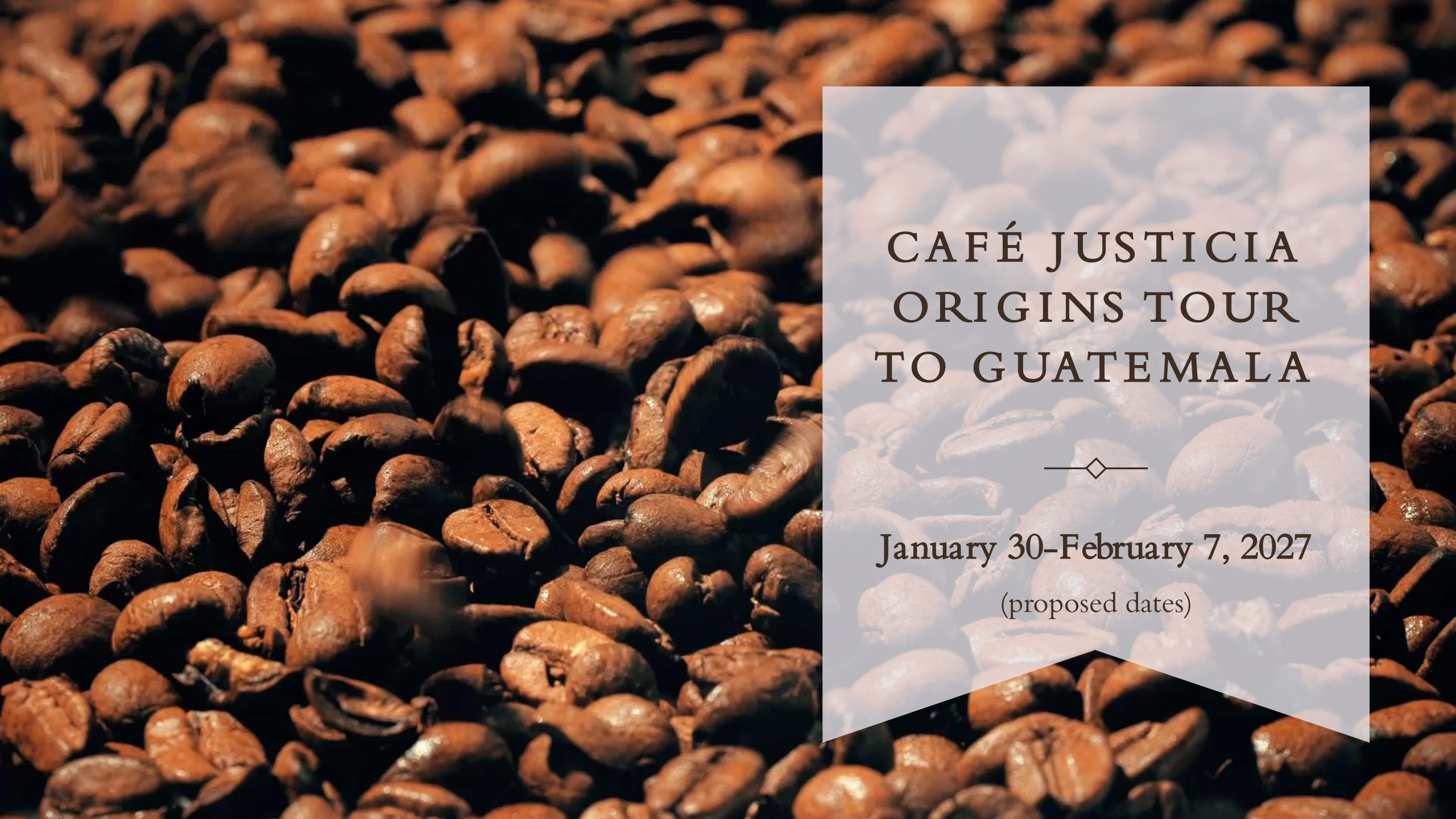


CAFÉ JUSTICIA ORIGINS TOUR TO GUATEMALA

January 30–February 7, 2027

(proposed dates)

Guatemala: a brief history

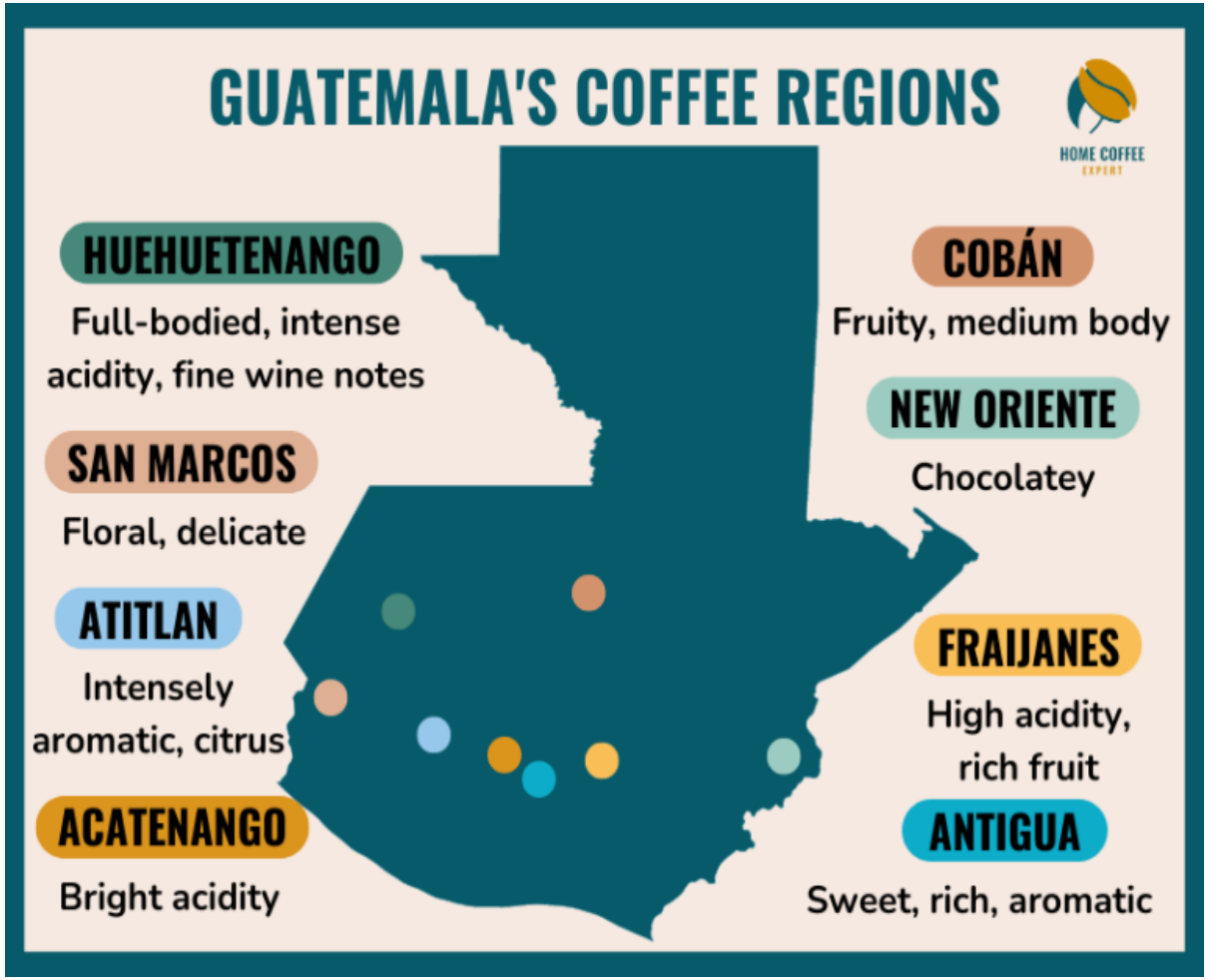
After winning independence from Spain in 1821 (and from Mexico in 1823) Guatemala was ruled by a series of strongmen. Indigenous Mayas were the majority, but politics and the economy were dominated by a handful of families descended from Spanish settlers.

In the 1870s, President Justo Rufino Barrios encouraged coffee production and "Euopization." He encouraged immigration by German families to establish coffee plantations on land formerly cultivated by indigenous farmers.

Mayans harvest coffee at the end of the 19th century.

Coffee quickly became one of the principal sources of cash employment in the Guatemalan countryside.

Today, the coffee industries employs about 125,000 families in Guatemala. The country has eight coffee growing regions – Antigua, Atitlan, Acatenango Valley, Cobán, Fraijanes, Huehuetenango, New Oriente, and San Marcos. Most of these are located in the high elevation mountains that run through the centre of the country.



President Juan Jose Arevalos created Guatemala's social security systems/

In 1944, a popular uprising overthrew the dictator Jorge Ubico, and the reformist Juan Jose Arevalo was elected president. Arevalo built a modern state in Guatemala introducing a labour code, public health system, pensions, social security, schools and other institutions to improve the well-being of Guatemalans. Arevalo is the father of the current Guatemalan president Bernardo Arevalo.

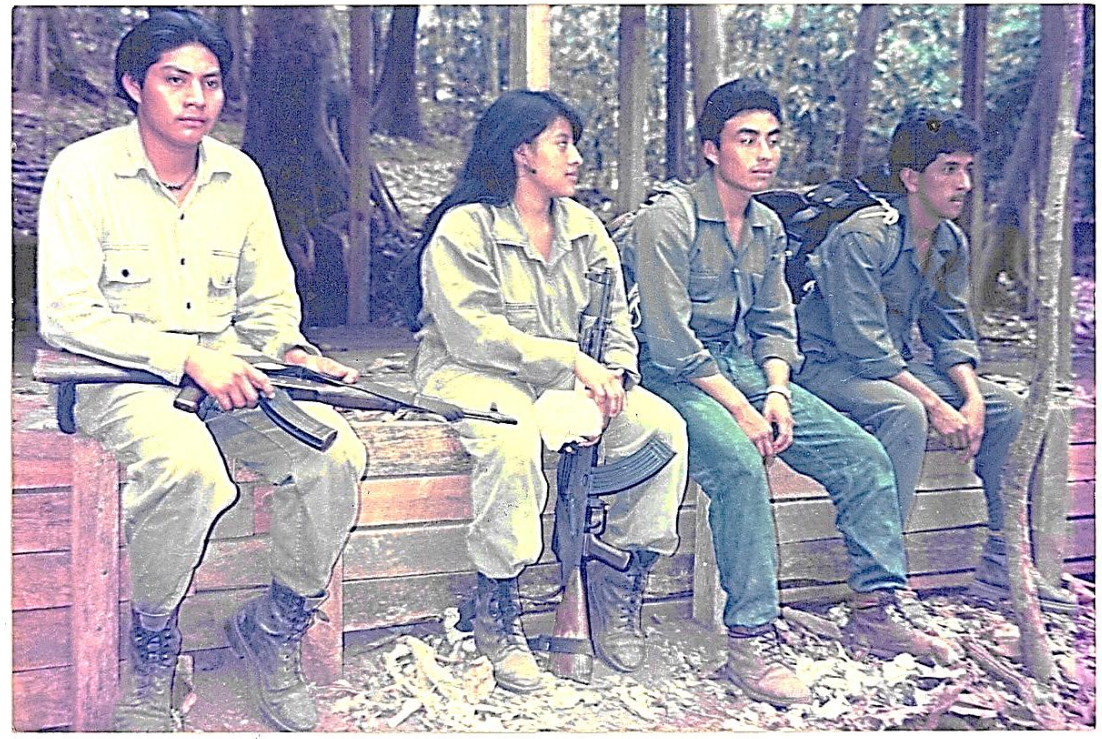
In 1951, Arevalo turned power over to Jacobo Arbenz, who had won elections earlier that year.

Mexican muralist Diego Rivera's depiction of the United Fruit Company coup in Guatemala

Arbenz extended Arevalo's reforms. He launched a land reform program that threatened the interests of the United Fruit Company , a US Corporation that owned most of Guatemala's arable land. Arbenz proposed to nationalize unused United Fruit Company land, compensating them on the value that the company had claimed the land was worth in its tax returns.

The head of the CIA and the US Secretary of State were both employed by the company and the US organized an invasion that overthrew Arbenz in 1954. The coup ushered in 40+ years of military-controlled governments in Guatemala.

In 1960, an armed uprising began against military rule. The conflict lasted for another 36 years, before a peace agreement was signed in December 1996. 200,000 civilians were killed in the war, 45,000 were *disappeared*. 85% of the people killed were Mayan farmers. A United Nations Truth commission found that the military committed 94% of the killings of civilians.



Young rebel combatants near Antigua, Guatemala, 1996 – photo: Steve Stewart

- The Peace Accords led to the reform of the justice system and the installation in Guatemala of a UN mission (CICIG) to investigate corruption and organized crime within the Guatemalan state. CICIG uncovered extensive criminal operations within the state, which led to the resignation of the president and vice-president in 2015.

The Struggle Against Corruption

In 2016 a powerful campaign began against the CICIG, and by 2019, the mission had been thrown out of the country. With the departure of CICIG, sights were then turned to the reformed justice system. The two former Attorney Generals had to flee into exile and dozens of judges and prosecutors who had prosecuted cases of corruption or human rights abuses were either jailed or forced into exile. They were replaced by agents under the control of organized crime.

- By the 2023 national elections, democracy and the legal system in Guatemala was almost completely undermined. Newspapers were shut down and reporters jailed. Several leading candidates not controlled by organized crime were charged with invented crimes and disqualified.
- However, this inadvertently cleared the field for a small anti-corruption party led by Bernardo Arevalo, son of the great reformer Juan Jose Arevalo.

Guatemalan Vice President Karin Herrera and President Bernardo Arevalo

- Arevalo assumed the presidency despite attempts by the "pact of the corrupt" to prevent it. However, with the Attorney General's office, the legislature and the judiciary largely in the hands of the "Pact of the Corrupt," the president has made little headway.

2027 is a new election year in Guatemala, with the first round taking place in June and a second round in August. President Arevalo’s term ends in January 2028.

Café Justicia

Café Justicia is a specialty coffee produced in the Guatemalan highlands by the Campesino Committee of the Highlands and imported and distributed in Canada by BC CASA

TIKONELAAB' MOLAAJ AJ UK'U'X IXIMULEW

Comité Campesino Del Altiplano

Col. Santa Cruz Quixayá, San Lucas Tolimán, Sololá
Guatemala, C.A.

- A Mayan farmers' movement created in 1982
- Most original members were workers on large coffee and sugar plantations
- During the armed conflict of the 1980s and early 90s the Army saw the CCDA as a subversive organization and it suffered state repression
- 1996 Peace Accords led to the demobilization of guerrilla forces in 1997
- The Peace Accords included an agreement to provide credit to Mayan farmer communties to buy land. In 1998, the CCDA assisted 5 member communities to obtain the El Paraiso Coffee plantation near Lake Atitlan.
- Since then, the CCDA has helped its communities to obtain 81 more farms, which are organized into cooperatives. The coffee is processed and exported by the CCDA's cooperative COICOMSA

BC CASA

- Began in 1990 as a student organization – the BC Central America Student Alliance – to support Guatemala's Association of University Students, whose leadership had been forcibly disappeared.
- Throughout the 1990s we led annual student human rights delegations to Guatemala
- Linked with the CCDA in 1993 and began to support education bursaries for children in the organization
- In 1999, began to import coffee from the CCDA's El Paraiso Cooperative
- Now imports about 200,000 lbs. annually from CCDA producers to warehouses in Delta, BC and Mississauga, ON. to distribute to roasters in Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC.
- 100% of profits are returned for human rights and development projects and bursaries in Guatemala

The Tour:

Antigua Guatemala

Pacaman Coffee Mill and Research and Training Centre, Cerro de Oro

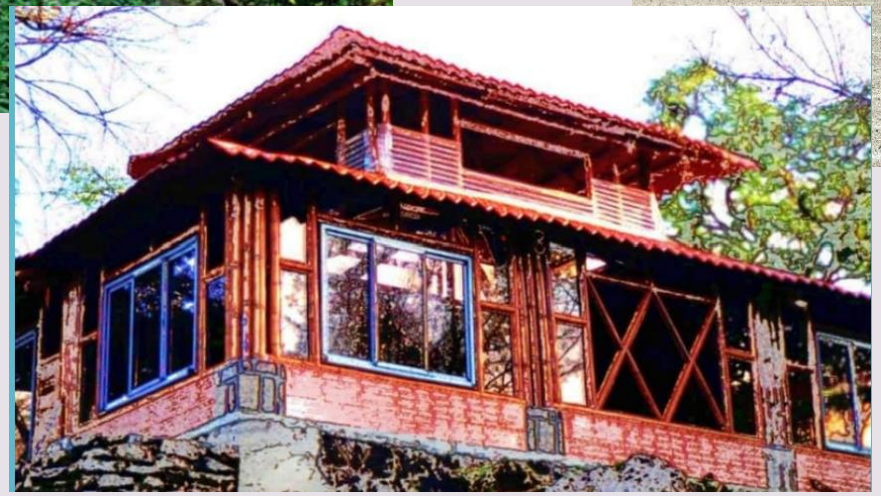
Accommodations at Pacaman Coffee Mill

OBSERVE COFFEE PROCESSING

Visit El Paraiso Coffee Cooperative

Visit CCDA members' organic coffee plots

Maybe even help out with the harvest!



VISIT TO CCDA ORGANIC FERTILIZER PLANT, BASIC GRAIN SILOS, AND COFFEE SEEDLING NURSERY

BOAT EXCURSION ACROSS LAKE TO SAN ANTONIO POLAPÓ.

VISIT TO CCDA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND ROASTERY IN SANTA CRUZ QUIXAYÁ

Tour of the Dinámica Crops coffee export facility, Guatemala City

Cupping class

BBQ and glamping in the last working coffee plantation in Guatemala City

Return to Antigua

Free afternoon in Antigua, optional excursion to climb the Pacaya Volcano

What's covered in the $1850* fee?

**based on 9 participants*

- 3 nights' accommodation in hotels in Antigua,
- 4 nights in cabins at the CCDA coffee mill in Cerro de Oro and one night at the Dinamica Crops coffee farm
- All ground and water transportation,
- Entry fees, all breakfasts and most lunches and suppers (the two days that we are in Antigua participants will pay for their own lunch and supper),
- A guide and simultaneous interpretation throughout the tour.

Airfare is extra and will differ depending on where you are flying from

www.Cafejusticia.ca