



# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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## LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL

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# AVOCADO TOUR




At only 20 minutes from Antigua, take part in the amazing Avocado Tour! Learn more about the cultivation of this heavenly fruit, enjoy being surrounded by an avocado paradise and learn how to prepare your own guacamole!









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# BIKE TOUR

Come with us to know the villages and landscapes that surround La Antigua Guatemala in this entertaining and active tour. With your personal guide from La Unión, you will learn about the different picturesque sites that you will encounter on the tour.



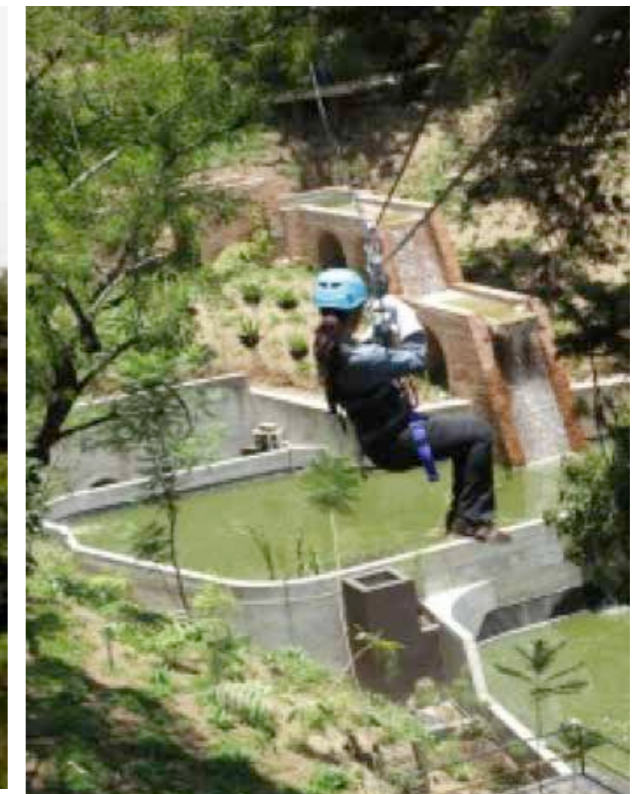
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# CANOPY

El canopy or zipline is an entertaining experience for lovers of extreme sport and adventure tourism. No matter your age, you can enjoy this fun adventure that will lead you up in the air, where you will be able to watch the city of Antigua Guatemala and its nature from up high.



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# CERRO DE LA CRUZ




In this tour you will discover one of the most beautiful mirador of the region. From which you can admire the beauty of the colonial city of Antigua Guatemala, its architecture and the valley surrounded by scenic villages and impressive volcanoes. A short 10 minutes hike, it is an ideal site to meditate or simply relax while enjoying the view.









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# CERRO SAN CRISTÓBAL




In this activity we will take a short ride up 1,850 above sea level, in the village of San Cristobal el Alto located on top of a mountain just a few kilometers away from La Antigua Guatemala. Cerro San Cristóbal is an eco-restaurant, organic farm and cocktail bar with a terrace that offers a flabbergasting view over the Valley of Panchoy where the colonial city of Antigua is located and the volcanoes and mountains surrounding it. Apart from relaxing, enjoy the spectacular view, having a drink on terrace or try one the organic dishes of the restaurant, you can tour the organic farm, the orchid garden or the chapel of the Mayan deity of Maximón.









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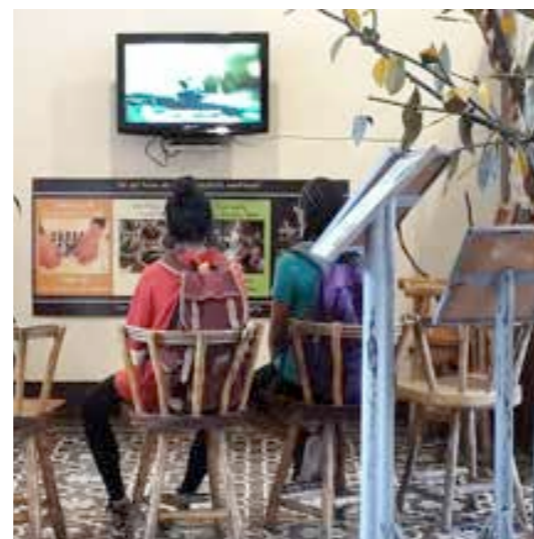
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# CHOCO MUSEO

In the ChocoMuseo, you will be able to find and get a sample of the panoply of different beverages, sweets and varied products made of cacao. You will also find a small museum explaining the history of cacao, how its seeds are processed and the importance of this product in the Guatemalan culture. Archeological research has demonstrated that the cacao was once used as money of exchange. However, its main uses were as a ceremonial beverage and in special rituals of the Mayan cosmivision.



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# CHOCOLATE FABRIC

San Juan del Obispo is a colonial village located on the outskirts of La Antigua Guatemala on the slopes of the Volcano Agua and known for its cultural and ecological tours as well as its promotion of community tourism. San Juan del Obispo is famous for some specialties, including chocolate. During this interactive activity, you will learn about the history and importance of cacao in Guatemala and the Mayan culture. In addition, you will be able to participate in the whole process of the elaboration of chocolate, from the transformation of cacao, to the confection of your own chocolate tablet and concluding with the tasting of a delicious chocolate to drink. While in San Juan del Obispo, you can also visit a local artisanal wine factory where you can discover more than 40 different wines made from fruits and products of the region.



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# CLAY HANDICRAFT

In the splendid village of San Cristobal El Alto, there is a peculiar tradition: handicraft in clay. During this workshop, local artisans will teach you everything about clay, its role in their family, how it can be worked and why they are passionate about it. You will get to conceive, elaborate and paint your own piece to bring back home. In the quietness of a magnificent garden, let your imagination create your own piece of handicraft in clay and enjoy a delicious snack prepared by the artisans before leaving this charming place.



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# COFFEE TOUR


If you are a coffee lover, you need to experiment the coffee tour and museum of the cultural center of Jocotenango. During the tour of the coffee museum, you will learn about the mystery and history of coffee, its process and production. In addition, you can visit the Casa K'ojom, showcasing a display of instruments used by the Mayans and the Rincón Sacatepéquez, with an exhibition on different communities of the department. The tour also includes a walk through the nature of the plantation and in the store you can try the delicious gourmet coffee made with grains grown on the plantation.





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# COOKING CLASS



In this cooking class, you can enjoy an ingenious and interesting experience through the history, preparation and tasting of a variety of typical dishes through the active and dynamic participation of each person. This cooking class is an initiative that arises with the main motivation of making known the customs, traditions and dishes of typical Guatemalan food. Their interactive workshop is committed to the preservation of the traditional Guatemalan cuisine inherited from the ancestors throughout the years. The 100% Guatemalan dishes elaborated during the cooking class are pepián, jocón, subanik, kaquik and tamales colorados. During the class, you will enjoy working together as a team to elaborate the main dish, rice, tortillas and a dessert while savoring the typical Rosa de Jamaica and some tasty wine. You will enjoy having a drink on the rooftop terrace of the house to contemplate the surrounding mountains and lively neighborhood of Jocotenango. After the class, you will all enjoy your typical meal together in the warm and lively atmosphere of a family dinner.









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# EARTH LODGE

Earth Lodge is an eco-friendly lodge and avocado farm, located 8km outside of Antigua and 6000 feet into the mountains above Antigua Guatemala. Earth Lodge is a unique and wonderful natural retreat famous for its volcano views, delicious home cooked meals, magical tree houses and relaxing atmosphere. On Sundays, you can also enjoy live music concerts!



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# ECO TOUR VUELTA GRANDE

Vuelta Grande is an indigenous rural community located 25 minutes from Antigua in the hollow of the mountains. This absolutely unique tour will allow you to experience the lifestyle of the inhabitants of the community by visiting the village and sharing a simple meal with a local family. You will also hike in the mountains and their nature with a guide from the village that will let you know everything about the daily life in Vuelta Grande.



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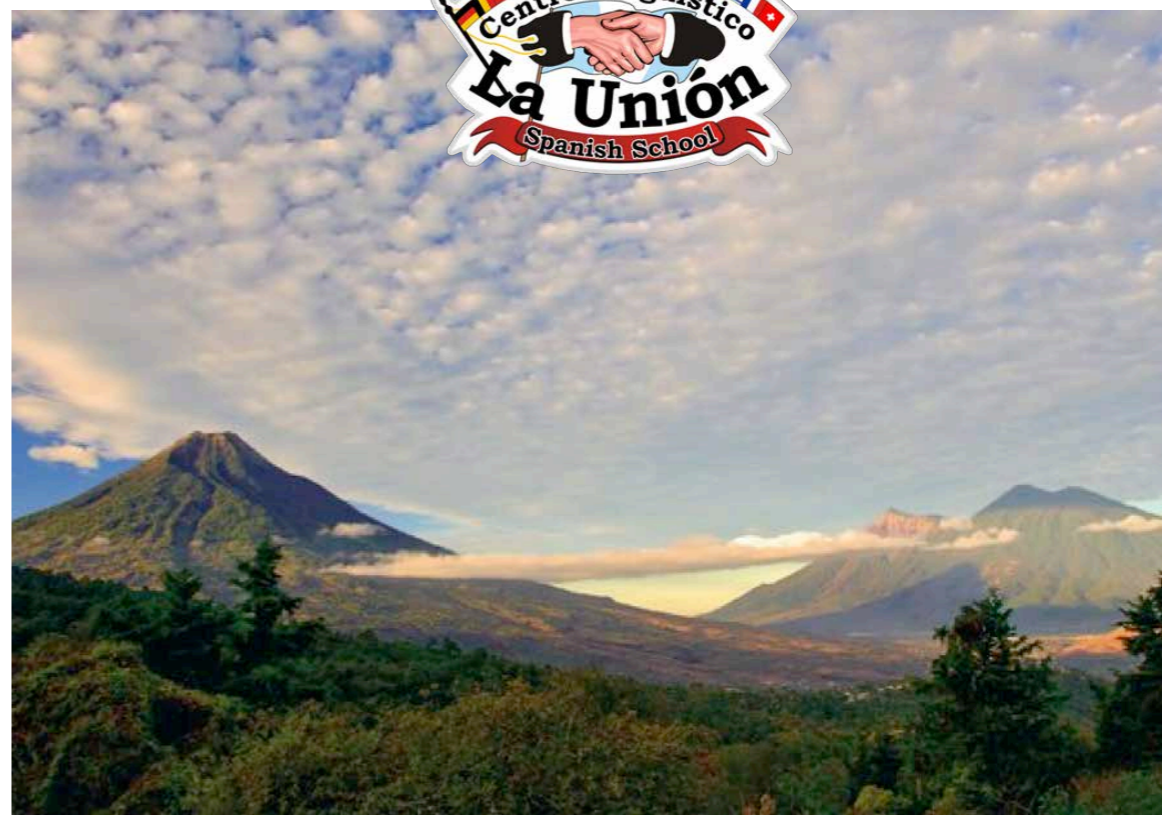
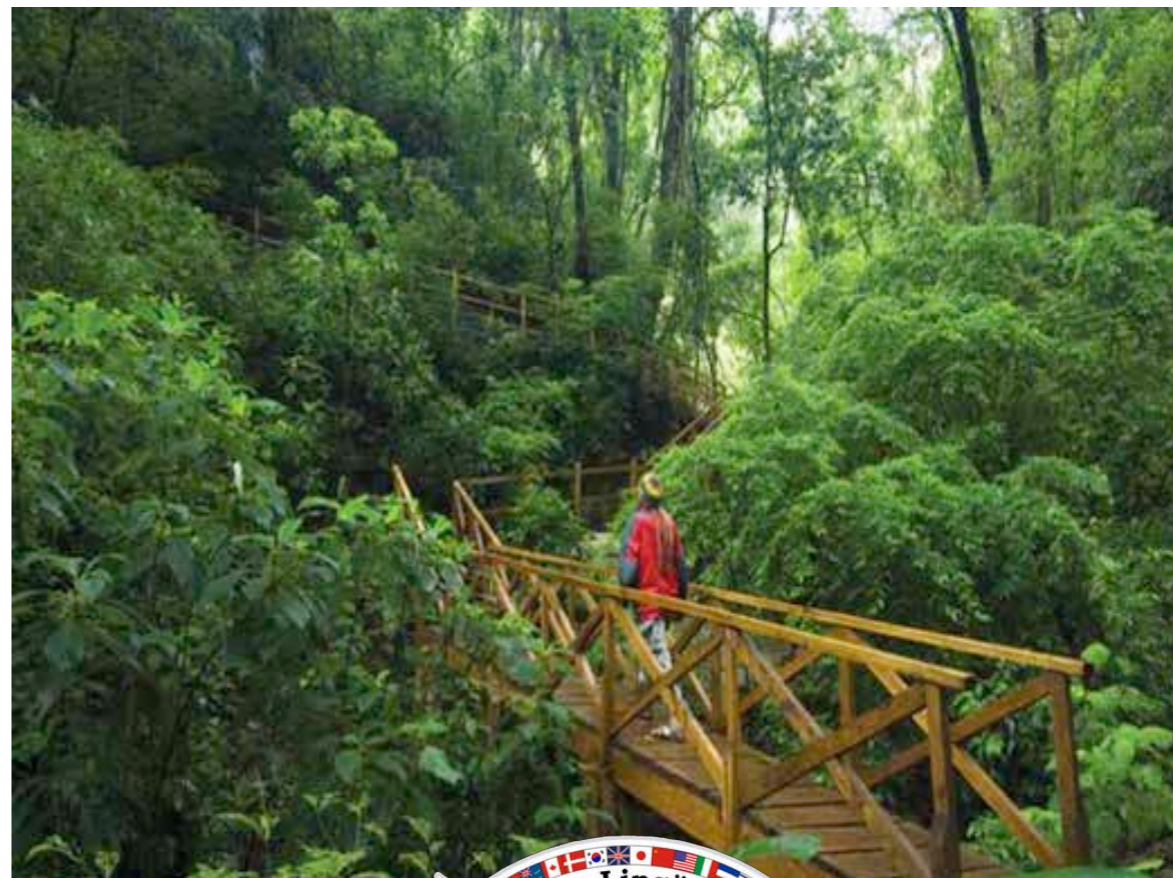
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# FINCA EL PILAR

Finca El Pilar, also known as The Blue Paradise, is a natural reserve that protects different types of forests. It is the ideal site to realize different activities such as trekking, bird observation, mountain bike or natural pools. From there you can ascend to the summit of Cerro El Cucurucho, the highest summit of La Antigua Guatemala.



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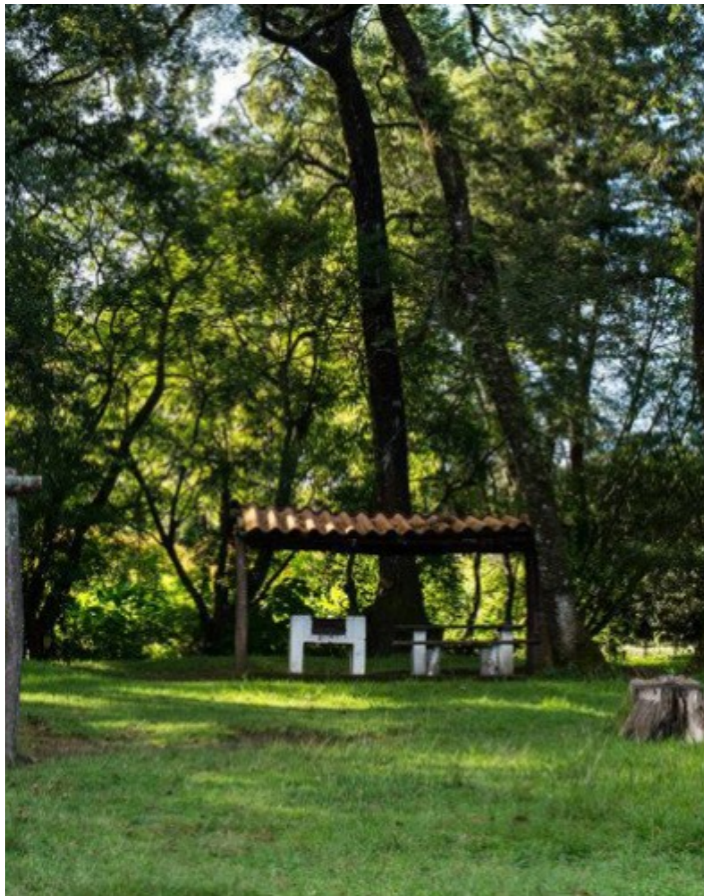
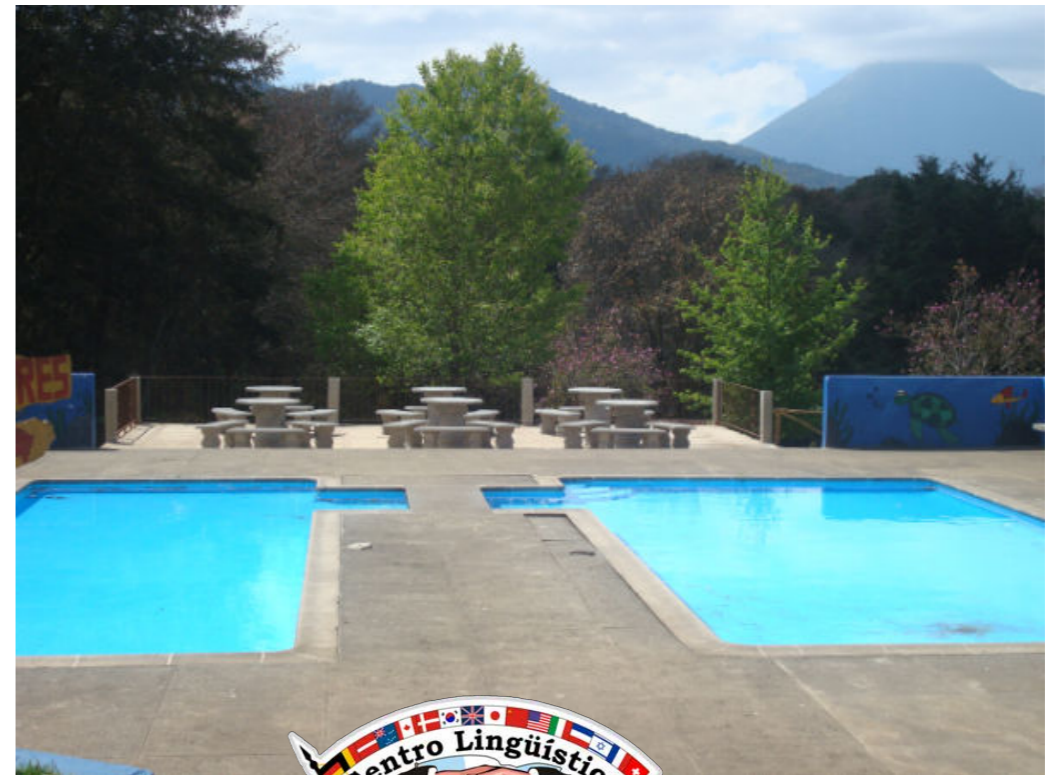
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# FINCA FLORENCIA




La Finca Florencia was opened in the 1930's. The name comes from Florencia Salazar, the father of the lawyer and notary Filadelfo Salazar who gave the finca to the municipality of Antigua in 1954. In Finca Florencia visitors can enjoy green environments and walking trails, an artificial lake, pools and fields of football, basketball and volleyball.









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# FISHING TRIP




You are a lover of fishing? Guatemala is one of the largest breeding grounds for Pacific sailfish and boasts one of the highest concentrations of sails in the world. Experiment one day sailfish experience in the Pacific Ocean. The tour includes transportation, a well-trained crew, an experienced captain, a first class boat, all the necessary gear and bait, a sandwich, water and beer.









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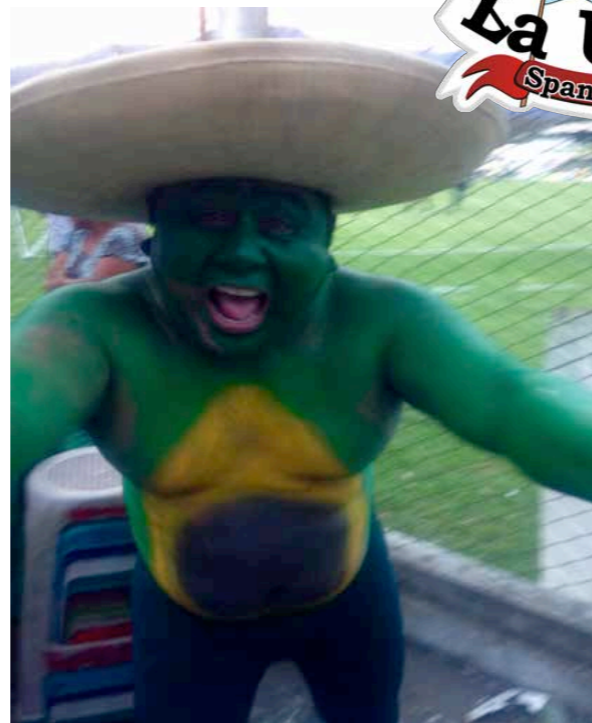


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# PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL GAME


Come enjoy a professional football game of Antigua GFC, the official team of La Antigua Guatemala. Practice your Spanish with popular expressions and songs!!!





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# GARBAGE DUMP

During this very unique tour, you will have the opportunity to discover the reality of the communities who live in extreme poverty in the site of the garbage dump of Guatemala City. You will be able to observe the landfill from the General Cemetery of the city as well as to enjoy a tour of a school, a center of educative reinforcement, a program of alphabetization for adults and an initiative of recycled jewelry made up for the community by a social organization. It is possible that the visitors experiment difficult and moving scenes throughout the tour. A local guide will accompany to provide you with historic and cultural information about this striving community.



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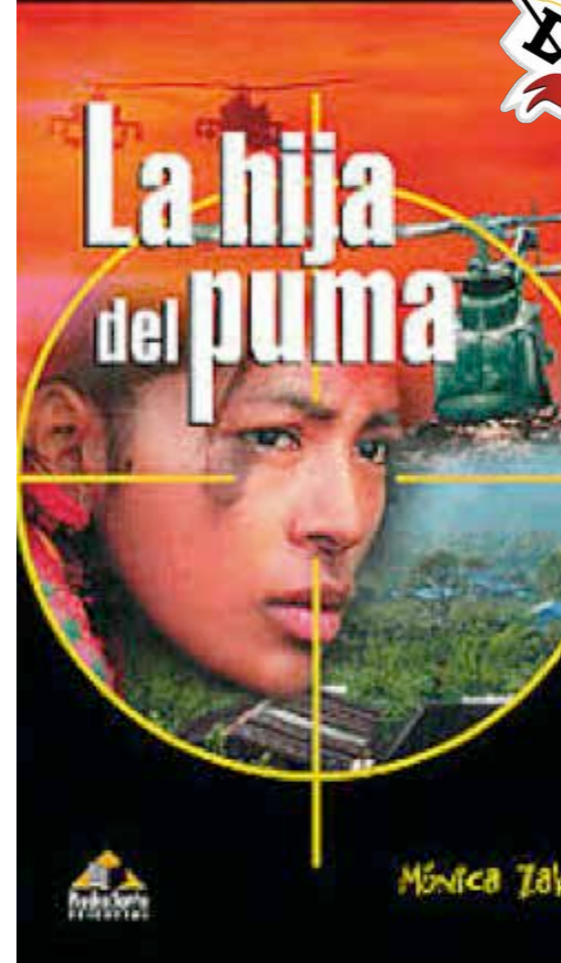
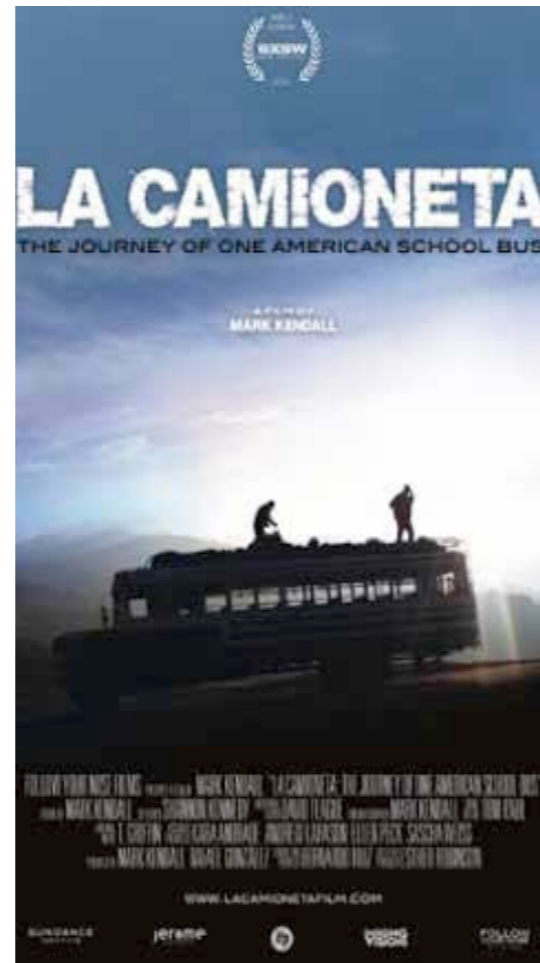
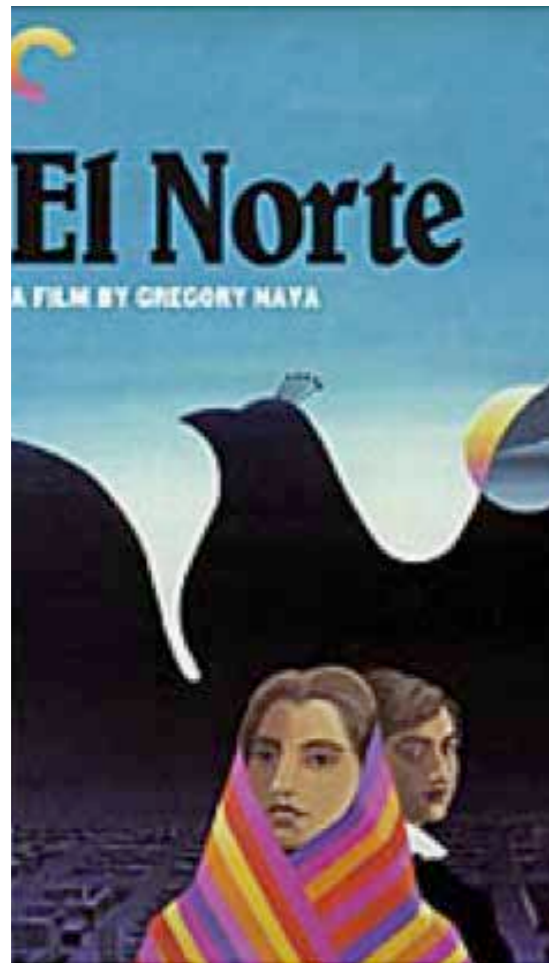
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# GUATEMALAN MOVIE

In this activity, we invite you for a cinema afternoon to learn about the culture and history of Guatemala through the 7th art, while practicing your Spanish. We have delicious poporopo to accompany your film!



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
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# HISTORY TOUR OF CIUDAD VIEJA

Being the second capital of Guatemala founded by the Spaniards in the XVI<sup>th</sup> Century on the slopes of the Volcano Agua, Ciudad Vieja has a lot to tell. During this tour, you will wander the streets of this village located 10 minutes from La Antigua Guatemala to admire its landscape between volcanoes, learn about its unique history and tragic destiny as well as feel the vibe of this proud town full of life, traditions and surprises. Besides discovering its hidden ruins, its majestic cathedral and the liveliness of its *plazuela*, you will learn about the one-of-a-kind custom of the 24 Devils that takes place every December and that is considered as a World Heritage by the UNESCO.



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# HOBBITENANGO




Get to know one of the most particular restaurants of Antigua Guatemala. It is located 25 minutes drive from the center of the colonial city, in the indigenous rural community of Vuelta Grande. Up on the top of the mountains, you will enjoy the incredible views that Hobbitenango has to offer. This eco restaurant and hotel is inspired by the house of the Hobbits of the movie Lord of the Ring. If they are not occupied, you may be able to sneak it. This special site is visited both by locals and foreigners, who come to enjoy the views and spend some time relaxing in a natural and peculiar atmosphere.









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# HOW TO MAKE TORTILLAS

This activity is a cultural experience unique of Guatemala, during which you will discover the history of mais, its colors, the legends surrounding it and its importance in the Guatemalan culture. You will get to learn how to *tortear* and cook the tortillas in the comal, before eating them with guacamole and frijoles.



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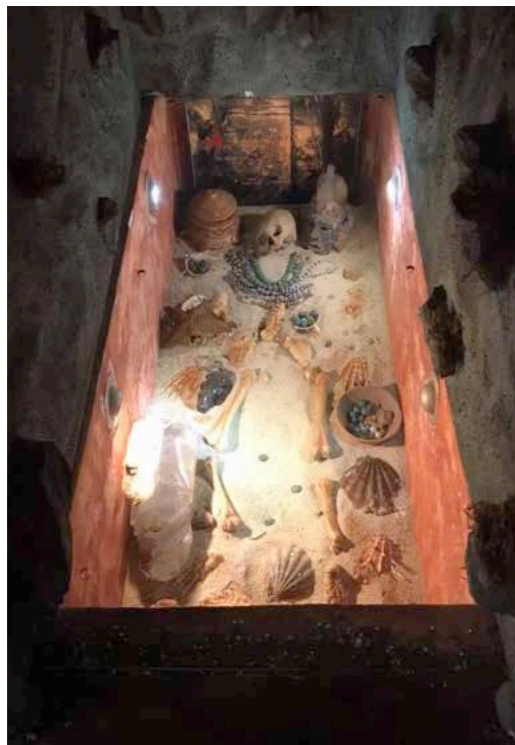
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# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL

# JADE FABRIC

Jade is a precious stone full of mystery. Only two countries in the world produce jade of the jadeite type, the most precious and pure, and these countries are Burma and Guatemala. During this tour, you will learn how to recognize real jade, and discover the fabulous history of this gem of extreme cultural importance for the Mayans. You will be able to know the process to elaborate jade jewels and observe magnificent jewelry inspired by this precious stone.



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# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL

# MACADAMIA PLANTATION

Come to live an experience surrounded by nature and lots of macadamia nuts! During the tour, you will learn about the process of cultivation and preparation of this special nut used for the elaboration of chocolate, crepes, soaps and oil for the care of the skin. At the end of the tour, you will be able to savor macadamia nut chocolates and enjoy a facial massage with macadamia oil.



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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL



# MAKE YOUR OWN JADE JEWEL



In Xibalba Joyas, learn about the fascinating history of jade and participate in a workshop to discover the different processes of cutting, carving and polishing this precious stone and be part of its elaboration. As the Mayans said, *Jade is a gift for eternity*. The jewels are a mystic fusion between beauty and style, pre-Hispanic and colonial pieces combined with high jewelry. Jade stones transmit their magic from the moment they look at you, diffusing light and inspiration. In Xibalba Joyas you will know them, fall in love with them and learn to admire their origin and highlight their natural form. During the Xibalba workshop, you will experience the designing, carving, polishing, drilling and cleaning of your jewel. You will first choose your own stone from a selection, then select your design to make earrings, a necklace or a bracelet. The next step is to carve, polish and drill the piece perfectly before an ultrasonica cleaning of your jewel. You will finally get an unique piece of jade made by you to take home !





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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



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# MARIMBA CLASS



Marimba is a wooden xylophone originating from Africa and the national instrument of Guatemala. It is steeped in centuries of traditions as the earliest records reveal that the marimba has been played by the Maya in Mesoamerica since 1680. It was used for ceremonial dancing, religious and social celebration, and usually played by men. The instrument is made of wood that comes from the tree hormigo, that can be found among other things on the Volcano Pacaya. It is considered as an official patriotic symbol of Guatemala since 1999. Take a marimba class to immerse you in the culture of Guatemala!






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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL

# MAXIMÓN

Maximón is a syncretic Mayan deity emblematic of Guatemala associated to both catholic saints such as Judas and gods of the Mayan *cosmovisión*. Maximón is a character of great importance in Guatemala since he is the object of a religious cult for indigenous communities and he is also considered as an icon of the national cultural identity. The origins of Maximón date back to the Mayan mythology, when he was known as Rilaj Maam or *El Gran Abuelo*. With time, he went on to be recognized as Maximón and considered as an ancestral deity with the power of serving as intermediate between the earthly and the divine. In Mayan beliefs, people attribute him powers of healing, love, protection against danger, success in business etc. When people come to the figure of Maximón, they donate him various offerings to guarantee the fulfillment of their requests. Among these offerings are money, liquor, candles, tobacco and food. The deity of Maximón is constituted by the duality of good and evil, so that those who venerate him adore him and fear him at the same time. During this tour, we visit the house of cult of Maximón in the Mayan village of San Andres Itzapa, 45 minutes from Antigua, to learn more about this peculiar belief and tradition as well as to observe the different rituals that are performed on the site. It is a truly unique experience that will transport you to another world and arouse your curiosity.



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# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL



# MAYAN ACTIVITY




In this interesting and entertaining activity, you will learn about the different traditions and customs of Guatemala in a cooperative of Mayan women in the village of Santiago Zamora in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, renowned internationally for its special weaving technique of *doble brocado*. You will discover more about weaving, traditional dances, the customs related to weddings, how to make tortillas and the cultivation of coffee. In addition, you will have the chance to experience the ceremonial Guatemalan meal per excellence, the *pepián*!









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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL

# MEDICINAL PLANTS

In Guatemalan culture, there are many beliefs around the use of natural medicine to cure and prevent diseases and ills. In this very interesting activity perfect for curious people eager for new knowledge, a local shaman will explain the different uses and properties of the medicinal plants of Guatemala. Superstition or reality? It is yours to discover!



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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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# NIGHT TOUR OF ANTIGUA'S RUINS



During this activity, we will tour La Antigua Guatemala at night to appreciate the beauty of its illuminated ruins and learn about the history and architecture of each one.









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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL



# PAINTBALL




You like adrenaline and adventure? This excursion is made for you. With first class equipment and an impressive playfield, you will enjoy an amazing and exciting paintball game in the middle of the Guatemalan forest!









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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



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# PHOTO TOUR




La Antigua Guatemala and its surrounding villages have such scenic and interesting landscapes and architecture. During this photo tour and a professional photographer will guide through the best secret spots to take amazing photos of Antigua, its landscapes, people and uniqueness.









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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



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# POOLS




Santa Catarina Barahona is located at 20 minutes drive from La Antigua. On a hot and sunny afternoon, what is better than enjoying some time at the pool! During this activity, you will experiment the different pools of Santa Catarina Barahona while enjoying the view over the volcanoes and the surrounding villages.









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# PRESENTATION OF TYPICAL SWEETS, FRUITS OR VEGETABLES

This is the perfect activity for students eager to discover Guatemalan flavors while learning about typical gastronomy, the benefits of local food for the health and the role of these products for the country and its people. For this special interactive activity, your Spanish teacher will help you prepare a short presentation on a typical Guatemalan fruit, sweet or vegetable that you will introduce together with other students in a fun exhibition before all sharing and tasting together the different products exposed. Your teacher will accompany you to the market to buy your fruit, sweet and vegetable so that you can practice negotiating with locals at the same time. This activity is ideal to practice your Spanish, improve your speaking fluency, awaken your taste buds and share with new friends!




# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES


LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL


# RUINS OF SAN FRANCISCO


The ruins of the convent of San Francisco is one of the most popular sites of La Antigua Guatemala and Central America because of its interesting history and scenic landscape. With the earthquake of 1773, the temple and convent of San Francisco suffered severe damages and the convent was completely ruined. Actually, the temple of San Francisco is also the Sanctuary of Santo Hermano Pedro, the first Saint of Guatemala and Central America venerated around the world. The tour includes the visit of the ruins where you will be able to take amazing pictures and the museum of Santo Hermano Pedro.





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**CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**  
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# SALSA CLASS

Salsa classes are very popular in Guatemala and throughout Latin America. Learn and practice salsa and merengue with professional dance teachers. The class includes presentation and practice of basic steps and a lot of fun!



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# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

















LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL

# SCAVENGER HUNT

We have prepared a very special and interesting activity for you to discover La Antigua Guatemala's hidden treasures, architecture, history, culture and must see, eat and do! Participate in our scavenger hunt and you will learn quite a lot of original facts and compelling sites while touring the streets of the colonial city and getting to practice your Spanish by speaking and sharing with locals. You can do the scavenger hunt with the help of your Spanish teacher and if you succeed getting the greatest number of correct answers, we have a special reward for you!



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**CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**  
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# SERPENTARIO

The Serpentario is the result of a passion to unite two worlds – that of humans and that of slippery scaly reptiles and amphibians. In this amazing museum of reptiles and amphibians, you will have the chance to learn about these exotic animals and you may even have the opportunity to touch them!



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# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



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# SPORT ACTIVITY




Come and spend an afternoon of fun with the staff, teachers or families of La Unión during which we will play football together, the national sport of Guatemala which is almost a religion as well!









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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES


LA UNIÓN SPANISH SCHOOL


# TENEDOR DEL CERRO


Tenedor del Cerro is an artistic complex and restaurant located on top of a mountain with a view on Antigua. This tour combines nature with art and culture. You will be able to visit the different museums that form part of this original and surprising center and take some time to relax on one of its terrace or enjoy a cocktail from its famous restaurant. In addition, you will visit Casa Santo Domingo, a former convent that is now a luxury hotel combining modernity and antique ruins.





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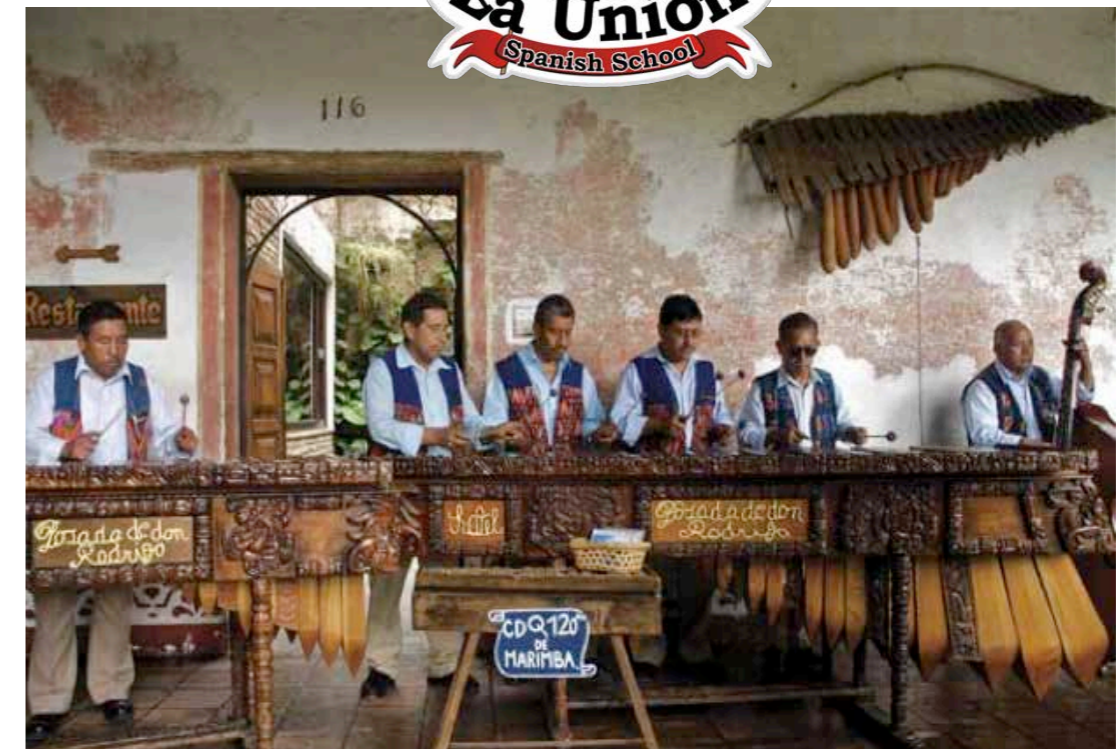


# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



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# TOUR FOLKLORIC NIGHT




Tour the most important sites of the colonial city at the sunset. You will be able to enjoy its architecture and nice cobblestone streets, before enjoying a typical Guatemalan dish and a nice folkloric show with the Dance of the Moros and traditional marimba music.









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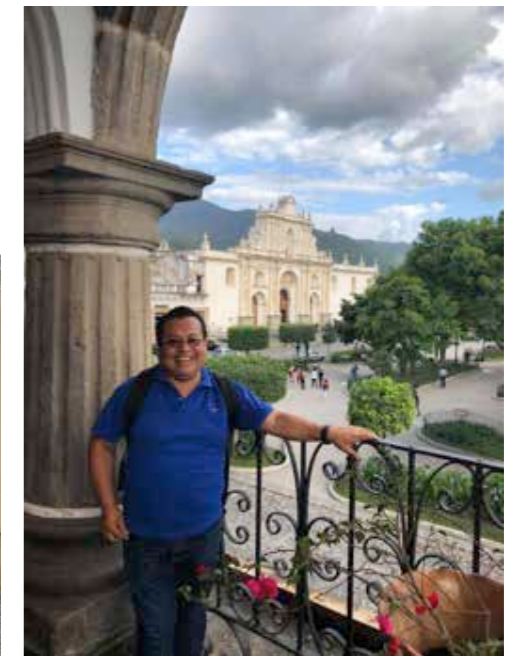
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# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



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# TOUR OF ANTIGUA




This tour is your best introduction to La Antigua Guatemala, its amazing sceneries, intriguing histories and colorful culture. During this guided walking tour, we will visit the Church of San Francisco and home of the tomb of Santo Hermano Pedro, the famous Tanque de La Unión also known as the Park of Love, the Parque Central and its sumptuous architecture, the Calle del Arco which is the landmark of the city, the Church of La Merced with its sumptuous Guatemalan baroque architecture and the municipal market of Antigua always full of life and a feast for the eyes.









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# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



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# TOUR OF GUATEMALA CITY




During this tour, you will learn about the socio-cultural reality and the history of the capital city of Guatemala while visiting the Palacio Nacional, the Metropolitan Cathedral, the Mapa en Relieve and the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology.









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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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# VILLAGES TOUR

La Antigua Guatemala is surrounded by amazing colonial villages, each of them showcasing its own unique atmosphere, architecture, history, handicrafts and landscapes. A visit to these local villages gives you an insight into the real daily life of the Guatemalan people and it feels like a trip on its own. Although customizable according to your interests, the usual tour first leads you to El Calvario to learn about the religious impact and social heritage of Santo Hermano Pedro on Guatemala and the whole Central America. In the picturesque San Juan del Obispo, you will be able to discover the village's characteristic local products, chocolate and *níspero*. In San Pedro Las Huertas, you will observe the tradition of the public pilas where women wash the clothes and visit its hidden gem, a jade fabric. In Ciudad Vieja, you will get to know this scenic city surrounded by volcanoes that was once the 2<sup>nd</sup> capital of Guatemala, before being destroyed in a great tragedy. The tour will end in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, famous nationally and worldwide for its most unique weaving technique and where you will discover the colorful handicrafts that make the renown of Guatemala, while being able to share with local indigenous artisans.



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## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



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# VOLCANO PACAYA




The Volcano Pacaya is one of the 4 active volcanoes of Guatemala. It erupted for the first time 23 000 years ago and it is one of the most active volcanoes of Central America since the past 500 years. Pacaya is a volcano that was produced a lot in the region before. With a height of 2,500 meters above sea level, it takes approximately 1.5 hour to climb up the volcano. The Volcano Pacaya was declared National Park in 2005 and it is a popular tourist attraction but for locals and foreigners. This volcano is part of the Central American Volcanic Arc, a chain of volcanoes located along the Pacific coast of Central America. It forms a large volcanic cauldron that includes Lake Amatitlán and Laguna de Calderas. Pacaya is characterized by its regular or constant activity. It is a stratovolcano and a rocky constitution of porphyritic olivine basalt. Its type of eruption is Strombolian as it throws ash upwards, water vapor and small stones. Pacaya Volcano has had constant activity since 1565, when it had a strong eruption that also included earthquakes. During the colonial era there were about 23 eruptions and after a century of inactivity, eruptions began again in the 1960's. Its last eruptions were in 2010 and in 2014. On your trip to Volcano Pacaya, you can enjoy nature, walk on the fields of cold lava, observe plants and birds from the region and if you might even see explosions or smoke coming out of the crater. During your hike, you may be able to observe the capital, Lake Amatitlán, Laguna de Calderas, the geothermic plant, the highway that leads to the Pacific and the volcanoes Agua, Acatenango and Fuego.









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# WEAVING CLASS




Guatemalan handicrafts are known all around the world for their quality and magnificent colors. Would you like to elaborate your own personalized piece of handicrafts? You can take a weaving class with a Mayan expert of Guatemalan weaving that will explain you everything about this tradition and ancestral technique so that you can conceive your own work of art.









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# WINE TOUR

Château de Fay is a 3000 case winery and vineyard located in Santa María de Jesús, on the slope of the Volcano Agua, 30 to 40 minutes from Antigua. The owners Jacques and Angie DeFay purchased the former coffee farm in 2000 and converted part of the land into a vineyard, bringing dozens of grape varieties from abroad and planted them in the volcanic soil, also experimenting with different winemaking strategies. The official opening of the winery was in 2007. They have now been able to produce thirteen different wines: 6 whites, 5 reds and 2 roses that have been very well received. They produce high quality wines that are unique to their vineyards and are not found anywhere else in the world. During the tour, you will visit the plantation, learn about the origin of Château DeFay, the cycle of production of the wine and visit the fabric before enjoying a tasting of the wines. There is also a restaurant on site where they serve a variety of local and international cuisine and Guatemalan cheeses.



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# WOODWORK HANDICRAFT

Come and discover a tradition of the village of Jocotenango during this tour about woodwork handicraft. The wood handicrafts of Jocotenango distinguish itself by the quality of the work and the details in these little pieces of art. The sculptures often represent fruits or Mayan characters. Learn more about the whole elaboration process with local artisans with decades of experience in woodwork. You will also take advantage of the tour to visit the *plazuela* of Jocotenango and discover more about its history and local culture.



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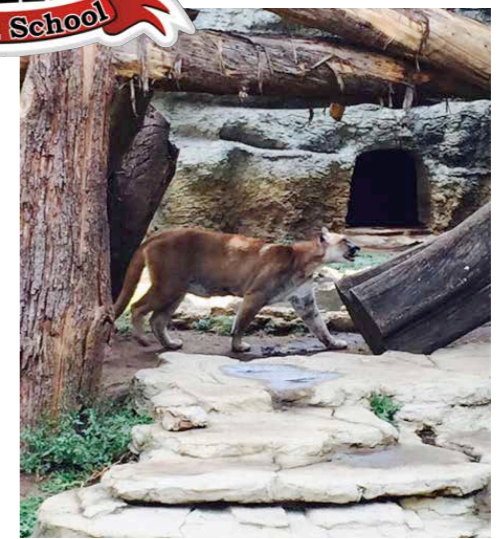
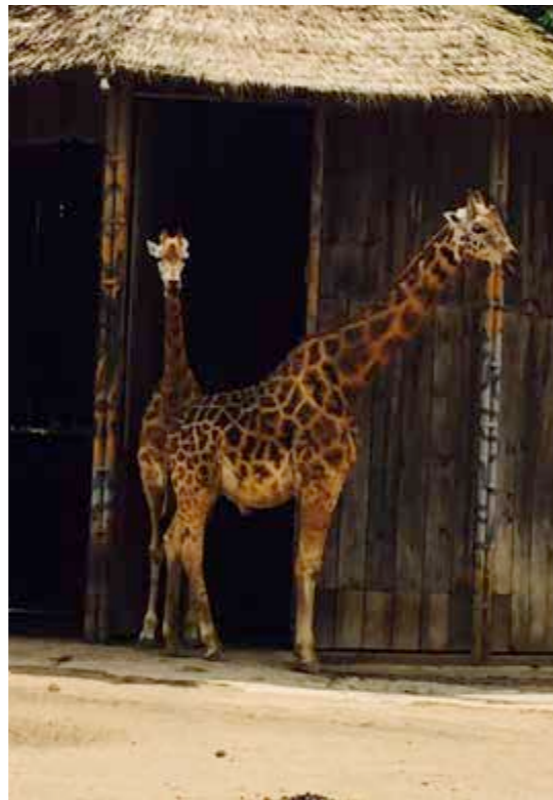


# CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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# ZOO

The zoo of Guatemala City is known for being one of the best in all Latin America. Founded in 1924, this huge zoo is the biggest lung of the capital city and it is a home to a panoply of splendid animals such as giraffes, hippopotamus, elephants, panthers, tigers, reptiles and the famous lion of Pacaya. The zoo is divided in three different areas where it is possible to appreciate animals of Asia, America and Africa. It is a great place to spend some time with friends or family while learning about the fauna and enjoying the natural surrounding of this impressive zoo.



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