



Steph's Quick Budget Fact Sheet

Guatemala - Quetzaltenango (Xela)

Quick Facts

- ✓ **Capital:** Guatemala City
- ✓ **Language:** Spanish, 21 Maya languages, Xinca, Garifuna.
- ✓ **Population:** ± 225,000
- ✓ **Sq km:** ± 120
- ✓ **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/Hurricane												
High season												
Budget												

Altitude: 2367m. Climate: Subtropical highland climate, very cold during the night (just above freezing point).

Bucket List For Free

- ☺ Sights: Parque Central & Benito Juarez, Puente los Chocoyos, Mercado La Democracia, Templo de Minerva, Cerro El Baul, La Ermita de la Concepción, cementery.
- ☺ Visit surrounding villages: Valle de Almolonga, Cantel, Colomba, San Andres Xecul, San Cristóbal Totonicapán.
- ☺ Free art: Casa de los Tiempos / Los Altos, [Centro Intercultural Lounge](#), [Ciudad de Imaginación](#), [Cuarto Ardor](#), [El Cuartito](#) & [Vessica](#).
- ☺ Free salsa on Tue ([Bakanos](#)) & Wed ([La Parranda](#)/SHOTS)

Worth The Extra \$€¥

- 👍 Nature: Volcán Santa Maria & Tajumulco & Santaguigo, Laguna de Chicabal, Cerro Quemado, Cerro Sija, Cerro El Baúl & Las Fuentes Georginas.
- 👍 Museums: Historia Natural, Casa N'oj, Railway Museum, Museo Ixkik' (all closed when I was there, so can't judge).
- 👍 Other & tours: La Rambla paintball, Chocolate Dona Panha, Ferrocarril de la Historia (city tour in tram), bird watching, Takalik Abaj, rock climbing...

Festivals

- ☼ Independence Day: 15-Sep.
 - ☼ Revolution 1944 Day: 20-Oct.
 - ☼ Mes de Virgin del Rosario: Oct.
- Pick up a free copy of [Xela Who](#).

Budget Bites

- ⌘ Market: Minerva (4ª calle) & La Democracia (zona 3, ave 15&18).
- ⌘ Cheap supermarket: Despensa Familiar & Paiz.
- ⌘ 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.

Next?

- ➔ In Guatemala: Lago de Atitlán, Chichicastenango, Antigua.
- ➔ International destinations closeby: Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Belize.

The Earth Becomes
My Throne

Sleep Cheap

- ❖ [7 Orejas Hostel](#), +50277683218, 2a Calle 16-29 (zona 1).
- ❖ [Hostal Nim Sut](#), +50277613083, 4a Calle 9-42 (zona 1).
- ❖ Instead, go [Couchsurfing](#) (on a boat) or [house-sitting](#)! Also check [WorkAway](#).

Nights Best Spent

- ◆ Old School Bar, 14 Avenida 1-49 (zona 1).
- ◆ Bakanos Dance Studio (Tue: Free salsa), 15 Avenida 3-51 (zona 1).
- ◆ Shots Nightclub (Wed: Free salsa), 14 Avenida (zona 1).

...Seated Down

- ◆ Teatro Municipal, zona 1.
- ◆ La Guarida (Sun: Movie nights), 7 calle 42, 15 Avenida (zona 1).
- ◆ Cine Blue Angel, 7ª Calle 15-79 (zona 1).

Mama Said

- ☠ Watch your bag, buy a lock. Don't flash your valuables. Be especially careful around the Minerva market/terminal & Barrio Las Flores.
- ☠ Avoid walking around alone at night.
- ☠ 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), pants and sunscreen.

Free-Riding?

- Within the centre everything is walkable. City bikes are rented in several places, like Vrisa Books.
- Taxi's are an option, but not the cheapest one. Always negotiate the price upfront.
- Citybuses (minibuses) run all day. They charge for luggage. Destinations are displayed in front, but speaking Spanish is helpful. The chickenbus terminal (to go in our outside Xela) is located right next to the Minerva market, zona 3. Fancy-pants backpacker? Take a Pullman bus via Linea Dorada, Transportes Galgos, Transportes Alamo & Fuentes del Norte... or book a shuttle at a travel agency.
- Hitch-hiking is common and easy. However, there's always a risk.

Tip: Download the Triposo Guatemala app for offline maps etc., or load Google Maps when you have wifi and leave it open.