



Ministerio de
Cultura y Deportes

Ministerio de
**Relaciones
Exteriores**

Guatemala, June 05 2026

FAITH, MEMORY, AND GUATEMALA'S ANCESTRAL CUISINE ADVANCE TOWARD UNESCO

The Government of Guatemala, through the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is promoting the inscription on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, of two Guatemalan heritage elements: "The Pilgrimage to the Black Christ of Esquipulas and its Cultural Manifestations" and "Knowledge and Practices in the Preparation of Recados of the Mayan Cultures in Guatemala."

These nominations seek to recognize cultural expressions that remain alive within communities and that, far from remaining in the past, they continue to be part of daily life, collective memory, and the cultural identity of this nation.

The Pilgrimage to the Black Christ of Esquipulas, whose nomination is being submitted on a regional basis together with Panama, is considered one of the most important religious and cultural pilgrimages in Mesoamerica. Every year, countless pilgrims travel long distances to the Basilica of Esquipulas in a manifestation that combines spirituality, oral tradition, music, popular commerce, gastronomy, and community forms of organization that have been passed down through generations.

The nomination of the Pilgrimage to the Black Christ seeks to safeguard not only the devotion experienced within it, but also the cultural practices that have emerged around it, transforming this journey into a space for encounter among communities, identities, and shared traditions that transcend borders.

The nomination of the Mayan Recados, for its part, is based on a system of culinary knowledge transmitted primarily through oral tradition within the Mayan communities of Guatemala. This knowledge encompasses ancestral techniques, local ingredients, traditional preparation methods, and practices linked to family, ceremonial, and community life.

Beyond their gastronomic dimension, recados represent a way of preserving historical memory, cultural identity, and the relationship with the natural environment. Their preparation involves knowledge and cultural practices that remain relevant in daily life, transmitted from generation to generation, and whose continuity depends directly on the communities that keep this tradition alive.



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Both nominations seek to strengthen the international recognition of the cultural expressions that form part of Guatemala's living heritage and to promote actions for their preservation and transmission to new generations.

The nomination files will be evaluated in upcoming sessions by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Currently, Guatemala has four elements inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including: Technique of making the giant kites of Santiago Sacatepéquez and Sumpango, inscribed in 2024; Holy Week in Guatemala, inscribed in 2022; and The Garifuna Language, Dance and Music, together with Rabinal Achí, inscribed in 2008.

We reaffirm our commitment to working together to preserve memory by protecting and promoting the cultural expressions of a heritage that does not remain in museums or archives, but continues to live in kitchens, pilgrimages, celebrations, and the everyday memory of communities, being passed down from generation to generation.