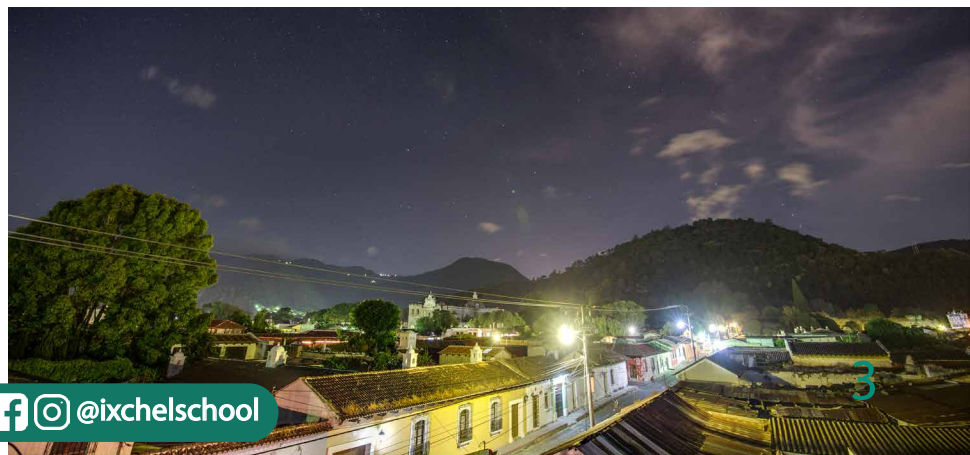
JUNE-SEPTEMBER OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

These months mark the rainy season in Antigua, characterized by afternoon showers and occasional thunderstorms. The mornings are typically sunny and clear. Temperatures range from 15°C (59°F) to 24°C (75°F), and humidity levels increase. Don't forget to pack an umbrella or rain jacket to stay prepared for the occasional showers.

In October, the rainy season transitions into a drier period. The weather becomes more stable, with pleasant temperatures ranging from 14°C (57°F) to 24°C (75°F). This period offers a beautiful balance between sunny days and comfortable nights.

DECEMBER

December welcomes the beginning of the dry season once again. The weather tends to be cooler, especially in the evenings, with temperatures ranging from 10°C (50°F) to 22°C (72°F). It's a festive time in Antigua, with Christmas decorations adorning the city and various celebrations taking place.



Safety Tips

It's essential to keep a few safety tips in mind to ensure a secure and enjoyable visit.

Here are some tips:



Stay Vigilant

Like in any other tourist destination, it's important to stay alert and aware of your surroundings. Be mindful of your belongings, especially in crowded areas, and avoid displaying valuable items openly.

Carry a Copy of Important Documents

Make photocopies or take digital scans of your passport, identification, and other essential documents. Keep the copies separate from the originals and store them securely. This will help expedite the process in case of loss or theft.

Use ATMs Safely

When withdrawing cash from ATMs, choose well-lit and secure locations, such as inside banks or shopping centers. Shield your PIN number while entering it, and be discreet when handling money in public.

Use Reliable Transportation

When moving around the city or exploring nearby areas, opt for registered taxis or reliable transportation services recommended by your accommodation.

Currency and Banking Information

Useful information to help you navigate currency exchange and banking in Antigua:

Currency

The official currency of Guatemala is the Guatemalan Quetzal (GTQ). Quetzal banknotes come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200, while coins are available in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 centavos.

Currency Exchange

You can exchange foreign currencies for Quetzals at various exchange offices (casas de cambio) and banks in Antigua. It's advisable to compare rates and fees to ensure you receive a fair exchange. Banks usually offer competitive rates, but they may have limited operating hours, so plan accordingly.

Banking Hours

Banking hours in Antigua generally follow standard business hours, typically from Monday to Friday, between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Some banks may be open on Saturdays but with shorter operating hours. ATMs, on the other hand, are accessible 24/7.

Banking Services

Banks in Antigua offer a range of services, including currency exchange, cash withdrawals, and money transfers. Some banks also provide foreign currency exchange, but it's advisable to check with specific banks regarding their services and fees.

ATMs and Debit/Credit Cards:

ATMs are widely available in Antigua, accepting major international debit and credit cards such as Visa and Mastercard. It's recommended to notify your bank or credit card company about your travel plans to avoid any issues with card usage abroad. Additionally, inquire about any foreign transaction fees or daily withdrawal limits imposed by your bank.



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Packing Essentials

It's important to pack wisely and ensure you have all the essentials to make your visit comfortable and enjoyable. Here's a helpful packing guide to assist you in preparing for your journey

1 Lightweight Clothing

Antigua has a mild climate, so pack lightweight and breathable clothing suitable for the city's year-round spring-like weather. Include items such as t-shirts, shorts, skirts, dresses, and comfortable walking shoes. Don't forget to pack a light jacket or sweater for cooler evenings.

2 Rain Gear

Antigua experiences a rainy season, typically from June to September. It's advisable to pack a compact umbrella or a rain jacket to stay prepared for occasional showers.

3 Sun Protection

The sun can be intense in Antigua, so bring sun protection essentials like sunscreen (with a high SPF), sunglasses, and a hat to shield yourself from the sun's rays.

4 Travel Adapter

Guatemala uses Type A and Type B electrical outlets, so it's advisable to pack a universal travel adapter to charge your electronic devices and keep them powered throughout your stay.

5 Insect Repellent

To protect yourself from mosquitoes and other insects, especially during outdoor activities or in the evenings, pack a reliable insect repellent.

6 Travel Documents

Carry essential travel documents, including your passport, visa (if required), flight tickets, and a copy of your accommodation reservations. It's wise to keep digital copies of these documents as well.



7 Money and Payment Options

Bring a mix of cash (both local currency and U.S. dollars) for small purchases and emergencies. Also, carry a debit or credit card for larger expenses and ensure you notify your bank about your travel plans.

8 Daypack or Bag

A small daypack or bag will come in handy for carrying your essentials while exploring Antigua. Include items like a water bottle, camera, guidebook, snacks, and a reusable shopping bag for eco-friendly purchases.

9 Language Guide and Maps

Consider bringing a Spanish phrasebook or a language translation app to aid in communication. Maps or a travel guidebook of Antigua can also be helpful for navigating the city.

5

Transportation Options in Guatemala

Getting around in Antigua Guatemala is relatively easy, thanks to its compact size and well-connected transportation network. Here are some transportation options to consider during your visit:

Walking

Antigua's city center is compact and pedestrian-friendly, making walking a convenient and enjoyable option. Strolling through the charming streets allows you to immerse yourself in the city's atmosphere, explore its architectural wonders and discover hidden gems at your own pace.

Taxis

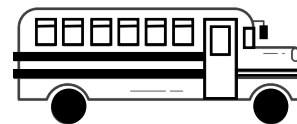
Taxis are readily available throughout Antigua. Look for taxis with official markings and negotiate the fare before starting your trip. It is recommended to ask your hotel or a trusted local for help in arranging a reliable taxi service.

Tuc-Tucs



Tuc-tucs are three-wheeled motorized vehicles that serve as a popular mode of transportation in Antigua. They can be found in abundance and offer a fun and economical way to navigate the city's narrow streets. Negotiate the fare before getting on board and enjoy the open-air ride.

Public Buses



Public buses (known as "chicken buses") connect Antigua with various towns and cities across Guatemala. They are a cost-effective option, but the ride can be crowded and the schedule less predictable. If you're up for an authentic local experience and have some flexibility in your itinerary, consider using the public bus system.

6 Basic Greetings and Polite Phrases

Hola	Hi
Adiós	Goodbye
¡Buenos días!	Good morning
¡Hasta luego!	See you later
Por favor	Please
Gracias	Thank you
De nada	You're welcome
Perdón / Disculpe	Excuse me / Sorry
Sí / No	Yes / No
¿Cómo estás?	How are you?
Estoy bien, gracias	I'm fine, thank you
¿Cómo te llamas?	What is your name?
Me llamo...	My name is...
Mucho gusto	Nice to meet you
¿Hablas inglés?	Do you speak English?
¿Dónde está...?	Where is...?
¿Cuánto cuesta?	How much does it cost?
Me puedes ayudar?	Can you help me?
¡Que tengas un buen día!	Have a nice day!

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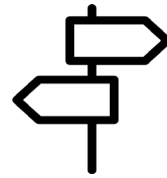
Ordering Food and Drinks

Exploring the local cuisine is a delightful part of any visit to Antigua Guatemala. To make your dining experience enjoyable, here are some useful phrases and expressions for ordering food and drinks:

¿Puedo ver el menú, por favor?	May I see the menu, please?
¿Qué me recomienda?	What do you recommend?
Me gustaría pedir...	I would like to order...
¿Me puede traer...?	Can I have the...?
¿Tienen opciones vegetarianas?	Do you have any vegetarian options?
¿Es picante?	Is it spicy?
Me gustaría una taza de café	I'd like a cup of coffee.
¿Qué postres tienen?	What desserts do you have?
¿Puedo pagar la cuenta?	Can I pay the bill?
¡La comida estaba deliciosa!	The food was delicious!

8

Asking for Directions



When exploring the beautiful streets of Antigua Guatemala, you may find yourself in need of directions to navigate the city's charming streets. Here are some helpful phrases and expressions for asking for directions:

Disculpe, ¿dónde está...?	Excuse me, where is...?
¿Cómo llego a...?	How do I get to...?
¿Está lejos de aquí?	Is it far from here?
¿Puede mostrarme en el mapa?	Can you show me on the map?
¿Hacia qué lado debo ir?	Which way should I go?

Gire a la izquierda / derecha.	Turn left / right:
Siga recto	Go straight ahead
Está en la esquina.	It's on the corner:
¿Puede repetir eso, por favor?	Can you repeat that, please?
Disculpe, estoy perdido(a).	Excuse me, I'm lost.
¿Puede indicarme cómo volver al centro de la ciudad?	Can you guide me back to the city center?



9 Shopping

You'll find a wide range of shops and markets offering unique crafts, textiles, artwork, and local products. To enhance your shopping experience, here are some useful phrases and expressions for shopping:

¿Cuánto cuesta?	How much does it cost?
¿Me puede hacer un descuento?	Can you give me a discount?
¿Tiene esto en otro color/talla?	Do you have this in a different color/size?
¿Me lo puedo probar?	Can I try it on?
Solo estoy mirando, gracias.	I'm just looking, thank you.
¿Aceptan tarjetas de crédito?	Do you accept credit cards?
¿Hay un probador?	Is there a fitting room?
¿Puede envolverlo como regalo?	Can you wrap it as a gift?
¿Puede mostrarme algo similar?	Can you show me something similar?
Me lo llevo	I'll take it

10 Cultural Do's and Don'ts

It's essential to be aware of the local customs and cultural norms to ensure a respectful and enjoyable experience. Here are some cultural do's and don'ts to keep in mind during your visit:

Do's:

- Greet people with a smile and a polite "buenos días" (good morning) or "buenas tardes" (good afternoon) when entering shops, restaurants, or meeting locals.
- Learn a few basic Spanish phrases. Locals appreciate when visitors make an effort to communicate in their language.
- Engage in conversations with locals and show interest in their culture, history, and traditions. It's an excellent opportunity to learn and connect with the community.
- Try the local cuisine and traditional dishes. Antigua Guatemala offers a wide range of delicious foods, such as tamales, pepián, and coffee.
- Explore the local markets and support artisans by purchasing handmade crafts and souvenirs.
- Dress modestly and respectfully, especially when visiting religious sites and traditional villages.

Don'ts:

- Don't touch religious artifacts without permission. Respect the sanctity of churches and religious sites.
- Don't be overly loud or disruptive in public places. Maintain a considerate noise level, especially in residential areas.
- Don't assume that everyone speaks English. While some locals may speak English, it's always appreciated to start conversations in Spanish and seek assistance if needed.
- Don't drink tap water unless it's been purified or boiled. Stick to bottled water to avoid any health issues.
- Don't take photos of people without their consent, especially in indigenous communities. Always ask for permission before capturing someone's image.
- Don't litter or leave trash behind. Dispose of waste responsibly and help keep Antigua clean and beautiful.

11 Introduction to Antigua's Layout

With its picturesque streets and historic charm, is a city that is best explored on foot. To help you navigate the layout of this captivating destination, here is an introduction to Antigua's layout and key areas to make your visit more convenient:

1

Parque Central (Central Park): Parque Central is the heart of Antigua Guatemala, located in the city center. This bustling square is surrounded by significant landmarks, including the iconic La Merced Church, the Ayuntamiento (City Hall), and the Palacio de los Capitanes (Palace of the Captains). Parque Central serves as a central point of reference for navigating the city.

2

La calle del Arco (Arch Street): Calle del Arco is one of Antigua's most emblematic streets. It runs parallel to the northern side of Parque Central and is known for its iconic arch, a symbol of the city. This street is lined with shops, restaurants, and cafes, making it a popular spot for locals and visitors alike.

3

5ta Avenida (5th Avenue): 5ta Avenida is a vibrant street that extends south from Parque Central. It is home to numerous shops, boutiques, and art galleries, offering a variety of handicrafts, textiles, and artwork for sale. This avenue is a great place for shopping and discovering local treasures.

4

Ruinas (Ruins): Antigua Guatemala is famous for its historical ruins, remnants of colonial churches and buildings damaged by earthquakes. Some prominent ruins include the Convento de las Capuchinas, the Iglesia y Convento de la Recolectión, and the Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco. Exploring these ruins provides a glimpse into the city's rich history.

5

Mercado de Artesanías (Craft Market): Located near the intersection of Calle del Arco and 5ta Avenida, the Mercado de Artesanías is a vibrant market where you can find a wide range of traditional crafts, textiles, pottery, and souvenirs. It's a must-visit spot to experience the local artisanal culture.

6

Calles (Streets): Antigua Guatemala is laid out in a grid pattern, making it relatively easy to navigate. The streets are often named after saints or significant historical figures. Major streets, such as Calle del Arco, Calle de los Pasos, and Calle del Hermano Pedro, intersect the city and provide convenient routes for exploration.

Remember, a map or navigation app can be helpful to familiarize yourself with Antigua's layout and plan your routes. Additionally, don't hesitate to ask locals for directions or recommendations—they are often friendly and eager to assist visitors. Enjoy your exploration of Antigua Guatemala and immerse yourself in the city's fascinating history, stunning architecture, and vibrant streets!

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Important Phone Numbers and Emergency Contacts

During your visit to Antigua Guatemala, it's essential to be prepared and aware of important phone numbers and emergency contacts in case of any unforeseen situations. Here are some crucial numbers to keep in mind:

Emergency Services:

Ambulance: (+502) 23000-4000

Fire Department: (+502) 4144-2323

National Civil Police: (+502) 4503-2553

Medical Assistance:

Centro Médico (Medical Center):
(+502) 7832-0919

Hospital Privado Santiago Apóstol:
(+502) 7832-0884

Hospital Nacional Pedro de
Bethancourt: (+502) 7832-0420

Tourist Assistance:

Tourism Police: (+502) 2269-0041

The Tourism Police can provide assistance and guidance specifically tailored to tourists. They can help with issues such as lost documents, theft, or general safety concerns.

Transportation:

Antigua Guatemala Municipal Tourist
Police: (+502) 5978-3586

The Tourist Police can assist with transportation-related issues, including reports of taxi scams or transportation safety concerns.

Antigua Tourism Office:

Antigua Guatemala Municipal Tourism Office: (+502) 7832-0787 The Tourism Office can provide information on local attractions, events, and answer general inquiries about your visit to Antigua.