

Name: _____



Fantastic Places of the World

Guatemala: The Magic of the Mayan World

I remember perfectly as if it were yesterday, the first time I saw a documentary about the Mayan world on television. Its great pyramids, its traditions, and its culture made me think about being an archaeologist when I was older.



I always imagined that it would be great to be the person who discovered a new Mayan city. So every time my birthday came, I asked my parents and grandparents to give me books about the Mayan world. I never imagined that on my fifteenth birthday, I would receive the most wonderful gift ever: a trip to Guatemala, the cradle of civilization in the Mayan world.



The country of Guatemala is in Central America, surrounded by countries such as Mexico, Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras. It is not an exceptionally large country, but it offers so many things that it is impossible not to fall in love with this beautiful place.

Its colorful markets are surprising, where ceramics and textiles occupy the highest sales positions. I love to eat the typical fruits of the country like suncillo, with its exquisite flavor and cheap prices. At just 8 quetzales (almost \$1), you can buy a small bag of rich fruit.





Also, in the markets, you can enjoy its extensive gastronomy, such as pepian with chicken and rice or chuchitos, which are like tamales. After an excellent meal, I intend to rest in its beautiful squares, having good chocolate or a delicious coffee. Let us not forget that in the past, for Guatemalans, cocoa was considered the food of the gods, hence its great value.

The people are very hospitable. They are open to greet the foreigner and treat him as a guest of honor. Many families hang the country's flag, with three vertical stripes of equal size, blue on the sides, and white in the center, next to the national coat of arms. The blue color of the flag is said to represent the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, while the white represents the purity and peace of the nation.

Even though the official language in Guatemala is Spanish, more than 20 different dialects are spoken. So, if you travel to the most remote villages, communication will be difficult.

The capital of Guatemala is Guatemala City. It is the largest in all of Central America. But, despite its large size, the city that most impressed me is Tikal, since it houses impressive Mayan ruins in the middle of a dense rain forest. These archaeological sites were declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco in 1979.

The buildings are made of limestone and wood, and their state of preservation is quite good. Curiously, much of the city is still buried, still undiscovered. I would love to be part of the team that unearthed it in the future.

I would love to see some of the four active volcanoes that it has: Pacaya, Santiaguito, Fuego, and Tacana. Of course, without getting too close, I so not want to get burned with its hot lava. I would also like to go to the shore of Lake Atitlan, considered one of the most beautiful on the planet and one of the deepest in Central America.





Its waters are said to be temperate at sunrise, so it would be amazing to start the day swimming in its waters.

Speaking of natural wealth, the quetzal is its national bird. This bird usually has bright plumage of various colors, highlighting reds and greens. As I said before, the quetzal is also the Guatemalan national currency. This is because, in ancient times, the Mayans used the feathers of these birds as currency to barter or exchange in markets and daily life.

The White Nun Orchid, Monja Blanca, is its national flower, and the ceiba tree is its national tree. It is quite common in different areas of the country. These trees grow to 3 meters wide, the equivalent of 10 people standing in a line together.

I cannot wait to fly to Guatemala and visit such a beautiful country. I think it is the best birthday gift I have ever received!



Name _____

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS



1. Look at the title of the text. Why do you think it says magic?
 - a. They have a magic school.
 - b. Many magicians live there.
 - c. They have volcanoes.
 - d. It is the cradle of the civilization for the Mayan world.

2. Circle the options that are true about Guatemala.
 - a. It is the cradle of the civilization for the Aztec world.
 - b. Quetzals are their national bird.
 - c. It is a volcanic country.
 - d. The official language is Mayan.



3. After reading the text, and if they let you visit Guatemala, what experiences would you like to try? Explain.

4. Draw lines to create correct sentences.

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| 1. Lake Atitlan | a. is an active volcano in Guatemala. |
| 2. The quetzal | b. is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. |
| 3. Pacaya | c. is the national flower. |
| 4. Tikal | d. is one of the deepest in Central America. |
| 5. The White Nun | e. is the national bird. |

5. Complete each idea with a sentence. Follow the example.

Example. Location: Guatemala is a country in Central America.

Flag: _____

Currency: _____

Language: _____

Gastronomy: _____

Mayan ruins: _____

6. Coffee is considered the drink of the gods.

- a. True.
- b. False.

7. What does the underlined word REMOTE mean in the text?

- a. nearby
- b. big
- c. little
- d. far away



8. In the text, he says that the main character would like to visit an active volcano without getting too close to it. Why?

- a. He can be burned with the ice.
- b. It is very high and hard to reach the top.
- c. The burning lava can scorch you.
- d. Quetzals scare him.

9. Why do you think much of the city of Tikal is still buried? Give justification for your answer.

10. Polysemic words are those that have different meanings. Quetzal is a polysemic word. What two meanings does it have?

a.

b.
