

Customs and Cuisine

Guatemala



Guatemalan cuisine is influenced by Mayan and Spanish flavors and pulls from many other Latin American culinary traditions. It is common for Guatemalan dishes to be served with corn tortillas, while black beans and rice are also dietary staples. Some traditional dishes include:

- Pepian - hearty meat and vegetable stew with a thick sauce
- Pulique - thinner meat and vegetable stew/soup
- Jocon - chicken stew with a green sauce
- Pollo Guisado - Spanish stewed chicken
- Estofado - beef, potato, and carrot stew
- Caldo de Gallina - chicken soup
- Fiambre - chilled salad that can be made up of dozens of ingredients, like meats, cheeses, and pickled vegetables
- Tamales - typically a corn-based masa or dough, which is steamed in a banana leaf or a corn husk
- Paches - tamales with the dough made from potato
- Kak'ik - turkey soup
- Subanik - meat and vegetable stew in spicy sauce

Cultural rituals, festivals, and/or celebrations include:

- Maya New Year is celebrated each February, with the exact date varying based on the Maya calendar. Town elders and members of the community congregate at the town hall and the Maya mayor (a different representative than that of the Guatemalan government) performs a ritual with candles and blesses the town for the year.
- Semana Santa, or Holy Week, takes place during Easter week. It is Guatemala's largest celebration that includes religious processions and the creation of colorful sawdust carpets in the streets.
- Sept. 15 is Guatemala's Independence Day.
- All Saints Day is celebrated on Nov. 1.
- The Day of the Dead is celebrated on Nov. 2. Families traditionally go together to the cemetery to honor their deceased relatives.

- On Dec. 7, many in Guatemala celebrate the Burning of the Devil. Typically Guatemalan families light burnable items on fire in the street in an act to cleanse the household before Christmas.
- Many Guatemalan families celebrate the Catholic holiday of Corpus Cristi with processions and sawdust carpets in the streets.
- Guatemala celebrates Christmas and New Year's with processions, fireworks, and traditional food.

(Source: Women's Justice Initiative)