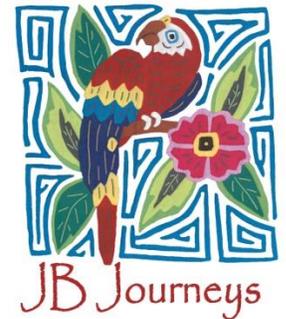


Guatemala - Culture & Culinary

Semana Santa – April 5 – 12, 2022



Considered one of the most colorful celebrations in the New World, processions and vigils are scheduled throughout Lent, and none are as beautiful and magical as those in Antigua, Guatemala, the lovely colonial city just one hour from the capitol. We have chosen to attend the amazing Palm Sunday procession, where thousands of men in purple Roman robes carry life sized - or larger - wooden figures, which tell the Easter story. The processions travel through the streets of Antigua, passing over elaborate, colorful alfombras, or carpets, made of flower petals and colored sawdust. This tradition has gone on for centuries; there is mention of it back to the 1500's.

Also in Antigua, we visit a small coffee co-op, part of a 'direct trade' project. One of the 30 growers in the co-op will show us around his or her small finca, where other crops are grown to feed the family. After visiting the farm, we walk to the farmer's home, we'll see how coffee is separated, roasted and ground, followed by lunch with the family. Our chocolate lesson will include some history served along with the beans which we will toast and grind, to make hot drinks and candies.



The Maya in Guatemala are known for their beautifully woven costumes, which differ from one village to the next. At the famous Chichicastenango Market, we will have the chance to see the variety and do some bargaining and shopping, before we continue to Lake Atitlan. On any list of 'most beautiful lakes in the world' will be Lake Atitlan, and you'll see why. Ringed by volcanoes and a number of indigenous villages, this is a stunning place. One morning will be spent on the lake, learning about the villages, the people and the interesting geography.

We will have tasted some interesting foods in Guatemala, and we have a chance to learn a few cooking secrets in the kitchen of one of Antigua's restaurants.

Much of our tour is on foot, really the easiest way to get around the cobble-stoned streets of these old towns. We'll also walk among coffee bushes in the De La Gente fincas. We recommend this itinerary for those comfortable with lots of walking, and it can be hot this time of year.

Day 1 - Tuesday (D)

Arrive Guatemala today by 12:30 pm. (see flight suggestions) You will be met by our driver for the one hour transfer to Antigua, the ancient capitol. (Arrivals later than 12:30 pm, will be by separate transfer, possibly at an additional charge.)

Our home in Antigua will be **Hotel Los Pasos**, a small hotel in the old city. Hotel Los Pasos is located on the legendary Calle de Los Pasos, two blocks from the Temple of San Francisco, one block from Escuela de Cristo, and only minutes from the central park of Antigua. The hotel is in an old colonial house with wide corridors and colorful



gardens. Each room is decorated in a unique style with beautiful textiles and crafts from the area. Rooms have TV, wi-fi, safe, telephone and minibar.

Around 3:00 pm we'll gather in the lobby for a walking tour, which focuses on the city's history, cultural trends, and restoration efforts. We visit the City Hall Palace, Palace of the Captain's General, the Cathedral with its majestic ruins, and the best museums in town at Paseo de los Museos in the Santo Domingo Hotel complex. Our tour ends at a local restaurant for a traditional dinner.

Day 2 - Wednesday (B, L)

After breakfast, we will meet in the lobby for our visit to San Miguel Escobar (just outside Antigua) and the coffee *fincas* (farms) of **De la Gente**, a direct trade coffee co-op.



Wear comfortable shoes as we walk to the farmer's patch of nutrient-rich soil, just below the volcano, and gain a whole new perspective on your daily cup of java. Here we will witness the steps involved as they explain how to pick, process and roast your coffee.



Then we continue to the village and to the farmer's home, where he or she demonstrates how they separate the freshly picked coffee fruit by density, husk the fruit, ferment and wash the beans, dry them, remove the inner hull, sort by size, color and grade, roast the beans, and – finally – taste. Experience the difference between traditional and modern roasting and brewing techniques. De

la Gente provides coffee farmers with training and support that enable them to create profitable, marketable products, thereby allowing them to improve their quality of life and help their communities in an environmentally and economically sustainable way.

And then we join the farmer and family for a typical lunch. This truly is an example of sustainable tourism.
Dinner on your own

Day 3 - Thursday (B, D)



This morning, we'll depart the hotel for two nights on Lake Atitlan. You can leave some of your luggage at Hotel los Pasos if you wish. If you do, be sure to lock and label your remaining bag.

Around 9:00 am, we'll board the van for the 2 - 2.5 hour drive to Chichicastenango Market. When we arrive, we'll orient ourselves and set a meeting time and place for departure. You will have the day shop at the market, visit the church and cemetery. Lunch on your own.

Market day in "Chichi" is a mad orgy of sights,

sounds, and smells. Maya craft sellers from across the highlands set up makeshift booths around the central plaza, spilling over on to sidewalks, the church steps, and up various side streets. A broad selection of Guatemalan handicrafts is available, including carved-wood masks and religious figures, ceramic wares, and an immense selection of the country's amazing native textiles. In addition to the craftworks, vendors sell fruits, vegetables, flowers, medicinal herbs, and more.



*The **Iglesia de Santo Tomás** was built by Dominican priests more than 450 years ago on top of an ancient Maya worship site. It remains the heart and soul of Chichicastenango and -- to this day -- is used as much for traditional Maya ceremonial purposes as it is for Catholic Mass. Local Maya can almost always be found on the steps leading up to the church, burning copal incense and candles, and offering prayer. Each of the 18 steps represents one of the months in the Maya calendar. Rather than the expected pews, you'll find makeshift shrines and altars spread out on the floor with pine needles and candles. It was in the church's convent that the oldest known copy of the ancient **Popol Vuh, the Maya holy book**, was discovered.*

*Chichicastenango's **cemetery** is filled with brightly painted mausoleums and above-ground crypts. It is very photogenic and atmospheric, and with luck you may witness a shaman ceremony, which is quite fascinating. Feel free to wander but be respectful of the situation.*

Around 3 or 4:00 pm, we'll meet up with our driver and continue to Panajachel on Lake Atitlan, about 1 hour.

We will stay two nights at **Jenna's River B&B** just outside the town of Panajachel, with spectacular views of the lake. Once checked in, Jenna will serve us dinner. She is well known for her creativity in the kitchen, and her breakfasts are also delicious.

Jennifer Bigman, a world citizen, has been in Guatemala for around 30 years, most of that time running a funky B&B in Panajachel. A couple of years ago she moved to a beautiful location just outside of town. Instead of rooms, we'll be sleeping in yurts, but possibly the nicest yurts you've seen, decorated with local furniture and colorful textiles. Each yurt has a small porch with views of the volcanos and lake, creative baths (hot water), and electricity. Jennifer is a great source of information about the area, as well as a character!

Day 4 - Friday (B, L)

Aldous Huxley famously claimed that **Lake Atitlán** was "the most beautiful lake in the world. Formed thousands of years ago in the crater of a massive volcano, Lake Atitlán is more than 10 miles across at its widest point. It sits at nearly a mile high in altitude, and is surrounded on all sides by steep, verdant hills, picturesque Maya villages, and massive volcanoes with striking pointed cones. The views from the lakeshore, the hillsides above the lake, and the boats plying its waters are all stunning, and seemingly endlessly varied, as the light and cloud cover shift constantly throughout the day. Our morning boat trip takes us around the lake to visit two villages. In San Juan la Laguna, we'll visit a women's weaving coop and learn the traditional methods of dying threads and using back-strap looms to create beautiful textiles. We'll have the opportunity to see inside the home of one of the weavers, as we are invited for lunch.



Later we'll head to Santiago to see other crafts and traditions, returning to the dock in the afternoon. Dinner on your own.

Day 5 – Saturday (B)

This morning is free in the area, lunch on your own. If anyone is interested, we'll take a tuk-tuk to Santa Catarina and visit a pottery factory and see another of the crafts of the area. Early afternoon, we will depart for the return ride to Antigua.

Back to Los Pasos and dinner on your own.

Day 6 - Palm Sunday



After breakfast, we head to the main square and join a walking tour to witness the Palm Sunday procession, known as *La Reseña*, which departs from La Merced church. About 4,000 participate in this majestic procession, carrying a wooden Christ which was sculpted in 1650, and the procession has occurred since that year.

The rest of the day is free. There will be lots going on in the town this day and we can see the procession in different parts of town. Lunch and dinner on your own.

Day 7 - Monday (B, D)

Holy vigils, or *velaciones*, take place in the churches around town and we'll visit the spectacular display at La Merced. Additional *alfombras* are created inside the church, in front of the altars, surrounded by candles.



We'll then walk to **ChocoMuseo** to learn about **cacao** and **chocolate**, the production process and history of cacao since the Maya, 1000 years ago, and then make your own chocolate, right from the cacao beans!

Lunch on your own.

This evening we will learn a bit more about the traditional foods of Guatemala, with a cooking class in a local restaurant. We will learn the preparation of Guatemalan cuisine and then enjoy the meal we have prepared.



Day 8 - Tuesday (B)

We'll depart for the airport about 3.5 hours before flight.

Note: The order & sites visit may vary due to weather, road conditions, and other factors beyond our control.

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Interested in visiting Tikal before or after our trip? We recommend you plan early due to Holy Week. Let us know!



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Minimum 6 people, maximum 10 people. Escorted by Jean Warneke of JB Journeys.

Cost for 2022: \$1450 per person in double occupancy, based on 10. With 8: \$1495; with 6: \$1550.

Single supplement \$395 (very limited) *Singles are either a double room at single rate or a smaller room.*

Included:

- Transportation as listed by van (note much of our visits will be walks)
- Seven nights in B&B with taxes included.
- Daily breakfast
- Bi-lingual local guides
- Visits on excursions as listed with entry fees
- Two lunches, three dinners, with gratuities
- Basic gratuities to guides, drivers

Not Included:

- International airfare (to Guatemala City)
- Meals not listed
- Gratuities at hotels, breakfast
- Drinks during meals
- Personal Insurance

To confirm your spot, please complete the reservation form and return to JB Journeys with your deposit of \$500 per person. Final payment will be due January 15, 2022.

We accept all credit cards or payment by check.

Suggested flights (with connections from other cities) to arrive Guatemala City-GUA-on April 5, depart April 12*

United from/to Houston IAH

- United 1751 depart Houston 9.45 am, arrive Guatemala City 12.35 am
- United 1903, departing Guatemala 12:30 pm, arrive Houston 4.34 pm

Or Delta from/to Atlanta

- Delta 904, departs Atlanta 10.37 am, arrives Guatemala 1.11 pm
- Delta 906, departs Guatemala 1.21 pm, arrives Atlanta 6:45 pm

Or American from/to Miami

- AA 2241, departs Miami 10.55 am, arrives Guatemala 12:49 pm
- AA 2359, departs Guatemala 1:44 pm, arrives Miami 5.34 pm

** Flight numbers and times may change*