



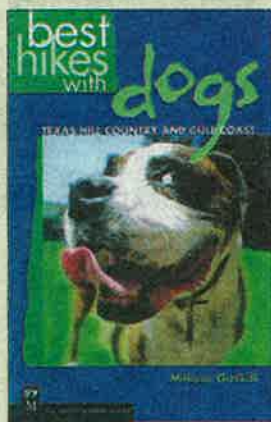
YOUR BEST SHOT

Colorado color

Reader David Young took this picture at Shrine Mountain in Eagle County, Colo. Submit your photos online at DallasNews.com/travel.

DallasNews.com

Sunday, November 19,



Tell your dog to go take a hike

If you leave the dog home when you go hiking, don't let the pooch get wind of the new book, *Best Hikes With Dogs: Texas Hill Country and Gulf Coast*. (Mountain-eers Books, \$16.95) The volume by Melissa Gaskill outlines 55 trails ranging from easy walks to overnight adventures, all paw-friendly. It includes topo maps and dog regulations for each excursion.

DigitalEXTRA

Deals, deals, deals

How about Fort Lauderdale, Fla., for \$98 round trip? That was one of the bargain fares listed this week online. Check "Today's Great Deals" daily for more incredible fares. And sign up for our weekly newsletter. It's all at DallasNews.com/travel.

Rick Steves: Read about the walking tour Rick takes when he visits Amsterdam.

Taking the Kids: Hitting the slopes with a 3-year-old.

ADVICE

Hotel specials

Winter brings bargains including free nights and gift cards. **Best Fares**, 21

Late at the gate

If you're late for a flight, it's not the airline's fault. **Travel Troubleshooter**, 21

NATIONAL

Sonoma exclusive

Saag an invitation for an annual insider's weekend. **Back Page**

Macy parade tips

How to see Manhattan's holiday spectacular. 31

New York favorites: It's easy to get overwhelmed by the city. Here are suggestions from a former resident. **Sophia Dembling**, 31

GETAWAY

Ancient Texans

Bosque Museum examines 11,000-year-old shelter. 71

Salsa Tourism

The flavor of Guatemala, in just a few flashy steps



SpanishContact.com

The Centro Linguistico Internacional in Antigua, Guatemala, offers dance classes to its language students.



Tim Harrison

Visitors to Antigua, Guatemala, can find inexpensive salsa dancing lessons throughout the city.

By LAURA SUTHERLAND

Special Contributor

ANTIGUA, Guatemala — "Tone it down, buddy," the salsa instructor said to my 16-year-old son. At the moment, Walker was wildly swinging his hips from side to side with all the subtlety of a clock pendulum.

"Like this — smooooth," the instructor continued, and as his feet kept rhythm to the scorching salsa beat, he swiveled his hips with the perfect degree of relaxed Latin cool.



SpanishContact.com

Salsa lessons are commonplace in Antigua, which also has dozens of Spanish-language schools.

My son was clearly impressed with the instructor's macho control — the subtle and sexy hip movements, the smoldering glance straight into the eyes of his partner, and the syncopated steps and smooth spins. I could tell Walker was seeing his future self, mesmerizing scores of young women with his powerful gaze and seductive maneuvers on the dance floor.

During the next hour, my teenager worked hard at toning down the overdone hip thrust and mastering the all-knowing, sultry Antonio Banderas stare. The eye-to-eye focus isn't just for effect; in salsa dancing, it's a way to keep your balance and connect with your partner. There are so many different steps, swivels and spins that it's easy to get lost. The man is expected to communicate the next moves through a subtle but complex set of glances, guiding gestures and hand pressures. The woman follows his lead, and the red-hot rhythms help the couple stay in step with each other.

We were in the colonial town of Antigua, about an hour's drive from Guatemala City, where most visitors come to study Spanish in one of the dozens of inexpensive Spanish-language schools found throughout the town. We, too, had planned to spend our mornings in language classes, but our studies were stopped before they started by a mild bout of *turista* that kept my family close to the hotel the first two mornings of instruction. By the afternoon of our second day, we were feeling better and started wandering around the town to get our bearings.

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Salsa classes are a lesson in swinging fun

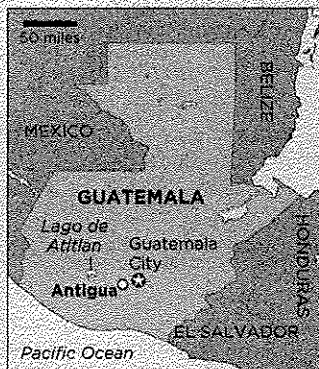
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As we meandered along cobblestone streets, we passed colonial buildings faced with crumbling colored plaster and fronted with massive wooden doorways and heavy iron door knockers. Through the open window of one building, salsa music blared enticingly, so we stepped closer to take a look. Inside the small front room, a young man was showing a young woman, probably a language student, a complicated spin. They finished their lesson within minutes of our arrival and the instructor, Julio, stepped outside to talk to us.

Julio's "Salsa Buena" dance studio, like all of the salsa studios we encountered, was in a residential front room that had been converted into a studio by moving out the furniture, adding a wall-size mirror and blasting salsa from a boom box placed atop a shelf. It didn't take long for all of us to agree to try a salsa class, so we booked a private lesson for four: my husband, Lance; 18-year old daughter Madeleine; Walker; and myself.

With some trepidation, we arrived for our first lesson the next morning. My husband and I hadn't successfully danced together for more than 20 years, as my tendency to lead and our ensuing arguments had led us to an unspoken moratorium on any kind of touch dancing. To my husband's great delight, Julio repeatedly admonished me for leading, explaining that in salsa, the gentleman had the most difficult job — that of leading — and his partner had simply to follow his cues. With that cosmic payback fueling him, my normally dance-averse husband took to salsa with surprising gusto.

While he and I practiced the basic steps, Madeleine and her brother mastered more complicated



DEAN HOLLINGSWORTH/Staff Artist

ed salsa moves and fine-tuned their smooth and subtle attitude.

It was so much fun that we decided to forget the four hours of language classes each morning and study salsa instead, sampling every salsa studio we could find. We wandered the cobblestone streets of the town with a purpose — to seek out every open window with salsa music playing and every bulletin board advertising salsa dance lessons. We learned that teaser classes were offered many afternoons so newcomers could try out the dance studio and instructors on a complimentary basis or for a small fee.

The very walkable town of Antigua is situated in a sweeping highland valley between the cones of three strikingly green volcanoes, and it is one of Central America's most enchanting and best-preserved colonial cities. Founded in the 16th century, it served as the capital of the Spanish-controlled territories that stretched from

WHEN YOU GO

Salsa classes in Antigua run \$3-5 per hour for group lessons; \$8-10 per hour for private individual lessons or \$10-13 per hour for two-person private lessons. There are many studios around town. Here are a few:

■ La Salsa Dance Academy; 011-502-7832-9558; www.lasalsadance.com

■ Salsarengue; 011-502-7832-0486; salsajm@hotmail.com

■ Salsa Max; 011-502-5684-3290;

salsamax_studio@yahoo.com

■ Salsa Antigua; 011-502-5212-536; salsantigua123@yahoo.com

For videos, check youtube.com and search for "salsa dance."

More Information

Check www.aroundantigua.com. The city has dozens of **Spanish language schools**, many costing just a few hundred dollars a week, including room and board. Schools are listed at www.visitguatemala.com. Also check www.larutamayaonline.com/schools.html.

Mexico City to Peru for more than two centuries. By 1773, it had grown into the most important city in Central America, filled with government buildings, cathedrals, monasteries, hospitals, a university, and grand family homes.

After an earthquake struck in 1773, leveling part of the town, the capital was moved to Guatemala City. Today some of the buildings still lie in a romantic ruin, while others have been superbly restored and now house hotels, restaurants, shops and private homes. Understandably, UNESCO has dubbed Antigua a world heritage center, which helps protect its charm.

There was a light downpour as we left to go to our second lesson, so we ran through the rain on cobble streets past vendors in colorful hand-woven skirts and shawls to La Salsa Academia de Baile. Instructor Selvin Miranda watched us dance for a few minutes to evaluate our ability and planned his lesson on the spot. Lance and I worked on spins, while the kids learned intricate touch-and-go

turns and got extra style pointers on the importance of maintaining the frame — the arm positions and erect carriage needed to dance with the right salsa attitude.

Soon we had a rhythm to our days: Grab breakfast, head to salsa class, and then browse through some of the shops, museums or churches that we passed as we traipsed into a new section of town. In the afternoon, we'd head to one of the group classes around town where language students from all over the world gather to learn to dance.

One afternoon, we happened upon a salsa studio where the lively Carmen, who taught Spanish in the morning in a language school and salsa every afternoon, was conducting class. Smitten by her enthusiasm, we decided to focus on private lessons with Carmen for our last few days to hone our technique and style. She taught us our first shine, a flashy movement with fancy footwork that partners do while apart.

On our final night, a Friday, we visited the salsa club La Sin Ventu-

ra near the main town square. We grabbed drinks at the long bar crowded with locals and language students and edged toward the dance floor to watch the action. One high-energy salsa number rolled right into the next, and the best dancers in the club took to the floor. It was still early in the evening, and only the bravest and most skilled had the courage to show their moves.

I wish I could say that the four of us turned heads dancing up a storm as the newest *salseros* on the scene. But since we faced a 3 a.m. shuttle to the airport to catch a flight to the Mayan ruins of Tikal, we dragged the kids away before

the floor got crowded enough for any of us to be comfortable dancing.

But as we walked into the warm night, a familiar face greeted us — Carmen, dressed to kill with a handsome man on her arm and surrounded by a group of other dance instructors we recognized from around town. She gave us a thumbs-up, happy to see that we had ventured beyond the walls of the classroom. We returned the gesture and slipped into the night content with imagining them tearing up the dance floor without us.

Laura Sutherland is a freelance writer in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Marley Resort to open in Bahamas

Travel Weekly

Jamaica may be the birthplace of Bob Marley, but it's the Baha-

mas that's generating Marley news these days.

Rita Marley, the performer's widow, will open the 16-suite Marley Resort and Spa on Cable Beach in Nassau on Feb. 6 on what would have been the musician's 61st birthday. Bob Marley died in 1981 after a four-year bout with cancer.

The resort, originally a governor's mansion located near private homes far from large resorts, had been used as a summer getaway by the Marley family for years.

The 13 master suites, all named after Marley's songs such as Jammin', Three Little Birds or Lively Up Yourself, will feature balcon-

ies; flat-screen TVs and a Bose sound system; high-speed Internet; and 24-hour room service.

Natural Mystic, the resort's indoor-outdoor spa, will offer therapies and treatments fused from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

Introductory rates start at \$495 per room, per night, double. Contact: www.marleyresort.com.