

# LIVE WELL WACO

Summer 2023

beat the heat with a sweet summer treat



Helados  
la Azteca

ice cream, culture and community

# IN THIS ISSUE



## *coffee that's under 'ground'*

local shops rich with flavor and dripping with good vibes



## *doing good and eating well*

a guide to becoming a sustainable tourist in your hometown

## Editor's Note



***Shelby Peck***

Summer in Waco has arrived. While it's fair to dream of visiting far-off Italian villas or snorkeling in colorful reefs, Waco offers more peaceful escapes than you may initially believe. If you find yourself here during the summer—for an internship, to take a break from teaching or whatever it may be—explore the hidden respites that make a positive change in our community. In the still moments of the summer when you discover some extra time, venture outside your normal pit stops (looking at you, Common Grounds). From a family-owned creamery to a coffee shop located on a farm, this edition of Live Well Waco highlights some of the nearby hidden gems that are sure to make your summer a bit more sweet.

*Shelby Peck*

Photos by Madeleine Barton





Photo by Madeleine Barton

# Sit And Sip

By Caroline Thiemann

## *Don't you wish every day was a coffee day?*

There's no better way to start your day than with a good cup of coffee.

Coffee shops are places where we can chat with friends, try some new food or a calming place to read a book. No matter the reason, they are extremely popular in college towns.

If you are looking up coffee shops in Waco, you'll find many Starbucks and see praise for the Baylor favorite Common Grounds. What people don't know is that there is a wide variety of coffee shops scattered across Waco that need more recognition and love.





**Options Galore:** A full bar is available at Lighthouse Coffee as well as a variety of coffee drinks. Photo by Madeleine Barton

## Waco coffee shops offer more than just a caffeine boost

### Heritage Coffee: Good Conversation and Good Coffee

Located right next to the Homestead Heritage, a farm north of Waco, this coffee shop has a quiet and peaceful ambiance that brings people in from all over. The big windows and rustic décor matched with calming instrumental music makes the atmosphere easy to relax in.

Due to its distance from Downtown Waco, less people are aware of Heritage Coffee, making it a great place to visit if you need to focus on a conversation with a friend or just want some peace and quiet.

“I love working at this place. Obviously, it’s very aesthetically pleasing. I just like being here, it’s got some cozy feelings to it,” Annabelle Weston, Heritage Coffee barista, said.

What makes this place so unique is the location. After driving 25 minutes from Baylor, you’ll find Heritage Coffee residing amongst an agrarian and craft-based intentional Christian community according to the Homestead O4 Heritage website. However, the location isn’t the only

thing special about Heritage Coffee.

“Not all coffee shops have their own architecture firm that’s unique, I think,” Weston said. “So, the coffee shop is basically their showcase so it’s neat to work in a place that is very well built.”

Having the coffee shop being connected to a functioning architecture firm makes this place stand out. The beauty of this shop matches the incredible community that the employees foster with the customers.

The baristas are always trying to be the best first impression of the heritage community Weston said. When behind the bar, the baristas want customers to feel cared for and welcomed as soon as they open the door. To not feel scared if they want to ask about the menu or to just get to know whoever’s behind the register.

“We really try to focus on good craft quality coffee. And a lot of good craft quality coffee shops fall into a snobby side of things, not to say that we are better than them,” Weston said. “It’s unique because we are constantly trying to compare and make people feel that they are welcome.”





# Comfort And Community All In One Place

best things we do! We bring a chef in with a set menu, but you get to choose soup or salad, your protein like this week it's salmon, beef or lamb chops and there's a choice of dessert too," McDonald said.

Along with Friday night dinners, Lighthouse is also known for their wine Wednesdays. This is where any open bottle of wine is \$5 a glass so it's a really great way to try medium to higher end wines at a cheap price. Also, the to-go wine bottles are 50% off on Wednesdays.

The staff at Lighthouse add to the calming and welcoming atmosphere. Each barista is happy to strike up a conversation and make you feel at home once you walk in. One of their customers comments on how she likes her experience at Lighthouse.

"I think the people that work here are really nice and that's always nice to be around happy people," Katie Carlsen, Lighthouse customer, said. "It's quiet, but still has coffee shop noises still happening."

## Lighthouse Coffee & Wine: All You Need Are Coffee and Cocktails

Settled in along Washington Avenue in Downtown Waco, Lighthouse Coffee & Wine is one of the newest coffee shops in town. From its covered patio with a view of the Allico building to its smiling staff members this place is one to remember.

Lighthouse has a unique rotating menu filled with quality coffee that draws people to its doors. This coffee shop is lined with tall windows that overlook Downtown Waco, just a street over from the Waco Downtown Farmers Market. Lighthouse becomes extremely popular on Saturday mornings as Farmers Market goers stroll in for a cup of coffee or a cocktail.

"It all comes down to the quality of the coffee and the fact that we make all our own serves," Troy McDonald, barista, said. "You can't necessarily get that everywhere."

Something that really stands out about Lighthouse is their Friday night dinners. According to Lighthouse's website, each Friday, the chefs from Barnett's Public House get out of their kitchen and cater a four-course dinner to Lighthouse guests. Friday dinners begin at 7 p.m. and are \$25 per person, with an optional wine and cocktail pairing sold separately.

"It's super great for date nights and stuff. It's one of the



**Something Different:** A fan favorite at Lighthouse Coffee is the lavender latte.

Photo by Madeleine Barton









# Doing Good And Eating Well

## *Stop By and Try: A Guide to Being An Impactful Tourist in Waco*

*By Megan Hale*

As some of the most generous tables in town, World Cup Cafe and Helados la Azteca are making an impact on individuals around Waco and visitors from around the world.

Located on the northern side of central Waco, not far from Cameron Park and the hustle and bustle of downtown, these locally owned restaurants and small businesses have partnered with Mission Waco to support individuals and families throughout the community. According to their website, Mission Waco is an organization with the goal to empower the poor and overcome systemic issues of social injustice in the city of Waco and around the world.

**Grab and Go:** Helados la Azteca not only serves gourmet ice cream but also a variety of snacks to munch on.  
Photo by Madeleine Barton



**Woman on the Wall:** A mural outside of Helados la Azteca depicts the Mexican culture and symbolism the ice cream shop offers. Photo by Madeleine Barton

“It is as if you can feel the *culture of joy* and community that permeates this diner.” - Rion King

“We always get the returning customers and people who we just remember their names,” King said. “I have people who come in and I already know what they are going to order. But it is also always the best day when we get to meet new people as well.”

King said that her must-have dish on the menu is the Texas Toaster with American cheese and bacon. She also recommended the French toast as a classic and universal favorite. World Cup Cafe also offers a seasonal menu with delicious, limited-time specials like Pumpkin Pancakes and Pecan Praline French Toast.

Anne-Douglas Cousar, a Baylor student who often frequents this hot spot on the weekends, described it as a small-town community eatery where you feel known and loved.

Beginning in 2010, World Cup Cafe integrated a new element to their Waco experience by adding the fair trade market. According to their website, this market features unique items from around the world such as jewelry, bags, home decorations and more. All these items help support livable wages for people in Waco and around the world.

“Our fair trade market basically gives people a face and is our way of helping them do what they want to do,” King said. “We have something down there right now called the ‘Starfish Project’ which features a ton of beautiful jewelry. All the proceeds from the jewelry purchases go toward helping women escape from human trafficking. It is really cool how everything has its own story.”

## *Give Back Through a Good Meal*

World Cup Cafe, located on the corner of north Waco’s Jubilee Center at Colcord Avenue and 15th St., is a cozy diner that provides locals with a wide range of delicious southern homestyle dishes for breakfast and lunch.

According to the restaurant’s website, World Cup Cafe and Mission Waco have long sought to revitalize the surrounding community by breaking socioeconomic barriers between the lower and middle-income individuals of Waco, bringing everyone together.

Rion King, a Waco local who has been working at this restaurant for the past five months said what stands out about World Cup Cafe when compared to other similar restaurants is the welcoming atmosphere and the love that the employees pour out into each customer. It is as if you can  
08 feel the culture of joy and community that permeates this diner.



## *An Ice Cream Excursion*

Across the street from the beloved World Cup Cafe lies another Waco spot called Helados la Azteca. This community ice cream shop seeks to bring the many diverse cultures of Waco together by producing homemade and authentic Mexican drinks, ice cream and paletas and partnering with Mission Waco.

“Our mission is to spread the Mexican culture as much as we can,” Eduardo Garcia, owner of Helados La Azteca, said in a phone interview. “When I opened my personal location at Colcord Avenue, I wanted it to be as diverse as possible. I wanted everyone to feel welcome and comfortable in that space, and that is what I am still aiming for.”

This family-owned business was started by the Garcia family, who immigrated to the United States in 1995 from a town in Mexico called Mexiticacán, Jalisco. This town, with a population of fewer than 3,000 people, is known for its authentic ice cream and unique paleta flavors. The Garcia family sought to share their culture with others and decided to move to Waco and open the first location, Helados La Azteca on Franklin Avenue.

“The sole purpose of us moving to Waco was for Helados La Azteca on Franklin Avenue. My dad and his brothers saw a vision and saw an opportunity for something that was not there and that is how Helados La Azteca came to be,” Garcia said.

As the rapid growth and popularity of this Waco spot grew among members of the community, the Garcia family decided to open several more locations around Waco, including Eduardo Garcia’s personal location on Concord Avenue, where he spends most of his efforts today. His brother, Victor Garcia, decided to expand down the road and opened another location in Haltom City, Texas. As this family prepares to open their fourth location on Valley Mills Drive in the upcoming years, the Garcia’s continue to stay true to their roots, attracting individuals and families of all ethnicities, ages, colors and creeds to stop by for a taste of Mexico.

“Helados La Azteca offers diversity of flavors and really bring their culture into everything they do,” Aidan Conom, a local Waco regular, said. “I love it because it is not just another ice cream store run by a big franchise, but it is family owned and I get to see a side of Waco I otherwise probably would never see.”

These authentic treats offer a cultural escape and the opportunity to try something new. Their most popular flavors of ice cream range from avocado pistachio to mango con chile. They also serve unique drinks like the Bloody Horchata which is a combination of homemade horchata, strawberry jelly and strawberry ice cream.

“The employees at Helados La Azteca genuinely care about their customers,” Conom said. “They love what they do and love interacting with the community.”

## **A Taste of Mexico: Fan Favorites**

### *Ice Cream Flavors*

Cajeta Con Nuez  
Avocado Pistachio  
Mango Con Chile

### *Hand Crafted Beverages*

Mangonada Congelada  
Specialties Rusa Loca  
Specialties Mangonada Loca



**Treat Yourself:** After buying ice cream or candy too, there is plenty of room to sit and enjoy.  
Photo by Madeleine Barton

# Raspberry Kissed By a Rose



Poppy Prebiotic Soda



See you later from our editors...



*Catherine Binkley*

It has been a joy to find hidden spots in a place I call home! I often only associate Waco as the home of the Baylor Bears and Magnolia; however, there are so many shops and businesses that bring life to this city. One might not think to travel to Waco for leisure, but I think this magazine could bring you towards a fun-filled day trip. We found a few of the many inviting places in Waco and tried them for you! If you are looking for caffeine, a lunch stop or even a cure for your sweet tooth, there is always something right around the corner. I hope this read brings you to the sweet places of Waco, just like it did to me.

*Catherine Binkley*



*Madeleine Barton*

Waco has so many hidden gems within its limits. There is beauty to be found in the seemingly plain. Being able to better oneself and others through an act as simple as buying an ice cream cone is part of what makes Waco special—each action we take has an effect on the people around us. Waco's community lends itself to great changes. I encourage our readers find beauty in the mundane, live with purpose and delight in the simple things.

*Madeleine Barton*

THANKS

# LIVE WELL WACO

Questions, comments or concerns?  
Want to be featured in the next edition?

## CONTACT US

*hello@livewellwaco.org*

*254-757-5800*

**Cover photo by Madeleine Barton**