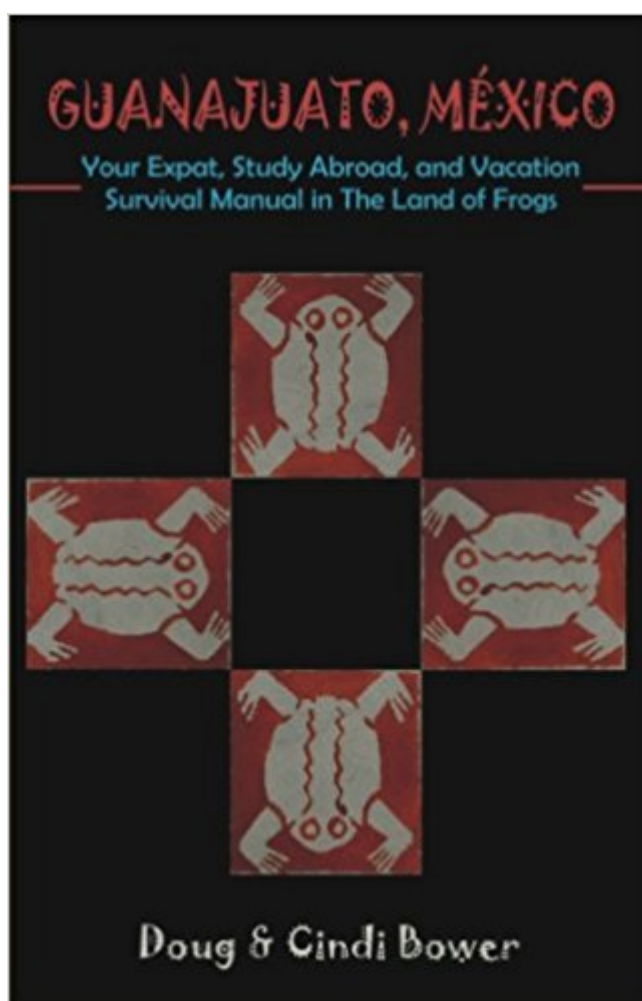


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# Guanajuato, Mexico: Your Expat, Study Abroad, And Vacation Survival Manual In The Land Of Frogs



## Synopsis

Living in the city of Guanajuato is nothing like living the Gringo Landias or Gringo Gulches of San Miguel de Allende or Puerto Vallarta. No information exists in book form to guide the potential expat to a new life in central Mexico. Expatriating to Guanajuato is different and unique. Unlike San Miguel de Allende or Puerto Vallarta, there is not a huge gringo community here that acts as a support buffer for "newbies". Nor is English as widely spoken as it is in other areas where expats live. Doug and Cindi Bower spell out the differences between living in Guanajuato and living in other areas where expats have traditionally congregated. They offer a survival manual for the potential expat.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Doug Bower is a freelance writer, Syndicated Columnist, and book author. His most recent writing credits include The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The Houston Chronicle, The Philadelphia Inquirer, Associated Content, Transitions Abroad, International Living, Escape Artist, and The Front Porch Syndicate. He is a columnist with The American Chronicle and more than 21 additional online magazines. He is also a writer with EzineArticles.com where his articles have been syndicated in more than 840 online publications. His article and column writing is a major platform from which to publicize his books. He is co-author of The Plain Truth about Living in Mexico (.com), Guanajuato Expatriation Guide, You Can Learn Spanish No Matter Your Age or Disposition, and Blogging South of the Border: Notes from a so-called Third-World Country. He lives with his wife in Guanajuato, Mexico.

This book is terrible. Just a few of the problems here:--tendency to use all caps, as if authors are writing an email, not a book.--a continual theme (the major theme perhaps) is that Americans who come to Mexico are dumb and naive. Perhaps so--but does the reader have to be hit over the head w/ this point on every page?--somewhere the authors write that they have lived in Guanajuato for a limited time. Given that, maybe they should have held off on writing this book until they had learned more.--frequently--either out of laziness or ignorance--the authors 'cut and paste' long quotes from real books. For example in the frontmatter, on page vi, begins a long quotation on the history of the city. I guess this is the authors way of saying they really don't know anything about the history of G. BTW, the long passage isn't blocked and indented.

It is rare to see a book prefaced with a disclaimer (but not an apology) for its misleading subtitle. The authors should have extended the disclaimer to the very title of the book. They may have written it in Guanajuato, but the city itself isn't the main theme of the book. A more appropriate title might have been "Ignorant Gringos" or "Learn Spanish!" This book is about the authors' dismay at the reluctance of Americans living in Mexico to learn Spanish and their tendency to live together in colonies. I agree with the authors criticism, but this was supposed to be a book about Guanajuato. Instead, over and over again, we get criticism of fellow expatriates that live in what they describe as the "gringo-infested" cities of Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta, or (God forbid) San Miguel de Allende. There is advice that could apply to living anywhere in Mexico. But detailed information that would serve a newcomer to the city of Guanajuato is limited. You will be ambushed in nearly every chapter by an attack on gringos who fail to learn Spanish. You began to wonder if the point it isn't selling books on learning Spanish. In one chapter, Mr. Bower laments that you can't get your hands on his latest learning Spanish book, because he can't find a publisher. Fine and good, but we paid good money for what we thought was going to provide insight about living in Guanajuato. Never do we get a well organized outline about living there. Most of the information could describe any city in Mexico. The limited city-specific information does not warrant its title. There is not even a map of the city in the book. Where should we live, for instance? None of the sectors of the city are identified or ranked in terms of desirability, except to note two that should be avoided and the joy that there is no American sector. We do get a crybaby account of noise, buses and rental practices in Guanajuato, but this could apply to anywhere in Mexico. You would do better buying Don Adam's "Head for Mexico" or Mike Nelson's "Live Better South of the Border in Mexico" if you want a Mexico guide. These authors are experienced Mexico hands.

The book has some good information in it. I just recently moved to Guanajuato and thankfully avoided many of the common pitfalls other x-pats experienced. My good luck came in the form of a local becoming my girlfriend. I'd love to meet Doug and Cindy Bower. If you're reading this review please contact me. :-) Let's have lunch.

Much of this book is repetitive and a rant about expats to don't try to learn Spanish but I read the whole thing anyway. There were amusing parts

In spite of its shortcomings, I'm glad I bought this book, I enjoyed much of it and I learned quite a bit. His writing style and stories are charming and informative. He certainly gets his point across with evocative examples like the water venders screaming "Agua...agua...agua" and you run naked from the shower screaming "A-G-U-A!" or risk death by dehydration because who knows when you will, if ever, hear the call again. The book is really a collection of essays and emails published online and elsewhere and gathered together with little apparent effort to integrate it into a satisfying whole. The two most frustrating things were the very frequent repetition and harping on the author's favorite themes scattered throughout the book, and the lack of real detail about Guanajuato itself. First, I found myself reading the same content over and over, and then skimming and skipping, hoping I wasn't missing some important new point or information about the topic in its next incarnation. His favorite themes are the Ugly Americans with their ignorance and prejudice, who congregate in expatriate enclaves in major tourist areas like San Miguel de Allende, never learn the language and both miss out on and ruin the authentic Mexican experience. This is a valuable insight in how NOT to approach Guanajuato. So make your case, develop it well once and be done with it. It becomes tiresome harping the tenth time around, and doesn't help learn about Guanajuato which is why I bought the book. Other favorite themes are the problem of cars and parking in Guanajuato, the value/problems of learning/not learning Spanish, and selling his new book on learning language. Again, these topics are valuable the first time around. Modern word processors make it easy to bring together the same topics and ideas. Do readers a big favor and pick the best arguments and stories for each topic and then move on to new material. I think editing out half or even two-thirds of the book would only increase its usefulness and readers enjoyment. How about a revised edition? Second, I was disappointed to not find more detail about Guanajuato. It seemed more words were dedicated to selling his next book about learning language than Guanajuato per se. I found more material about Guanajuato on several websites than this entire book. He offers a disclaimer right at the beginning that there is no information about "studying abroad in Guanajuato as the title

of the book might imply" (as the title states, in my reading of it). Much of the book offers generalities (helpful, yes) that seem to apply to much of Mexico. I would love to have read more about the author's experience of the city itself. Take us on some of your "enormous walks from our home". Introduce us to some of your friends, your favorite restaurants; take us along your favorite streets. Invite us to sit with you for those "long hours in the vast plazas...for the soul-satisfying pleasure of doing nothing at all." Where is Guanajuato? Take us there.

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