



Destinations

Visit Guadalajara for the Culinary Scene, Shopping and New Hotels

by [Ana Figueroa](#) | Mar 21, 2017 10:24am



Lula Bistro

Guadalajara may be [Mexico's](#) second city. But, it's not taking a back seat to anyone these days. That's especially true in the culinary arena.

The third annual **COME International Festival of Flavors** took place in Guadalajara in early March. In February, the TV program **Top Chef** aired a final round episode set in Guadalajara. Contestants created delicacies featuring goat — a local specialty — and, of course, tequila.

"The city is developing a strong name in the gastronomical world, along with its chefs and restaurants. It is evolving and proposing a new creole cuisine, which is being reflected in international festivals such as COME," said **Gustavo Staufert Buclón**, CEO of the **Guadalajara Convention and Visitors Bureau**.

Restaurants throughout the city are offering tasting menus at affordable prices. And chefs known for their experimentation are helming award-winning eateries. Among the most prominent: **Darren Walsh** of **Lula Bistro**. The **French**-trained chef has worked in several **Michelin**-starred establishments, including **Daniel** in **New York City**, headed by **Daniel Boulud**.

Tour operators such as **Pleasant Holidays** have added Guadalajara to their lineup. And increased airlift is boosting tourist numbers. **Volaris** has recently launched nonstop flights from **Miami** and **Milwaukee**. That's in addition to new service from the **Seattle-Tacoma** and **Austin-Bergstrom** international airports.

Staufert tells [Travel Agent](#) that the destination's appeal is multi-fold.

to charros, Mexican cowboys. That is the ambiguity that represents the city and makes it one of a kind,” said Staufert.

Must-see cultural attractions in Guadalajara’s historic center include the 19th-century **Hospicio Cabañas**. The **UNESCO World Heritage Site** (a one-time hospital) houses a treasure trove of murals by one of Mexico’s greatest artists, **José Clemente Orozco**.

The metropolitan suburbs hold cultural treasures, as well.

Mariachi traces its roots to Tlaquepaque, where bands still perform in public areas and restaurants. There’s even a chance to see all-female groups, which is a rarity. An hour west of Guadalajara, near the town of **Teuchitlán**, is **Guachimontones**. The pre-Hispanic archaeological site is home to mysterious circular pyramids. The area, including nearby tequila distilleries, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



In the **Magic Town** of **Tequila**, immersive tours trace the agave plant’s transformation into Mexico’s most popular spirit. From Guadalajara, transportation options include the **Sauza Tequila Copter** and the **Jose Cuervo Tequila Express** train.

Shopping is serious business in Guadalajara, and can easily comprise the bulk of a visit. Favorable exchange rates make that option particularly attractive now.

The city is home to the largest indoor markets in **Latin America**. Signature handicrafts range from woven baskets to colorful ceramics and leather goods. The famous **Mercado Libertad** has three themed floors and close to 3,000 vendors. There’s one entire mall devoted to shoes, and another just for jewelry.



The hotel scene in Guadalajara is evolving, as well.

In August 2016, **Marriott** International opened its first **AC Hotel** in Mexico. The 188-room **AC Hotel Guadalajara** features an infinity-edged rooftop pool and lounge with views of the cityscape.

And in mid-February, The **Hyatt Regency Andares Guadalajara** debuted. It's located in the **Zapopan** district, near a luxury shopping mall.

"Guadalajara is one of Mexico's most vibrant cities, with great cuisine and a thriving art scene that's central to the energetic urban culture. It's one of the best up-and-coming cities to explore and experience authentic Mexico," **Tim Sheldon**, president of **Marriott Caribbean and Latin America**, tells Travel Agent.

In addition to international hotel brands, several boutique properties are garnering attention. One of them is a prime destination wedding venue. **Hacienda Lomajim Hotel Boutique & Spa** is in the **Sierra Madres**, 45 minutes from downtown Guadalajara. The renovated rancho features 17 distinctively-decorated rooms, lake-filled grounds and an onsite chapel. Guests can enjoy in-room spa treatments, mountain bike excursions and guided hikes. Its most notable amenity: a hot tub overlooking **San Cristobal Canyon**.

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