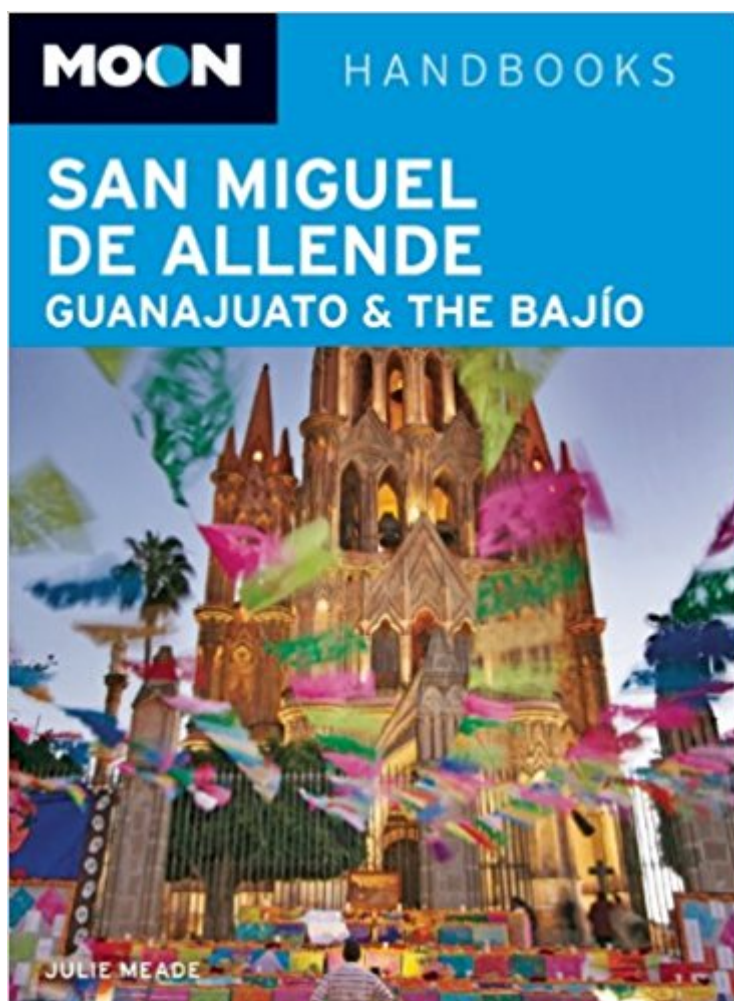


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Moon San Miguel De Allende, Guanajuato And The Bajío (Moon Handbooks)



Synopsis

Professional writer and longtime Mexico resident Julie Doherty offers up the inside scoop on the Baj o, from where to sip a margarita in San Miguel to how to best explore Guanajuato on foot. Doherty also provides original trip itinerary ideas, including The Best of the Baj o, Art Lover's Tour, and Desert Chill. Complete with tips on the best museums, historic sights, shopping, and food in the region, Moon San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato & the Baj o gives travelers the tools they need to create a more personal and memorable experience.

Book Information

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Author Q&A: The Best of San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato & the Baj o with Julie Doherty Meade1. What s the best way to get a feel for the history of Guanajuato and its surrounding areas?Built on the steep sides of a ravine, the city of Guanajuato, Guanajuato was not designed to accommodate automobile traffic (cars travel in underground tunnels), so it s easy to imagine the city as it was centuries ago when walking around the centro historico. During the colonial era, Guanajuato was one of the most important silver mining settlements in the New World, and the city s wealthy families invested lavishly in civic buildings, churches, convents, and haciendas. When wandering through town, notice the details of the fine, centuries-old handiwork: thick wrought-iron balconies overlooking the street, worn sandstone fa ades, impossibly narrow alleys, and weathered seventeenth-century religious paintings in old chapels.2. What do you consider to be the Baj o s best annual festival?The Baj o is a traditionally Mexican region, where religious

festivals, civic holidays, and saint's days are celebrated with enthusiasm and pageantry. San Miguel de Allende's celebrations during Holy Week, or Semana Santa, are some of the most famous in all of Mexico, culminating in a long and solemn reenactment of the Stations of the Cross. The cosmopolitan International Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato brings world-famous musicians, theater groups, dance troupes, and performing artists to venues across the city. Held every October, the streets of downtown Guanajuato are alive with concertgoers, street performers, and live music throughout the two weeks of the festival.³

San Miguel de Allende is home to many artists and expatriates. What do you think is the draw? First and foremost, San Miguel de Allende is uniquely beautiful. The blend of earthy ochre- and rust-colored buildings, sandstone chapels, weathered fountains, flowering trees, and soft pink sunlight is a feast for the eyes. San Miguel de Allende is also a real old-fashioned small town, which seems to stir up nostalgia for a simpler, quieter, and friendlier era. It is a place of great tradition, strong community, and civic pride. Expatriates quickly fit in within this cozy community, though San Miguel de Allende also attracts plenty of new national residents, who were drawn to the same qualities as its foreign denizens.⁴

What kind of weather can visitors expect? The Bajío is located in the semi-arid central highlands of Mexico, at more than 6,000 feet above sea level. Here, altitude tempers the arid climate, and the weather is generally warm, dry, and sunny year round. That said, it can be chilly during winter evenings, with temperatures dropping below freezing on the coldest nights. Pack layers and, if you are visiting during the summer months, rain gear. From June to September, furious thunderstorms roll across the Bajío during the afternoons and early evenings, flooding the streets.⁵

Where's the best place to stay for a budget-conscious traveler? Budget-conscious travelers in San Miguel de Allende can easily find a clean, centrally located room to rest their head, while enjoying inexpensive meals at the market, at taco stands, or at one of the fun and low-key eateries around town. Fortunately, many of the best things to do in San Miguel—visiting old chapels, poking around the town's many art galleries, and exploring the botanical gardens—are inexpensive or free. In the city of Guanajuato, you'll find dozens of central, low-cost hostels and inns. Budget accommodations can be a bit ramshackle but, fortunately, cute coffee shops, cheap eateries, and bookshops abound, and art galleries at the university are free.⁶

Is traveling to the Bajío region difficult for non-Spanish speakers? English is widely spoken throughout the Bajío, especially in the tourist and service industries. Travelers will rarely have a problem communicating, though it's never a bad idea to brush up on a few Spanish phrases before you head down south. And if you don't speak the language, a smile and a friendly attitude are the best way to communicate!⁷

What are some of the best places to take a day trip to in the Bajío? About 45 minutes east of San Miguel de Allende,

Mineral de Pozos is a former nineteenth century mining community. By the mid-twentieth century, Pozos was all but abandoned and the mining camps, once large and lavish settlements near town, were left to crumble. To me, Pozos is the embodiment of Mexican romance. The center of town is filled with uneven cobblestone streets, crumbling mansions, and adobe homes overrun with vines and cactus. In the past decade, a smattering of artists and expatriates has begun settling in Pozos, and youâ™ll find some lovely boutique hotels, as well as a few nice galleries.⁸ Whereâ™s the best place to see baroque architecture in the region? During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the entire BajÃ-o region flourished with the massive wealth generated by the colonial-era silver trade. For sheer spectacle and beauty, head to Guanajuato, one of the most dramatic baroque cities in Mexico, where colonial-era houses and chapels seem practically stacked one on top of the other. To the north of the city center, the sandstone facade of the Chapel of San Cayetano is one of the most famous examples of Churrigueresque-style baroque design in Mexico. Mixed in, youâ™ll also see some impressive nineteenth-century neo-colonial buildings in Guanajuatoâ™s downtown, including the spectacular Teatro Juarez.⁹ You lived in Mexico for almost 10 years—what advice do you have for visitors about the local culture and customs? Mexican people are generally warm, welcoming, and polite, and the BajÃ-o is one of the friendliest regions in the country! Visitors who come with an open mind and a positive attitude will have the opportunity to really experience daily life in Mexico. Iâ™d also advise you to leave your watch at home—figuratively speaking, of course. When visiting small cities like San Miguel de Allende and Guanajuato, thereâ™s no reason to rush.¹⁰ Where can you find a great (but affordable) meal in San Miguel de Allende? Try Los Burritacos on Mesones. They make fresh flour tortillas and then stuff them with fillings like chicken in pipiÃn (pumpkin-seed sauce), poblano peppers and cream, or picadillo (seasoned ground beef.) They also make delicious aguas frescas in flavors like orange or guava. Here, you can try some diverse flavors and fill up your belly for under \$5.

We had a terrific trip to San Miguel & Guanajuato with this book. There are so many little gems hidden around the cities that we wouldn't have found without this guide--like the hot springs. The food recommendations are dead-on, too--fresh juices in the mornings with tamales, tacos, churros with chocolate, mole, nieves. I'm hungry just thinking about it, and can't wait to go back. It's a beautiful area, and a very relaxing vacation.

As with all Moon Guides, this is a very comprehensive guide which covers both well and lesser well

known area sights. And, I believe it's one of only a few guides covering this area in detail.

I was concerned that the age of this guidebook would minimize its usefulness but I found it helpful in both Guanajuato & San Miguel. Although there are new restaurants that aren't included here, many of the recommendations for eating are still valid. Strong on background for sights to visit. Always smart to double check hours places are open. Easy to use In an ebook format.

Great hand book for traveling to San Miguel and Guanajuato . Very informative. Recommend it highly! It made our trip so much more enjoyable!

Lots of good tips and suggested activities, places to eat and stay. Comprehensive and well organized. The other books I considered were far inferior to this one.

This book is essential for anyone planing a trip to this beautiful part of Mexico. Full of practical advice, interesting history, and well-organized. DOn't leave home without it .

The information is out of date and incomplete.

Arrived on time and seems really informative. I will update when I come back from the trip.

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