

# we all eat



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## Guatemala Tortillas for a Festival

Preparation for the April 4<sup>th</sup> festival of San Isidro, patron of farmers and of corn, beans and squash, the traditional Mayan crops. For each deity, the Maya adopted a parallel Catholic saint, as a way to preserve their religion and culture. The patron of *Joyabaj* is Maria de Transito, who corresponds to the goddess of the Moon.

These women are wearing the *guipiles* unique to the Xoy Maya; most are part of one extended family. The women in back are patting out the masa mixture of stone-ground cornmeal, water and lime; those in front are cooking the tortillas on three clay *comales*. (Some of these women are now dead, victims of the government's violence of the 1980s.) There are no better tortillas than handmade yellow corn ones, fresh from a clay *comal*.

--Tony Hoyt, *Peace Corps/Liberia, 1968-69; Peace Corps/Guatemala, 1974-75*

### **Guatemala (Republic of Guatemala)**

**Capital** Guatemala

**Population** 13,276,517 (2009 est.)

**Life Expectancy** 70.29 years

**Literacy** 69.1% (age 15 and over can read and write)

**Languages** Spanish 60%, Amerindian languages 40%

**Religions** Roman Catholic, Protestant, indigenous Mayan beliefs

**Government** constitutional democratic republic

Source: *The World Factbook, 2009*

Guatemala



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