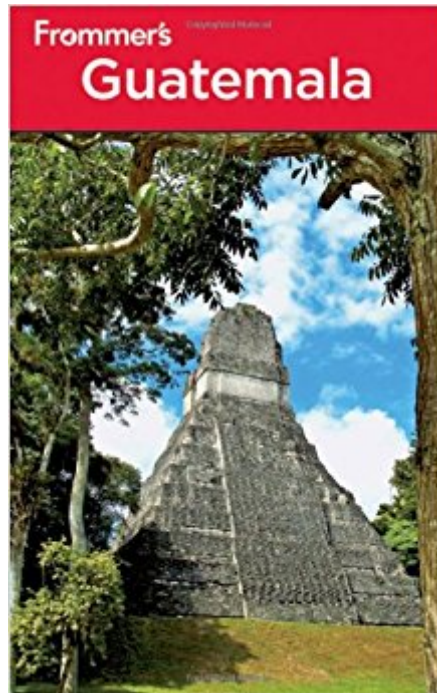




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Frommer's Guatemala (Frommer's Complete Guides)



Synopsis

Our author, a longtime resident of Central America, hits all the highlights, from Lake Atitlán to the Pacific coast. He's checked out all of Guatemala's fascinating regions, has visited the best hotels and restaurants in person, and offers authoritative, candid reviews that will help you find the choices that suit your tastes and budget. You'll also get up-to-the-minute coverage of shopping and nightlife; in-depth coverage of Maya archeological sites; extensive information about outdoor activities and hard-to-reach natural areas; and advice on planning country-wide itineraries. Frommer's Guatemala includes several pages of accurate, detailed maps, as well as all of the information you need to plan a successful trip.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Don't miss Antigua's striking Santa Catalina Arch, with its dramatic backdrop of Volcan de Agua. See chapter 6. Detailed maps throughout Exact prices, directions, opening hours, and other practical information Candid reviews of hotels and restaurants, plus sights, shopping, and nightlife Itineraries, walking tours, and trip-planning ideas Insider tips from local expert authors

Eliot Greenspan is a poet, journalist, and travel writer who took his backpack and typewriter the length of Mesoamerica before settling in Costa Rica in 1992. Since then, he has worked steadily as a travel writer, freelance journalist, and translator, and has continued his travels in the region. He is the author of Frommer's Belize, Frommer's Costa Rica, Frommer's Guatemala, Frommer's Ecuador, Costa Rica Day By Day and Costa Rica For Dummies,

as well as the Venezuela chapter in Frommer's South America.

Given that a few years ago Frommers led me on a great trip through Italy, I decided to try them again. I was sorely disappointed at the overall lack of information. After spending 5 weeks in Guatemala I feel almost more qualified to have written a guide than the 2011 edition. The maps of cities were unusable as they were too small, the information provided on tours/activities was so limited it was obvious the author had not taken the tour, and the number of listed hostals, hotels, and restaurants was so few that I was unable to offer my travel companions any input when planning our get-aways. My travel companions had the Rough Guide and Moon, and both had so much helpful information for each city and even for hostals that we used these instead of my Frommers. Either step it up Frommers or stick to Europe!

Given that this book was published so recently, I figured it would be the best buy for my May 2007 trip to Guatemala. My trip involved Antigua, Lake Atitlan, Tikal, and Guatemala City, so I had a good chance to use several sections of the book. Unfortunately, the book disappointed in many areas. For one thing, the book caters mainly to the very affluent tourist looking for comfort. (As a disclaimer, I should explain that I'm a young budget-traveling student.) The book features only the most gringo-rific hotels and restaurants (which happen to be the most expensive), and their "budget" options are not nearly the most budget-friendly options available. Their recommended tourist agencies are mainly Western-owned companies that charge Western prices, while locally owned travel agencies charge a fraction of the price for reasonable service. (e.g. US \$30-50 for a trip to climb Volcan Pacaya from Atitlan vs. \$5 from one of the many reasonable agencies near the main tourist area.) In the end, I ended up relying much more on word of mouth from friends in the area (and their guide books) for advice on lodging, dining, and transportation rather than the Frommer's Guide. The Tikal section was another disappointment. The "suggested tour" covers only a fraction of the sites available there, and the map is so poorly labeled that it is impossible to do the tour without a guide. The night before I explored the ruins at Tikal (which are fantastic!), I was reading my guide at my hotel restaurant. A woman sitting at a nearby table asked me what I thought of it. When I told her I had found it very disappointing, she nodded in agreement. "Good luck finding your way inside with that book," she told me, shaking her head. She ended up being right -- had I not met a group of travelers with a better map, there is no way I could have navigated the park with that guide. These are just a few of the problems with the book I had I can think of off the top of my head. Bottom line, this book is so superficial that it is much more of a brochure than a travel guide. It also caters mainly

toward affluent travelers looking for luxury. Buy another guidebook that might not be as pretty, but makes up for it with content.

This guide book arrived on time and in perfect condition. It is easy to read and you can quickly locate information about the region of the country that you are interested in. I would buy a Frommer's guide (to another country) again as it was very helpful.

good

the book outlines the basics of foreign travel. it's a guide.being there and making your own discoveries is the actual travel guide.

Good book. Slow delivery by the bookshop.

The [...] message boards can be very helpful in planning a trip so I hate to nix this travel guide but travelers with Lonely Planet consistently had better information than I had.For example, after arriving by bus in Flores/Santa Elena they knew to walk behind the other side of the bus station to get a bus or van to Tikal. I was fending off an aggressive man who was trying to bargain me into paying a lot more money (consistent with the suggestion in the Frommers Guide) for a taxi. Not pleasant. Rescued by info from a Lonely Planet tourist.In the same section the guide briefly mentions Remate as a place to stay but it's not on their map so I wasn't sure whether to get on the colectivo that was leaving right away or not. Remate was along the way to Tikal but, as happened way too often, the Frommers guide didn't have ready access to the needed info.The guide did get me to a Q70 a night "hammock" at the Jaguar Inn in Tikal. The hammock was a tent adjacent (as in sides touching) to three other tents meaning I could not only hear every snore, I could hear anyone roll over, and that was with earplugs. The guide was just published but how long ago did they gather the info? No fact checking?There was consistently incorrect bus info as to which company would go where and when the bus would leave. The guide got me to a nice (expensive, \$[...] for the room and ride from the airport, but they considered it inexpensive) hotel by the bus stations so I could run from station to station rolling suitcase on cobblestones, finding out for myself.The listed Languin hotel phone number was incorrect or maybe the pay phone did it wrong. Sounds like a delightful location but no one wants to go that far from Coban to find out if a room is available.I have a bone to pick about La Panza Verde restaurant description in the Antiqua section. Izquierdo from Buena Vista

Social Club is a part owner and plays there multiple times a week. Knowing that would have determined the splurge meal. A guide isn't going to have everything, but come on. Other tourists knew...Hacienda Tijax in Frontera/Rio Dulce was a terrific recommendation but the guide doesn't tell you that the mob at the bus station is lying when they say it is closed and suggest other jungle lodges. You can call for the boat shuttle at Bruno's restaurant. It took me a hot, dusty hour to find the correct information. The last night at Hotel Dos Lunas by the airport was really unfair advice. At the end of a trip most of us are trying to be almost out of Quetzales. Twenty left in pocket for departure tax. La Senora wants to be paid in cash, either Quetzales or dollars. To pay by credit card she demands a \$[...] surcharge on a \$[...] room, claiming taxes of 22% and high Visa charges. Wait. The tax is already in the \$[...] and Visa charges 5%. Needed to know that since, like most tourists, I have a silly little aversion to lies and being ripped off. That's why we buy guides.

While this book touches on a lot of the sights worth seeing, the rest was lacking. The restaurant and hotel prices list were substantially lower than actual costs. The restaurants felt like total tourist traps-overpriced, mediocre to terrible food, and bad service. I was better off looking for restaurants on my own.

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