

ADDICTED



Go to Guadalajara – A Metropolitan Mexican destination

When we think of travelling to Mexico, we likely envision sandy beaches, sparkling blue waters and all-inclusive hotels. And while a beach vacation is a beautiful experience, there is so much more that Mexico has to offer, like its beautiful, bustling cities, like **Guadalajara**.

“Innovation is Our Tradition”

Guadalajara is the capital of the state of Jalisco and is the second largest city in all of Mexico. GDL (as those in the know call it), is centrally located, sitting 350 miles west of Mexico City and 200 miles east from Puerto Vallarta. Rich in history and filled with spirit, Guadalajara is the birthplace of Mexican cultural exports like tequila, mariachi music, and charrería. With such precious resources, it's no wonder that Guadalajara's people, called Tapatíos, take such pride in preserving and celebrating their rich cultural heritage.



Along with revering their storied past, the Tapatíos take pride in stewarding themselves toward a progressive future. Inclusivity Guadalajara has been at the forefront of promoting equality and creating a culture that is welcoming to all, particularly making significant strides in bolstering and empowering the LGBTQ+ community. With a strong commitment to diversity and equal rights, Guadalajara stands as an innovator in promoting equity and inclusion within Mexico’s cultural and societal landscape.

The History...

The essence of Guadalajara dates back to the Pre-Columbian Era, when indigenous groups, including the Nahuatl and Tarascan peoples, lived, farmed and traded in the region around the present day city. Spanish settlers founded the city of Guadalajara (its original namesake being in Spain) in 1533, but the city went through several relocations before settling in its present location, where it was officially established on February 14, 1542. Guadalajara was declared the capital of Nueva Galicia province, and as a vital center in colonial Mexico, the city grew rapidly and became a significant hub for Spanish expeditions. In 1810, Miguel Hidalgo – a Catholic priest and insurgent – established a revolutionary government in Guadalajara during the fight for Mexican independence, but he was eventually defeated and executed. Mexican independence was achieved in 1821, but the city witnessed intense battles during the War of the Reform in the 19th century and clashes between Constitutionalist and Villista armies in 1915. The influence of this complicated and evocative history is evident in the art and architecture throughout Guadalajara, like the powerful and occasionally clairvoyant murals by Jose Orozco, one of the city’s most prominent and prolific painters.



By the late 19th century, Guadalajara surpassed Puebla to become Mexico's second-largest city after Mexico City. Today, with a population exceeding 4 million, Guadalajara thrives as a major commercial, industrial, and cultural centre. It has emerged as a hub for technology, communications, and innovation, serving as a focal point for the northern half of Mexico.

Getting there, and getting around...

From Toronto, I flew from Pearson International airport to the metropolitan area of via Miguel Hidalgo International Airport (GDL). The airport is located 24 miles from the city center, making it a fairly reasonable taxi ride to your hotel or other accommodation from landing. While currently there are no direct flights from Toronto to Guadalajara, there are many daily direct flights available from major cities across the United States and Canada. And it's worth taking that layover to visit this beautiful city.

Traveling within Guadalajara is easy. Guadalajara has modern highways connecting the city to its metropolitan area and beyond. Visitors can easily access taxis, public buses, and car rentals. The Guadalajara light rail system serves Guadalajara, Zapopan, and Tlaquepaque. Taxis and rideshare companies like Uber are also available, as well as private drivers for those who prefer a more consistent option.

Stay at...

The metropolitan area of Guadalajara boasts over 23,000 hotel rooms, ranging from budget-friendly crashpads to luxury retreats.. For our familiarization trip to the city we were hosted at the **Hotel Indigo**, an Intercontinental Hotel Group property centrally located in Guadalajara, making it easy to get around the city for all our exploring needs. The hotel's architecture was immediately impressive, with a soaring high ceiling over the central lounge and dining room, with the guest rooms wrapping around each floor. The rooms themselves were a beautiful balance of chic and comfortable, with loft like open concept bathrooms, incredibly cozy beds and all the trappings required for a relaxing stay.



The lobby bar features a literal wall of bottles, reaching nearly as high as the rooms on the 6th floor, a vast array of spirits from around the world with tequila and mezcal featuring most prominently of course. The hotel is topped by a lively rooftop restaurant and cocktail bar where hotel guests and Tapatíos alike come to sip, savour and enjoy the night under the bright city lights and twinkling night sky. Overall, [Hotel Indigo](#) provided all the comforts of home with the incomparable touch of Mexican hospitality to make for a happy and memorable stay.

Eat at...

Mexican cuisine is a warm, flavourful and delectable experience, one that I enjoy thoroughly, so I took great pleasure in tasting my way through Guadalajara. From the chicest gourmet restaurant to the oldest, most traditional Cantinas and everything in between, every eating experience was better than the last.

Alcalde

If you love an intimate, upscale dining experience then **Alcalde** needs to be on your list for your Guadalajara trip. Recently named number 54 on the illustrious **World's 50 Best Restaurants**, Alcalde's reputation for deliciously intriguing dishes preceded it. The reputation and recent accolades were well deserved, as each dish, from appetizer to dessert, was absolutely divine. Presentation and flavour were all of equal priority, making for an experience that was just as enjoyable for the eyes as it was for the tastebuds.



Yunaites

Yunaites is a casual brunch restaurant located in a bustling market, with stall after stall of fragrant food, lush plants, colourful fruits and vegetables and various merchants all selling their wares. Yunaites is renowned for traditional Mexican breakfast options, including tacos with handmade corn tortillas, pork and chicken in Mole (pronounced *Mo-lay*), a chocolate based curry style sauce that is to die for, and the most delicious brewed coffee I've ever tasted.



Rin Tin Tin

This cozy café is a hidden gem in Guadalajara's Colonia Americana district. **Rin Tin Tin** offers a variety of fresh pastries and traditional Mexican dishes from the light to hearty, and a full espresso bar offering a variety of milk alternatives for those of us who still enjoy an oat milk latte while travelling. The atmosphere is artsy and ethereal, and the service was warm and welcoming.



Sips cocktails and mocktails at...

Guadalajara boasts a vibrant nightlife scene with an array of restaurants, bars, and nightclubs. From live concerts and shows at the Telmex concert hall to thrilling lucha libre wrestling at Arena Coliseo and national soccer games at Estadio Omnilife and Estadio Jalisco, there's no shortage of entertainment options. The Chapultepec neighborhood is a hotspot for nightlife among both locals and tourists.

De Lao Cantina

Named for Mexican revolutionary Genovevo de la O, **De La O Cantina** has the cooler than cool vibe of a New York dive bar with a warm, colourful Guadalajara energy and hospitality. With an impressive cocktail list and small but incredibly tasty menu of shareable plates. In fact, I savoured my favourite meal of the trip here: the Chile Relleno, it was truly *chef's kiss*. I washed down this divine dish with a series of incredible craft cocktails, including a refreshing watermelon punch and a mezcal and hibiscus concoction.



Peligro al Fondo

Located in the American Neighbourhood of Guadalajara, Peligro al Fondo is one of the coolest spots to hang out in Guadalajara. Its twinkle light filled patio has a giant tree growing right through it, and a raised, covered area that gives the best view of the action below. What action, you ask? The weekly live and interactive drag show. As we were there during in late October, we had the pleasure of watching a fantastic Halloween themed drag show, featuring some of the most vivacious drag queens I have ever watched or met. We sipped on a variety of cocktails, and snacked on elevated bar snacks while dancing in our chairs and singing along with the music. For this night I decided to make it all about Mezcal, enjoying a hibiscus flavoured concoction, before switching to a citrusy sipper, topped with marigold leaves in keeping with the Dia De Muerto tradition.



Enjoy a unique cultural experience at....

Calaverandia

This place is like a dreamscape come to life, a feast for all the senses and a playground for the imagination. Calaverandia is the only theme park in the world dedicated to Dia de Muertos, or Day of the Dead. A mystical and soulful Mexican cultural touch stone, Day of the Dead is a celebration of loved ones that are no longer with us, and Calaverandia brings this beautiful tradition to life. The entire park tells the origin story of Dia de Muertos in a myriad of ways; the musical cemetery showing how mariachi plays into the tradition, the dazzling light, water and dance shows that tell the whole story in the most mesmerizing way, and the marigold flowers and monarch butterflies that guide those leaving this mortal coil woven all throughout the park. With incredible production, passionate performers and staff and stunning experiences and activations throughout the park, Calaverandia is a must-see experience in Guadalajara during the Day of the Dead festivities in October and November.



If you're looking for a different type of Mexican destination, consider Guadalajara. It's full of sights, sounds, tastes and experiences to engage and enlighten every type of traveller. And no matter what version of Guadalajara you decide to explore, it's going to be beautiful and memorable.

For a more visual taste of my visit to Guadalajara, check out my highlight on the city on my Instagram profile [here](#). And learn more about GDL through the links below.

<https://visitguadalajara.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/gotoguadalajara/>

<https://www.weraddicted.com/go-to-guadalajara-a-metropolitan-mexican-destination/>