



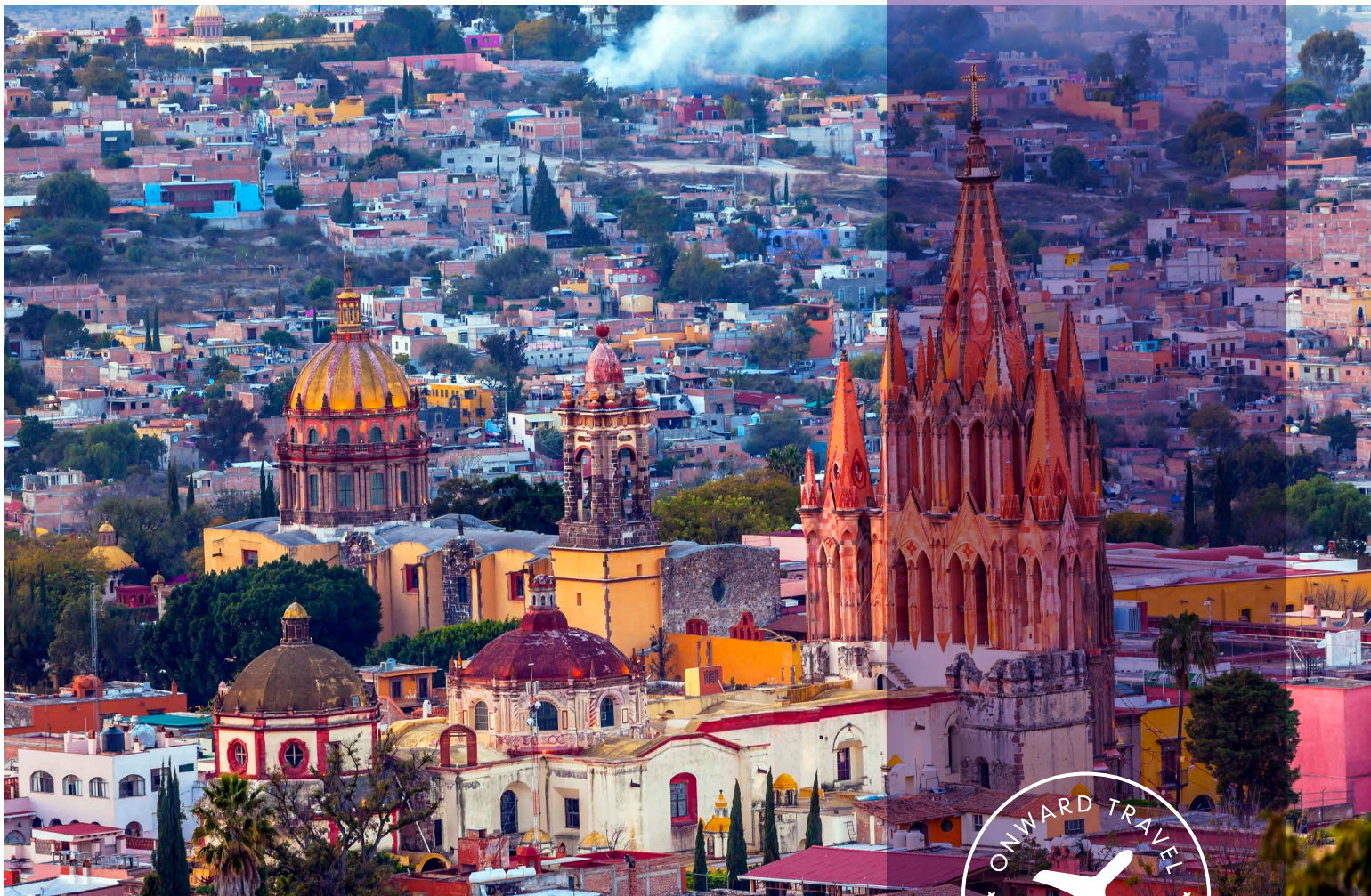
# EXPLORING THE *Mexican Highlands*

Cuisine & Culture in San Miguel de Allende  
*March 17—24, 2024*

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️

EST 2014





THE NEO-GOTHIC CHURCH PARROQUIA DE SAN MIGUEL ARCÁNGEL'S DRAMATIC PINK TOWERS RISE ABOVE THE MAIN PLAZA, EL JARDÍN.

The awards and accolades for San Miguel de Allende have been racking up in recent years but it has long been an enchanting and captivating destination.

SMA is situated at an altitude of 6,400 feet with a refreshing year round spring-like climate and a beautiful mountainous backdrop. When we arrive in early spring the jacaranda trees will be in full purple bloom to welcome us. The cobblestone streets, pastel colored buildings, baroque Spanish architecture, and old churches make for a truly special ambiance. The culinary scene is absolutely flourishing so join Onward Travel to journey to this picture-perfect colonial town to discover all it has to offer!

This week long tour provides lots of special experiences plus time for you to enjoy the city and its outskirts on your own. Our small group will call the 9-room Casa Calderoni home and enjoy this quaint, well-located, comfortable B&B. Every room pays homage to a different famous artist. In SMA we'll experience two hands-on cooking classes; enjoy local cuisine in many forms; learn about history, archaeology, and astronomy; sip on wine, tequila, mezcal and homemade margaritas; and day after day we'll delight in the talents of the local craftspeople, artisans, and musicians who have made SMA such a spectacular destination.



IMAGINE YOURSELF...

Sipping a margarita on a rooftop overlooking picturesque SMA

Learning about pre-Hispanic times at a world class archaeological site

Strolling the town's picturesque and colorful cobblestone streets



## Bienvenido a México!

DAY 1: SUNDAY MARCH 17

- Meet fellow travelers for a welcome toast on the B&B's scenic rooftop
- Head out on the town for an unforgettable food tour dinner

Journey today to Mexico's highlands. A transfer will be organized for you from Del Bajío Airport in Leon (BJX) or Querétaro Airport (QRO). We'll convene early evening for a welcome toast at our homebase, Casa Calderoni B&B. The rooftop deck has beautiful views over the city and after we've become acquainted we'll be ready to go and see it for ourselves! A local gourmet guide will be taking us to taste the best tacos and margaritas in town on a lively introductory food tour so we can get to know each other along with the fun and funky place we'll be calling home for the next week.

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Meals Dinner

SMA IS FREE OF TRAFFIC LIGHTS, NEON SIGNS, FIRE HYDRANTS AND FAST FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS. FEEL TRANSPORTED BACK IN TIME!



## Exploring Culture & Cuisine

DAY 2: MONDAY MARCH 18

- Get to know SMA through an informative walking tour
- Learn to cook a few of Chef Gaby's favorite recipes

Start your day with a delicious breakfast at Casa Calderoni, as you will each morning, complete with fresh fruit and made-to-order hot options. Then we're off on a historical walking tour to learn how this 500 year-old colonial village became the "cradle" of Mexican Independence. We'll visit Parroquia - San Miguel's iconic landmark church, Bellas Artes - once a convent, then San Miguel's first school of art, now a cultural center, Vida y Obra de General Ignacio Allende - David Siqueiros' famous unfinished mural, and so much more. This walking tour social enterprise is headed by volunteers, so all income is directed toward medical and dental care for children in the campos and we'll learn about this important effort.

Hungry yet? Let's have lunch on one of the city's rooftops where we can nosh on classic Mexican dishes with a great view of the city's architectural jewel: La Parroquia de San Miguel Arcángel. Enjoy the afternoon as your leisure. Tonight we reconvene for a special cooking class! Chef Gaby, a native of Mexico City, has run four restaurants and a food truck over the past 20 years and she is also a wine expert. Today she invites us into a beautiful kitchen for a lively, hands-on experience where you'll learn about Mexican cooking and use local ingredients such as cactus, chiles, and amaranth.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**CASA CALDERONI** We'll be based at this charming and lauded B&B with 9 artist-themed rooms. Enjoy Casa Calderoni and its amenities including the rooftop terrace with stunning views. Located just a 5 minute walk from the city center, the B&B offers clean and comfortable en suite accommodations plus excellent service.



## Wonders of the Countryside

DAY 3: TUESDAY MARCH 19

- Travel (way) back in time to the pyramids at Cañada de la Virgen
- Relax on a fourth-generation horse ranch for a homestyle lunch

Today we'll head an hour west of San Miguel de Allende to visit the Cañada de la Virgen archaeological zone where our expert guide will provide an introduction to the pre-Hispanic history of Mexico. The Otomi people occupied this space from approximately 540 to 1050AD. Excavation only began relatively recently on the ancient burial site built here in a glorious natural setting, the stunning pyramids designed in accordance with the movements of the moon and stars. \

We'll be doing some light hiking to reach the archaeological site and move around it. After the morning exploring ancient pyramids, a nearby horse ranch will be a welcome place to rest and tuck in to a delicious homestyle lunch cooked by the family in their open kitchen. There is an option to stay on the ranch and set out on a guided horseback ride through the gorgeous scenery. Those who do so will return in the late afternoon, the others after lunch. *If you'd like to participate in horseback riding, the cost is \$135 per person.*

Tonight you have a free night to enjoy SMA - many different dining and shopping options surround you and the streets are yours to wander. Perhaps you'd like to enjoy an ice cream in El Jardin square while you watch the mariachi bands play!

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch



OnwardTravel.co Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the Hudson Valley, New York

## Artistic Spirits of SMA

DAY 4: WEDNESDAY MARCH 20

- Get creative at Fábrica La Aurora
- Taste liquid creativity in a cosy artsy space with the winemaker

This morning we are headed to Fábrica La Aurora, a renovated textile mill home to galleries, design stores, a bookstore, cafes, exhibition spaces, and studios for local artists. Many artists from around the world have come to SMA to be a part of this beating artistic heart and today we will go behind the scenes to learn about its conception and how it gained the local influence it has today. But we aren't just here to look - let's catch the creative wave ourselves and partake in a painting workshop where everyone will create their own work of art to take home. After a casual lunch at the on site cafe everyone will be free to explore the galleries and shops at their own pace.

Tonight we'll reconvene to go and visit a very interesting and creative person working here in SMA. Marcelo is a winemaker who makes natural wine in clay amphorae, as well as an extensive line of distillations from all kinds of ingredients. Tonight he will share with us his many drinkable creations at his cosy boutique tasting room which is also an art gallery showcasing mostly textiles from his wife's native Uzbekistan. We'll also enjoy a delicious dinner of smoked meats with all the fixins from Marcelo's ranch outside the city.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## The Market's Bounty

DAY 5: THURSDAY MARCH 21

- Squeeze into a sandwich counter for the best *agua fresca* around
- Take an informative cooking class at SMA's premier cooking school

After a leisurely morning, the group will meet at lunchtime to head over to the city's wonderful and vibrant food market, Mercado Ignacio Ramirez. We'll squeeze in at a typical lunch counter there for absolutely delicious sandwiches or *tortas* that are somehow upstaged by the fruity and refreshing *aguas frescas* which are made to order and served up in giant glass goblets.

This afternoon features a cooking class at the Sazón Cooking School, located in an 18th-century mansion at luxury hotel Belmond Casa de Sierra Nevada. Chef Ruben will meet us at the market and together we'll go shopping for the ingredients we'll use to make our dinner. The class will feature healthy Mexican cooking and we'll have a lot of fun using organic, seasonal ingredients to create inspiring dishes. Chef Ruben is informative and engaging and the class culminates with a wonderful three-course meal.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Soaking in the Scenery

DAY 6: FRIDAY MARCH 22

- Enjoy the legacy of volcanic activity: geothermal waters and mineral soil, perfect for growing grapes
- Clink glasses at one of the trendiest rooftop bars in town

As you'll have learned by now, the first settlement on the site of San Miguel de Allende was originally founded because of natural springs and the city is built on the edge of an extinct volcano. So that all means... hot springs! The hot springs aren't far from town and this morning we'll be driving up to take a soak at La Gruta Spa. Enjoy some total rest and relaxation and if you'd like you can prebook a massage or other treatment.

After a soak in the wellness-promoting waters of the spa's pools, we'll explore another benefit of the local geography that might surprise you: a vineyard. While we don't always associate Mexico with wine, when the Spaniards colonized the country they brought their love of viticulture with them and the Highlands make a great region for growing grapes. Let's enjoy lunch and a tasting at a lovely family-run vineyard.

After we return to the city we'll stop by the workshop and studio of a trendy local hat designer. If a wearable souvenir is on your list, you will love this visit! After we've learned how handcrafted cowboy hats are made, we'll head to one of the cities most happenin' rooftops for a late afternoon cocktail. Then the evening is yours to enjoy... Friday night in San Miguel de Allende means plenty of fun to be had!

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## SMA as You Like It

DAY 7: SATURDAY MARCH 23

- Soar high above SMA in a hot air balloon at dawn
- Experience a serene local folk music performance over dinner

It's our last day in SMA, so we'll leave the day flexible. It's likely that some festivals and cultural events will be happening in the city... There's almost always something going on on a Saturday! For those who want to take a walk to the other side of town, we can visit the weekly organic food market that features food and produce stalls plus prepared food vendors. Admire the beautiful products and grab some lunch. The vendors have creative fare, for example... garbanzo and cactus in a guajillo chile broth and stewed rabbit and tortillas handmade with locally grown varieties of corn.

But first, if conditions are right, let's get up super early for a once-in-a-lifetime experience: a hot air balloon ride at dawn over San Miguel de Allende and the surrounding countryside. We've chosen the most experienced operator for this special outing. *If you'd like to participate in the hot air balloon ride, the cost is \$180 per person.*

Tonight we're headed out for our last dinner together, at an atmospheric restaurant where our hotel's manager plays beautiful music in a folk band featuring local instruments. We'll raise a round of margaritas to a fun, creative and delicious week shared here in the spectacular Mexican Highlands!

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Meals Breakfast, Dinner

## Hasta Luego!

DAY 8: SUNDAY MARCH 24

No activities are scheduled today and we wish you a safe journey home or to your next destination. Onward Travel will organize airport transfers based on traveler flight schedules.

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Meals Breakfast

## Trip Essentials

BEGINS	San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, on Sunday, March 17 Welcome toast at Casa Calderoni at 5pm. Airport transfer organized per your arriving flight.
ENDS	San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, on Sunday, March 24 No activities are scheduled today. Airport transfer organized per your departing flight.
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<b><u>This trip is best suited for travelers who are comfortable walking as a mode of transportation. SMA is hilly and the streets are mostly cobblestone. The tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time.</u></b> Not all facilities have elevators so stairs should be expected. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided.
TOUR DATES & PRICE	March 17–24, 2024 Double Occupancy \$2,975 per traveler Single Supplement \$525 (please inquire, limited availability)  <i>Contact Onward if you are interested in arriving early or extending your stay. Note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to Mexico.</i>  <i>You are welcome to pay by credit card, please add a 3% surcharge.</i>
AIR TRAVEL	The tour will start and end with transfers to/from Del Bajío Airport in Leon (BJX) or Querétaro Airport (QRO).  Please confirm flight plans with Onward Travel before booking and don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like any assistance finding the right itinerary.



## Trip price includes the following:

- Airport transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities.
- Seven nights accommodations at Casa Calderoni.
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, five lunches, and four dinners. We've planned fantastic gourmet experiences, wine and cocktails included.
- Local experts and guides and an Onward Travel host at your service.
- Activities, tastings, cooking classes, and tours as detailed in the itinerary.

### Register now!

Visit [onwardtravel.co](https://onwardtravel.co) to complete the registration form and submit payment.

Space is limited to only 12 travelers.

\$1,000 deposit due upon booking, balance due by December 15, 2023.



**The Onward Travel Tour Director for this trip is Molly**

**Molly Crist** founded Onward Travel in 2013 with her sister Kat. She lives on an apple orchard in the Hudson Valley. She loves cooking, gardening, reading, crafting with her little daughters, and traveling...of course!



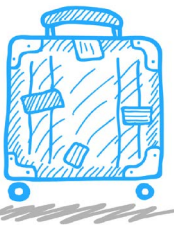
**Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at [www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo](http://www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo)**



Once Onward Travel receives your registration form, we will send you an **invoice** with instructions to pay the **deposit**.



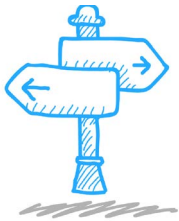
If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit [www.travelex.com](http://www.travelex.com) and refer to location number 32-0704.



Four to six weeks before the tour **we will mail you a packet** with a packing list, traveler directory and other useful info.



Make sure you know where your **passport** is now! For travel to Mexico, it only needs to be valid until your return date.



**Onward Travel's cancellation policy in a nutshell:**

- \$250 of your initial deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 90 days and the full deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 60 days and 50% of total trip fee is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 30 days and the full trip fee is nonrefundable

See the full [Terms & Conditions](http://www.onwardtravel.co/terms) at [www.onwardtravel.co/terms](http://www.onwardtravel.co/terms)

**Get in Touch!**

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:  
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