

REVUE

Guatemala's English-language Magazine

MAY 2022 revuemag.com Year 31 No. 3

*5 Great Guatemala
Destinations*



THIS MONTH IN REVUE

On the Cover

1st Place Judges Vote
“Entrepreneurs”
San Antonio Palopó
by Javier
Alvarez Vassaux

PHOTO CONTEST
Theme for June 2022
“Adventures in Guatemala”
click for details



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From the Publishers

La Antigua Interactive Map



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ADVERTISER INDEX

places to go, things to do and fun to be had.

Restaurants - Hotels
Shopping - Services
Real Estate - Travel

VIDEO

VIDEO BY DANIEL GOHSTAND

REVUE

Guatemala's English-language Ezine

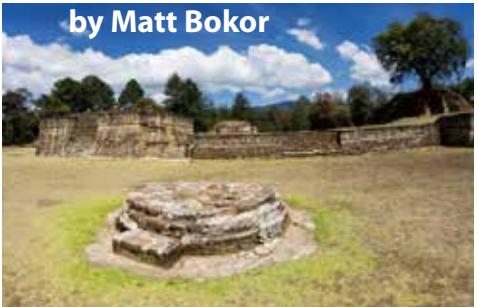
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by Matt Bokor



10 REASONS to Visit **IXIMCHÉ**

It's more impressive than it looks in travel guides.



10 REASONS to Visit **MONTERRICO**

An oceanfront hammock is way better than a regular hammock.



10 REASONS to Climb **PACAYA VOLCANO**

Much better selfie opps than the gym.

WHY YOU SHOULD HIKE A GUATEMALAN VOLCANO IN YOUR LIFETIME

For adventurous travelers, climbing a volcano is high on the to-do list. The appeal is both visceral and aesthetic.

text by
John
Wachunas
photos by
Alessandro
Rafanelli



SEMUC CHAMPEY IT REALLY IS WORTH IT

Turquoise pools and mysterious caves are just two reasons... by Tara Tiedemann



MY SADDEST PLEASURES: 50 YEARS ON THE ROAD - FIRST STOP, GUATEMALA Part of the Yin and Yang of Travel Series by Mark Walker

Guatemala: First Stop on my Global Sojourn
(Trekking in the Peace Corps)

Here is a re-published article in honor of our recently departed friend:
SENSUOUS GUATEMALA by Ken Veronda "Guatemala's Season of Aromas"

Places to go, things to do and fun to be had...

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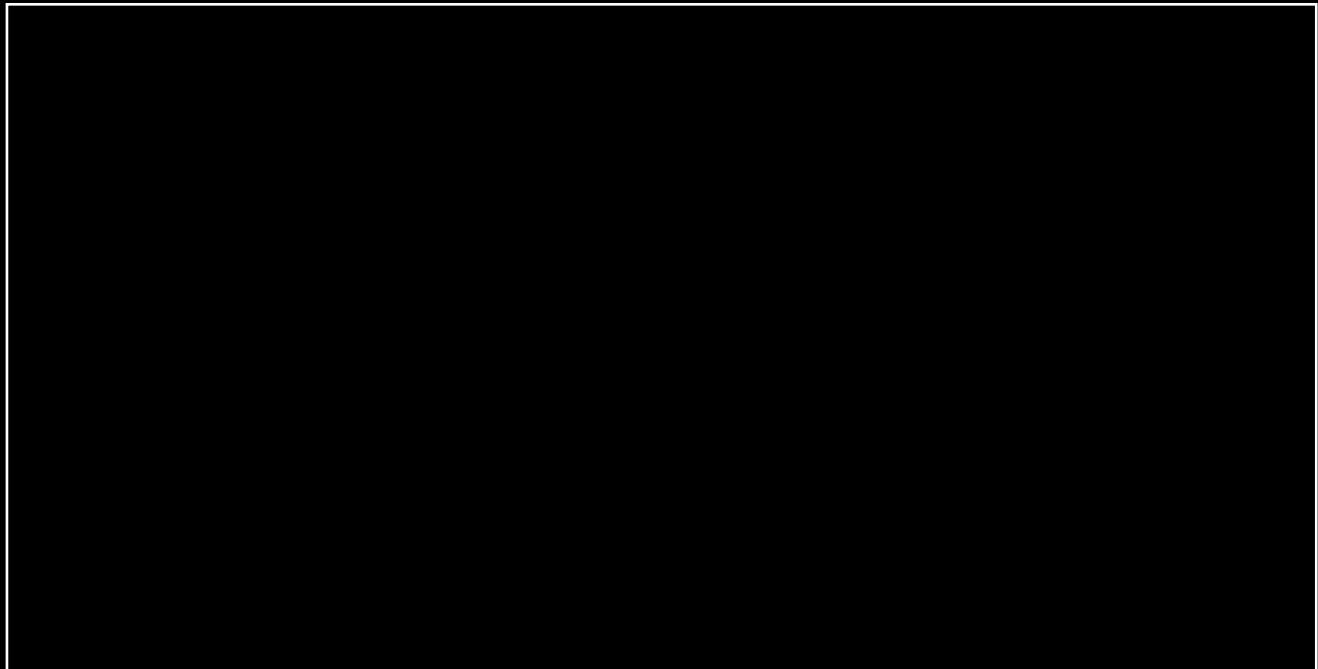
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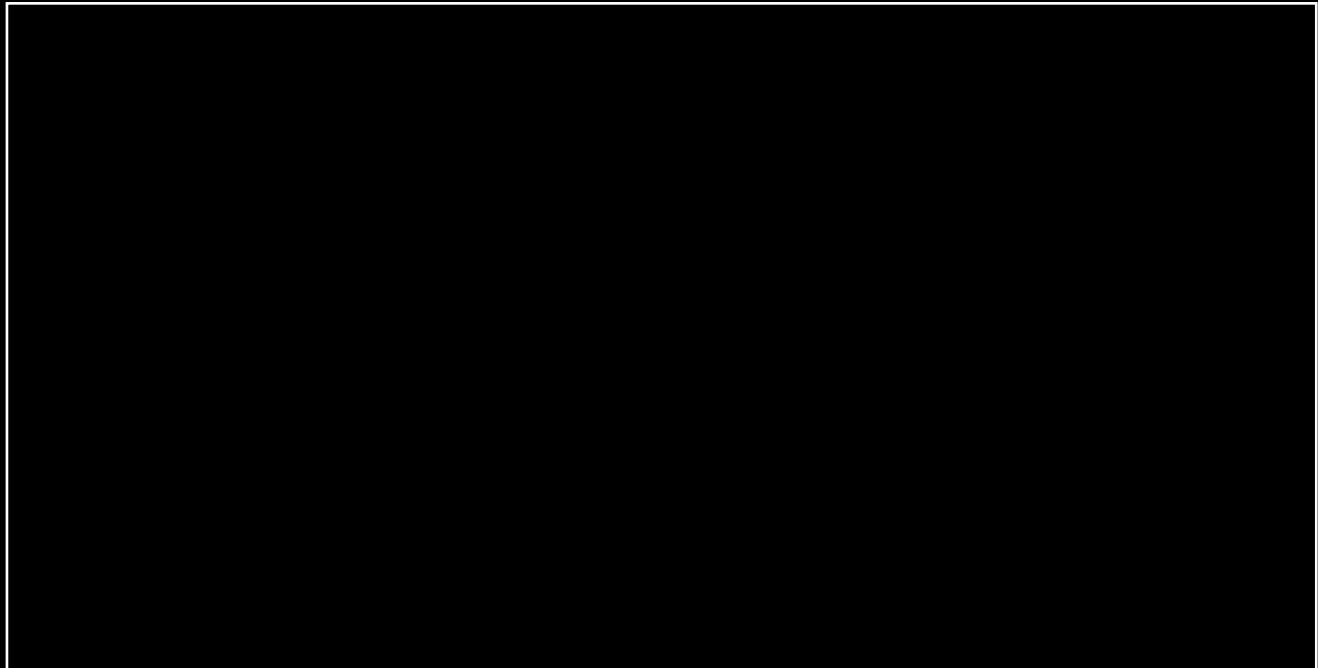
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video courtesy of Mexcal - Rhet

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from the PUBLISHERS

With less travel restrictions in place people are traveling more, so we thought we would point out some fun and interesting destinations in Guatemala. There are obvious choices of places to go and hang out, like Monterrico, and there are some lesser known but very cool locations that are worth checking out, like the Iximché Ruins. Revue contributer Matt Bokor gives us some amusing lists of *10 Reasons* why we should take the road less traveled.

Writer John Wachunas shares his logic for *Why You Should Hike a Guatemalan Volcano in Your Lifetime*, and why it is on the to-do list for many adventurous travelers. Contributing writer Tara Tiedemann gives several excellent examples to prove the title of her article *Semuc Champey - It Really Is Worth It*. Turquoise pools and mysterious caves are just two reasons.

Ken Veronda, a good friend and long-time contributing writer for Revue passed away last month. His community service in Antigua had a positive impact on so many. He will be dearly missed. We have included one of his *Sensuous Guatemala* articles in this issue In Memorium.

Mark Walker's inclusion this month is *My Saddest Pleasures: 50 Years on the Road*, as part of his Yin and Yang of Travel Series.

Thanks for reading and we wish you a Marvelous May.

— Terry & John Kovick Biskovich

revue team

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In the contents and advertiser index pages just click or tap on the subject you're interested in and it will take you to that page. Videos will play directly in the format.

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The screenshot shows the Facebook profile page for Revue magazine. The profile picture is a large red square with a white stylized 'R'. The page name is 'Revue' and it lists 'Gremiromagazine' as the page category. The bio reads 'Welcome To the January ISSUE of the DIGITAL INTERACTIVE REVUE'. A photo of a tablet displaying the magazine's cover is shown. The timeline includes a post with a placeholder for a photo and a link to 'Our Story' which mentions '28 Years Promoting the Best of Guatemala. Photographs, Cultural Calendar, Travel articles, Interviews...'. Other visible sections include 'Fotos' (Photos) showing a person on a swing against a cloudy sky, and 'Comunidad' (Community). The top navigation bar of the Facebook interface is visible, showing 'Revue' and other options like 'Inicio', 'Búsqueda', and 'Noticias'.

2nd Place Judges Vote "El Sombrero"
Antigua by Henry Cukier





1st Place Popular Vote "Van las pelotas artesanales al mercado"
Circunvalación de Chimaltenango by Luis Alberto Soto Santizo



piclass





10 Reasons

to Visit Iximché

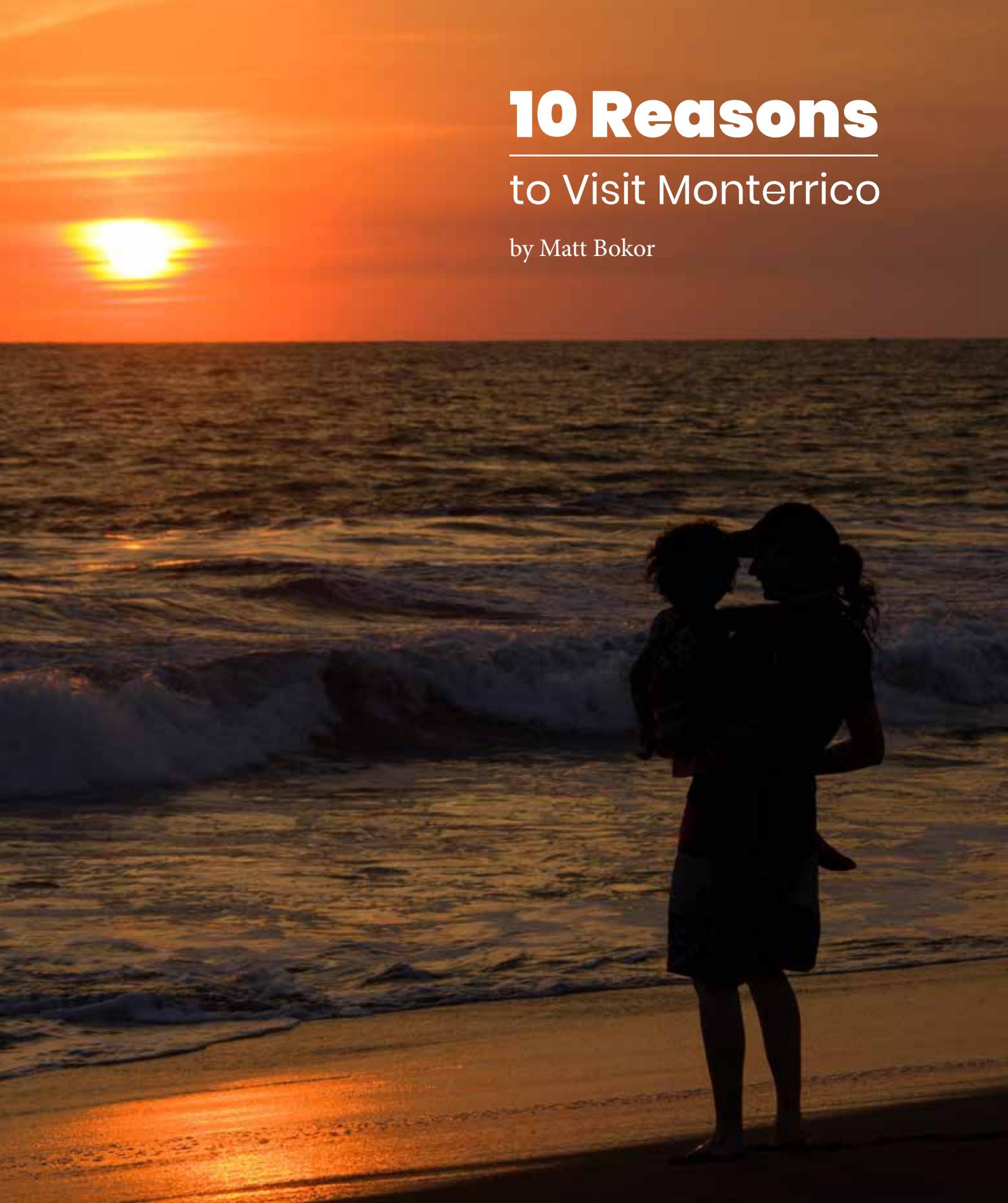
by Matt Bokor

1. You're **dying to see Mayan ruins** but don't have time to visit Tikal.
2. If you're really in a hurry, you can **see it all in two hours** or less.
3. It's only **about an hour drive** from La Antigua Guatemala.
4. Did you say "**ball court?**"





5. It's the excuse you need to stuff yourself at one of **Tecpán's great restaurants**.
6. It's **more impressive than it looks** in travel guides.
7. You can pack a picnic lunch and **dine among the ruins**.
8. It's **a great side trip** on your way to or from Lake Atitlán.
9. **You might catch a shaman** performing a ritual
10. It will make **your inner warrior happy**.

A photograph of a couple standing on a beach at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over the ocean waves. The couple is silhouetted against the bright sky.

10 Reasons

to Visit Monterrico

by Matt Bokor



photo by Willy Posadas

There are dozens of reasons to visit Monterrico and the south coast of Guatemala. It is a spectacular, beautiful area, with a variety of recreational and wilderness options.

With tongue-in-cheek, Revue Associate Editor Matt Bokor gives us **10 of his favorite reasons to stop by.**



photo by Willy Posadas

1. The sand really is **black**.
2. You can **take a side trip** to Hawaii.*
3. The place is **chill but never chilly**.
4. An **oceanfront hammock** is way better than a regular hammock.



5. An **oceanfront hangover** is way better than a regular hangover.

6. Maybe you can **release sea turtle hatchlings**.

7. It's **always casual day**. Very. Casual.

8. **Excessive partying** is encouraged.

9. It's not every day that you take a **ferry to cross a river** to get to a beach.

10. It only gets stressful when it's time to leave.



* Be sure to check out the Biotoxo Monterrico-Hawaii nature reserve

facebook.com/RNUMM

photo by Willy Posadas



For some ideas of hotels in the area, go to visitmonterrico.com



photo by Julio Hurtado L.



by Kyle Weinstein

10 Reasons

to climb
Pacaya Volcano

by Matt Bokor

1. Your friends back home think **you're crazy**, this will confirm it.
2. Way **better selfie** opps than the gym.



- 
3. You think “**scree**” is a dirty word, and there’s a ton of it up there.
4. You’ve always wanted **to roast a marshmallow** over a thermal vent.
5. You packed **hiking boots**, you need to use them.
6. You bought **a groovy, hand-carved walking stick** in Antigua. You need to use it, too.
7. You need **to burn some of the calories** you piled up at the bars and restaurants during your trip.
8. No one thinks **you’ve got the stamina**.
9. You have **no guilt about renting a horse** and not telling anyone. (see previous)
10. You’re looking for **the experience of a lifetime**, which you can also tell your Mom about.

Ascenso al Volcán de Pacaya by Alejandro González



2nd Place Popular Vote “The beauty created by our people / La belleza creada por nuestra gente” San Juan La Laguna, Sololá by Edwin Yonael Chávez Martínez



"Domingo de Ramos." La Antigua Guatemala by Ludwing Paniagua



"El Color de Fe" Esquipulas
by Diego Romero



by Carlos Cordón



SEMUC CHAMPEY

It Really is Worth it

by Tara Tiedemann

Turquoise pools and mysterious caves are just two reasons why Semuc Champey is a must-visit destination. When traveling, you often find yourself evaluating the many destinations, and here in Guatemala the variety is astounding. One of the must-visit attractions is Semuc Champey. You may have seen pictures of the shimmering turquoise pools, cascading through the jungle. The water is so blue that looks like it was transported right out of the Caribbean Sea. You've probably also heard it is quite a journey and are wondering if it is really worth the trip. I am here to tell you that yes, Semuc Champey really is worth it. Be sure to plan some extra time to explore the surrounding caves and flora and fauna.

The drive from Guatemala City can take up to eight hours. Shuttles are available from a number of travel agencies; another option is a coach-style bus (far different than a camioneta) from Guatemala City.

You'll first head to the city of Cobán, located in the department of Alta Verapaz. This city and its surrounding area have enough attractions to warrant an overnight stay. From Cobán, you can book a shuttle straight to Lanquín, your jumping-off point to all the adventures in and around Semuc Champey.

You'll descend down from Cobán through cool cloud forests and into Lanquín, a welcoming and warm tropical retreat with flowers, cacao trees and flowing cobalt rivers. There are a number of beautiful palm roof-style lodges to call home for a few days. Each



by Tara Tiedemann

by Carlos Cordón





one is a slice of heaven nestled near the Cahabón River. To take full advantage of the surroundings without rushing through at a break-neck pace, give yourself at least three nights in the area.

Guided tours of Semuc Champey can be arranged through each hotel and are the best way to fully enjoy the park. They all provide roundtrip transportation and a box lunch, since food and beverage options at the park are scarce. You'll definitely want your camera for the breathtaking views that await at the mirador (lookout), following a strenuous 45-minute hike up. Gazing at the cascading turquoise water, you'll understand why it's sometimes called the Eighth Wonder of the World. After your workout you'll be ready to jump into the water to cool off. Be careful—the rocks around the pools can be a little slick. Be sure to visit the impressive El Sumidero, where the river tumbles through extreme rapids and disappears underground—a great photo op but don't fall in.

After the pools, your guide will take you up to the Kan'Ba Caves for some heart-pounding excitement. You'll be escorted through with only a candle for light—and you'll be swimming with your candle most of the way. Don't splash too much or you'll put your can-



A scenic view of a waterfall cascading down a rocky cliff into a pool of water, surrounded by lush green vegetation.

by Tara Tiedemann

dle out. Crawl up a rope through a tumbling waterfall and take a blind leap, splashing down into the pool on the other side.

After a full day at the park you'll be ready for a hearty dinner, at your hotel the staff will be waiting with an amazing spread to help you recover. Fall asleep to the sound of crickets and the "hoot hoot" of the owl—leaving the rumbling buses and car horns miles away.

In addition to Semuc Champey, you can also explore the Lanquín Caves, which offer a spectacular view of bats leaving at dusk, and go tubing down the Cahabón River. If you haven't already reached your adrenaline quota, try the "extreme tubing" tour, which leaves from Utopia Eco Hotel and starts with a jump off the bridge. There is plenty of hiking in the area, and the bird watching is fabulous with more than 90 species recorded.

So look at your calendar and schedule your trip to Semuc Champey. You'll come back telling your friends, "Yes, it really is worth it!" 

3rd Place Judges Vote “Muñequetas” by Jaime B. Montalvo

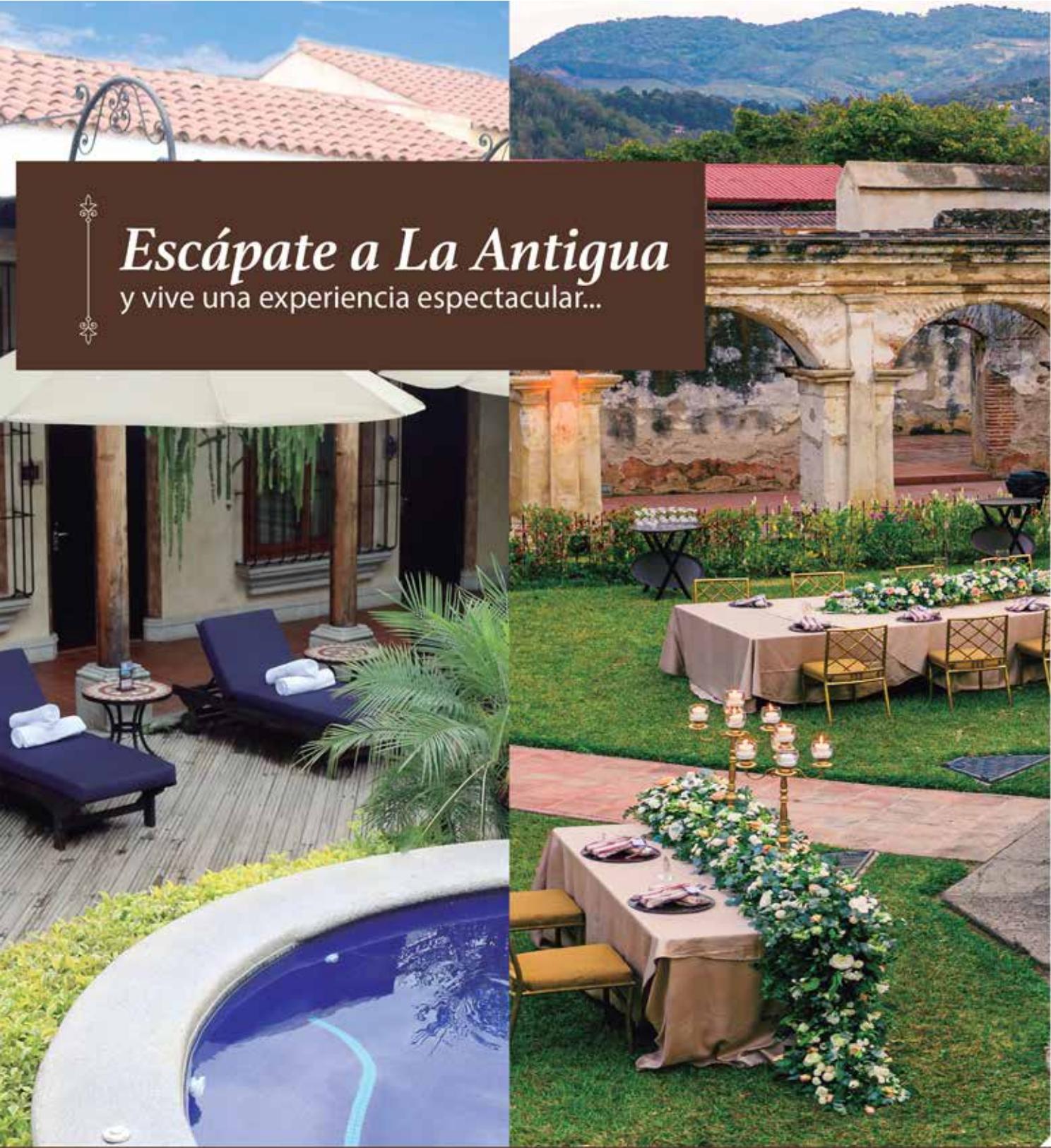






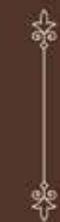
3rd Place Popular Vote
"Barro y colores" Centro histórico de Guatemala
by Francisco Hernández





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Fuego Volcano, Guatemala



Why You Should Hike a Guatemalan Volcano in Your Lifetime

For adventurous travelers, climbing a volcano is high on the to-do list. The appeal is both visceral and aesthetic. Depending on which one you choose to ascend, you will experience a palpable sense of risk and/or be rewarded by scenes of otherworldly natural beauty.

text by John Wachunas
photos by Alessandro Rafanelli
Embark.org

After an initial two-hour hike up the mountain, the trail takes you into a beautiful cloud forest, where lush foliage enveloped in what can only be described as an ethereal mist.

Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in Guatemala, where the highest and most active volcanoes in the Americas reside outside of the Andes. Take the 3,976-meter behemoth volcán Acatenango, for example. Having hiked various igneous marvels from the humble Black Butte in Oregon to Africa's towering Mount Kenya, this to me constitutes one of the most beautiful and rewarding volcanic destinations on Earth.

After an initial two-hour hike through farmland, the trail up Acatenango takes you into a beautiful cloud forest. Imagine trekking through lush jungle foliage enveloped in what can only be described as an ethereal mist.

The topography changes dramatically as you exit the timberline atop a black, barren mountain of volcanic scree (loose pebbles). You might imagine the scene ripped straight from the pages of a 1960s sci-fi novella.

The topography of Acatenango changes dramatically as you exit the timberline.



**ike through farmland, the trail up Acatenango
cloud forest. Imagine trekking through lush jungle
can only be described as an ethereal mist.**



Summiting from the north, “Purgatory Path” rewards exhausted glimpse of Acatenango’s sister volcano, Fuego. Seeing the two g by side, you immediately realize why these geological structures



**hikers with their first
gloriously standing side
s are so utterly incredible.**



View from Purgatory Path

On a clear day, look to the northwest and you'll see Lake Atitlán, a body of water so beautiful that Aldous Huxley once described it as, "really, too much of a good thing." To the east you can see the colonial city of La Antigua Guatemala, and to the south is the vast Pacific Ocean. Satisfied? Don't be, because Acatenango has saved the best for last.

Summiting from the north, "Purgatory Path" rewards exhausted hikers with their first glimpse of Acatenango's sister volcano, Fuego. Seeing the two gloriously standing side by side, you immediately realize why these geological structures are so utterly incredible.

Those who have witnessed a volcanic eruption firsthand will tell you that the sight strikes a primeval chord within the human psyche. Fuego in particular sparks your imagination to time travel back some 8,500 years to the collapse of its ancestral Meseta volcano, or to 1524 when record keeping on its activity first began.



It's a sight to behold! Acatenango gives you ringside seats to the show

To give you some perspective, Fuego's eruption in 2012 lasted nearly two weeks, spew...
During a second explosion in 2015, one lava flow traveled 1.6 km south, and another...
and train sounds audible up to 12 km away.”

Volcanic explosions of this magnitude happen sporadically, of course. However, minor...
ringside seats to the show, it is a perfect window into that other world. •

Those who have witnessed a volcanic eruption firsthand will tell yo...



Night time on the volcano

© INSIVUMEH

ing molten rock and an ash plume that rose 7 kilometers into the Earth's stratosphere. 600 m west. It was reported by INSIVUMEH that "the eruption produced rumbling

er ones can occur multiple times per hour. It's a sight to behold! Acatenango gives you

u that the sight strikes a primeval chord within the human psyche.

My Saddest Pleasures: 50 Years on the Road - First Stop, Guatemala

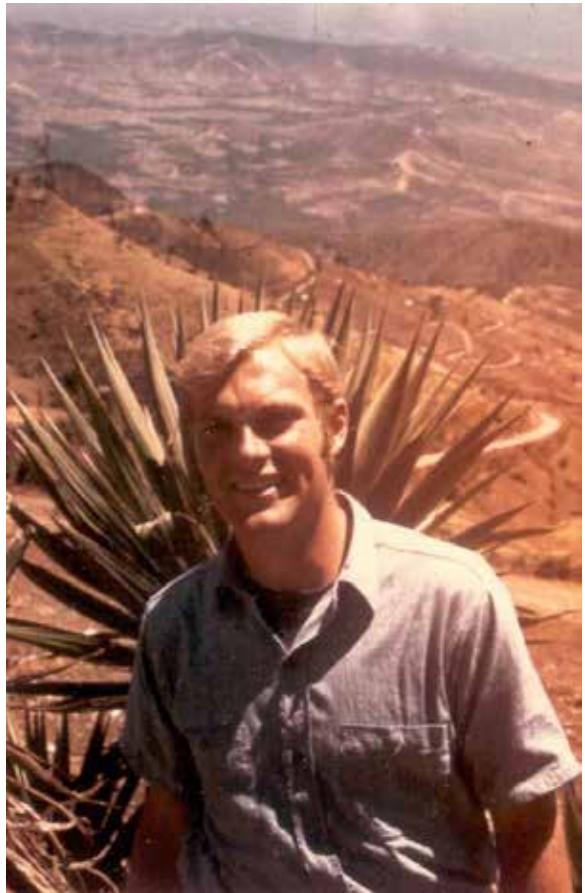
Part of the Yin and Yang of Travel Series

By Mark D. Walker

Guatemala: First Stop on my Global Sojourn (Trekking in the Peace Corps)

My global travels started at twenty-one years of age in Ponce, on the lush tropical island of Puerto Rico, where, in 1971, the Peace Corps sent me to learn Spanish, live with a local family and work, in preparation for my service as a volunteer in Guatemala. In Ponce, I was placed in a comfortable middle-class family with another Peace Corps Volunteer who already understood Spanish. Instead of counting myself lucky, I complained to my trainers that I hadn't joined the Peace Corps to live in a comfortable home. Within a few days, I was shipped off to one of the toughest barrios in the city, Punto Bravo.

Initially, I felt isolated since I didn't even speak rudimentary Spanish, but my neighbors soon introduced me to the



entire lexicon of dirty words—profanity would become my linguistic specialty. I learned to pick up the local population’s foul words and the innumerable slang terms they used to communicate, e.g., *Miercoles* could mean “Wednesday” in one country and “shit” in another. This would become especially helpful in Guatemala, where the *modismos* (expressions) are a rich mixture of Spanish, English, and Mayan dialects. The villagers were always impressed that a gringo could learn their unique slang.

Christmas arrived after only a few months of training, and I turned down an invitation from the host family of another volunteer to join them on their yacht destined for Saint Thomas. Most reasonable volunteers would jump at any opportunity to relax on exotic Caribbean Island beaches. Still, I turned it down to experience the holiday in the barrio and to continue learning Spanish (or a facsimile of it).

I participated in the traditional processions celebrating the holy pilgrimage to Bethlehem by walking from house to small house and singing traditional songs with guitar accompaniment. I didn’t understand the lyrics, but I knew what Christmas was, so I caught on quickly. Traditional food included *Lechon* (pork stuffed with rice and cooked underground until the meat

falls off the bones). Together with red beans, this would become my favorite local dish. Also, the families we visited offered local liquor. Although my memories are fuzzy, I remember having a good old time, and my appreciation of salsa and Caribbean music has stuck with me.

My next stop was Liberia, Costa Rica, in the state of Guanacaste in the northern part of the country, where I’d begin agricultural training and continue language training. I enjoyed these tropical wonderlands and looked forward to reaching my ultimate destination, Guatemala, The Land of Eternal Spring, with an average temperature of 75 degrees. Who could ask for anything more?

I chose an isolated work site in Guatemala to avoid English speakers (and Spanish speakers, it turned out). I brought a good array of short-sleeved cotton shirts, so I was surprised when my bus ride upcountry from the capital passed large herds of grazing sheep next to broad, sweeping wheat fields, and the dropping temperatures could only be called “brisk.”

When we arrived in Quetzaltenango, the Mayan highlands capital, at 7,600 feet, I realized that this part of the country was anything but tropical. I purchased a few sweaters at the local market while changing buses. Late that afternoon and several “chicken buses”

later, I arrived in Ixchiguán, located close to the Mexican border on a 10,000-foot plateau, making it the highest town in Central America. It was surrounded by strangely-shaped mountains and hills, with streams that meandered through alpine forests and tundra-like “quasi-páramo” grasslands.



Outside of Ixchiguán

The surrounding area looked like a moonscape: barren, rocky, and inhospitable to any form of life. The mountains were part of the Cuchumatanes, which, in turn, were part of the Sierra Madres. This volcanic mountain range included some of the isthmus’s highest volcanoes, Tacaná and Tajumulco, at 13,320 feet and 13,845 feet. Not precisely the tropical wonderland I was expecting! Months later, I’d learn that the Peace Corps Volunteer who did the “site survey” had never actually visited the community, so it was a case of the blind leading the blind.

Upon disembarking from the bus in Ixchiguán, I entered a community enveloped in a thick, cold mist. After asking around, I figured out where the municipal building was and found several low-level officials who didn’t seem to expect me at all—or maybe they didn’t understand my broken, pathetic Spanish since Mam was their first language. Eventually, I confirmed that nobody had been informed of my arrival or the nature of the work I was to do (fertilizer experiments).

The officials showed me to a room down the hall, where I spent the next five nights—freezing. The room had a flimsy cot but no windows, no electricity, and heat source other than a few candles I had for light. The frame around the entry door was filled with holes, which provided an effective, though superfluous, air ventilation system. I learned that Guatemala is much more than a “tropical” country and culturally and linguistically more diverse than I could imagine. I also realized I’d have a lot of work to do before I could function effectively and help anyone.

Eventually, I’d move several hours to the south of Ixchiguán to live and work in the village of Calapté, which was at a lower altitude, warmer, and where the locals wore European-style clothes and spoke Spanish. One morning after my first year as a volunteer, I awoke with a

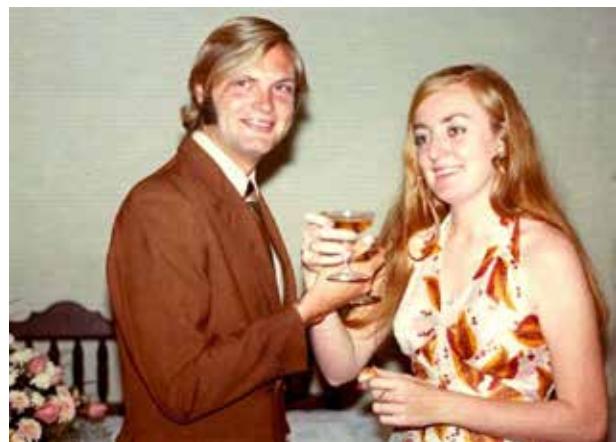
horrendous stomach cramp. I was sweating profusely and only semiconscious. I didn't have the strength to get out of bed, let alone walk the forty-five minutes uphill to the only daily bus that passed by. Peace Corps staff had previously assured me that if I ever got ill or had an accident, I'd be medevacked in a helicopter, which sounded good at the time. However, lying very sick in my bed, I remembered that the local telegraph system was down, and the only phone in the community didn't work. I was up the proverbial creek.



Doña Martha in her kitchen in Calapté, San Marcos

Fortunately, when I didn't turn up for breakfast, Doña Martha, who was like a second mother, came looking for me with two friends and found me in bed in a daze. They gave me a series of herbal drinks and the indigenous wisdom of these three women saved my life. Within three days, I was hiking up the hill to catch the bus to the Peace Corps headquarters in Guatemala City.

My medical condition was too risky to allow me to remain in such a remote village, so the Peace Corps staff sent me to San Jeronimo, Baja Verapaz, closer to more reliable communication systems and potential evacuation roads. Shortly after my arrival, my eyes locked onto a strawberry blond girl who, it turned out, was visiting her father's small horse ranch nearby.



Mark and Ligia toasting to a new life together.

I was smitten at first sight, but like a dumb gringo, I wasn't sure how to proceed with this pretty girl. Luckily, a Guatemalan friend from my new village made the introduction. Her name was Ligia, and she agreed to have coffee with me, and the rest is history, as they say. So, these initial trials and tribulations, plus the horrendous stomach pains and the amoebas that caused them, ironically and serendipitously led me to the love of my life.

Taking Donors to the Far Reaches of the World

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.

—Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*

City, Oklahoma, donor tours were essential for our major donor strategy. Over the years, I led groups in several programs of World Neighbors, Food for the Hungry, and MAP International throughout Latin America and Asia.

The five stories that follow reflect how the beguiling randomness, disappointments, and challenges of travel in remote, far-off places can affect everyone and are a study on how to avert potential travel disasters.

Donor trips are a very tricky business. My primary focus always was on the donors. Still, I also had to negotiate and work effectively with local field staff, whose responsibility was the communities they supported and, to a large degree, protected. Their job was to strengthen the local group's capabilities to solve problems and determine the future of their communities, while my goal was to engage critical donors and offer them an opportunity to meet the field staff so that they not only understood the work but also supported the activities that most motivated them.

Another challenge in bringing donors to overseas work sites is keeping everyone healthy when almost any local water or food can lead to severe intestinal problems. Some local ailments, like amoebas or malaria, can have long-lasting health



Donor tour of Rotarians in Cochabamba, Bolivia

By my early 40s, I had been a senior director for several international development agencies. It was my job to engage top and potential top donors and offer them an opportunity to see first-hand the work they supported. As a Senior Director of Fundraising for World Neighbors, a Christian-based, grassroots development agency with headquarters in Oklahoma

implications. Yet, in protecting your donors, you had to do so without insulting local hosts. Overall, donor tours are worth the effort, as these trips impact the worldview and future giving of the participants, although leading them is not for the faint of heart.

Introducing Donors to the Highlands of Guatemala



In my late 40s as a senior director of Food for the Hungry (FHI), I led several groups of child sponsors, plus their children in some cases, and Foundation board members, to the Departments Quiché and Alta Verapaz in Guatemala. Twenty years before these tours, I had helped set up a local indigenous foundation in San Andres Sajcabaja in Quiché, so I knew the area had some of the most horrendous roads winding through the Cuchumatanes mountains.

Large trucks hauled loads of workers to the south coast during the rainy season to harvest coffee. They would put chains on the back four tires to enhance traction, but the chains and the weight of the trucks destroyed the roads. I also knew the health dangers involved in traveling to this part of Guatemala. We almost lost our middle daughter after she contracted amoebas while living with us on a project farm I had helped establish.

Since the 1980s, the area was also the center of thirteen years of violence, with the local Ixil-speaking indigenous population caught between leftist guerrillas and right-wing death squads. Some 15,000 had been killed and thousands more displaced. I came across drawings of FHI-sponsored children, which depicted helicopters and planes dropping napalm and bombs on their communities. This happened, and it traumatized the local population, especially children.

This was not an area for the casual tourist, but FHI's programs were excellent, and we were all impressed by the dedication of the staff who coordinated our visits. At no point did we ever feel that we might be in danger. After many years of doing this, I understood the importance of including children on these tours, as they represented the next generation of philanthropists. Also, many parents wanted

to expose their children to how others lived around the world.

So, in March of 1997, I took Bill Williams and two of his daughters, fifteen-year-old Sarah and eight-year-old Emily, to Guatemala. My associate, John Scola, also invited John and Jeanette Tornquist from Illinois, generous and committed supporters. We flew on two small Cessna planes from Guatemala City to Santa María Nebaj in the Ixil Triangle of the Department of Quiché.

A Hunger Corps volunteer, Jodi Johnson, provided a program overview when we arrived. The Hunger Corps was like a Christian Peace Corps organized by FHI. Volunteers made a two-year commitment. After Jodi's program overview and visits to water projects close by, it had clouded over, and I realized the two planes would not be returning due to inclement weather, a frequent occurrence.

I often traveled in small planes to the San Andres Sacatepequez area when I worked there years before, and sometimes I had to wait over a week until the clouds parted long enough for the pilots to return. But this timeline wouldn't work for donors who have other plans, so I worked with our local staff to identify other transportation options and finally commandeered an old "chicken" bus (a former school bus painted with

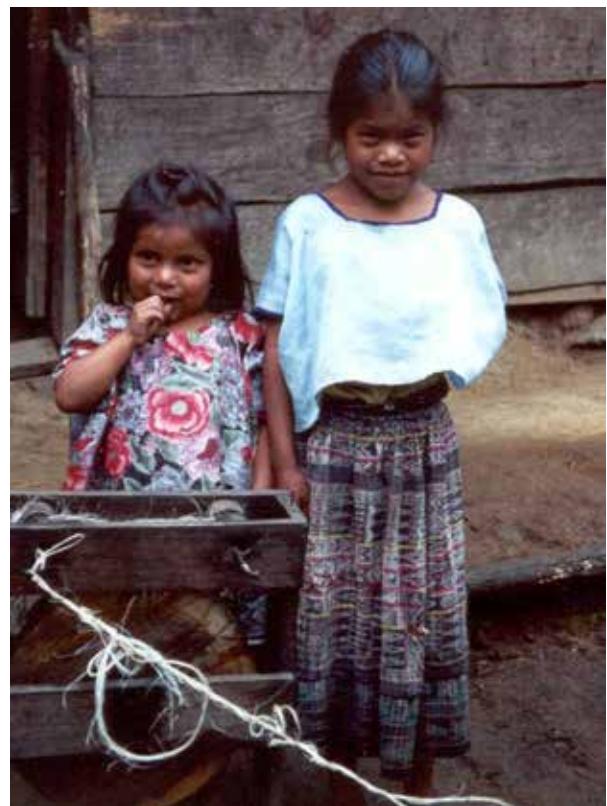
local scenes) and a driver and our little band headed out over a dusty, bumpy road from Nebaj through Uspantan, next to the Chixoy River, and eventually to our destination, Cobán, the departmental capital of Alta Verapaz. We had to leave the windows down because the bus had no air conditioning, allowing a steady stream of dust to enter. Seven hours later, covered in a fine layer of dust, shaken up, and in a daze, we finally reached Cobán.

After a quick orientation in Cobán from Patricia Cuba, the Country Director for FHI, we headed out in Land Cruisers to the community of Chiguorrán, where FHI supported a local school program. Classes there were taught in the Mayan language of Poqomchi'. During recess, little Emily distributed balloons and played with the students all about her age. Then the Tornquists and Emily showed the children how to blow bubbles. They all were laughing and having a good time together. The language barrier didn't seem to be an issue.

FHI pairs up a U.S. sponsor, who pays about \$21 a month to provide support such as education and food to a child in a program country equivalent to Guatemala. The Williamses' encounter with the child they sponsored, Carmela, was the trip's highlight. We hiked out twenty minutes from the vehicle to Carmela's

house, which was traditional for the area: a thatch-roofed kitchen in the back and a wood plank dwelling in the front. Firewood was piled up on the front porch. Several coffee and fruit trees, including bananas, surrounded the house. The animals, some chickens, and a few piglets were kept behind the kitchen area. The house had a cement floor and plastic sheets separated the interior into rooms.

Initially, Carmela's parents couldn't find her because she was hiding in the corn-field until the foreigners (us) left. When her father finally brought her to us, she



Carmela and her little sister outside of Chiguorrán, Alta Verapaz

wore a simple white blouse and a blue skirt, with plastic sandals on her feet. She was shorter than Emily's shoulder, although she was probably the same age. I took a picture of Bill with the two girls and another with Carmela and her sister. I didn't see any windows in their house, which would explain why it seemed so dark inside, even during the day.

Carmela's father showed us around, and then we all sat on the front porch, and Sarah and Emily began asking questions about how they lived: What do you grow? Why doesn't the kitchen have a chimney? How does Carmela get to school? (Walking 1 ½ hour per day). Where will Carmela go after she graduates from the local school? What do you eat for dinner? Where's the bathroom? What was the round white structure in the back? (The girls were able to see the traditional steam bath that uses hot rocks and water to clean off, like our shower.) Carmela and her father responded to these questions and asked a few of their own, like where did Sarah and Emily live? Eventually, we had to say our goodbyes, and we brought the Williamses back to Cobán.

Despite the change in flight plans, rough roads, and cloudy, very long days, everyone in the group did fine. They had seen an isolated part of the country, which wasn't that different from other parts of Guatemala, and they had met a local family up close and per-

sonal. None would be the same after this experience, and the Williams children would later become serious philanthropists, just like their daddy. Regarding Carmela, that's more difficult to say, as the sponsorship program discontinues when the children graduate from primary school, so FHI often loses track of their whereabouts.

Obviously, after fifty years on the road, much of it in and around Guatemala, I was still capable of some real travel gaffes. And yet, we're almost at our best and learn the most when we miscalculate and have to depend on the locals (and our wits) to figure a way out of the mess. And Theroux's quip proved so true, "Travel is the saddest of pleasures as it gave me eyes," no matter one's age. And yes, Moritz Thomsen was right, "life is a bitch and then you die," but neither of us would have had it any other way.

About the author

(MillionMileWalker.com) Mark Walker was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala, 1971-1973, working on fertilizer experiments with small farmers in the Highlands.

Over the next 40 years, he managed or raised funds for many international groups, including Food for the Hungry, Make-A-Wish International, and as CEO of Hagar USA. He wrote about those experiences in Different Latitudes: My Life in the Peace

Corps and Beyond. He is a contributing writer for Literary Traveler and Revue Magazine: Uncovering the Art of Francisco Goldman, Tschiffely's Epic Equestrian Ride; The Future of the Peace Corps in Guatemala; Maya Gods & Monsters; The Making of the Kingdom of Mescal; Luis Argueta – Telling the stories of Guatemalan Immigrants; Luis Argueta: Guatemalan Filmmaker, Recipient of a Global Citizen Award; Traveling in Tandem with a Chapina; Victor Montejo's Dream of a Secure Maya Community; and Traveling Through the Land of the Eternal Spring: A Literary Journey. He's producing a documentary set in Guatemala, Trouble in the Highlands. His wife and three children were born in Guatemala.

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Walker's new book, "**My Saddest Pleasures: 50 Years on the Road**" will be available in May/June 2022.

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The screenshot shows the Facebook profile page for Revue magazine. The profile picture is a large red square with a white stylized 'R'. The page name is 'Revue' and it lists 'Gremiromagazine' as the page category. The bio reads 'Welcome To the January ISSUE of the DIGITAL INTERACTIVE REVUE'. A large image of a tablet displaying the magazine's cover is prominently featured. The timeline shows several posts, including one from 'Revue' itself featuring a photo of a person in traditional Guatemalan dress. Other posts include a link to 'Revue.com' and a post about the magazine's 25th anniversary.

IN MEMORIAM

Kenneth R. Veronda (Dec. 4, 1940 - April 9, 2022)

Ken was not only a consistent and welcome contributer to Revue magazine over the years, he was a good friend of ours and of many Antigua residents. His community service had a positive impact on so many. He will be dearly missed. You can find his series of essays on our website. Here is one of our favorites...

SENSUOUS GUATEMALA by Ken Veronda

Guatemala's Season of Aromas

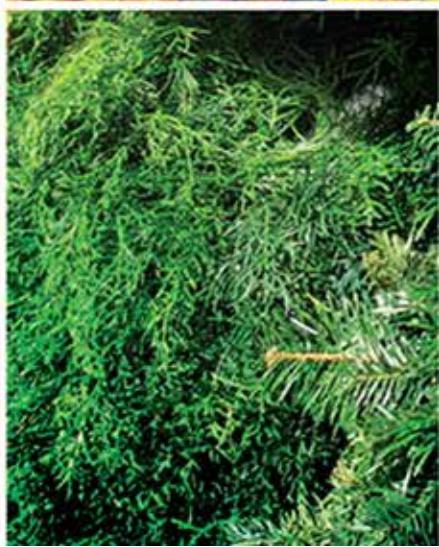
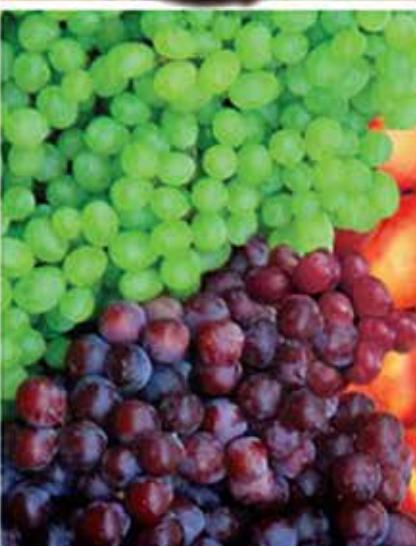
The spice and smoke aromas, the sweet and pungent, hot cocoas and burned punk, fruit punches and sugary eggnogs, odors that harmonize with all we're seeing, hearing, tasting, touching.

Cedar and chocolate, cinnamon and corn, breathe deep and enjoy this holiday time of rich aromas in the air. The pungent pine needles on market floors, the chimineas providing light smoke on chilly nights, the cups of chocolate ready to welcome visitors and especially seekers of shelter for the holy family during the nine nights of traditional posada travelers going door to door.

These and other familiar odors serve as backdrops for all the other sensual holiday experiences, the sights of the nacimientos (nativity scenes) in homes and churches, the sounds of carols and bells, the taste of tamales stuffed with fruits or meats, the touch of abrazos (hugs) as families gather from afar.

The spice and smoke aromas, the sweet and pungent, hot cocoas and burned punk, fruit punches and sugary eggnogs, odors that harmonize with all we're seeing, hearing, tasting, touching through December's holidays.

More than 20 different ethnic groups scatter across Guatemala, each with some special holiday traditions. The Spanish brought Christian ceremonies to blend in with the ancient incense and pine odors of the year-ending rituals as the days grew short and nights



dark and long. Then German farmers came with more traditions of the holiday, bringing Christmas trees into homes to permeate the holiday air with their special smell. Chocolate and coffee became important products, adding more rich aromas to the season.

Then comes Christmas Eve, families and friends gathering as midnight approaches and towns celebrate the holy birth with a barrage of firecrackers and fireworks lighting the skies and assaulting the ears. The smells of burned fireworks becomes a backdrop to family prayers after midnight, then to children opening presents appearing under the tree from the Christ child.

Enjoy every aspect of this sensuous time, and be sure to note the many distinctive and delightful aromas of December in Guatemala. R

REVUE PHOTO CONTEST

JUNE 2022

We invite you to participate in our
MONTHLY PHOTO CONTEST for
June 2022 with the theme:
ADVENTURES IN GUATEMALA

Please send ONE (1) HIGH RES
photo with caption/location and
your name & website for the credit line
to: photos@revuemag.com

More information at: revuemag.com
Submissions entered by the 15th of
May will be eligible.

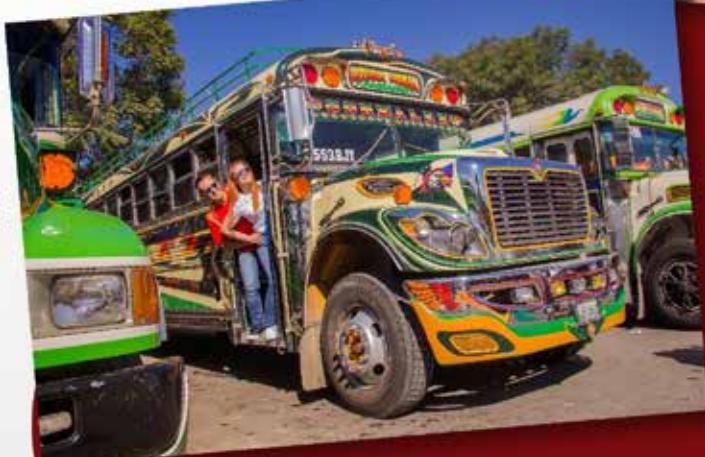
;Prizes are Back on both categories!

Q100 1st Place Popular Vote

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Q100 1st Place Judges Vote

Q100 2nd Place Judges Vote





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Enviar (1) foto en **ALTA RESOLUCIÓN**
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**¡Los premios están de vuelta
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González, Debra Edwards and Abi de Carlo.

1st Place Judges Vote "Emprendedores / Entrepreneurs"
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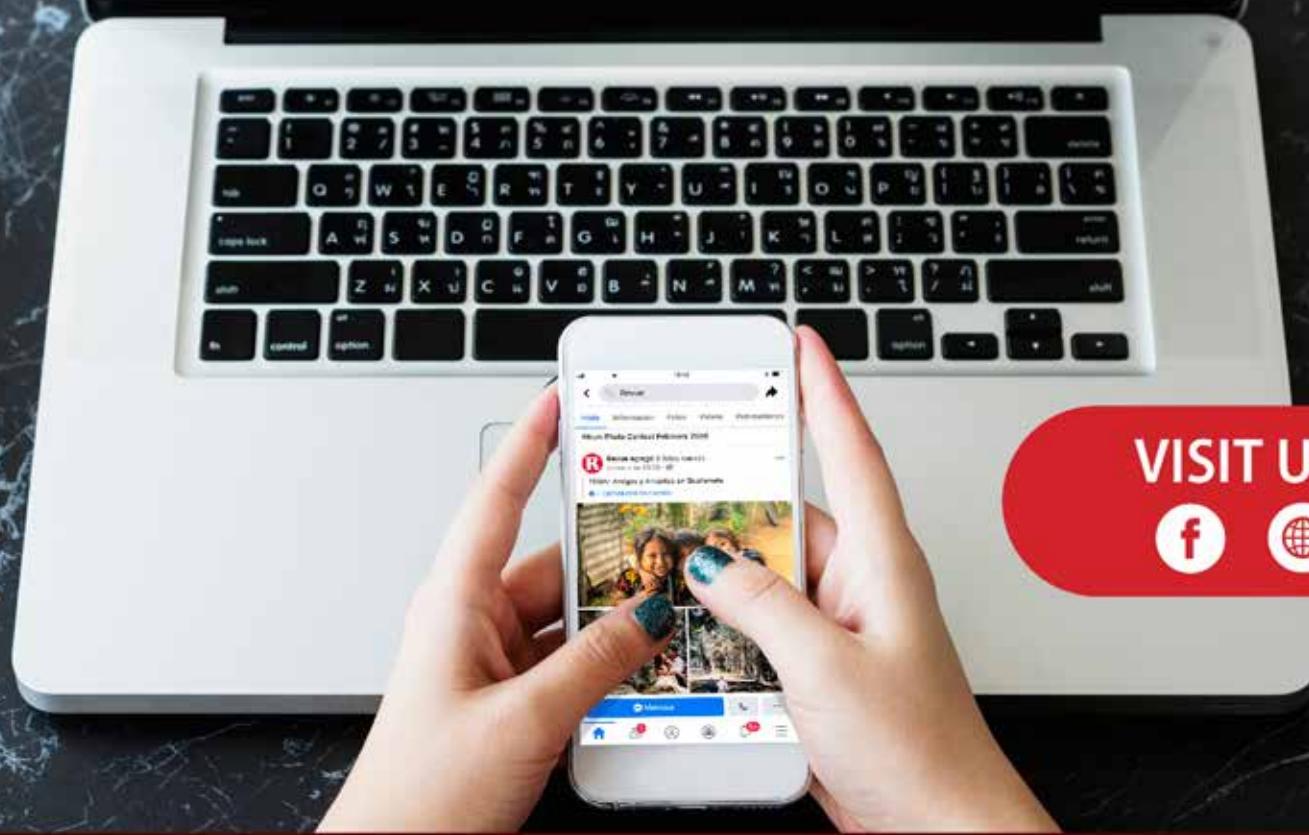
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