

## Making a Difference: Jardines del Lago Hotel and Convention Center

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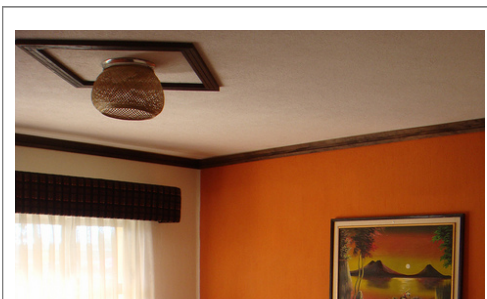
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On the famous Lake Atitlán, known as the "mirror of the sky," is the **Jardines del Lago Hotel and Convention Center**. Each year, thousands of tourists visit this destination in Guatemala to enjoy its unmatched scenic beauty, rich nature and a mystical world, filled with the Maya traditions that have survived in the indigenous communities of the peoples that live around the lake.

Jardines del Lago Hotel is this month's winner of our recognition for **Making a Difference**. This hotel, **verified by the Rainforest Alliance** and certified by **Great Green Deal**, stands out for its strong commitment to conserving the environment and supporting local communities.

Heymi Patricia Ajcalón, the hotel's assistant for development and sustainability, tells us about the sustainability initiatives conducted by the hotel.



**Question: How long ago did the Jardines del Lago Hotel and Convention Center decide to implement sustainable tourism practices and why?**

**Ajcalón:**

In February 2009, we realized that we should implement sustainable actions due to the nature of our



tourism activities and the environmental importance of our location.

**Q: What noteworthy sustainable initiatives are you carrying out?**

**A:**

We take measures to save electricity and lower water consumption. For example, there are energy-saving lighting systems in all hotel facilities and solar heaters for the showers. We've installed alternative ventilation

systems so we can limit the use of air conditioning, and we are reusing the water treated within the hotel to irrigate the gardens.

We use biodegradable products and buy products in bulk to reduce the amount of waste generated. All of our organic wastes are converted to compost that we use as organic fertilizer in the gardens, while all inorganic wastes are sent to the municipality's collection center. We also use efficient vehicles to reduce our CO2 emissions.

On the social side, we provide all legal benefits to our employees plus additional benefits offered by the hotel owner, and we support the socio-cultural events held by the surrounding communities.

**Q: What additional support do you offer to local communities?**

**A:**

We provide cash or in-kind donations and we often allow community members to use our facilities at no cost for social and cultural activities. We also buy natural shampoo and soap for our guests from the women's organization in the department of Solola. In addition, we communicate our sustainability initiatives to primary and secondary schools and universities, provide a space for learning, and give lectures on sustainability.

**Q: Lake Atitlan is one of the most beautiful sites in Guatemala, but it has also suffered from pollution and the negative impact of tourism. How does your hotel take care of this lake and the wildlife that depends on it?**

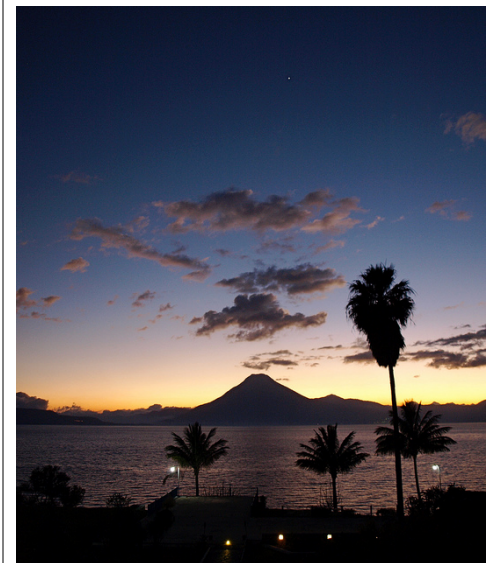
**A:**

We conducted a lake cleanup rally with the collaboration of the company's entire staff, and we participate in other initiatives organized by the Municipal Environmental Commission of Panajachel.

**Q: How can your guests get involved with your sustainability activities?**

**A:**

In all of our hotel facilities, we post informational signs to raise awareness among



guests and visitors about saving water and electricity. We also have a Ten Card inside the rooms that tells guests to place it on the sheets and towels they want to have washed and replaced, which helps us save water and detergent.

The hotel's corridors have marked bins so that everyone can help with sorting wastes. We also invite guests to respect the cultures and customs of the communities near the Lake Atitlan watershed and to not introduce exotic species at any site they visit.

**Q: Why is the Jardines del Lago Hotel and Convention Center so special compared to other hotels in the area?**

**A:**

We stand out for our sustainability activities and our perseverance for continuing improvement. In addition, our facilities and grounds are unique; no other hotel can offer the panorama that you will enjoy from our rooms and gardens.