My Culture (Guatemala)

Guatemala is the country that has everything. Guatemala is known as the “Country of the Eternal Spring” around the world for its wonderful weather. In here anyone can experience the hot tropical weather in the plenty of lakes, beaches and forests, and can also have nice cool evenings in our winter. The average temperature in Guatemala City lies at about 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit. There is of course no snow there, the coldest it can get in the year on the city is no less the 50 Fahrenheit. On the other hand, for the people who like cold weather, there are some places in the west of Guatemala, located at really high altitudes like Xelaju, which can get down to 30 Fahrenheit.

Moving on to the geography, Guatemala is divided into twenty two states, with the capital being the state of Guatemala. There are four major lakes, with the biggest one being Lake Izabal, which has connection to the Atlantic ocean, then Lake Atitlan, Lake Flores and Lake Amatitlan. Guatemala is the home for many volcanoes and mountains. One of the most perfect-shaped volcanoes is there, called “El Volcan de Agua”, which stands for the water volcano. Thanks to all the beautiful and diverse flora and fauna found here in Guatemala, there are not many big developed cities in the country, and although there are many industries and huge companies, agriculture is our main source of work and income, and it has become part of our culture nowadays.

About 65% of the population in Guatemala is Native indigenous, descendents from the Mayans. They usually live on the inside of the country, and most of them work in the
There are about 21 different religions and groups of people in Guatemala, and 22 different dialects spoken. Besides Spanish, depending on the tribe the people belong to, they have their own polytheistic religion and their own dialect. What makes it hard for indigenous people to go live to the big cities is the fact that for most of them, Spanish is their second language, and they have a hard time trying to adapt to the city life and the new language, so most of them stay in their villages with their people. Guatemalan society is huge with rural legends. The people that live in the rural areas of Guatemala are known for being incredibly superstitious, and they make up stories for every supernatural event they see. Out of all those stories, many great writers from Guatemala and Central America have written books about the most popular ones.

Those stories became so famous that they are taught in schools (like mine), and are widely read. The climax of them was when the Guatemalan writer Miguel Angel Asturias wrote some books about them and then won the Nobel Prize of Literature on 1967, mainly for his book “Hombres de Maiz” (Men of Maize), which is about the conflict between the indigenous people of Guatemala who thought of Maize (corn) to be a sacred product, given that one of their greatest Gods was the God of Maize, and the people who just saw it as a commercial product.

Besides the Nobel Prize winner Miguel Angel Asturias, other famous Guatemalan people that give us a lot of pride are the soloist singer Ricardo Arjona, Latin American Idol winner Carlos Peña, hiker Jaime Viñals, and soccer player Carlos Ruiz. Ricardo Arjona is widely known around the world and has sold out stadiums and concerts in every Spanish-speaking country around the world. He is a poet and everyone that speaks Spanish and understands his songs loves him. He has won many awards, including Orgullosamente
Latino (Proudly latin) on 2006, for best soloist, Latin Grammy Award for Best pop male album (2006), and International Grammy award for Best Album Latin Pop (2007). Another singer, Carlos Peña froze Guatemala every Wednesday when he sang in Latin American Idol, and he won it the first time he participated, on 2007. Another Guatemalan figure is the hiker Jaime Viñals, who has climbed the top 10 highest mountains in the world, including the Mount Everest, where he left the Guatemalan Flag. Last but not least, the person everyone in Guatemala loves, the soccer player and top scorer Carlos Ruiz. Throughout his career he has played in a team in Guatemala, Mexico, United States (LA Galaxy, with David Beckham), and is now playing in Europe. He obviously plays in the Guatemalan Team, and on 2004, playing in the playoffs for the World cup, scored a goal against Costa Rica which was considered by ESPN the best goal of the year. Besides being a great goal, it was in a very important match, in which we defeated Costa Rica 3-0.