

Guadalajara

Top Five Gifts to Buy in Guadalajara This Holiday Season

GUADALAJARA, MEXICO – NOVEMBER 14, 2017 – A top shopping destination in Mexico, Guadalajara is home to the largest indoor market in Latin America. Just outside of the city lies the artisan center of Tlaquepaque (which translates to “men who make clay utensils with their hands”), a quaint artisanal village offering exquisite artesanías (handicrafts). This small pottery community is known throughout the world for its high-fire ceramic techniques and decorative styles. Easily accessible from Guadalajara by bus or taxi, visitors can take in picturesque architecture while strolling along Independencia, its pedestrian-friendly main street lined with colonial-style mansions that now have a second life as shops and galleries.

With the holidays approaching, travelers are strolling the cobblestone streets of Guadalajara and Tlaquepaque in search of the perfect gift for everyone on their holiday list. Below are the top five local gifts for visitors to pick up this holiday season:

Traditional Clay Cookware

Pottery and ceramics in this region include everything from the collectible blue and white Talavera tiles, to pots and other items made from twice-fired clay or from a Pre-Columbian era technique known as “bruñido,” where it is molded from an unfired soft clay, painted, and then fired once. The pieces are often decorated with animals depicted in surreal, exaggerated styles and painted with soft tones of rose, gray-blue and white on a background of either a light brown, gray, green or blue. A trip to the **Mercado de Artesanías** (Calle Juárez 145, Centro, 45500 San Pedro) features miles of stalls filled with ceramics and other souvenirs. For a unique gift, shoppers should be on the lookout for pottery featuring the region’s oldest traditional motif of a crosshatch design known as “petatillo.” To create a truly personalized gift to take home, visitors can participate in a pottery making class offered on Independencia, where they will learn style and techniques from a local craftsman and leave with their own work of art.

Blown Glass Vase

Colorful **blown glass** ranks high on the souvenir list for travelers to Mexico and also makes the perfect holiday gift. Tlaquepaque is known to have the best blown glass in Mexico, and at **La Rosa de Cristal** (Avenida Independencia 232), visitors can watch children as young as 12 years old carrying balls of molten glass on long metal poles, blowing, twirling, shaping, firing and cutting off a vase, pitcher or a classic blue-rimmed margarita glass. Glassware and other gifts can be purchased in the store’s gift shop.

Wood Carved Masks

Intricate wood carvings of all shapes and sizes are available in stores and markets throughout Guadalajara. Handcrafted indigenous masks are popular gifts that are made from wood or papier-mâché. Mask-making in Mexico dates back to pre-Hispanic times where they were often used for ceremonies and festivals. Today, they are mostly used as wall-mounted ornaments. The finest wooden masks can be found along the four-block stretch of Independencia and in the bustling markets of Guadalajara.

Leather Shoes

Leatherwork in Mexico has its roots in the cowboy tradition as it was most commonly used for saddles, belts, and boots. Leather is the material of choice for shoemakers in Guadalajara, which is known for its shoe workmanship (especially custom leather loafers). Holiday shoppers can find the perfect pair of boots or shoes at **Galeria del Calzado** (Avenida México 3225), a mall with more than 60 stores solely dedicated to shoes. Shoppers at **Mercado Libertad**, also known as San Juan de Dios market (Calz Javier Mina No.52), will find a variety of leather goods created in the state's rural villages along the market's first floor.

Beaded Necklace

The colorful beaded jewelry created by the native Huichol people of the state of Jalisco are adorned with centuries-old symbols and designs most commonly holding religious and cultural significance. Located in the heart of Guadalajara, **Magno Centro Joyero** (Paseo Hospicio 22, San Juan de Dios, 44360) is the largest jewelry marketplace in Latin America, made up of four levels and more than 700 stores for visitors to shop for traditional beaded jewelry and renowned Mexican silver, with trendsetting pieces inspired by Mexican culture.

Additional ways to visit Guadalajara or to see a list of tour packages, visit www.visitguadalajara.com/.

About Guadalajara

The birthplace of iconic Mexican heritage including tequila and mariachi, Guadalajara is the second largest city in Mexico and considered the country's cultural center. Each year, tourists travel to this cosmopolitan destination to experience a plethora of attractions including nearby magical towns such as Tequila, where the popular spirit is produced; explore colonial architecture; and visit museums and small towns with exquisite crafts and artwork. Guadalajara is the capital of the state of Jalisco, which is located in the center of Mexico, 350 miles west of Mexico City and 200 miles east from Puerto Vallarta along the Pacific Ocean. The metropolitan area of Guadalajara consists of four urban districts – Guadalajara, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá, and Zapopan – and three suburban districts, Tlajomulco, El Salto, and Tequila.

Travel to Guadalajara is easily accessible via the Miguel Hidalgo International Airport (GDL), which is located 24 miles from the city center of Guadalajara, with non-stop daily flights from major markets across the United States and Canada.

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