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In Guadalajara, a confluence of tradition and tech

By [Meagan Drillinger](#) □ □ | Nov 13, 2018



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While Mexico City has had its turn in the spotlight for its historical and cultural charms, Guadalajara is coming into its own right as another massive cultural capital of Mexico. But in Guadalajara's case, the target audience is focused to the artistic, creative and tech-savvy youth, a niche that has been the focus of Aristoteles Sandoval, the governor of the state of Jalisco.

"Jalisco has become a state with a large growth of young people. People that come from other states of the country, or the world, come to Guadalajara because there is an ecosystem related to the technology industry," Sandoval told me last month. Sandoval was one of the first in the country to harness the development of technology and created a ministry in Jalisco for innovation and technology, which has shifted the scope of Jalisco away from the traditional tourism pillars like tequila and mariachi.

Technology brings a lot of solutions, especially for tourism because it attracts new companies, which brings business travelers. And from those young, hip, affluent business travelers, leisure travel follows.

"In five years we've had investment that we haven't seen in the previous 12," said Sandoval. "That really forces the dynamics of the city. In the last six years our restaurant count went from 5,000 restaurants to 17,000."

"Jalisco is a cosmopolitan state that recognizes both the tradition, and the future," said Sandoval. "Everything you recognized from Mexico comes from Jalisco, like tequila and mariachi. But we have been able to recognize and respect the legacy of Jalisco, but have taken it to avant garde levels in terms of cuisine and art."

Guadalajara, for example, has always been a city known for its traditional handicrafts, especially in Tlaquepaque, one of the largest markets in Mexico for crafts. Today, the city is calling modern artists from all over the world, taking the city's history of creation to the next level.

Take the Tonalá Pueblo Museum Project. Tonalá used to be a traditional town on the outskirts of Guadalajara. Today it's a modern artisanal area with a wide avenue flanked with galleries selling everything from furniture to paintings, clay sculptures, and jewelry. Within the city limits today travelers can find the tradition of Tlaquepaque next to the modernity of Tonalá.



The ruins of Guachimontones in Teuchitlan, about an hour outside Guadalajara. Photo Credit: TW photo by Eric Moya

Jalisco for tourism

Behind Quintana Roo, the state of Jalisco is the second highest terms of hotel rooms, and saw 5 million visitors in 2017. The government is starting to position Guadalajara as an add-on to beach destination Puerto Vallarta. "The trip between the two cities used to be 5.5 hours [by car] and is now three hours. By the end of 2019 the trip will be 2.5 hours," said Sandoval.

Along the way visitors can visit the town of Tequila, or see the archaeological site Guachimontones, which is an Olmec archeological site and one of the only pyramid structures in Mexico that are circular. Sandoval said that Jalisco has been collaborating with tour operators to have trips that start in Puerto Vallarta and then move to end in Guadalajara without having to pay an extra fee to be able to fly in and out of both the PVR and GDL airports.

Six new properties opened in 2018, including Hard Rock Hotel Guadalajara, which is the first Mexican property to enter the Hard Rock Hotel portfolio. Other hotels that opened were Hotel 1970 Posada Guadalajara; Aloft Guadalajara; Hilton Midtown, City Express & Suites; and FCH Providencia Urban Boutique.

More than 15 hotels are set to open in 2019 and 2020, including a 150-room

Thompson, a 150-room Indigo Andares, a 200-room Aloft Punta Sur, a 220-room JW Marriott, a 180-room Hotsson, a 160-room Courtyard by Marriott, a 130-room Candlewood Suites, a 126-room Fiesta Inn Aeropuerto and Fiesta Inn Ciudad Judicial, a 190-room Hyatt Centric, a 140-room Hotel Independiente, a 180-room Hotel Pabellon, and a 120-room Garden Inn Hilton.

Overall, Sandoval said, more than \$28 million has been invested in infrastructure and urban spaces in Jalisco during his term. This financing has gone to improving the airports, roads, security in cities, and to preserve the Pueblos Magicos.
