

Guatemala:

The Country of Eternal Spring

> Cairo - Mounir El Fishawy

Tourism in Guatemala is considered one of the most important economic activities. In 2005, 1,315, 646 international visitors arrived, contributing \$868 million to the national revenue.



Guatemala has magnificent natural resources, traditions, folklore, archaeology, rivers, lakes, beaches, a pleasant climate all year around, amicable people and easily accessible tourist sites. There are very many impressive places to visit including the archaeological reserve of El-Mirador with a giant Mayan pyramid, Tikal. Apart from the numerous Mayan centres there is the precious lake of Atitlan and the colonial city of Antigua.

Guatemala City

The city of Guatemala is one of the most beautiful cities in Latin America, located in the Valley of La Ermita. It is near the Agua, Pacaya, Acatenango and Fuego volcanoes. The city is divided into different zones: Zone 1 is the centre with the National Palace and the Cathedral, Zone 10 or the live zone is the area for hotels, restaurants and night life. The crafts market and museums of archaeology, ethnology, the children's museum and the airport are located in Zone 13. The city of Guatemala is one of the greenest on the American continent.



Historical centre

The city of Guatemala was founded in 1776 in the Valley of La Ermita or the Valley of the Virgin. It grew rapidly to a population of 30.000 inhabitants with a large number of civil, religious and domestic buildings. Old Guatemala, the country's main tourist city, is known as the City of Eternal Roses. It is famous for its colonial style, paved with stone streets – not to mention the volcano.

It is also famous for its Spanish language schools and cosmopolitan residents.

The national park of Tikal

Tikal is considered one of the most important cities of Mayan culture. It was once situated on the trade route, a place occupied by El Mirador. Among the attractions is the Central square, the North Acropolis, (a funeral complex), the Lost

World and the palaces. The combination of the archaeological park and its ecological landscape attracts large numbers of tourists. It was declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site because of its international character. In conclusion, Guatemala is impressive: a visit to this wonderful country, with millions of Arab and foreign emigrants, enjoying a good calm life, is a tourists' dream come true. ■