

MERIDIAN COFFEE CO. · ORIGIN SERIES



# The Guatemala Coffee Guide

*Born in Volcanic Shadow, Forged by Fire*

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A deep dive into the world's most dramatic coffee terroir — where three active volcanoes create the mineral-rich soil behind every extraordinary cup.

CHAPTER ONE

# Why Guatemala Stands Apart

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Guatemala sits in the heart of Central America where the Pacific Plate meets the Caribbean Plate — a geological collision that spawned three of the world's most active volcanoes: Agua, Fuego, and Acatenango. These mountains don't just frame the horizon. They built the soil that grows some of the most complex coffee on earth.

For over 200 years, Guatemalan farmers — many from indigenous Maya communities — have coaxed from this volcanic earth a coffee defined by dark chocolate depth, warm brown spice, and a clean, lingering sweetness that no flat-land farm can replicate. The altitude matters. The volcanic mineral ash matters. The dual dry season matters. Every element of Guatemala's geography conspires to produce something remarkable.

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Active Volcanoes  
Surrounding Antigua

1,700m

Peak Growing Altitude in  
Huehuetenango

8th

Largest Coffee Producer  
Globally

REGION ONE

# Antigua

*Where three volcanoes shape every cup*

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Antigua is Guatemala's most celebrated coffee valley — a dramatic bowl of land cradled by the volcanic trio of Agua (3,766m), Fuego (3,763m), and Acatenango (3,976m). When Fuego erupts — and it does, regularly — it deposits fresh mineral ash across the valley floor, enriching the already volcanic soil with nutrients that coffee plants absorb over years.

The valley's sheltered microclimate — cool nights, warm days, low humidity — slows the cherry's development, concentrating sugars and building the complex flavor compounds that make Antigua coffee unmistakable. Altitude sits at 1,500–1,700m. The dry season allows slow drying on raised beds. The result: exceptional body, rich dark chocolate, and a clean finish that cuts like a knife.

## TASTING PROFILE

 Dark Chocolate

 Brown Spice

 Subtle Smoke

 Caramel

 Dried Fruit


# Beyond Antigua: Two Hidden Gems

## Huehuetenango

Way-way-ten-AN-go · 1,500–1,900m

Guatemala's highest growing region, where warm air from Mexico's Tehuantepec plain prevents frost and enables coffee at extreme altitude. The result is surprisingly light and floral — a counterpoint to Antigua's darkness.

### TASTING NOTES




-  Peach & Apricot
-  Floral Jasmine
-  Citrus Brightness

## Lake Atitlán

Atit-LAN · 1,500–1,700m

Grown on the steep volcanic slopes surrounding Lake Atitlán — one of the world's most beautiful caldera lakes. Coffee here absorbs lake humidity and volcanic minerals, creating a bold, structured profile with a long finish.

### TASTING NOTES

-  Milk Chocolate
-  Walnut & Almond
-  Brown Sugar Sweetness

THE SCIENCE OF FLAVOR

# Why Volcanic Soil Tastes Different

*The geology of Guatemala in your cup*

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## Mineral-Rich Ash

Each eruption deposits magnesium, phosphorus, and calcium — nutrients that coffee plants convert into flavor complexity unavailable in sedimentary soils.



## Porous Drainage

Volcanic pumice drains water rapidly. Coffee roots stay oxygenated and never waterlogged — preventing the flat, fermented flavors found in poor-draining soils.



## Thermal Regulation

The valley walls trap warm air by day and release cool mountain air at night. This 15-20°C swing forces cherries to develop slowly — building sugars and acids.



## Dual Dry Season

Guatemala's unique two-season dry cycle allows coffee cherries to fully mature and then dry slowly on raised beds — locking in sweetness before processing.

# The People Behind Every Bag

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Over 90% of Guatemala's coffee is grown by smallholder farmers — families tending plots of 2 to 10 hectares, many of them indigenous Maya communities whose ancestors have farmed these mountains for centuries. The Tz'utujil, Kaqchikel, and K'iche' peoples are Guatemala's coffee farmers. Their traditional knowledge of the land — when to prune, how to harvest selectively, which cherries to reject — is passed from parent to child across generations.

Most farms still hand-sort every cherry at harvest, selecting only those that have reached peak ripeness — a red or deep yellow, depending on variety. Washed processing is the norm in Antigua, using the mountain's clean spring water to ferment and wash the beans, then raising them on African-style drying beds to dry in the highland sun for 10-21 days.

*"The volcano gives us the soil. The sun gives us the sugar. We give it our hands — and together we make something the rest of the world calls extraordinary."*

— Traditional saying among Antigua farmers

# How to Brew Guatemala Right



## French Press

The rich, full-bodied profile of Antigua shines through a French Press. The oils are preserved in the immersion brew — you taste the chocolate and spice at their fullest.

- Grind: Coarse
- Ratio: 1:15 (coffee:water)
- Water: 93°C / 200°F
- Steep: 4 minutes



## Pour Over

For Huehuetenango's floral and citrus notes, pour over is ideal. The clean filter highlights the delicate aromatics without muddying them with heavy oils.

- Grind: Medium-Fine
- Ratio: 1:16 (coffee:water)
- Water: 90°C / 194°F
- Bloom: 30s, Total: 3:30



## Espresso

Antigua's dark roast is a natural for espresso — the volcanic mineral quality becomes a rich crema with bittersweet chocolate finish. Add a splash of hot water for an Americano to open the complexity.

- Grind: Fine
- Dose: 18–20g
- Yield: 36–40g
- Time: 25–30 seconds



## Cold Brew

Cold brew extracts Guatemala's chocolate and caramel beautifully — the low temperature coaxes sweetness without bitterness, making an intensely rich concentrate perfect over ice.

- Grind: Extra Coarse
- Ratio: 1:8 concentrate
- Water: Cold/Room Temp
- Steep: 16-18 hours



READY TO TASTE GUATEMALA?

# Shop Our Guatemala Collection

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Three distinct expressions of Guatemalan terroir — from the volcanic darkness of Antigua to the floral peaks of Huehuetenango. Each bag ships direct from specialty roasters to your door.

[DRINKMERIDIAN.COM/SHOP](https://drinkmeridian.com/shop)

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