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Narrow street in Guanajuato, Mexico

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Several people climb a steep street between two multi-colored buildings. The narrow street has stairs of stone with electric wires stringing between the tops of the buildings.Guanajuato is a large city in the central highlands of Mexico. It was an important colonial city because of the area's large silver deposits. Silver continues to be a major export, while tourism and industry round out the balance of the economy. Because it was an important colonial site, the city boasts of lavish colonial architecture and a historic city center that is recognized by UNESCO for its cultural heritage. Guanajuato is also famous for one of the most important battles in the early push for independence. In 1810, Miguel Hidalgo led his ragtag peasant army to the rich city of Guanajuato. The undermanned Spanish garrison was routed and the surviving soldiers and many wealth citizens barricaded themselves in the granary. The insurgent army then lit the granary on fire, killing all the occupants. Ironically, the granary fire at Guanajuato may have actually slowed down the independence movement because many moderate Mexicans feared the violent insurgents more than the corrupt colonial officials.



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