



GLIMPSE OF GUATEMALA TOUR MARCH 8 - 16, 2024



- **ALDEA offers a unique, eye-opening, 8-day/8-night tour of the western highlands of Guatemala, the “Land of Eternal Spring.” Participants visit rural Mayan partner communities and experience Guatemala’s incredible beauty, vibrant culture, and breathtaking landscape around Antigua and Lake Atitlán.**



The tour is full of opportunities to meet local Mayans in their villages and learn of their struggles, sacrifices, and dreams of a better life for themselves and their children. See first-hand the positive changes in these indigenous communities where ALDEA has partnered to create lasting solutions to the persistent problems of poverty and inequality in rural Guatemala. Delve into the history of a people with extraordinary artistic and architectural creativity and sophistication. Witness the impact of colonization and religion on Guatemalan culture.

Participants from various areas and professions travel with ALDEA, forming strong bonds, and a shared commitment to improving the lives of rural Mayans.

Tour Highlights: (Day-by-day itinerary follows)

- Learn about ALDEA’s community development projects with Mayan partner villages.
- Discover daily activities of rural Mayans in their homes, learn their stories first-hand, and meet community leaders.
- Experience Guatemala’s thriving Mayan heritage and amazing legacy.
- Explore colonial Antigua and learn of its rich history.
- Experience one of Antigua’s famous Lenten processions.
- Relax surrounded by the mesmerizing beauty of volcano-ringed Lake Atitlán.
- See the Lake’s rich and fertile hills, fishermen, artists, traditional weaving, and daily activities.
- Walk the Mayan ruins of Iximché and witness a Mayan ritual.
- Enjoy delicious Guatemalan food and some of the best coffee in the world.
- Take advantage of shopping opportunities in Antigua, Santiago Atitlán, and San Juan La Laguna.

What’s Included:

- Extensive pre-tour information, trip coordination assistance, welcome packet, souvenir gift.
- Pick-up and shuttle to/from La Aurora Airport (GUA) in Guatemala City.
- Five nights at [Hotel Aurora](#) in Antigua, one night at Villa San Ricardo in Tecpán, and two nights at [Hotel Bambú](#) at Lake Atitlán.
- Daily breakfasts plus six lunches and seven dinners (including a special farewell dinner).
- Air-conditioned, chauffeured coaster bus for in-country trips; water and some snacks included.
- Bilingual guides/available translators, all excursions and entrance fees during group activities.
- Gratuities for meals, chauffeurs, local on-site guides, and hotel service.

Price per Person: \$1,900 double occupancy; \$2,200 single occupancy

What’s Not Included:

- Roundtrip air transportation.
- Items of a personal nature, e.g. souvenirs, laundry, extra snacks and drinks.
- Meals on Friday, March 8 and lunch on Friday, March 15.
- Cost of optional activities during free time.
- Travel medical insurance.

Deposit/Payments/Cancellations: \$500 deposit is due at the time of registration and the remaining balance (\$1,400 per person for double occupancy and \$1,700 for single occupancy) is due on **November 30, 2023**. If a participant cancels by November 30, 2023, they will receive a full refund of the amount paid. No refunds will be made for cancellations after November 30, 2023, unless the vacancy can be filled with a participant of equivalent occupancy. [Register and pay online here](#) through [ALDEAGuatemala.org](#).

Participation Details: The activity level for this trip is moderately difficult due to walking up to three miles at a time on cobblestones and uneven surfaces, walking up and down slopes; standing for periods of time; getting in and out of boats; and riding on bumpy roads. Tour is limited to 15 participants; all must be a minimum of 21 years of age. Participants are required to sign a liability waiver, to provide proof of COVID vaccination, and to have travel medical insurance coverage.

Travel Documents: A current U.S. passport is required. No visa is required for Guatemala visits of fewer than 90 days.

Climate: March weather in the Guatemalan Highlands is sunny, rain is unusual, daytime temperatures in 70s F, nights in the 50s.



Brief Day-by-Day Itinerary (Subject to Change):

Friday, March 8: Arrive at Guatemala City airport (GUA). Shuttle to colonial Antigua, check in at [Hotel Aurora](#).

Saturday, March 9: Antigua walking tour followed by tour orientation. After lunch, explore Antigua on your own. Pre-dinner discussion of Guatemala's social/political/economic situation with former U.S. Consul General/ALDEA board member.

Sunday, March 10: Experience Guatemalan Lenten procession, typical lunch/cooking and weaving demo/product display at local family home in San Antonio Aguas Calientes. Pre-dinner discussion of ALDEA's history and current program with ALDEA Executive Director.

Monday, March 11: ALDEA update in Chimaltenango by Executive Director of ABPD (ALDEA's Guatemalan sister organization), travel to two rural Mayan villages – one village with ALDEA-sponsored environmental and empowerment projects completed and one without projects. Overnight stay at rustic Villa San Ricardo in Tecpán – best local accommodations.

Tuesday, March 12: Guided visit of the pre-Columbian ruins of Iximché en-route to Lake Atitlán, check in at [Hotel Bambú](#). After lunch, join local guide Don Diego Chavez for tour of Santiago Atitlán's church, and rectory where the first U.S.-born priest to be beatified was murdered in 1981. Shopping opportunities. Possible "Maximón" encounter.

Wednesday, March 13: Optional early morning bird watching hike-to spot Quetzals (Guatemalan national bird). Mid-morning boat ride to San Juan La Laguna, witness the natural dye process at local weavers' cooperative, learn about coffee production by touring a local small plantation, see a demonstration of San Juan's unique painting style by a local artist. Free time in afternoon to relax at Hotel Bambú's pool, or shop in Santiago Atitlán.

Thursday, March 14: AM boat ride to Panajachel to meet our bus which will take us to visit another rural ALDEA village and participate with villagers in typical daily activities. Return to Antigua in time for dinner.

Friday, March 15: AM to mid-afternoon time to relax, shop, stroll in fascinating, colonial Antigua. Among many activity options: Visit a jade factory, handicrafts market, museum, or spa; participate in chocolate truffles workshop or cooking class, climb Pacaya Volcano, or get a massage in your hotel room. Late afternoon guided tour of the historic Casa Santo Domingo monastery followed by special dinner finale at the hotel's exquisite restaurant.

Saturday, March 16: Shuttle to Guatemala City airport for flight departures **OR** plan additional post-tour activity, e.g. famous Chichicastenango market, overnight to Tikal or Copan, Spanish language school, cooking class, or visit more of Antigua.

"June and I are very experienced travelers and this trip was one of our best. It is completely different to be a tourist versus truly experiencing a country and getting to know its people, history, and uniqueness. We got to understand how people in Mayan communities live and the transformation in their lives through the help of ALDEA and ABPD. I will never forget the side by side look at villages - before and after stoves, latrines, and clean water systems were installed. Our sensory input was flooded by smoking volcanos, jungles, challenging roads, native crafts, old Spanish churches, and beauty of Antigua and Lake Atitlan, and we shared these experiences with a fantastic group of people. The accommodations were beautiful and very comfortable. June and I are foodies and loved our meals at some very special restaurants and the typical Guatemalan food served during activities. We strongly recommend this tour."

— June and Brian Strunk, 2022 Tour Participants