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ON THE COVER

Luly Yang, designer of Alaska Airlines' new uniforms.
Photo by Ingrid Barrentine / Alaska Airlines

JALISCO HERITAGE

By Melanie Haiken

» Famous for two of Mexico's most renowned exports—mariachi music and tequila—Guadalajara takes pride in maintaining a rich cultural identity as the capital of the state of Jalisco and a quintessentially Mexican city. The importance of local heritage is clear to me as I explore Guadalajara's El Centro Histórico, the historical city center dating back to the 1500s that features splendid Spanish colonial buildings and impressive monuments arranged around a series of spacious squares.

My starting point is the Metropolitan Cathedral of Guadalajara. With its ornate gothic towers reaching into the sky, the church is easy to spot from any direction as you approach. I explore its interior, admiring its richly decorated marble and silver altar, and its soaring ceilings. Then I exit into the Plaza de Armas, a landscaped space centered on a wrought-iron gazebo.

East of the plaza, the baroque Palacio de Gobierno (Jalisco's government building) offers me my first look at a mural by José Clemente Orozco, whose fresco adorns the ceiling of a two-story stairwell and features the Mexican revolutionary leader Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla facing down anyone ascending the stairs. A contemporary of Diego Rivera, Orozco created provocative work that has undergone a revival; his murals have become favorites among Guadalajara's sights.

Back outside, a walk east takes me through the wide-open Plaza de la Liberación, past the giant sign spelling out the letters in *Guadalajara*, and past the neoclassical Teatro Degollado. I follow the long promenade Paseo Hospicio to the Hospicio Cabañas, a former orphanage/medical complex founded in the 19th century that is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. There I join a tour of the complex's main hall, which features 57 stunning Orozco



murals. Following the instructions of a guide, I stand under the central dome to admire the visionary mural *El Hombre de Fuego* (Man of Fire), whose central figure appears to float upward as I circle below.

For lunch—and souvenir shopping—I head to the Mercado San Juan de Dios (aka Mercado Libertad), an enormous indoor marketplace. Despite its bustle and its labyrinthine layout, I easily locate the hand-tooled leather goods and colorful pottery I seek. Then I sit down to a bowl of *birria*, a savory lamb stew that is one of Guadalajara's signature dishes.

Later, my choice for dinner is Casa Bariachi, which has shows by some of the city's best mariachi bands and dancers. As I listen to a high-energy version of the song *Cielito Lindo*, I dip into a *jericalla*, Jalisco's flanlike answer to *crème brûlée*. I reflect on how my time in Guadalajara has deepened my appreciation for Mexican culture. ✂

» Clockwise from top: the Plaza de Armas, with the Metropolitan Cathedral of Guadalajara in the background; the mural-adorned Hospicio Cabañas; dancers outdoors in the historical city center.

■ Fly Alaska Airlines (alaskaair.com) nonstop to Guadalajara (GDL), Mexico, from Los Angeles (LAX) and San Jose (SJC), California.



MAGICAL CRAFTS IN TLAQUEPAQUE

By Melanie Haiken

» I'm trying to spread thick, creamy caramel sauce into a small wooden box, and it's not going smoothly. My hands are sticky, and the *cajeta*, as the caramel is known, overflows the sides of the box.

"Don't worry—just scrape it off—then you can eat the extra," says my guide, Ada Martínez of the tour company Sensaciones Turísticas, and she demonstrates.

We're visiting Nuestros Talleres ("our workshops"), an alliance of candymakers in the village of Tlaquepaque, where some of the Jalisco region's most admired craft confectioners demonstrate traditional techniques and offer tastings in a 150-year-old adobe house. Across a sunny courtyard, a tiled kitchen hums with activity as bottles of the eggnoglike drink *rompo* are readied for market. Moving to the next room, we compare the taste of cacao beans and artisan-made chocolates in the workshop of chocolatier Cristina Taylor. Nuestros Talleres, which opened in 2018, is the dream of Luis del Hoyo, whose grandmother's recipe for *rompo* with macadamia nut is featured in a tiled-mosaic fountain on one wall.

Traditions such as candymaking are the essence of Tlaquepaque, celebrated as a center of craftworks, where shops, studios and galleries showcase some of

Mexico's finest textiles, silverwork, glass-blowing, ceramics, arts and foods. About 5 miles south of Guadalajara's historical city center, Tlaquepaque is one of the Mexican government's designated "Pueblos Mágicos"—having become one of these "Magic Towns" in 2018.

As Martínez guides me up and down Tlaquepaque's cobblestone streets, we visit the woodworking studio of Agustín González and peek into two churches that date back more than 200 years: the ornate Parish of St. Peter and the serene Our Lady of Solitude Sanctuary. Then it's time to visit the workshop of Luis Manzano Galán, where we watch the elderly potter add ears to a smiling clay piggy bank. Martínez tells me this is one of the few studios to produce this type of traditional wood-fired pottery.

As the shops begin to shutter for the day, we head for Casa Luna Restaurante, where meals are an extravagance of tastes, colors, sounds and textures, in a dining room as art-filled as any gallery. For the evening's final toast, we choose the local tequila-spiked fruit punch *cazuela voladora*, named for the handmade clay bowl it's served in. The drink seems a fitting end to a day in which we've been immersed in the artisanal traditions of Jalisco. ✈

» Clockwise from top left: a brightly decorated cobblestone street in Tlaquepaque; Our Lady of Solitude Sanctuary; colorful masks at a local shop.