



EXPLORING THE *Mexican Highlands*

Cuisine & Culture in San Miguel de Allende
March 9—15, 2025

ONWARD TRAVEL 
EST 2014



COVER: THE NEO-GOTHIC CHURCH PARROQUIA DE SAN MIGUEL ARCÁNGEL'S DRAMATIC PINK TOWERS RISE ABOVE THE MAIN PLAZA, EL JARDÍN. PHOTO BY TRAVELER SUE WALLACE.

HERE, SUZAE SAYS HELLO TO A FRIENDLY HORSE AFTER LUNCH ON THE RANCH.

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 9

- 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.

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 10

- Get to know SMA through an informative walking tour
- Learn to cook some 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.

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 11

- 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!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch



Let's Get Inspired

DAY 4: WEDNESDAY MARCH 12

- Soar high above SMA in a hot air balloon at dawn
- Get creative at Fábrica La Aurora

This morning, 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.*

Later 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 all over 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 we have special insiders tour of this creative hotbed and then you will be free to explore the galleries and shops at your own pace.

Later this afternoon and tomorrow afternoon we have a special cooking class arranged at the Sazón Cooking School, managed by the luxury hotel Belmond Casa de Sierra Nevada. Chef Ruben will meet half of our group at the market today (the other half tomorrow) and we'll go shopping for the ingredients 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 wonderfully delicious meal.

Those not participating in today's class will have a free evening.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

YOU ARE SURE TO COOK UP SOMETHING WONDERFUL WITH CHEF RUBEN

Soaking in the Scenery

DAY 5: THURSDAY MARCH 13

- Enjoy the legacy of volcanic activity: geothermal waters and mineral soil, perfect for growing grapes
- Take an informative cooking class at SMA's premier cooking school

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 even have a massage.

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 those who didn't cook with Chef Ruben yesterday will head over to the market to meet him for their own fabulous culinary experience with dinner and the rest of the group will have a free evening.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch



A Perfect Day in SMA

DAY 6: FRIDAY MARCH 14

- Get to know a local designer and learn about her story and process
- Enjoy a beverage at a hip rooftop bar as the sun sets over the city

It's our last full day in SMA, so we'll leave the day flexible. At lunch-time let's meet at the 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.

Later in the afternoon we reconvene to visit the workshop and studio of a trendy local hat designer. If a wearable souvenir is on your list, you will love this stop! After we've learned how handcrafted cowboy hats are made, we'll head to one of the cities most happenin' rooftops for a pre-dinner cocktail and we can watch the sun set over the beautiful city rooftops.

Tonight we're headed out for our last dinner together, at a local favorite restaurant in an atmospheric colonial courtyard. You're sure to enjoy the upscale and modern spin on traditional local dishes and as we dine together one last time we'll raise a round of margaritas to a fun, creative and delicious week shared here in the spectacular Mexican Highlands!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Hasta Luego!

DAY 7: SATURDAY MARCH 15

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

Meals Breakfast

TAKING IN THE VIEW FROM THE ROOFTOP
AT CASA CALDERONI

Trip Essentials

BEGINS	San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, on Sunday, March 9 Welcome toast at Casa Calderoni at 5pm. Airport transfer organized per your arriving flight. <u>Inform Onward if you would like to arrive a day early, rooms are being held at Casa Calderoni.</u>
ENDS	San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, on Saturday, March 15 No activities are scheduled today. Airport transfer organized per your departing flight.
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<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> 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 9–15, 2025 Double Occupancy \$2,975 per traveler Single Supplement \$475 (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.
- Six 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

to complete the registration form and submit payment.

Space is limited to only 12 travelers.

\$1,000 deposit due upon booking, balance due by November 1, 2024.



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

Katerina Clauhs Dhand founded Onward Travel along with her sister, Molly, and has been hosting our tours for about a decade (hard to believe!).

Kat has lived on three continents and traveled extensively throughout the world. She especially loves to explore architecture, art, nature and wine & spirits on her tours. Kat lives in Philadelphia with her husband, they have two young children and a dog.

Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo



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



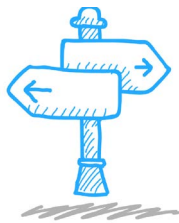
If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit www.travelex.com and refer to location number 32-0704.



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

Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:
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