



Steph's Quick Budget Fact Sheet

Guatemala - San Marcos (Lago de Atitlan)

Quick Facts

- ✓ **Capital:** Guatemala City
- ✓ **Language:** Spanish, 21 Maya languages, Xinca, Garifuna.
- ✓ **Population:** ± 2200
- ✓ **Sq km:** ± 130,1 (lake)
- ✓ **Currency:** Quetzales
- ✓ **Country code:** +502
- ✓ **Visa:** Fore some countries, [check here!](#)
- ✓ **Alarm codes:** 110 (police) / 123 (fire) / 120 (ambulance)
- ✓ **Vaccinations:** Hep-A / Hep-B / Typhoid / Yellow fever / DTP / Malaria prevention



History Recap Over 1 Drink

[Maya culture](#). 1523-24: Spanish colonize Mayas. 1821: Independent → joins Mexican empire. '23: Part of United Provinces of Central America. '39: Fully independent. '44-65: Dictator Carrera. '73: Pres Rufino-1931: Ubico-'44: Arevalo-'51: Arbenz. '54: US backed coup: Castillo (because: Arbenz's nationalization of plantations of United Fruit Company). '60: Start Civil War: Genocide Mayas/violations human rights → 200,000 killed/disappeared. '63: Assassination Castillo → Peralta. '66: Pres Mendez-'70: Arena → eliminate left-wingers: 50,000+ deaths. '76: 27000 killed by earthquake. '81: 11000 killed by death squads & soldiers in response to growing anti-government guerrilla activity. '82: Military coup Rios Mont. '83: Coup Mejia Victores: Amnesty for guerrillas. '85: Pres Cerezo Arevalo-'91: Serrano Elias: Diplomatic relations restored with Belize (territorial claims) → '93: Pres Carpio. '94: Peace talks government & rebels. '95: Rebels ceasefire. Human rights abuses. '96: Pres Arzu → peace agreement with rebels, ending 36 years of civil war. 2000: Pres Portillo (corrupt). '03: Pres Berger. Free trade agreement with US (+ES/Nica/Hond). '04: Army cuts. Compensation paid to Civil War victims. '05: Stan tropical storm, hundreds killed. '07: Pres Colom. '10: Pacaya erupts. Drugs trafficking. '15: Pres Maldonado.

Travel Seasons

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dry												
Wet												
Best (high)			semana	santa								
Budget												

Altitude: 1581m. Climate: Warm during the day, fresh during the night.

Bucket List For Free

- ☺ Swim in the lake, hike around, jump off the rocks and climb a volcano or 2.

Sleep Cheap

- ❖ Ask around for Merlin's house, you can stay there for free.
- ❖ Circles, +50233278961, main road.
- ❖ Instead, go [Couchsurfing](#) (on a boat) or [house-sitting!](#) Also check [WorkAway](#).

Worth The Extra \$€¥

- 👉 Visit the lake's villages with a tour or public *lancha*. Buses connect the villages too.
- 👉 Get zen. Keep an eye on the hand-written advertisement spread on the walls. A selection from when I was here: Yoga of sound & chocolate, spiritual sexual shamanism, ayurvedic consultation, shamanic journey, meditative reiki massage fusion, open channel healing art retreat...
- 👉 Visit Cerro Tzankujil Natural Reserve.

Festivals

- ☼ Cosmic Convergence: Dec-Jan.
- ☼ Festival Atitlan: Mar.
- ☼ Independence Day: 15-Sep.
- ☼ Revolution 1944 Day: 20-Oct.

Mama Said

- ☠ Watch your bag, buy a lock. Don't flash your valuables.
- ☠ Get cash-out, there are no ATMs here.
- ☠ Narcotrafficking is big in Guatemala and most murders are related to drugs trade. In short: Don't get involved.
- ☠ Bring both a sweater (or 2) and sunscreen.

Nights Best Spent

For a party, grab a boat to San Pedro. In San Marcos you just get high around the campfire.

Budget Bites

- ⌘ Fruit and veggies can be found cheap at market stalls scattered around. There are no big supermarkets, only *tiendas*. Take food from Antigua or Xela if possible.
- ⌘ At the end of the main street (coming from the water) on the left side, dinner is sold for Q10.
- ⌘ Guatemala's streetfood & cheap *comedores*: Pepián (meat stew), pupusas (corn tortillas filled with cheese or meat), elote (corn), tacos, garnachas / tostadas (fried tortillas with meat and salad), rellenitos (plantains stuffed with beans), tamales (stuffed corn dough), bunuelos (sweet), salshichas (sausage), chicharones (pork), cheveres (hot dogs), hamburgers, chile releno, mango with lime, ceviche, kilos of fried chicken, enchilada and burrito. Everything served with beans and guacamole.

Free-Riding?

- Within San Marcos everything is easily walkable.
- Tuktuks are available but quite unnecessary with the minimal distances here.
- Chickenbuses leave from town, the schedule being rather flexible (check the same day to be sure). More convenient are the shuttles connecting San Marcos with surrounding cities. Ask for Paul in Restaurant Fe, he has the cheapest rates: Q50 for a direct shuttle to Antigua, can't beat that.
- *Lancha* boats connect the villages facing the lake and have fixed rates.
- Hitch-hiking is common. However, there's always a risk.

Tip: Download the Triposo Guatemala app for offline maps and landmark descriptions & more, or load Google Maps when you have wifi and leave it open, you will still be able to use it offline.

Next?

- ➔ In Guatemala: Antigua, Xela, Guatemala City, Semuc Champey.
- ➔ International destinations closeby: Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Belize.

The Earth Becomes My Throne