In general, information available as of 1 January 2003 was used in the preparation of The World Factbook 2003.

This page was last updated on 18 December, 2003.
Background: Guatemala was freed of Spanish colonial rule in 1821. During the second half of the 20th century, it experienced a variety of military and civilian governments as well as a 36-year guerrilla war. In 1996, the government signed a peace agreement formally ending the conflict, which had led to the death of more than 100,000 people and had created some 1 million refugees.

Geography

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

Geographic coordinates: 15 30 N, 90 15 W

Map references: Central America and the Caribbean

Area: 108,890 sq km (total), 460 sq km (water), 108,430 sq km (land)

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Tennessee

Land boundaries: 1,687 km (total), Belize 266 km, El Salvador 203 km, Honduras 256 km, Mexico 962 km

Coastline: 400 km

Maritime claims: continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation, exclusive economic zone: 200 NM, territorial sea: 12 NM

Climate: tropical; hot, humid in lowlands; cooler in highlands

Terrain: mostly mountains with narrow coastal plains and rolling limestone plateau (Peten)

Elevation extremes: lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m, highest point: Volcan Tajumulco 4,211 m

Natural resources: petroleum, nickel, rare woods, fish, chicle, hydropower

Land use: arable land: 12.54%, permanent crops: 5.03%, other: 82.43% (1998 est.)
Irrigated land: 1,250 sq km (1998 est.)

Natural hazards: numerous volcanoes in mountains, with occasional violent earthquakes; Caribbean coast extremely susceptible to hurricanes and other tropical storms

Environment - current issues: deforestation in the Peten rainforest; soil erosion; water pollution


signed, but not ratified: Antarctic-Environmental Protocol

Geography - note: no natural harbors on west coast

People

Guatemala

Population: 13,909,384 (July 2003 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 42.9% (male 3,052,658; female 2,908,428)
15-64 years: 53.8% (male 3,779,688; female 3,706,315)
65 years and over: 3.3% (male 215,653; female 246,642) (2003 est.)

Median age:

total: 18.3 years
male: 18.1 years
female: 18.5 years (2002)

Population growth rate: 2.66% (2003 est.)

Birth rate: 35.05 births/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Death rate: 6.78 deaths/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Net migration rate: -1.71 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Sex ratio:
at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.05 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.02 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.87 male(s)/female
total population: 1.03 male(s)/female (2003 est.)

Infant mortality rate:
total: 37.92 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 37.09 deaths/1,000 live births (2003 est.)
male: 38.72 deaths/1,000 live births
Life expectancy at birth: total population: 65.23 years
male: 64.31 years
female: 66.21 years (2003 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.67 children born/woman (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 1% (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 67,000 (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 5,200 (2001 est.)

Nationality: noun: Guatemalan(s) adjective: Guatemalan

Ethnic groups: Mestizo (mixed Amerindian-Spanish or assimilated Amerindian - in local Spanish called Ladino), approximately 55%, Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian, approximately 43%, whites and others 2%

Religions: Roman Catholic, Protestant, indigenous Mayan beliefs

Languages: Spanish 60%, Amerindian languages 40% (23 officially recognized Amerindian languages, including Quiche, Cakchiquel, Kekchi, Mam, Garifuna, and Xinca)

Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write total population: 70.6% male: 78% female: 63.3% (2003 est.)

Government


Government type: constitutional democratic republic

Capital: Guatemala

Administrative divisions: 22 departments (departamentos, singular - departamento); Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Chimaltenango, Chiquimula, El Progreso, Escuintla, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Izabal, Jalapa, Jutiapa, Peten, Quetzaltenango, Quiche, Retalhuleu, Sacatepequez, San Marcos, Santa Rosa, Solola, Suchitepequez, Totonicapan, Zacapa
Independence: 15 September 1821 (from Spain)

National holiday: Independence Day, 15 September (1821)

Constitution: 31 May 1985, effective 14 January 1986; note - suspended 25 May 1993 by former President SERRANO; reinstated 5 June 1993 following ouster of president; amended November 1993

Legal system: civil law system; judicial review of legislative acts; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal (active duty members of the armed forces may not vote and are restricted to their barracks on election day)

Executive branch: President Alfonso Antonio PORTILLO Cabrera (since 14 January 2000); Vice President Juan Francisco REYES Lopez (since 14 January 2000); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government; Council of Ministers appointed by the president

cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the president

elections: president elected by popular vote for a four-year term; election last held 7 November 1999; runoff held 26 December 1999 (next to be held NA November 2003)

election results: Alfonso Antonio PORTILLO Cabrera elected president; percent of vote - Alfonso Antonio PORTILLO Cabrera (FRG) 68%, Oscar BERGER Perdomo (PAN) 32%

Legislative branch: unicameral Congress of the Republic or Congreso de la Republica (140 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

elections: last held 9 November 2003 (next to be held NA November 2007)

note: for the 9 November 2003 election, the number of congressional seats increased to 140 from 113

election results: percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - GANA 49, FRG 42, UNE 33, PAN 16

Judicial branch: Supreme Court of Justice or Corte Suprema de Justicia (thirteen members serve concurrent five-year terms and elect a president of the Court each year from among their number; the president of the Supreme Court of Justice also supervises trial judges around the country, who are named to five-year terms); Constitutional Court or Corte de Constitucionalidad (five judges are elected for concurrent five-year terms by Congress, each serving one year as president of the Constitutional Court; one is elected by Congress, one elected by the Supreme Court of Justice, one appointed by the President, one elected by Superior Counsel of Universidad San Carlos de Guatemala, and one by Colegio de Abogados)

Political parties and leaders: Authentic Integral Development or DIA [Eduardo SUGER]; Democratic Union or UD [Rodolfo PAIZ Andrade]; Grand National Alliance or GANA [leader NA]; Green
Political pressure groups and leaders:
- Agrarian Owners Group or UNAGRO
- Alliance Against Impunity or AAI
- Committee for Campesino Unity or CUC
- Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Associations or CACIF
- Mutual Support Group or GAM

International organization participation:
- BCIE, CACM, ECLAC, FAO, G-24, G-77, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFCC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO (correspondent), ITU, LAES, LAIA (observer), NAM, OAS, OPANAL, PCA, RG, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNU, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WTO, WToO

Diplomatic representation in the US:
- chief of mission: Ambassador Antonio Fernando ARENALES Forno
- chancery: 2220 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20008
- consulate(s) general: Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and San Francisco
- FAX: [1] (202) 745-1908
- telephone: [1] (202) 745-4952

Diplomatic representation from the US:
- chief of mission: Ambassador John Randle HAMILTON
- embassy: 7-01 Avenida Reforma, Zone 10, Guatemala City
- mailing address: APO AA 34024
- telephone: [502] 331-1541/55
- FAX: [502] 334-8477

Flag description:
- three equal vertical bands of light blue (hoist side), white, and light blue with the coat of arms centered in the white band; the coat of arms includes a green and red quetzal (the national bird) and a scroll bearing the inscription LIBERTAD 15 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 1821 (the original date of independence from Spain) all superimposed on a pair of crossed rifles and a pair of crossed swords and framed by a wreath

Economy - overview:
The agricultural sector accounts for about one-fourth of GDP, two-thirds of exports, and half of the labor force. Coffee, sugar, and bananas are the main products. Former President ARZU (1996-2000) worked to implement a program of economic liberalization and political modernization. President PORTILLO has continued the...
liberalization program but with more sporadic results. The 1996 signing of the peace accords, which ended 36 years of civil war, removed a major obstacle to foreign investment, but numerous corruption scandals associated with the PORTILLO administration have dampened investor confidence. The distribution of income remains highly unequal, with perhaps 75% of the population below the poverty line. Ongoing challenges include increasing the government revenues, negotiating further assistance from international donors, upgrading both government and private financial operations, and narrowing the trade deficit. A free trade agreement between the US and Central American countries promises greater access to US and neighboring markets.

GDP: purchasing power parity - $53.2 billion (2002 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 2.2% (2002 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - $3,900 (2002 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:
- agriculture: 23%
- industry: 20%
- services: 57% (2001 est.)

Population below poverty line: 75% (2002 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:
- lowest 10%: 1.6%
- highest 10%: 46% (1998)

Distribution of family income - Gini index: 55.8 (1998)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 8.1% (2002 est.)

Labor force: 4.2 million (1999 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: agriculture 50%, industry 15%, services 35% (1999 est.)

Unemployment rate: 7.5% (1999 est.)

Budget:
- revenues: $2.3 billion
- expenditures: $2.7 billion, including capital expenditures of $750 million (2002 est.)

Industries: sugar, textiles and clothing, furniture, chemicals, petroleum, metals, rubber, tourism

Industrial production growth rate: 4.1% (1999)

Electricity -
Electricity - production: 6.237 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - production by source:
fossil fuel: 51.9%
hydro: 35.2%
other: 12.9% (2001)
nuclear: 0%

Electricity - consumption: 5.559 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - exports: 336 million kWh (2001)

Electricity - imports: 95 million kWh (2001)

Oil - production: 21,080 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - consumption: 61,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - exports: NA (2001)

Oil - imports: NA (2001)

Oil - proved reserves: 263 million bbl (37257)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 1.543 billion cu m (37257)

Agriculture - products: sugarcane, corn, bananas, coffee, beans, cardamom; cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens

Exports: $2.7 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)

Exports - commodities: coffee, sugar, bananas, fruits and vegetables, cardamom, meat, apparel, petroleum, electricity

Exports - partners: US 58.7%, El Salvador 9.3%, Nicaragua 3.1% (2002)

Imports: $5.6 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)

Imports - commodities: fuels, machinery and transport equipment, construction materials, grain, fertilizers, electricity

Imports - partners: US 33.2%, Mexico 9.9%, South Korea 8.2%, El Salvador 5.7%, China 4% (2002)

Debt - external: $4.9 billion (2002 est.)
recipient: $250 million (2000 est.)
Currency: quetzal (GTQ), US dollar (USD), others allowed
Currency code: GTQ; USD
Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications  Guatemala

Telephones - main lines in use: 665,061 (June 2000)
Telephones - mobile cellular: 663,296 (September 2000)
Telephone system: general assessment: fairly modern network centered in the city of Guatemala
domestic: NA
international: connected to Central American Microwave System; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean)

Television broadcast stations: 26 (plus 27 repeaters) (1997)

Internet country code: .gt
Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 5 (2000)
Internet users: 200,000 (2002)

Transportation  Guatemala

Railways: total: 886 km
narrow gauge: 886 km 0.914-m gauge (2002)

Highways: total: 14,118 km
paved: 4,871 km (including 74 km of expressways)
unpaved: 9,247 km (1999)

Waterways: 990 km
note: 260 km navigable year round; additional 730 km navigable during highwater season
Pipelines:
- oil 480 km (2003)

Ports and harbors:
- Champerico, Puerto Barrios, Puerto Quetzal, San Jose, Santo Tomas de Castilla

Merchant marine:
- none (2002 est.)

Airports:
- 466 (2002)

Airports - with paved runways:
- total: 11
  - 2,438 to 3,047 m: 3
  - 1,524 to 2,437 m: 2
  - 914 to 1,523 m: 4
  - under 914 m: 2 (2002)

Airports - with unpaved runways:
- total: 455
  - 2,438 to 3,047 m: 1
  - 1,524 to 2,437 m: 9
  - 914 to 1,523 m: 115
  - under 914 m: 330 (2002)

Military

Military branches:
- Army, Navy (includes Marines), Air Force

Military manpower - military age:
- 18 years of age (2003 est.)

Military manpower - availability:
- males age 15-49: 3,320,077 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - fit for military service:
- males age 15-49: 2,167,270 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - reaching military age annually:
- males: 151,294 (2003 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure:
- $120 million (FY99)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:
- 0.6% (FY99)

Transnational Issues

Disputes - international:
- Guatemalan squatters continue to settle in Belize border region; OAS brokered
Differendum in 2002 creating small adjustment to land boundary, large Guatemalan maritime corridor in Caribbean, joint ecological park for disputed Sapodilla Cays, and substantial US-UK financial package, but agreement was not brought to popular referendum leaving Guatemalan claim to southern half of Belize intact

**Illicit drugs:**

major transit country for cocaine and heroin; minor producer of illicit opium poppy and cannabis for mostly domestic consumption; proximity to Mexico makes Guatemala a major staging area for drugs (cocaine and heroin shipments); money laundering is a serious problem; corruption is a major problem

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