

**CIA World Factbook–Style Country Report**

**Republic of Guatemala**

**ATLAS Intelligence Edition (Expanded Assessment)**







## Official Name

**Republic of Guatemala (República de Guatemala)**

## Flag

The Guatemalan flag consists of three vertical bands of light blue, white, and light blue. The national coat of arms appears in the center of the white band, featuring the Resplendent Quetzal (symbol of liberty), crossed rifles and swords, a parchment bearing the date of independence (15 September 1821), and a laurel wreath representing victory.

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## Map

**Location:** Northern Central America

Borders:

- Mexico
- Belize
- Honduras
- El Salvador

Coastlines:

- Pacific Ocean
- Caribbean Sea (Gulf of Honduras)

Total Area:

**108,889 km<sup>2</sup>**

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## Population

- Estimated Population: **Approximately 19 million**
- Annual Growth Rate: Moderate
- Median Age: Approximately 24 years

Major Cities

| City           | Population                 |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Guatemala City | ~3.2 million (metro)       |
| Mixco          | Large urban municipality   |
| Villa Nueva    | Major industrial city      |
| Quetzaltenango | Regional commercial center |
| Escuintla      | Pacific economic hub       |

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## Capital

### Guatemala City

Largest city in Central America and the country's political, economic, military, and financial center.

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## Government

Government Type:

- Presidential Constitutional Republic

President:

- Head of State
- Head of Government

Legislature:

- Congress of the Republic
- Unicameral

Administrative Divisions:

- 22 Departments
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## Geography

Terrain:

- Volcanic mountain ranges
- Pacific coastal plain
- Northern tropical rainforest (Petén)
- Fertile central highlands

Highest Point:

- Volcán Tajumulco
- 4,220 meters

Natural Hazards:

- Earthquakes
- Volcanic eruptions
- Hurricanes
- Flooding
- Landslides

Climate:

- Tropical lowlands
- Temperate highlands

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**Natural Resources**

- Nickel
- Gold
- Silver
- Petroleum (limited)
- Hydroelectric potential
- Fertile agricultural land
- Forests

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## Economy

GDP:

Approximately **US\$120–130 billion**

Currency:

**Guatemalan Quetzal (GTQ)**

Primary Industries

- Agriculture
- Coffee
- Sugar
- Bananas
- Cardamom
- Textiles
- Food processing
- Mining
- Tourism
- Business services

Major Trading Partners

- United States
- Mexico
- Central America
- China
- European Union

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## Infrastructure

Road Network:

Moderately developed but uneven outside major cities.

Railroads:

Minimal operational freight service.

Major Ports

Pacific:

- Puerto Quetzal

Caribbean:

- Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla
- Puerto Barrios

Major Airports:

- La Aurora International Airport
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## **Energy**

Electricity Generation:

- Hydroelectric
- Coal
- Natural Gas
- Oil
- Growing renewable sector

Net importer of refined petroleum products.

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## **Communications**

Internet Penetration:

Moderate and expanding.

Mobile Phone Usage:

High.

Digital Infrastructure:

Growing rapidly in urban areas.

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## Demographics

### Ethnic Composition

- Mestizo (Ladino)
- Numerous Indigenous Maya peoples
- Xinca
- Garífuna

### Languages

#### Official:

- Spanish

#### Widely Spoken:

- More than 20 recognized Mayan languages
- Garífuna
- Xinca

### Religion

#### Predominantly:

- Roman Catholic
- Protestant Evangelical

Growing secular population.

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## Education

### Literacy:

Approximately **82%**

### Major Universities:

- University of San Carlos
- Universidad del Valle

- Francisco Marroquín University
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## **Healthcare**

Mixed public-private healthcare system.

Challenges include:

- Rural access
  - Malnutrition
  - Maternal health disparities
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## **Military**

### **Guatemalan Armed Forces**

Branches:

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force

Primary Missions

- Border security
- Counter-narcotics
- Counter-organized crime
- Disaster response
- Internal security support

Active Personnel:

Approximately **25,000**

Reserve Forces:

Limited organized reserve.

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## **Security Assessment**

## Major Threats

- Transnational organized crime
- Narcotics trafficking
- Human trafficking
- Illegal migration
- Corruption
- Gang violence (MS-13 and Barrio 18 influence)
- Border insecurity

Violence remains concentrated in urban corridors and trafficking routes rather than nationwide.

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## Intelligence Assessment

### Political Stability

#### Moderate

Democratic institutions remain functional, though governance continues to face persistent challenges from corruption, judicial disputes, and political polarization.

**Assessment: Stable but institutionally pressured.**

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### Economic Stability

#### Moderate

Macroeconomic fundamentals are generally resilient, supported by exports and significant remittance inflows from Guatemalans abroad. Structural inequality and limited formal employment remain long-term constraints.

**Assessment: Moderately Stable**

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### Internal Security

#### Moderate Risk

Organized criminal groups remain influential, particularly along trafficking corridors. Security conditions vary considerably by region.

### **Assessment: Elevated Criminal Threat**

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#### **External Security**

##### **Low Risk**

Guatemala maintains generally cooperative relations with neighboring states and does not face significant conventional military threats.

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#### **Intelligence Outlook (2026–2028)**

Key drivers include:

- Anti-corruption reforms
  - Migration pressures
  - U.S.–Central America cooperation
  - Infrastructure investment
  - Climate-related disasters
  - Cartel adaptation to enforcement efforts
  - Economic diversification
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#### **Strategic Outlook**

##### **Strengths**

- Largest economy in Central America
- Young labor force
- Strategic geographic location
- Strong agricultural exports
- Significant remittance support
- Expanding manufacturing base

## Weaknesses

- Persistent corruption
- Weak rule of law
- Organized crime
- Infrastructure deficits
- High poverty and inequality
- Climate vulnerability

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## ATLAS Strategic Risk Assessment

| Category                   | Risk                     |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Political Stability        | <b>Moderate</b>          |
| Economic Stability         | <b>Moderate</b>          |
| Military Threat            | <b>Low</b>               |
| Organized Crime            | <b>High</b>              |
| Border Security            | <b>Moderate</b>          |
| Natural Disaster Risk      | <b>High</b>              |
| Foreign Investment Risk    | <b>Moderate</b>          |
| Overall National Stability | <b>Moderately Stable</b> |

## Overall Assessment

Guatemala remains one of the pivotal states in Central America due to its population, economic weight, and geographic position linking Mexico with the rest of the isthmus. While the country is not exposed to major interstate military threats, organized crime, corruption, and natural disasters continue to shape its security environment. Continued economic growth and institutional reform could strengthen long-term stability, but progress will depend on sustained improvements in governance, public security, and infrastructure investment.