

Exploring Sustainability in Guatemala

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There are only a few places in the world that offer an exciting mix of ancient and modern cultures with an incredible diversity of natural resources like Guatemala.

Here we feature some of the most beautiful cultural and natural attractions the country has to offer.

Antigua is a beautiful colonial city with cobblestone streets, colorful houses, interesting museums, colonial churches, and an active nightlife. There are also many tour operators in the city that offer activities like hiking, mountain biking, and most excitingly, tours to climb one of the nearby volcanoes. Chichicastenango is home to an indigenous market where you can immerse yourself in the local culture, find authentic crafts, and improve your bargaining skills. After wandering the busy markets all day long, the nearby Lake Atitlan offers a welcome rest, providing picturesque views of the tranquil lake ringed by three different volcanoes. One of the most famous highlights in Guatemala is the ancient site of Tikal, home to spectacularly well-preserved Mayan ruins. The surrounding rainforests of the Maya Biosphere Reserve are teeming with exotic wildlife such as jaguars, scarlet macaws, monkeys, and more. The nearby colorful village of Flores offers a Caribbean climate and atmosphere; for an even deeper immersion in the Caribbean culture, the town of Livingston can be reached on a beautiful boat trip across the Rio Dulce.



Sustainable tourism has recently gained importance in Guatemala, and the Rainforest Alliance has been working with partners like the GREAT Green Deal program, the Guatemala Tourism Board (INGUAT), the Chamber of Tourism, the Universidad del Istmo, and the Guatemalan Exporter's Association to promote Guatemala as a sustainable tourism destination, train business owners in best management practices, and promote sustainable hotels and tour operators to travelers. On September 28th, the Rainforest Alliance will launch the Tour Operators Promoting Sustainability, or TOPS, a network of Rainforest Alliance Verified tour operators from Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

As a result of all of this hard work, we are excited to feature 16 Rainforest Alliance Verified and 12 GREAT Green Deal certified businesses in SustainableTrip.org.

Here we feature three fun and beautiful hotels that meet the Rainforest Alliance's strict standards for sustainability:

Hotel Villa Colonial

Located in the picturesque center of Antigua along a traditional cobblestone street, this colonial-style hotel offers 54 beautiful rooms and is highly committed to sustainability. Cornerstones of the hotel's sustainability approach are socially responsible environmental conservation, promoting the development of local communities, and supporting local cultures.



Porta Hotel del Lago

As a member of the Porta Hotels chain, this hotel is located on the beautiful Lake Atitlan and framed by the three impressive volcanoes. The local community is very much involved in and supported by the hotel as it promotes local handicrafts, businesses and services, hiring and training of local staff, fostering understanding and respect for indigenous cultures and customs, and promoting visits to local tourism sites and communities.



Takalik Maya Lodge

This former coffee farm was converted into a hotel to support the 22 families that live and work on the farm. In the process, 25 acres (10 hectares) of forest were dedicated as a private natural reserve. Meanwhile, 29 local residents are employed at the hotel and benefit from a higher standard of living. The hotel moreover promotes tours to the Takalik Abaj Archeological National Park and is a member of the Latin American **Community Tourism Network**.

