

# Travel Advisory

## Guatemala



Level

3

Reconsider travel

**Reissued with obsolete COVID-19 page links removed.**

Reconsider travel to Guatemala due to **crime**. Some areas have increased risk. Read the entire Travel Advisory.

Do not travel to:

- San Marcos Department (except the city of San Marcos) due to **crime**.
- Huehuetenango Department (except the city of Huehuetenango) due to **crime**.
- Zone 18 and the city of Villa Nueva in Guatemala City due to **crime**.

**Country Summary:** Violent crime such as extortion, murder, armed robbery, carjacking, narcotics trafficking and gang activity are common in Guatemala. Local police may lack the resources to respond effectively to criminal incidents resulting in a low arrest and conviction rate. Guatemala's National Tourist Assistance Program ([PROATUR](#)) provides 24-hour emergency assistance and routine guidance to tourists. PROATUR also provide additional security in locations frequented by tourists. The call center is staffed with Spanish and English speakers and can be reached 24/7 by calling 1500 or +502-2290-2800.

U.S. government personnel and family members are prohibited from traveling to/throughout the above-mentioned areas for personal travel but are permitted to travel throughout the rest of Guatemala, including tourist destinations such as Tikal, Antigua, Lake Atitlán, and Pacific coast areas in the Santa Rosa and Escuintla Departments.

Read the [country information page](#) for additional information on travel to Guatemala.

If you decide to travel to Guatemala:

- When traveling to Lake Atitlán, use certified tourist providers and travel between villages on the lakeshore by chartered boat, as perimeter paths pose a serious crime risk and are not easily accessible by emergency services. Hiking in the area, while popular, is best undertaken with the assistance of a local guide to ensure safety, as criminals are known to target some routes.
- When visiting Pacific coast beaches and resorts in the Santa Rosa and Escuintla Departments, arrange travel through hotel, resort, or charter agents. We recommend traveling to and from hotels, resorts, and fishing charters via road from Guatemala City during daylight hours only.
- Visitors are strongly advised to avoid swimming in the Pacific Ocean, since currents and undertows are

strong, and beaches lack adequate lifeguards or emergency response.

- Visitors should not leave drinks unattended in bars and restaurants and are advised to decline invitations from strangers to private parties or gatherings.
- Consider staying in hotels or other lodging facilities that offer secure parking, doormen, and a dedicated and professional security staff.
- Request security escorts, which are available for tourist groups, from the Guatemalan Tourism Institute ([INGUAT](#)).
- Be aware of your surroundings and avoid walking or driving at night.
- Do take radio-dispatched taxis (Taxi Amarillo), INGUAT-approved taxis from the “SAFE” stand at the airport, hotel taxis, vetted private drivers, and/or Uber.
- Do not take public transportation, including white car taxis. U.S. government personnel and their family members are prohibited from using these forms of transportation.
- Do not attempt to hike walking trails or volcanoes without the services of a qualified local guide. Robberies are commonplace, and emergency response is lacking.
- Do not physically resist any robbery attempt.
- Do not use public ATMs.
- Do not display signs of wealth, such as wearing expensive watches or jewelry, and avoid using mobile devices in public.
- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive Alerts while in Guatemala and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Follow the Department of State on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Review the [Country Security Report](#) for Guatemala.
- Prepare a contingency plan for emergency situations. Review the [Traveler’s Checklist](#).
- Visit the CDC page for the latest [Travel Health Information](#) related to your travel.

#### **San Marcos Department – Level 4: Do Not Travel**

All U.S. government personnel and family members are prohibited from traveling to San Marcos Department for personal travel, except for the city of San Marcos. Narcotics trafficking is widespread, and large portions of the department are under the influence of drug trafficking organizations. Several municipalities lack police presence, and local police may lack the resources to respond effectively to serious criminal incidents. Avoid areas outside of major roads and highways. Visit our website for [Travel to High-Risk Areas](#).

#### **Huehuetenango Department – Level 4: Do Not Travel**

All U.S. government personnel and family members are prohibited from traveling to Huehuetenango Department for personal travel, except for the city of Huehuetenango. Narcotics trafficking is widespread, and large portions of the department are under the influence of drug trafficking organizations. Several municipalities lack police presence, and local police may lack the resources to respond effectively to serious criminal incidents. Avoid areas outside of major roads and highways.

Visit our website for [Travel to High-Risk Areas](#).

#### **Zone 18 and Villa Nueva within the Guatemala Department – Level 4: Do Not Travel**

U.S. government personnel and family members are free to travel within Guatemala City except for zone 18 and the municipality of Villa Nueva. The following zones in Guatemala City are of elevated concern due to crime: 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 17, 19, 21, and 24. U.S. citizens should take appropriate security measures when traveling to and from the airport such as only using vetted transportation services, not displaying valuables or other signs of wealth, refraining from using mobile devices in public, and not lingering outside the airport. U.S. citizens are advised not

to hail white-car taxis on the street in Guatemala City. Use radio-dispatched taxis (Taxi Amarillo), INGUAT-approved taxis from the “SAFE” stand at the airport, hotel taxis, vetted private drivers, or Uber.

Visit our website for [Travel to High-Risk Areas](#).