

# Antigua Guatemala: The Essential Guide 2024 Edition



## Antigua Guatemala: The Essential Guide: 2024 Edition

by Rich Polanco

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Antigua Guatemala, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a beautiful and historic city located in the highlands of Guatemala. With its cobblestone streets, colorful colonial architecture, and stunning volcanoes, Antigua is a popular destination for tourists from all over the world.

The city was founded in 1543 by Spanish conquistadors and was the capital of Guatemala for over 200 years. In 1773, a massive earthquake destroyed much of the city, and the capital was moved to present-day Guatemala City.

Antigua was rebuilt after the earthquake, and many of the colonial buildings that remain today date from this period. The city's architecture is a mix of

Spanish, Moorish, and Baroque styles, and its churches and monasteries are some of the most beautiful in the Americas.

In addition to its architecture, Antigua is also known for its volcanoes. The city is surrounded by three volcanoes: Agua, Fuego, and Acatenango. Agua is the highest of the three, and it offers stunning views of the city and the surrounding countryside. Fuego is an active volcano, and it is often possible to see lava flowing down its slopes at night.

Antigua is a great place to visit for history buffs, architecture lovers, and nature enthusiasts alike. The city offers a wide variety of things to see and do, and there are plenty of restaurants, bars, and shops to keep you entertained.

### **What to See and Do in Antigua Guatemala**

- **Visit the ruins of the Cathedral of Santiago.** This massive cathedral was once the largest in the Americas, but it was destroyed by the earthquake of 1773. The ruins are still impressive, and they offer a glimpse into the city's past.
- **Stroll through the Plaza Mayor.** This central square is the heart of Antigua. It is surrounded by beautiful colonial buildings, including the Palacio del Ayuntamiento (City Hall) and the Iglesia de San Francisco (Church of St. Francis).
- **Visit the Iglesia de Santo Domingo.** This church is one of the most beautiful in Antigua. It is known for its elaborate Baroque façade and its stunning interior. The church is also home to the Museo de Santo Domingo, which houses a collection of religious art.

- **Hike to the top of Cerro de la Cruz.** This hill offers stunning views of the city and the surrounding volcanoes. The hike is relatively easy, and it takes about 30 minutes to reach the top.
- **Take a day trip to one of the nearby volcanoes.** Agua, Fuego, and Acatenango are all popular hiking destinations. Agua is the highest of the three, and it offers the best views. Fuego is an active volcano, and it is often possible to see lava flowing down its slopes at night. Acatenango is a challenging hike, but it rewards hikers with stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

## Where to Stay in Antigua Guatemala

There are a variety of hotels and guesthouses to choose from in Antigua Guatemala. Here are a few of the most popular options:

- **Hotel Casa Santo Domingo.** This luxury hotel is located in a former convent. It offers beautiful rooms, a swimming pool, and a spa.
- **Hotel Soleil La Antigua.** This mid-range hotel is located in the heart of the city. It offers comfortable rooms, a swimming pool, and a restaurant.
- **Mesón Panza Verde.** This budget-friendly guesthouse is located in a quiet neighborhood. It offers basic rooms and a communal kitchen.

## Where to Eat in Antigua Guatemala

Antigua Guatemala has a variety of restaurants to choose from, serving everything from traditional Guatemalan cuisine to international fare. Here are a few of the most popular options:

- **Restaurante El Portal.** This restaurant serves traditional Guatemalan cuisine in a beautiful setting. The menu includes dishes such as pepián, tamales, and churrasco.
- **Café Condesa.** This café is a great place to stop for a coffee and a bite to eat. The menu includes sandwiches, salads, and pastries.
- **La Fonda de la Calle Real.** This restaurant serves international cuisine in a charming setting. The menu includes dishes such as pasta, pizza, and steak.

## Getting to Antigua Guatemala

Antigua Guatemala is located about 45 minutes from Guatemala City. The easiest way to get to Antigua is by taking a bus or a shuttle from the airport or from Guatemala City. There are also several tour companies that offer day trips to Antigua from Guatemala City.

Antigua Guatemala is a beautiful and historic city that is well worth a visit. The city offers a wide variety of things to see and do, and there are plenty of restaurants, bars, and shops to keep you entertained. Whether you are interested in history, architecture, or nature, you are sure to find something to love in Antigua.



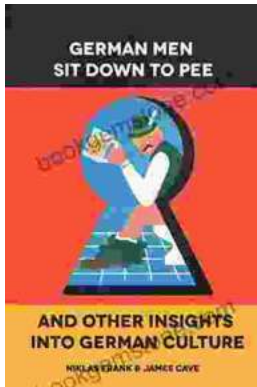
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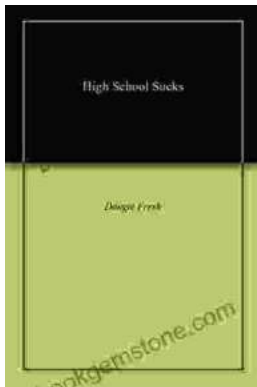
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