



## After successful September reopening, Guatemala is ready to welcome winter sun-seekers

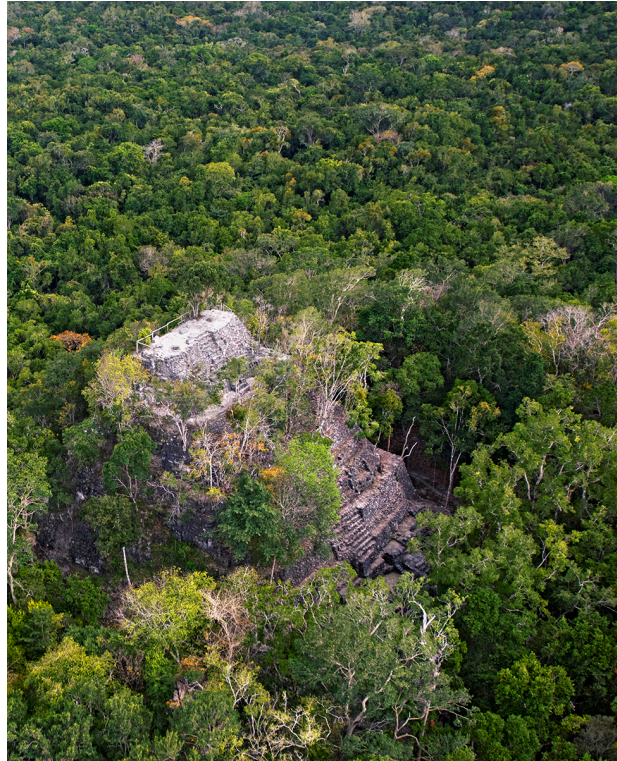
GUATEMALA CITY, Oct. 20, 2020/ — Just in time for those looking to escape the cold winter months ahead, warm and colorful Guatemala, which reopened its borders on September 18th, beckons international visitors.

Though not necessarily a household name for Americans seeking warm-weather winter destinations, Guatemala nonetheless hosted over 2 million foreign arrivals in 2019. The country enjoys a location at a tropical latitude and offers myriad cultural and natural attractions. Earlier this year, *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine dedicated several pages to Guatemala in its April 2020 edition, calling it “Central America’s most beguiling hidden treasure.” The feature’s author points out that, “In-the-know travelers have long been drawn to Guatemala’s sprawling pre-Columbian ruins, volcanic lakes, sophisticated cities, and artisanal communities.”

La Antigua Guatemala, a beautifully preserved colonial town and UNESCO World Heritage Site, recently won the distinction as the number 2 city in Latin America in *Travel + Leisure’s* World’s Best Awards, based on surveyed readers, for the second year in a row. Antigua (as it’s often called) also fared well in *Condé Nast Traveler’s* November 2020 Readers’ Choice Awards. Its Porta Hotel Antigua was awarded the number 4 spot for Hotels in The Caribbean and Central America. Just down the road off the Pan-American highway, Casa Palopó, an ultra-chic boutique hotel on the shores of volcanic Lake Atitlán, grabbed the number 6 spot for the Resorts category in Central America. Both Antigua and Lake Atitlán, in Guatemala’s Central Highlands, enjoy a pleasant spring-like climate year-round. This climate, with daytime highs in the mid-to-upper 70s and clear, sunny days from November to April, has earned Guatemala the nickname, “Land of Eternal Spring.”

Those in search of endless summer can find that, too, in Guatemala. Its coastal lowlands fronting the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea are hot and humid year round. A variety of lodging options in both regions run the gamut from beachside boutique with surfer vibes to all-

inclusive resort. The northern lowlands comprising the country's Petén region are home to sweltering rainforests harboring Guatemala's rich Mayan heritage. Tikal National Park, another UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the crown jewel of Guatemala's massive Maya Biosphere Reserve. On the shores of nearby Lake Petén Itzá, movie director Francis Ford Coppola's La Lancha is a rustic jungle hideaway with luxury touches. It makes a worthy base for exploring the region's exuberant nature and rich cultural history.



Travelers to Guatemala during the COVID pandemic can rest assured they are traveling to a safe destination. The country recently received the Safe Travel Seal granted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) after complying with all necessary hygiene and sanitation protocols. "Guatemala is a destination par excellence, offering attractions such as Antigua, the emblematic archaeological zone of Tikal, Quetzaltenango and Lake Atitlán; in addition to the extensive dishes that the region offers," said Gloria Guevara Manzo, President and CEO of the WTTC. The protocols were developed following the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These practices and protocols are evident in the operations at Guatemala City's La Aurora International Airport (GUA) and in all of the country's top hotels and restaurants.

Unlike some of the airports in the Central American region, Guatemala City's airport doesn't suffer from overcrowding and offers plenty of space for social distancing in a well-ventilated facility with high ceilings accenting its modern architecture. La Aurora reopened to commercial flights just over a month ago, on September 18th, with international carriers gradually resuming operations. Among the U.S. carriers, American, United, Delta, and Spirit have resumed multiple



daily frequencies from major U.S. hubs. United Airlines' service reintroduction has been particularly strong, having increased frequencies on previously existing flights from Houston, Washington D.C., and Newark while introducing new nonstop service 10 times per week from LAX. JetBlue, which had announced new service to Guatemala City prior to the pandemic, has moved the startup date for its New York JFK-Guatemala City flights to April 28, 2021. Iberia's nonstop flights from Madrid have also resumed, connecting Guatemala to Europe once more.

Addressing passengers waiting to board the first American Airlines Guatemala City-Miami flight since the reopening, Civil Aviation Director Francis Argueta encouraged travelers to book holiday travel into and out of GUA. "This fills us with great hope for Guatemala, he said. On behalf of President Giammattei, we thank you for placing your trust in us." He added, "This (pandemic) won't last forever and together we are going to do everything we can to provide you with a safe airport experience." The same can be said for Guatemala as a whole.

For more Guatemala travel information, go to [www.guatemalacvb.com](http://www.guatemalacvb.com) or email [info1@guatemalacvb.com](mailto:info1@guatemalacvb.com).

