



# Guatemala



## Country Overview:

*Location: Central America, bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between El Salvador and Mexico, and bordering the Gulf of Honduras (Caribbean Sea) between Honduras and Belize*

*Size: 108,889 sq km*

*Population: 14,373,472 (July 2013 est.)*

*Capital: Guatemala City*

*Export-commodities: coffee, sugar, petroleum, apparel, bananas, fruits and vegetables, cardamom*

*Import-commodities: fuels, machinery and transport equipment, construction materials, grain, fertilizers, electricity, mineral products, chemical products, plastic materials and products*

*Currency: Guatemalan quetzal(GTQ)*

*Religion: Roman Catholic, Protestant, indigenous Mayan beliefs*

*Ethnic groups: Mestizo (mixed Amerindian-Spanish - in local Spanish called Ladino) and European 59.4%, K'iche 9.1%, Kaqchikel 8.4%, Mam 7.9%, Q'eqchi 6.3%, other Mayan 8.6%, indigenous non-Mayan 0.2%, other 0.1% (2001 census)*

*Government Type: Constitutional democratic republic*

*Chief of State: President Otto Fernando PEREZ MOLINA (since 14 January 2012); Vice President Ingrid Roxana BALDETTI Elias (since 14 January 2012); NOTE - the president is both the chief of state and head of government*

*Language: Spanish (official) 60%, Amerindian languages 40%*



## Republic of Guatemala/ República de Guatemala

### Meetings & Negotiations

-Guatemalans tend to place more emphasis on people and **relationships**.

-Greetings between men are usually a simple oral exchange which would be accompanied by a handshake in a formal or semi-formal setting.

-Showing up a little late to a party or function is quite common. However, Guatemalans are **punctual** in business situations.

-Guatemalan decision makers are very accessible. **Successful** business relationships hinge on friendly social relationships.

-**Price** is the single most important factor in a purchasing decision.

-Business is discussed in an office or over a meal in a restaurant, **not** at the home or near family.

-Guatemalans find loud voices annoying, talk in **soft**, well-

modulated tones.

-Guatemalans favor **direct** eye contact and consider it a form of showing interest.

-Guatemalans are **most** comfortable with an arms length of space.

-Business **breakfast** or **lunch** is preferred over dinner.

-Beginning with small talk **helps** establish a base for the relationship, after which discussion of business matters can begin. It is **best** to allow your host to begin the business discussion.

### Business Attire

-A lightweight suit is appropriate for men, usually a conservative suit with a tie.

-Women should wear a suit, dress, or skirt and blouse. Women in pants is becoming appropriate but some still may be offended.

### Behavior

-Guatemala has a **collectivist** culture. Decisions are made by the group, not individually.

-Guatemala has a **macho** culture, making the treatment and expectations of women and men different.

### Gift Giving

-Gifts are typically not brought to a first meeting.

-**Always** take a more personal gift with you after an initial visit.

### Appropriate Gifts:

-If invited to a home, it is appropriate to bring flowers. Chocolate, wine spirits are also acceptable; candy, and something for the children.

### Gifts to Avoid:

-Avoid giving white flowers as they are reserved for funerals.

## Business Tips continued

### Conversation

-Shaking hands and saying "mucho gusto" is an appropriate greeting.

-Handshake may seem limp, which is **customary**.

-Close friends embrace and pat each other's back.

-Titles, especially among the

elderly, are very important:

Mr. = Señor

Mrs. = Señora

Miss = Señorita

-Social conversation before business is the **custom**.

-Dialogues or meetings begin first with an exchange of small talk, which would begin by saying "buenos días" (good morning) or

"buenas tardes" (good afternoon).

### Topics to Discuss:

-Guatemalan geography, history, and culture

### Topics to Avoid:

-racism, Mayan vs. Guatemalan issues, poverty, and politics

-"the violence" since 1978

