

Optional Saturday Excursions

Saturday, June 12 | Explore Antigua at Your Own Pace

If you're arriving early for the anniversary celebration, we invite you to take advantage of everything Antigua has to offer. From volcano hikes and coffee plantations to cooking classes and spa treatments, there are experiences for every interest.

Please note: These activities are optional, are not part of the official anniversary program, and should be booked independently. The links below are provided as a starting point to help you plan your visit.

Booking through Highland Tours: Several of the activities below can be arranged through Highland Tours, ALDEA's trusted travel partner, including guided tours, the coffee plantation visit, the village tour, and the Guatemalan cooking class. Guests interested in these activities can contact Highland Tours directly to coordinate details and booking. Email: highlandtours@gtmail.com.

Cultural and Historical

- **[Guided walking tour of Antigua](#):** Explore Antigua's UNESCO World Heritage streets, churches, convent ruins, plazas, and hidden courtyards with a knowledgeable local guide. Led and coordinated by [Highland Tours](#).
- **[Coffee plantation tour and tasting](#):** Visit Finca La Azotea, a working coffee plantation to learn about Guatemala's world-famous coffee—from cultivation to roasting—followed by a tasting. Led and coordinated by [Highland Tours](#).
- **Chocolate making workshop:** Discover the history of cacao in the Mayan world and make your own chocolate during this fun hands-on experience at ChocoMuseo. Two options are available: [ChocoMuseo](#) or [Ek Chuah](#).
- **[Tour of the Villages Around Antigua](#):** Visit San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Ciudad Vieja, San Pedro Las Huertas, and San Juan del Obispo to experience the history, culture, and daily life of communities surrounding Antigua. Led and coordinated by [Highland Tours](#). The tour takes approximately four hours, depending on traffic and the pace of the group.
- **[Guatemalan cooking class](#):** Learn to prepare authentic Guatemalan dishes using fresh local ingredients while exploring the country's culinary traditions. Led and coordinated by [Highland Tours](#).
- **Jade museum:** Learn about the cultural significance of jade in Mayan civilization while viewing archaeological pieces and contemporary craftsmanship with the option to [carve your own jade piece](#).

- **Pastores:** A traditional town about five miles west of Antigua, known as the “Land of the Boots” for its thriving leatherworking tradition. Local artisans handcraft high-quality cowboy boots, shoes, belts, and bags.

Outdoor Adventure

- **[Birdwatching excursion](#) (7:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.):** Explore nearby cloud forests and coffee plantations while spotting colorful hummingbirds, tanagers, toucanets, motmots, and many of Guatemala's native bird species. The excursion begins with breakfast at a local restaurant overlooking Antigua's breathtaking volcanoes, followed by a guided visit to **Finca El Pilar**, a private mountain nature reserve just outside the city. The tour includes round-trip transportation from Antigua, breakfast, entrance fees, taxes, and a local birdwatching specialist guide. Bring binoculars. \$100 per person; maximum 8 participants. To book, email ALDEA Advisor, Gordon Starkebaum, at Gordon Starkebaum: gstarkebaum@comcast.net
- **[Pacaya Volcano hike](#):** One of Guatemala's most accessible volcanoes, Pacaya offers an unforgettable day hike with dramatic volcanic landscapes and panoramic views.
- **[Acatenango overnight hike](#):** An unforgettable overnight adventure to one of Guatemala's highest volcanoes, famous for spectacular views of neighboring Volcán Fuego's eruptions.
- **[Finca Filadelfia](#)** Canopy tours and zip line. Located 10 minutes from Antigua, within the historic Finca Filadelfia. The ecological park offers a unique canopy adventure with views of the Panchoy Valley and Agua, Fuego, and Acatenango volcanoes.
- **[Earth Lodge](#)** - Boutique eco-resort and wellness center set on avocado farm 15 minutes outside of Antigua. Activities include yoga, massage, and temazcal (traditional sauna) experiences, as well as overnight accommodations.

Wellness and Relaxation

- **Massage and wellness treatments:** Unwind with a massage or spa treatment after your travels and before the anniversary festivities begin. ([Porta Hotel](#), [Casa Santo Domingo](#), and several other established spas in Antigua offer a range of treatments. For your safety, we recommend booking directly with reputable spas that have established storefronts rather than accepting offers from individuals distributing spa flyers on the street.
- **Yoga class:** Start your morning with a yoga class in one of Antigua's peaceful studios. Options include [YogAntigua at Panza Verde](#) and [Earth Lodge](#).

Other

- **[Hobbitenango](#):** Perched in the mountains above Antigua, Hobbitenango offers spectacular volcano views, scenic walking paths, restaurants, gardens, and whimsical Hobbit-inspired architecture.