



Five Affordable Destinations: Central America

GUATEMALA

Mexico's Southern neighbor is a little less expensive and a little more off the beaten path. The country offers a mix of a volcanic landscape, a colonial heritage, a rich indigenous folklore, and remnants of the heyday of the Mayan Civilization.

What To See and Do:

Visit the massive and still only partially-excavated ancient Mayan city of Tikal. Sail on or hike around Lago de Atitlán, the mystical volcanic lake that graces numerous Guatemalan tourism posters. Shop for local handicrafts at local markets, where every region offers distinct styles and patterns. Take in the colorful Holy Week processions at the colonial capital of Antigua. Climb one of the country's many volcanoes, both live and dormant.

Getting there:

Both Continental and American Airlines offer regular service to Guatemala City for around \$375, but there are often special sales and discounts. Guatemala City is less than three hours by air from Houston or Miami, the most common connecting points.

Getting around:

A bed in a hostel or budget hotel will average three to five dollars per night per person, and cheap restaurants called *comedores* offer full meals for three to four dollars. Guatemalan buses are frequent, crowded and cheap – about one dollar for every hour of travel. What they lack in comfort, they make up for in atmosphere, and the chance to mix with the locals.