



# THE SPECIALIST'S GUIDE TO LATIN AMERICA



EXPERIENCE  
SOMETHING  
EXTRAORDINARY

The UK's №1  
Specialist in travel  
to Latin America

Over 40 years of experience,  
expertise and knowledge

Award-winning  
holidays and  
passionate team

No-one knows Latin  
America like we do

Exceptional  
service levels  
from first contact

Awarded Platinum Trusted  
Service by Feefo



## CONTENTS

OUR STRENGTH IS OUR EXPERTISE	4
JOURNEY RESPONSIBLY	6
OUR LATIN AMERICA TRAVEL EXPERTS	8
WAYS TO TRAVEL	10
JOURNEY STYLES	12
<hr/>	
HIGHLIGHTS OF LATIN AMERICA	22
CUBA	24
MEXICO	28
GUATEMALA	32
BELIZE	34
EL SALVADOR	36
HONDURAS	38
NICARAGUA	40
COSTA RICA	42
PANAMA	46
<hr/>	
COLOMBIA	48
GUYANA, FRENCH GUIANA AND SURINAME	52
ECUADOR AND THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS	54
PERU	58
BOLIVIA	62
BRAZIL	64
CHILE	68
ARGENTINA	72
URUGUAY	76
PARAGUAY	78
ANTARCTICA AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS	80
<hr/>	
SO MUCH MORE AT JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA	82
BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE	83

## EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

It's my pleasure to introduce you to the latest edition of The Specialist's Guide to Latin America. Having explored this extraordinary continent for over forty years, I've been fortunate enough to witness its astonishing diversity first-hand – from the ancient ruins of Peru to the stark majesty of Patagonia and the lush forests of Costa Rica. I am often asked to recommend a favourite destination, but with so many unforgettable places and experiences, I find it an impossible task. There truly is something for everyone here, and each journey reveals new wonders.

We are proud to be recognised as the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America, and our team of Travel Experts share my passion. Between us, we have amassed a wealth of knowledge, experience and an infectious enthusiasm for this remarkable region. In this brochure, you'll discover inspiring ideas and

highlights for every country in Central and South America. That said, Latin America is vast and endlessly varied, and no guide could ever hope to cover every possibility.

If you're seeking something a little different, I warmly invite you to visit our website for further inspiration, or better still, to contact us directly. We love talking travel and would be delighted to help you craft a journey uniquely tailored to you.

Welcome to the first step on your adventure – we look forward to sharing our expertise and passion with you.



SARAH BRADLEY  
Managing Director of  
Journey Latin America

# OUR STRENGTH IS OUR EXPERTISE

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies as we tailor extraordinary experiences and inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

When you travel with us, you gain access to over 40 years of experience and expertise, knowledge and know-how, offered by a friendly team of travel experts with a passion for sharing it all.



**No company has more first-hand knowledge of its subject than Journey Latin America.**

Condé Nast Traveller

“



## Leading the way

In 1980 we were one of the first to offer holidays to Latin America. Our first-hand experience means we've explored the length and breadth of this ever-changing continent. We are often the first to blaze new trails and offer exciting new activities into emerging regions.

## Knowledge and expertise

Some of our staff have been with us for over 30 years and all of us have lived and worked or travelled extensively in Latin America – you won't find more committed and enthusiastic travel specialists.

## Trusted partners

We understand how important good relations with our partners are, and always seek the best services from proactive local suppliers. This dedicated support team includes our highly valued, top-rated local guides, who make the travel experience unique through their local knowledge and passion.

## Unrivalled portfolio

We can confidently say that no other operator can offer such a wide range of hand-picked accommodation, excursions, activities and experiences in Latin America.

## Authentic experiences

Our approach to creating unforgettable holidays is practical and hands-on. We travel to each country in Latin America at least once a year, revisiting existing experiences and activities, checking out new ones, and devising our own.

## With you all the way

While you're away you'll always have access to our 24/7 UK emergency support line. Plus all our local partners offer you contact both during and outside their office hours should you need it.

## Full financial protection

We are a fully bonded tour operator, registered with ATOL, ABTA and AITO. Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure.

## No-obligation quote

Call one of our travel experts on 020 8747 8315 today to start planning your unique Tailor-made Holiday. We'll send you a bespoke travel proposal completely free of charge, with no need to pay until you feel 100% satisfied with your personalised itinerary.

THE UK'S N<sup>o</sup>1  
**SPECIALIST**  
IN TRAVEL TO  
**LATIN  
AMERICA**



## Award winners

Our commitment to what we do has been recognised time and time again – our brochures, holidays, customer service, tour leaders, local guides and sustainable initiatives have all won travel trade and consumer awards over the years.



Awarded Platinum  
Trusted Service  
by Feefo



## BESPOKE TRAVEL APP

Our exclusive Journey Latin America App makes travel easy, by providing you with your personalised day-by-day itinerary, pre-departure info, recommended insider tips on restaurants, bars, offline maps and much more straight to your smartphone or tablet.

## TRIP DOSSIERS

Alongside our App, our in-depth Trip Dossiers include all the extra information you will need prior to your trip departure.

# JOURNEY RESPONSIBLY

At Journey Latin America we strive to be responsible in everything we do. By creating authentic, sustainable holidays which have a positive impact on people, places and wildlife, we believe everyone can benefit.

With our deep and long-lasting passion for the continent, we work closely with local partners to support positive and sustainable travel practices throughout the places we visit.

## Our responsible journey

We firmly believe, when undertaken responsibly, travel and tourism can bring vast benefits at grassroots level. As a result we measure the impact of our business against UN Sustainable Development Goals to bring improvements to everything we do. This approach has led us to win a Responsible Business Award. We are also proud to be independently verified by Ethy and Travelife.

## Climate action

Our company-wide Climate Action Strategy takes a five-step approach (measure, decarbonise, regenerate, collaborate and finance) as we seek to reduce the output arising from our business. Alongside this, with every booking, we donate to Rewilding Chile, a non-profit organisation working to renew the landscapes and habitats of Chilean Patagonia through the creation of national parks.



## On the ground

We work with local businesses, hotels and restaurants, bringing money directly to the communities we visit. We have clear policies on human rights, child welfare, fair working conditions and animal welfare, which we and our teams on the ground strive to meet.

## Reducing plastic

To help plastic reduction, we have partnered with Water-To-Go to offer our customers reusable bottles with a unique filter system, creating safe drinking water from any tap or stream – an incredibly convenient way to remove plastic waste on holiday.



Javiera Ide

## Social enterprise

We've recently supported the Sol y Luna Foundation, who provide education and a loving home to underprivileged children in the Peruvian Andes. Through a series of staff fundraising events, we were proud to have raised just over £2,000, which will cover one year's supply of energy in the children's home. We currently support El Rio Foundation, a non-profit organisation offering educational support and community sports opportunities, as well as reforestation and waste management projects to the local community of Buritaca on Colombia's Caribbean coast.



Belize Tourism Board



## Giving back to Latin America

Over the years we have always supported a wide range of social, environmental and disaster relief projects throughout Latin America. Our clients also have the opportunity to donate to the LATA Foundation, where every penny raised goes directly to the good causes on the ground.

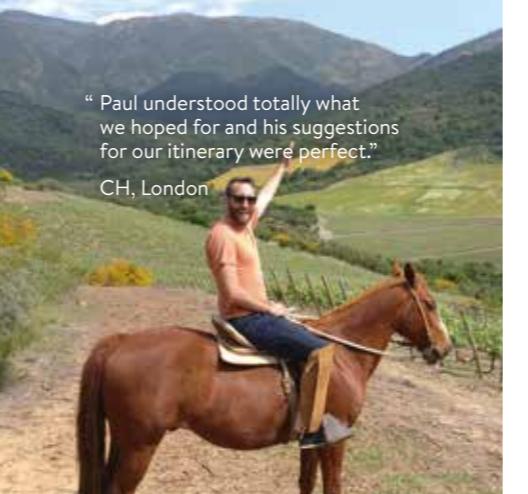
Find out more about our Responsible Journey by visiting our website [journeylatinamerica.com](http://journeylatinamerica.com)



“ Hannah D was excellent, she organised our previous trip and we requested her service this time as well, as we were so pleased.”  
RN, Highgate



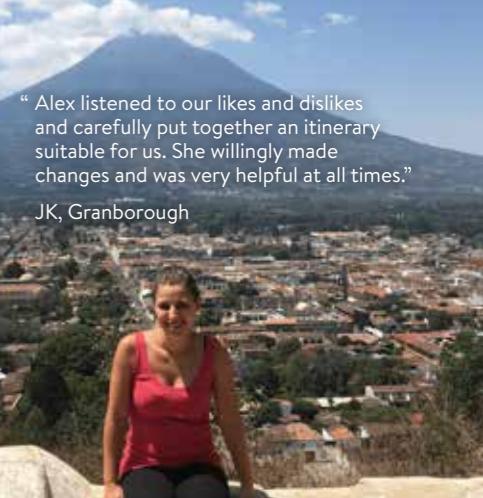
“ Chris was very personable, listened to what we wanted and acted accordingly. At no time did I feel under pressure. He put together an ideal itinerary for us.”  
JT, Orpington



“ Paul understood totally what we hoped for and his suggestions for our itinerary were perfect.”  
CH, London



“ Kathryn was fantastic! So helpful, friendly, quick to respond and knowledgeable. Couldn’t ask for more!”  
JK, Hampstead



“ Alex listened to our likes and dislikes and carefully put together an itinerary suitable for us. She willingly made changes and was very helpful at all times.”  
JK, Granborough



“ As first time visitors to the country, it was great to be able to talk to Sally who had been on the ground and had local knowledge.”

JM, London

## OUR LATIN AMERICA TRAVEL EXPERTS

Our expert consultants are friendly, articulate, educated and experienced travel specialists. Some are Latin American nationals, others have lived or travelled extensively across the continent and most hold an academic qualification relating to the region's history, geography and languages, meaning that you will receive unrivalled advice based on unique personal experiences.



“ Heloise answered my queries, very efficient and helpful -when an internal flight was cancelled, she managed to rearrange to ensure I didn't miss my next flight.”  
ML, Newcastle

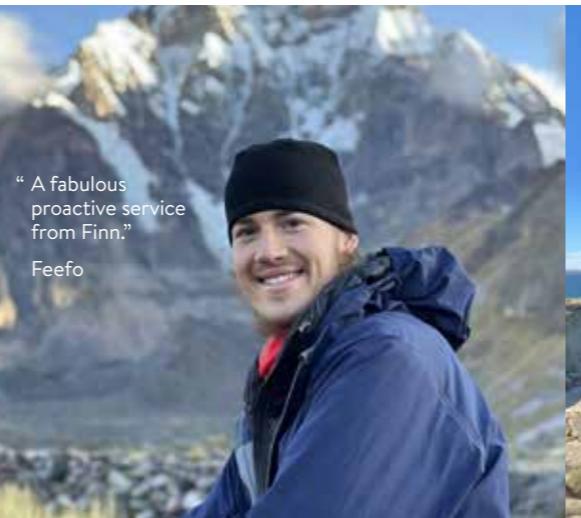


“ From the very first communication with regard to our possible once-in-a-lifetime trip Hannah was extremely efficient, knowledgeable, helpful and approachable.”  
VH, Bristol



“ Mary couldn't have been more helpful. She is a star!”

IT, Settle



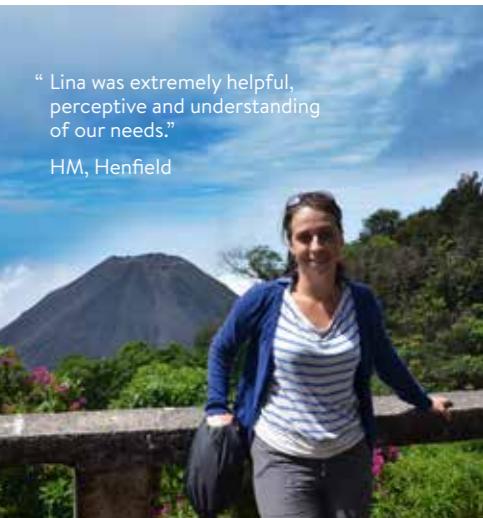
“ A fabulous proactive service from Finn.”  
Feefo



“ Sophie was very helpful, knowledgeable, had some excellent suggestions and organised a holiday that was perfect for our needs.”  
PE, Bromley



“ Maggie had a very short timescale to organise the trip and made it all work with great ideas.”  
SW, London



“ Lina was extremely helpful, perceptive and understanding of our needs.”  
HM, Henfield



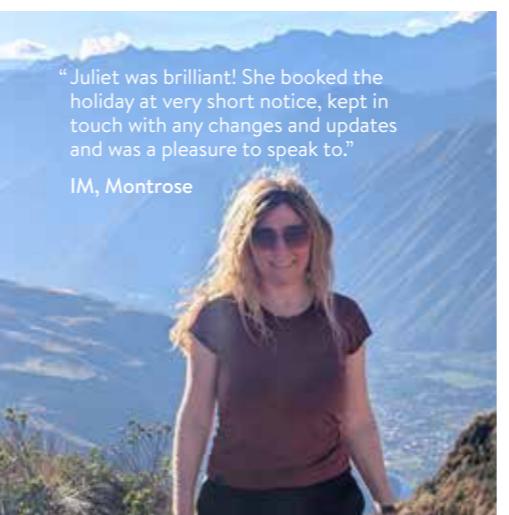
“ Very personalised service, information, encouragement. Helpful in every way. Carrie knows Peru and my tour route very well personally, so was able to answer all my many questions reassuringly and practically. An asset to your company!”

DS, Invergordon



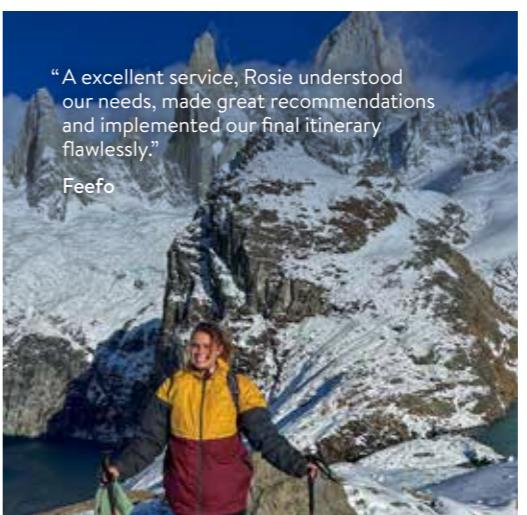
“ Outstanding help and advice from Charlotte. Exceptionally high level of detail and advice to guide our decision making about the itinerary, where to stay, what to see, different options to make the most of our journey.”

Feefo



“ Juliet was brilliant! She booked the holiday at very short notice, kept in touch with any changes and updates and was a pleasure to speak to.”

IM, Montrose



“ A excellent service, Rosie understood our needs, made great recommendations and implemented our final itinerary flawlessly.”

Feefo

### Speak with an Expert

Visit our website  
[journeylatinamerica.com](http://journeylatinamerica.com)

Speak to an expert consultant on  
020 8747 8315

Or email us at  
[tours@journeylatinamerica.com](mailto:tours@journeylatinamerica.com)

# WAYS TO TRAVEL

With an increasing number of travel options available, seeking guidance from an experienced tour operator on the best way to travel can save you time and add value to your holiday.

Whether it's a Tailor-made Holiday crafted from scratch, a pre-designed Private Journey or an Escorted Group Tour, our experts will listen to your requirements to make sure we provide an incredible holiday experience based on your personal preferences.



## “ WHAT YOU SAY

This is my first trip with Journey Latin America and they were brilliant customising everything to my needs and made the perfect holiday and more importantly a totally stress-free experience.

LR, Nottingham

## Tailor-made Journeys

### YOUR UNIQUE HOLIDAY

Speak to one of our travel experts to design your holiday exactly as you want it – creating truly personalised itineraries is what we excel at. We are happy to make changes as your holiday plans take shape and are always available throughout the process for any queries you might have.

### OUR UNRIVALLED PORTFOLIO

With 40 years' experience in travel to Latin America we have an unrivalled portfolio of accommodation and activities to choose from. We also regularly inspect the products that we offer, meaning you can book safe in the knowledge that we've done all the hard work for you.

### OUR SERVICE

From the first time you contact us to the moment you return, we strive for every part of the service we provide to be exceptional.

### HOW IT WORKS

Typically we assign you one specialist consultant throughout the planning and booking process. Speak to them in the office, on the phone, by email, via LiveChat or on our website – whatever suits you best.



Nahuel Huapi National Park, Argentina

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## Private Journeys

We have over 100 exclusive private holidays to choose from on our website where you can check prices and explore day-by-day itineraries.

All our Private Journeys are expertly designed by us and are completely flexible. Our travel experts will be happy to modify them to ensure they are exactly the right for you.



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## Group Tours

If you'd prefer to travel with other like-minded people in a sociable atmosphere, we offer two innovative styles of fixed-date escorted group tours with award-winning tour leaders: adventurous, trail-blazing Discovery Journeys; and Classic Journeys, featuring comfort and exclusivity.

For more details about our Group Tours visit our website to request a brochure via post or to download a digital version.



# JOURNEY STYLES

To guide you to the holiday which best suits you, we've created a range of contrasting styles. Try exhilarating adventure sports on a Walking and Active Holiday, spot rare, colourful birds on a Wildlife Holiday, or if you are travelling with children, head for our Family Holidays. For a full list of holiday styles visit our website, and browse suggested itineraries which our travel specialists can tailor to your specific needs.



Sacred Valley, Peru



Mount Fitz Roy, Argentina

Immerse yourself in the landscape with an active holiday through some of Latin America's most impressive wilderness scenery. The icy peaks of the Andes in Peru and Bolivia, the traditional highlands of Guatemala, the glaciers of Patagonia, the volcanoes of Ecuador: just a few of the stunning locations with an array of activities to suit all abilities.

## Our top walking and active experiences

- Climb Sierra Negra volcano and peer into the depths of the Galápagos' largest crater.
- Whizz through the luscious jungle canopy on 12 exhilarating zip-lines at Boquete, Panama.
- Raft the frothing white water of Costa Rica's exhilarating Pacuare river.
- Hit the trail to the base of Torres del Paine and be part of the most iconic view in Patagonia.
- Glorious day walks reveal the ice-spiked pinnacles of Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina.
- Take to Peru's Salkantay Inca Trail on horseback, riding past towering snow-drenched peaks.

## WHAT WE LOVE

To enjoy mountain-biking the Mindo cloud forest trails in Andean Ecuador you don't need off-road experience – the scenic dirt roads are safe – and the scenery is remarkably unspoilt given how close it is to Quito.

David Nichols



Turismo Chile



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## WHAT YOU SAY

Kayaking around the mangroves in the Damas Estuary (Costa Rica) was good fun and we saw lots of different wildlife – including a boa imperator in the trees. Our guide was very knowledgeable.

KF, Aldershot

## SELF-DRIVE



Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina

Break away from the crowds with the freedom and flexibility of your own car. Ever-improving roads in Latin America are opening up extraordinary landscapes to explore at your own pace, knowing you have accommodation booked at the end of the day. We offer self-drive car hire in nine Latin American countries, and counting...



## WHAT WE LOVE

Driving in Colombia is a real adventure. It's a great experience if you relish the chance to drive up steep winding mountain roads, with a stunning view around every corner. The scenery is stupendous.

Mary Anne Nelson



## WHAT YOU SAY

The self-drive in the Salta and Jujuy province was excellent. The GPS worked well, the car was good and the mountains are out-of-this-world.

NHC, Kuala Lumpur

## FAMILY HOLIDAYS



Caribbean coast, Belize

We understand the joys and challenges of travelling with children and teenagers, and we're the experts when it comes to designing flexible trips built specially around a family. We can suggest good value or luxurious family-friendly resorts and cruises, safe beaches for swimming, adventurous but accessible hikes and memorable wildlife encounters. We make sure it's all entertaining and educational for parents and children alike.



Tom Parrott

## Our top self-drive experiences

- Take a lonely road winding past Patagonia's volcanoes, turquoise lakes, glaciers and stark peaks.
- On a leisurely drive in Mexico's Yucatán, stop off at Mayan temples, colonial haciendas and sunny beaches.
- Explore rural roads through exquisite coffee-blanketed hills in Colombia's heartland.
- Delight in the empty roads of tiny Uruguay's unspoilt coastline and vineyard-sprinkled interior.
- It's a stunning, varied drive from the Caribbean to the Pacific through Costa Rica's wildlife-rich mountains.
- Descend a pioneering road from Ecuador's chilly uplands through cloud forest to the steamy Amazon.



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## WHAT WE LOVE

Our young son was thrilled to rise to the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain in a cable car. In Rio they give priority to families and we were whisked to the front of the queue.

Chris Rendell-Dunn



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## Our top family experiences

- Older children feel an explorer's excitement hiking the waterfalls of the remote Brazilian table top mountains of Chapada Diamantina.
- Roaming among jungle-clad Mexican pyramids as parrots squawk above delights all the family.
- A homestay at Lake Titicaca means you can all engage with a family across the generations.
- Spotting wildlife always thrills – especially the lovable turtles of Costa Rica.
- Slow-paced Cuba can be explored in many adventurous ways; by bike, jeep, and vintage car.
- Glamp it up in Patagonia in a family yurt – wilderness explorations leave from the front door – or flap.



## WHAT YOU SAY

We were travelling with kids, aged 10 and 15, and Sophie did a great job of tailoring our plans to take into account their needs. She had a very detailed knowledge of the region and therefore was able to make some helpful suggestions.

ME, Hong Kong

## HONEYMOON AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS



Atacama Desert, Chile

Getting married? Special anniversary or birthday? Perhaps your dream is of palm-studded beaches, a Patagonian glacier, a Galápagos cruise, Peru's Machu Picchu or the romance of Havana. We know how to make your dream holiday even more special. We have identified charming places to stay to ensure your special moments are delivered with an unforgettable level of service.



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### Our top honeymoon and special occasion experiences

- Rise early from first class Belmond Das Cataratas to be the first to view tumultuous Iguazú Falls.
- Glamp at Glover's Reef on a coral atoll off Belize's coast; kayak during an apricot sunset.
- Travel from Lake Titicaca to Cusco on luxury train Andean Explorer: sleep on board in a sumptuous suite.
- An exclusive adults-only boutique hotel near Costa Rica's Arenal volcano, Nayara Springs is a treat.
- Mashpi Lodge is an award-winning retreat in magical, bird-filled Ecuadorian cloud forest.
- Enjoy the pampas hospitality of romantic La Bamba, Argentina's premier estancia welcoming visitors.

### WHAT YOU SAY

A real treat was when our guide on Easter Island took us by surprise one morning to Anakena beach. There waiting for us was a bottle of bubbly and a private picnic fit for a king (and queen!).

Laura Rendell Dunn

## WILDLIFE ADVENTURES



Jaguar, Belize

Expert guides will take you to the region's most astounding natural habitats to observe extraordinary creatures first-hand. Choose between an eco-lodge deep in the rainforest or the wide open wetlands, a tropical wildlife cruise, a bird-watching trail, a visit to a monkey refuge, a whale-spotting excursion, photographing penguins in the South Atlantic or condors in the Andes... there's a range of choices.



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### Top wildlife experiences

- Spying a jaguar is the climax of a stay in Brazil's Pantanal wetlands.
- The comical dance of the blue-footed booby in the Galápagos raises a smile.
- Hummingbirds are abundant and easily spotted in the Andean cloud forest.
- Hundreds of scarlet macaws nibble a clay lick in Peru's Manú reserve.
- Look out for pumas searching for guanacos in the Patagonian steppe.
- Wake up to the dramatic chorus of howler monkeys in Nicaragua's tropical forests.

### WHAT YOU SAY

The trip to Harberton from Ushuaia to see penguins was amazing. We saw four whales and other wildlife including a king penguin. I was impressed by the knowledge of the guide and her commitment to conservation.

DF, Malvern

### WHAT WE LOVE

The Iguazú Falls are sensational – definitely the most memorable day especially with such a great guide! But the Hiram Bingham train journey to Machu Picchu was also a very special event for us.

### WHAT YOU SAY

Snorkelling with Galápagos hammerhead sharks is my most memorable underwater experience but my most exciting wildlife encounter was the sighting of a jaguar prowling in Peru's Manú National Park.

GC, Horsham

### WHAT WE LOVE

Ben Line

## OFF-THE-BEATEN-TRACK



Uyuni salt flats, Bolivia

There are still many places where a rare visitor is warmly welcomed, and where you can view jaw-dropping panoramas without a hint of a crowd. The wilderness of the Guianas, isolated eco-lodges in the highlands of Costa Rica, the penguin colonies of South Georgia – we have pushed back the horizons to offer you marvellous remote holidays.



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## Our top off-the-beaten-track experiences

- Discover a wild, far-flung corner of Patagonia's glaciated landscapes on Chile's Austral road.
- Cowboys help you spot anteaters in the cattle prairies of the Llanos wetlands in Colombia.
- Visit a surreal landscape of rippling sand dunes pitted with jade lagoons in Brazil's north-east.
- Bolivia's Amboró National Park - pumas, ocelots, and the rare spectacled bear.
- In the puna of Atacama, you're alone in rarefied, high altitude scenery as alien as Mars.
- Explore Peru's high-altitude landscapes on the Ausangate Trek, staying in community-run lodges en route.

## WHAT WE LOVE

The Weaver's Trail (Peru) not only covers spectacular scenery but gives you a great glimpse of local life. I didn't see another tourist for two days and was greeted by groups of curious children.

Hannah Donaldson

## WHAT YOU SAY

I was surprised and delighted about everything I saw and experienced, it was well worth getting off-the-beaten-track. In Trinidad (Cuba) I looked through an archway to a courtyard with about 100 locals having a tea dance.

PW, Norwich



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Colourful Mexican gastronomy

Latin American gastronomy – traditional, innovative or fusion – embraces distinct, always succulent, regional cuisines. We can arrange all sorts of foodie experiences from traditional snacks to gourmet – either as the main focus of your holiday or a special highlight. Sip maize beer in a Bolivian market, learn how to cook ceviche in Peru or savour luscious lobster with a convivial Cuban family.



Jenny Pownall

## Our top food and drink experiences

- A hands-on cookery class involves all aspects of creating a tasty Mexican meal.
- Savour the flavours of various pisco brandies at a traditional Peruvian distillery.
- Feast on a juicy asado in the open air on a ranch in the Argentine pampas.
- Visit a Guatemalan tropical plantation to sample avocados, cocoa and coffee at source.
- Sip premium wines in a delightful rural setting at Chile's historic Santa Rita winery.
- In south Brazil, sample oysters straight from the ocean, washed down with a caipirinha.



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## WHAT WE LOVE

Gastronomy has really taken off in Peru in the last ten years or so and it was really noticeable how much the quality of restaurants has risen in that time. Visitors should try to incorporate at least one culinary activity into their itinerary.

Gary Tombs

## WHAT YOU SAY

Uruguay was a fantastic surprise as we were not sure what to expect. The food and wine was excellent and it was really relaxed, which was great.

AE, Hope Valley

## BEACH &amp; BEYOND



Palenque, Mexico

Discovery and repose come together in an ideal holiday combination, whatever your budget. Clamber among pre-Columbian ruins or walk the streets of colonial cities, then spend a few days relaxing at a countryside hacienda or on sugary beaches. Or follow a challenging mountain trek with pampering in a luxury spa – the compatibility of different experiences is limitless...



Tierra Hotel

## Our top beach and beyond experiences

- Discover Peru's mountainous Inca heartland; sunbathe on Mancora's wild Pacific beaches.
- Join the party at Rio's riotous Carnival; sit back on the sands at fashionable Búzios.
- Delve into vast Mexico City's multi-layered culture then head to luxurious Pacific coast resorts.
- Dance to the salsa beat in Cuba's crumbly colonial cities; enjoy the tranquillity of Cayo Santa María.
- Venture onto the jungle trails of Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula; unwind at a luxury beach resort.

## WHAT YOU SAY

This was an amazing trip and fully met our expectations. We were new to South America and it had so much to offer – we will be returning. The planning was excellent and the pace of the trip exactly met our requirements.

SB, King's Langley

## WHAT WE LOVE

We explored by car the Chilean lake district's remote country roads, sweated up to a volcano's summit, then relaxed at a luxurious vineyard with a choice of top quality wines.

Mary Anne Nelson

## EXPEDITION CRUISES



Peruvian Amazon

To discover Latin America's islands, coasts, rivers and remote reaches, travelling by water can often be the best (or only) way. Our expedition cruises are adventurous in spirit, with expert guides and land excursions. Among them are wildlife trips on the Amazon, voyages in the Galápagos Islands and Antarctica, and cruises around the Patagonian archipelagos of the far south.



Lina Fuller

## Our top expedition cruise experiences

- Float down the remote Amazon like the Brazilians do, on a traditional wooden riverboat.
- Cruise historic glacial waterways.
- Rise and fall through the jungle-lined Panama Canal's massive locks.
- Explore Antarctic kayaking, camping on the ice and snow-shoeing.
- Cruise Colombia's Magdalena River, exploring hidden gems on the way.
- Discover Galápagos iguanas, albatrosses and giant tortoises.

## WHAT YOU SAY

The staff of MV Legend were very helpful and pleasant. The team have everything sorted, in a very professional way, with no shortage of activities. A great experience.

JC, Littlehampton



Aqua Expeditions

# HIGHLIGHTS OF LATIN AMERICA

Latin America has too many highlights to include all of them here, but below are a few of our favourites to get you started:



## WHAT YOU SAY

We had a fantastic trip and a wonderful experience. Journey Latin America's knowledge and experience of South America shone through in the organisation of the trip as a whole. We would whole-heartedly recommend them to anyone contemplating a holiday to Latin America and we will definitely be booking another tour with Journey Latin America in the future.

DL, Twickenham



### 1. CARIBBEAN COAST

Idyllic beaches and aquamarine waters fringe Latin America's Caribbean coast.



### 2. CHICHÉN ITZÁ

An astonishing Mayan city of pyramids and temples basking in the Yucatán sunshine.



### 3. GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

Get up close to curious sea lions, languid iguanas and giant tortoises on a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Galápagos.



### 4. AMAZON

Delve into the rainforest on a variety of explorations from a comfortable lodge in Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia or Ecuador.



### 5. MACHU PICCHU

Peru's legendary 'Lost City of the Incas', reached by train or by walking the Inca Trail, lives up to the highest expectations.



### 6. LAKE TITICACA

The world's highest navigable lake supports a melting pot of Peruvian and Bolivian cultures.



### 7. RIO CARNIVAL

The world's biggest party, held in what could well be its most beautiful city.



### 8. IGUAZÚ FALLS

Straddling the Brazil / Argentina border, these vast and powerful waterfalls crash through dense subtropical jungle.



### 9. ATACAMA DESERT

The world's driest desert is a haunting landscape of arid sands, geysers and unearthly wind-eroded rock sculptures.



### 10. EASTER ISLAND

A dramatically beautiful wilderness offering unrivalled adventures into the great outdoors.



### 11. ANTARCTICA

Tiny Easter Island is famed for its groups of enigmatic Moai: the huge stone heads that watch over this remote island.



### 12. ANTARCTICA

The world's last true wilderness; Antarctica's towering icebergs, jagged mountain peaks and vast glaciers are alive with wildlife.

# CUBA



Havana

Steamy dance floors, the clink of rum glasses, feet tapping to a salsa beat, vintage bikes, shiny Cadillacs, ox-driven carts carving through tobacco fields – you'll be utterly beguiled by Cuba with its beautiful, crumbling colonial towns and vivid natural landscapes, from sugary beaches to forest-shrouded mountains.

Cuba is unique from so many angles: a fusion of the joyously Caribbean with a Latin rhythm. Dive into its intoxicating blend of living art, revolutionary history, and sizzling creole cuisine.



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## Cuba highlights

- 1 **Viñales** Fairytale countryside is ploughed by ox-cart, and tobacco leaves are hand-picked in a timeless bucolic idyll.
- 2 **Havana** A spontaneous city alive with music and chatter, a chaos of restoration sitting alongside forgotten decaying mansions.
- 3 **Cienfuegos** A port with a history of piracy. A stylish French art deco legacy shelters animated Afro-Cuban clubs.

- 4 **Trinidad** Cuba's musical heart is a baroque masterpiece – cobbled lanes with pastel-washed houses, ornate churches and palm-studded squares.
- 5 **Santiago de Cuba** Cuba's anarchic Heroic City is a jumbled, feel-good place whose history gives rise to a laid-back African feel.
- 6 **Baracoa** A remote, tropical, hill-fringed town, this quaint little settlement is a base for hiking.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

Really enjoyed all of it, especially Havana and Trinidad. Loved the music, the atmosphere and the people.

GG, Diss

### WHAT WE LOVE

Cuban beaches have it all. The northern cayes are an excellent choice with tropical vegetation, exotic birds, coral reefs, white sands and turquoise waters with shallow areas great for kids.

Chris Rendell-Dunn



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## Signature Cuba:

### Complete Cuba

**18 days from £3,000pp**

#### DAYS 1-4

Stroll along the cobbles of Old Havana, music seeps out of every doorway and the narrow pastel-hued streets are clogged with bikes. Turn west to eco-friendly Las Terrazas and the Viñales valley, where farmers sit relaxing under shady trees smoking cigars.



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#### DAYS 5-12

Eastwards, the crumbly cities each have a story to tell. Wander the elegant French boulevards of Cienfuegos; in colonial Trinidad dancing and music continues into the early hours, while Camaguey is renowned for poetry and ballet and Santiago is a melting pot of Haitian and African motifs.

#### DAYS 13-18

Drive east to the island's tip, call in at lazy Baracoa, and Gibara, a pretty port set among sugar fields on the craggy northeast coast, before departing for Havana or add an extension, spending time in sun-kissed Guardalavaca.

#### WHAT WE LOVE

The highlights were definitely riding in a convertible Cadillac and hitching a ride on a tractor in the hills.

Jim Ashworth



Paul Winrow-Griffin

Gibara



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#### “ WHAT YOU SAY

In Havana we spent hours walking round both the old town and Vedado, which was totally fascinating. We saw groups of horsemen riding the wrong way down the Autopista!

RF, Henley-on-Thames



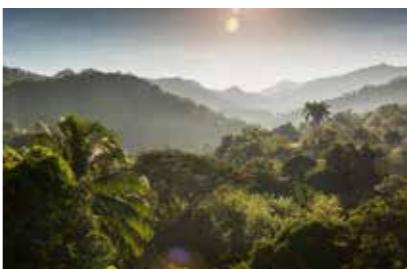
AWL Images

Havana

## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Sizzling salsa

Immerse yourself in the tropical rhythm of salsa, the seductive music and dance of the Latin Caribbean: watch extravagant tropical shows or even take a lesson.

### Drive old Cuba

Glide through city streets encased in the leather and chrome of a gleaming 1950s classic car for a nostalgic ride into the decadent, pre-revolutionary past.

### Hike to Fidel's hideaway

An evocative hike in the wild, remote Sierra Maestra leads you in the footsteps of a youthful Fidel Castro to his secret hideout.

### Emulate Ernest

Discover the intoxicating minty flavour of Cuban mojitos on a bar crawl round the fabled old-city haunts of Ernest Hemingway.

### Havana by bike

Cycle along the sun-streaked seaside malecón to its iconic, decaying fortress, cruising at the locals' own leisurely pace.



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# MEXICO



Tulum

Mexico's vast size promises stunning natural and cultural diversity. On display are the traces of the Aztec and Mayan empires, with magnificently sculpted pyramids and temples abandoned for centuries to a greedy rainforest. Ornate Spanish colonial towns dot the craggy mountainsides while the inviting white-sand coastline is lapped by azure seas.

Present day Mexico's capital is one of the world's greatest cities but the whole country bustles with thriving markets, flamboyant fiestas, world-renowned cuisine and cutting-edge hotels.



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## Mexico highlights

- 1 **Mexico City** The energetic capital is glamorous, extravagant, modest and always mesmerising with Aztec pyramids, an ornate Spanish cathedral and world-class museums.
- 2 **Chiapas** Bohemian San Cristóbal de las Casas is a magnet for lovers of little bars and live music, while the surrounding traditional Mayan villages give an insight into an age-old lifestyle.
- 3 **Baja California** This peninsula of rugged, scorched desert is fringed by chalk-white beaches and aquamarine seas bursting with dazzling marine life.
- 4 **Central colonial towns** A scattering of affluent Spanish silver towns attracts artists with their flower-filled plazas, ornate churches, pastel-washed mansions, colleges and frequent festivals.
- 5 **The Yucatán Peninsula** This steamy Mayan heartland has many awe-inspiring abandoned temples and limestone pools, all embraced by tangled jungle.
- 6 **Caribbean and Pacific coasts** The shimmering Riviera Maya offers sunny beaches, water-sports and a backdrop of pre-Columbian ruins; the Pacific coast promises luxury hotels, whales and boat trips.



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### “ WHAT YOU SAY

Our highlights were: visiting Frida Kahlo's museum; the Rivera murals. Also making friends with Sonia our guide and all the Mexican people we met during the week.

HW, Sheffield

### “ WHAT WE LOVE

Wandering the picturesque pastel streets of historic Campeche, catching hidden glimpses of local life, then enjoying a cocktail or two from a balcony bar looking down over its pretty plaza epitomises the relaxed pleasures of Mexico for me!

Juliet Ellwood

## Signature Mexico: Cultural Heartlands to Caribbean coast

**15 days from £4,485pp**

### DAYS 1-3

Visit the teeming plazas of the capital, Mexico City. Everything is on a huge scale: the ornate palace, monumental cathedral, the remains of the Aztec Templo Mayor, Frenchified boulevards and lazy parks – plus the sprawling Aztec ruins at Teotihuacán. You'll be awestruck.



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### DAYS 4-7

Beyond the vertiginous landscapes of wild Sumidero canyon, you'll explore the galleries and leisurely cafés of mountain-set San Cristóbal, centre for the arts and innovation, but surrounded by fascinating, firmly traditional Mayan villages.

### DAYS 8-15

Turn back to the past to discover some of the Mayan Empire's most extraordinary ruined cities, where you can scramble amongst sculpted temples and towering pyramids which are engulfed by rainforest. Explore Palenque and the most spectacular sites in the Yucatán Peninsula. Wind down on the Riviera's palm-studded Caribbean beaches.



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### WHAT WE LOVE

Oaxaca perfectly encapsulates everything I love about Mexico. Taste the delicious cuisine in upscale restaurants and in the local markets and admire the local art in artists' workshops and galleries. Outside of the city explore impressive Mesoamerican ruins and witness the natural beauty of places such as Hierve el Agua.

Charlotte Daubeney



Campeche

### “ WHAT YOU SAY

We loved the city of Merida and had a Sunday at leisure. Everything was very well planned by Sophie and we walked the Paseo de Montejo, visited the Museum of Anthropology, and had a late lunch in Santa Lucia Park watching the locals dancing.

AF, Merriot



Mexico City

## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Live the Day of the Dead

The photogenic Day of the Dead calls out ghoulish masked processions and animated music, while Mexicans hit the streets to remember their deceased loved ones. You're invited to join in.

### Savour the street food

Sample Mexico's ubiquitous tasty tacos and tamales at market stalls or take a cookery course to learn how to make them yourself.

### Balloon above the ruins

Get a bird's eye view over the great pre-Columbian abandoned city Teotihuacán from a hot air balloon, gliding over palaces, pyramids and ball courts.



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### Lucha Libre wrestling

Masked wrestlers show off amazing acrobatic skills to hold or throw their opponents. Get involved as the crowd cheers the heroes and boos the villains.

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# GUATEMALA



Antigua

## Guatemala highlights

Spectacular Guatemala lies at the heart of the Mayan world. Frequent exotic, colour-soaked festivals intertwine Christian motifs with the mysticism of old beliefs, and proud villagers lead an unchanged traditional lifestyle on pocket-sized farmsteads. Highland markets selling everything from incense to wooden masks are a kaleidoscope of colour, while gentle marimba music fills the colonial courtyards.

**1** **Tikal** Lofty pyramids punch through the jungle canopy in the vast, long-abandoned Mayan city.

**2** **Caribbean coast** Steamy tropical lowlands, overlooked by a vast Spanish fort, pulsate to an Afro-Caribbean beat.

**3** **Semuc Champey** Base for exploring coffee plantations, limestone caves and the cascading turquoise pools surrounded by lush jungle.

**4** **Antigua** A colonial gem dotted with shady plazas and courtyards bursting with bougainvillea, surrounded by smoking volcanoes.

**5** **Lake Atitlán** The deep blue waters of Lake Atitlán are circled by towering volcanoes and its shoreline is pitted with ancient Mayan villages.

**6** **Western highlands** A wild, isolated region pervaded by ancestral customs such as a drink-fuelled, day-long horse-race.



## Signature Guatemala: Mountain markets and Mayan ruins

12 days from £3,200 pp

**DAYS 1-3** After arriving in Guatemala fly north to Tikal and explore the vast complex of temples at Mayan Tikal, its pyramids shrouded in monkey-filled rainforest. The views from one of these ancient skyscrapers are unforgettable.

**DAYS 4-5** Wander the arty cobbled lanes of Antigua. The ruined churches, convents and monasteries attest the power of the volcanoes brooding over the city. Browse the boutiques and galleries, and drop in to one of the cosy cafés.

**DAYS 6-12** Continue into the mountains to the indigenous markets of the highlands; the lifeblood of remote communities. A living tableau of rural life, their stalls are heaving with produce traded by farmers congregating to swap village gossip. Atmospheric Lake Atitlán is fringed by kitchen gardens and emerald volcanoes casting shadows on the silvery waters. Take a boat trip to lakeside Santiago, an excellent place to buy authentic textiles.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

Being in Antigua when they were having the Feria de las Flores made the city even more interesting and colourful. I would never have tired of the views of the sunsets and volcanoes in Atitlán.

KG, London

### WHAT WE LOVE

I stopped at Yaxha, an isolated and largely unexcavated Mayan site, enabling me to quietly enjoy the wildlife. Climbing the tallest temple, I was stunned by the views of the jungle and lagoon.

Ben Line



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## Some of our favourite experiences



### Kayak on Lake Atitlán

Embrace the elements and enjoy the stunning 360-degree panorama of the surrounding mountains and villages as seen from Lake Atitlán's shimmering surface.

### Climb an active volcano

Rise from pine-forests to the summit of a fizzing volcano, climbing over lava flows and glowing blood-red embers for jaw-dropping views into El Salvador.

### Browse an open-air market

Streets come alive with commerce when Chichicastenango hosts Guatemala's largest open-air market. Stalls are piled high with rainbow-hued textiles, pottery, leather belts and flowers in a medley of mystical Mayan and Catholic influences.

# BELIZE



## Belize highlights

Awaiting exploration in this English-speaking corner of Central America are jungle rivers, mysterious caves, and bird-filled trails. Wildlife is everywhere, with watchful jaguars inhabiting the forest. There are numerous jungle-caressed Mayan archaeological sites, now the home of iguanas and monkeys.

- 1 **Caribbean Coast** Turquoise seas lap idyllic beaches, with coral reefs and wrecks harbouring a wealth of underwater life. The astonishing Blue Hole is a world-class dive site.
- 2 **Mountains and jungle** The unspoilt interior has intricate, little-visited Mayan ceremonial sites; Wildlife sanctuaries sit beside sugar cane fields; leafy Mountain Pine Ridge offers active eco-adventures.
- 3 **Toledo and the south** Dense rainforest canopies conceal caves and creeks, clear natural pools and waterfalls. On the coast the fishing port Punta Gorda is the launch pad for explorations.



## Signature Belize:

Rainforest, reef and ruins

12 days from £3,850pp

**DAYS 1-5** Head for the emerald hills of the interior, enveloped by tropical foliage. Visit the spooky ATM Mayan ceremonial caves, and consider a trip over the border to Tikal in Guatemala, where monkeys scurry around the towering pyramids of the abandoned city. Back in Belize, at Lamanai you can spot toucans at dawn, and enjoy sunset cocktails on the river.

**DAYS 6-8** Belize is famous for its eco-tourism and you'll stay at a lodge in the less-visited south where you can go kayaking, snorkelling, caving, and hiking. To meet local people, visit a welcoming Mayan or Garifuna community.

**DAYS 9-12** The wooden houses of Caribbean village Placencia are built on stilts among swaying palms rooted in powder-white sands. Indulge in a variety of water sports or go on a boat trip to seek out the elephantine West-Indian manatee.



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## WHAT WE LOVE

Belize really moves to its own beat – the coast is unmistakably Caribbean with incredible white sand beaches, turquoise seas and coral reefs, laidback people, pulsating reggae and rum punch. Combined with Mayan ruins and a plethora of wildlife and you have the recipe for a perfect holiday.

Charlotte Daubeney

## WHAT YOU SAY

On an early morning drive at Chan Chich, going round a bend we found a jaguar standing in the road ahead - a classic case of being in the right place at the right time.

CG, Poulton-le-Fylde



Belize Tourist Board

## Some of our favourite experiences



### Explore the ATM Cave

Hike into the shadowy caverns, cross underground rivers and enter a giant chamber. Once the setting for Mayan religious ceremonies, it's stuffed with relics including ceramics and, gruesomely, skeletons.

### The ultimate dawn chorus

The mind-boggling plethora of birds sheltering in the fertile greenery of Belize's pristine landscapes attracts bird lovers from all over the world. 605 species are on view, from tiny hummingbirds to majestic eagles.

### Island glamping and snorkelling

Many of Belize's attractions are water-focussed, unsurprising given the huge coral reef offshore. Snorkel, dive or kayak in the clear aquamarine waters in the company of whale-sharks or rays.

# EL SALVADOR



Ataco

## El Salvador highlights

It's a tiny country of wild beauty with a bucolic rhythm and among the most welcoming people in Latin America. That's why, for some of us, it is our favourite. The gorgeous floral Ruta de las Flores splices a coffee-growing heartland and is home to peaceful colonial towns and cobbled lanes.



- 1 **Suchitoto** This exquisite, flower-laden centre for arts and culture hosts internationally-renowned fiestas.
- 2 **Parque El Imposible** This coastal range, the haunt of puma and eagles, has delightful walking trails.
- 3 **Perquin** Once a hotbed of revolution it's now a peaceful town with an evocative war museum.
- 4 **El Sunzal** A sweep of volcanic sand is thumped by Pacific waves beloved of surfers.
- 5 **Gulf of Fonseca** Whales and dolphins play in this mangrove-fringed waterway peppered with picturesque islands.
- 6 **Ruta de las Flores** This scenic route passes through the principal coffee-growing region, linking several quiet highland towns.

## Signature El Salvador:

Revolutionary road trip

11 days from £2,775pp

**DAYS 1-3** Peer into the crater of extinct El Boquerón volcano. Explore the fine pyramids of Mayan ceremonial centre El Tazumal, set among coffee and sugar cane plantations. Linger in a coffee shop at Ataco, a renovated cobbled town on the Ruta del las Flores, a road which isn't just scenically beautiful - dip into a cultural heaven of museums, crafts, floral displays and food fairs.

**DAYS 4-8** By kayak or bike, discover Jiquilisco Bay's creeks and mangroves a haven for birds and turtles. Sip from a coconut as the sun sets over a serene watery land. Boat over the Gulf de Fonseca and continue to Perquín to learn about the now resolved civil war, and visit Joya de Cerén, the Pompeii of the Americas.

**DAYS 9-11** Delight in the arty workshops of Suchitoto, the country's colonial gem. Return for a visit of San Salvador's historic centre.



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## WHAT YOU SAY

The people were amazing and I found the civil war history very moving. The celebrations for the festive season were like nothing I have ever experienced. I can still hear those fireworks now!

FL, Brierley Hill

## WHAT WE LOVE

On the Pacific coast I helped with the release of some new-born turtles into the sea. It was very emotional to see them take their first steps to reach the water.

Lina Fuller



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## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Make your own pupusas

In pretty colonial Conchagua, on the flanks of a volcano, a local cook will help you prepare, cook and devour El Salvador's national dish, the pupusa, or cheese-filled tortilla.

### Summit a volcano

Views of three volcanoes appear through gaps in the foliage: trek through the clouds to enjoy heady views from the summit of Santa Ana, the highest of the coastal range.

### Coffee from bean to cup

On a coffee plantation on the Ruta de las Flores, discover how coffee is produced by age-old traditional methods and enjoy a delicious cup of the aromatic finished product.

# HONDURAS



Macaw

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## Honduras highlights

Honduras is home to beautiful national parks protecting flowering, bird-rich rainforest, deep river canyons and waterfalls. Discover prolific marine life in the Bay Islands off the mainland's palm-whispered Caribbean coast, and explore ruined Mayan cities in the heart of the jungle.



- 1 **Copán** The craftsmanship of the lavishly sculptured Mayan ruins here has survived the assaults of time and the tentacles of a rapacious jungle.
- 2 **Roatán** An idyllic Caribbean island fringed by white beaches and lapped by warm, glass-clear waters, with coral reefs teeming with marine life.
- 3 **Pico Bonito** This tropical national park, criss-crossed by walking trails shelters rainforest, creeks and canyons cut through by sparkling rivers and waterfalls.

## Signature Honduras: Jungle, Islands and Mayan Ruins

11 days from £3,225pp

**DAYS 1-4** Travel through coffee and tobacco plantations to Copán ruins, a quaint colonial town hosting some of the most elaborately embellished pre-Columbian ruins in the Americas. The intricate carvings narrate the battles fought, and the fate of the enemy. In the jungle nearby you'll be dazzled by the bright flash of a macaw's wings.



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**DAYS 5-7** Inland from the coast, at Pico Bonito National Park, hundreds of tropical bird species are protected. From your eco-lodge you can explore sun-dappled trails at dawn or dusk with a soundtrack of birdsong, or go white-water rafting on a wild river.

**DAYS 8-11** By boat to Caribbean Roatán island, where world-renowned dive and snorkelling sites dot the surrounding azure waters. Spy out the hammerhead sharks, rays, turtles and tiny seahorses which frequent the coral reef. You can kick back on powdery sands, and enjoy the laid-back Afro-Caribbean culture of lobster and calypso.

### WHAT YOU SAY

Copán is a marvellous site with carved stone in good condition. There's also stunning birdlife, including macaws and parrots. We were also taken to the less visited Sepulchre site to the south of the main site.

RT, Westbury



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### WHAT WE LOVE

The day I discovered the beauty of our oceans is the day when I entered the blue waters in Roatán. There I learned to dive and discover how fascinating the coral reef really is.

Lina Fuller

## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Live a timeless idyll

In the rugged, warmly forested hills around Pico Bonito, isolated rural communities lead a slow-paced way of life – watch horse-and-carts ply the gravel roads, and tiny farmsteads where families are oblivious to the goings-on of the outside world.

### Life with the Mayans

Copán will wake you up to the lifestyle of the Mayan Empire, which seems eager to tell its story. Marvel at the hieroglyphic stairway and the ball courts where ritual sports sealed the fate of sacrificial victims.

### Beachcombing the Caribbean

All along the sultry Caribbean coast you can discover divine palm-fringed beaches, and meet small communities of Garifuna (descendants of African slaves and indigenous tribes) along with a swashbuckling history of piracy.

# NICARAGUA



## Nicaragua highlights

The fuming volcanoes mirror the political upheavals which have kept Nicaragua a little known destination. But that's what makes it so alluring – the lyrical, unchanging rural lifestyle of the coffee hills; the primitive art of Lake Nicaragua's rebellious Solentiname islands; the most bird-prolific nature reserves in Central America.

**1 Granada** Explore the romantic and beautifully-restored lakeside colonial city, by horse-drawn carriage.

**2 Ometepe Island** A scenic laid-back island formed of twin volcanic peaks that rise from the vast metallic-blue waters of Lake Nicaragua.

**3 Rio San Juan** The wildlife-rich jungle borders this river which flows from Lake Nicaragua to the Caribbean Sea.

**4 Leon** Crumbly churches and walls adorned with revolutionary murals, offset by the city's lively nightlife.

**5 Pacific Coast** San Juan del Sur is a surfers' paradise, where turtles nest undisturbed on golden sands.

**6 Corn Islands** The mellow, English-speaking Afro-Caribbean islands offer a relaxed, homely beach scene and fresh lobster.



## Signature Nicaragua:

### Fire, Water and Revolution

13 days from £3,075pp

**DAYS 1-3** You'll travel by road and river to El Castillo, a remote and quirky waterside village dwarfed by the huge Spanish hilltop fort once captured by Nelson. Go caiman-spotting in the surrounding rainforest.

**DAYS 4-7** Explore the magical region: stroll past the aristocratic mansions in Spanish Granada, and pause to people watch at the city's social hub, Parque Central. Take a small boat and snake between watery islets, before a ferry-ride to Ometepe Island. Listen to howler monkeys; discover pre-Columbian petroglyphs and relish the peaceful rural lifestyle that has changed very little for centuries.

**DAYS 8-10** Stay in the lively beach town of San Juan del Sur and discover unspoilt and secluded beaches on the Pacific Coast. Turtles hatch on the beaches just south of town between September and April – a spectacular sight.

**DAYS 11-13** Rebellious but stately Leon's colonial churches are in abundance. Climb a bell tower for a rooftop view or join the artists, poets and students for drinks in the boisterous bar scene.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

Our highlight was seeing the crater of Volcan Masaya at night. The red fire was like staring into the gates of hell – an absolutely amazing sight.

IM, Andover

### WHAT WE LOVE

For me, a bird-lover, the Refugio de Vida Silvestre Los Guatuzos was heaven. The butterfly farm, caiman and turtle refuges, trails and canopy walkways were a delight. On the boat ride we identified over 40 out of the 389 bird species thriving there.

David Nichols



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## Some of our favourite experiences



**Sunset kayaking**  
The metallic waters of Lake Nicaragua are transformed at sunset into a palette of crimsons and golds. Kayak through this serene dusk setting with only bird calls to interrupt the silence.

**Peer into a volcanic crater**  
Volcanoes are impressive from afar, but for a heart-pumping experience venture to its peak and peer into the fiery crater. You might also sandboard speedily down the ash-strewn slopes.

**Meet a revolutionary**  
Many people you come across have a story to tell about the tumults of the past 30 years. Your guides help you understand the complexities.

# COSTA RICA



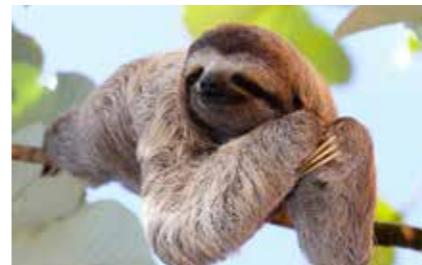
Monteverde cloud forest

Costa Rica is a treasure trove for nature-lovers and an adventurer's playground. Known for their professionally-run national parks, they proudly protect their precious landscapes of volcanoes, mountain cloud forests, rainforests, savannahs and wild jungle-fringed beaches, all of which are teeming with wildlife. Plantations of its world-famous coffee blanket the sunny slopes while trees laden with orchids are home to quetzals, trogons and hummingbirds.

Costa Ricans are open and charismatic, with a cheerful Latin personality – meaning you are sure to make new friends here.



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## Costa Rica highlights

- 1 Monteverde cloud forest** Hummingbirds and resplendent quetzals thrive among mossy trees and misty ferns, fluttering and soaring over colourful foliage.
- 2 Arenal volcano region** Surrounded by lakes, rivers, waterfalls and hot springs, this steaming volcano is popular among adventure enthusiasts with ziplining and whitewater-rafting.
- 3 Pacific coast beaches** Ocean rollers pound beaches popular for surfing, while sheltered bays chatter with the rainforest's creatures.

- 4 Osa Peninsula** Prolific wildlife in shallow lagoons, mangrove swamps, rivers, rainforest and untouched stretches of pristine beaches.
- 5 Caribbean and Tortuguero** The Afro-Caribbean southern beaches are folksy and laid-back. Tortuguero National Park is a sanctuary for nesting turtles.
- 6 Manuel Antonio National Park** A network of easy jungle trails and a wealth of wildlife, and white sand beaches by the entrance.



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### “ WHAT YOU SAY

So hard to pick out a single highlight, but the two river wildlife trips and the friendly nature of everyone was unique. Also having the wildlife right on our doorstep at each accommodation was very special.

SY, Solihull

### “ WHAT WE LOVE

In Sarapiquí we saw loads of birds, including a yellow-throated toucan eating a snake and an owl jump out of its nest! Always plenty of drama in the forest...

Hannah Waterhouse

## Signature Costa Rica: The Natural Highlights 12 days from £3,450 pp

### DAYS 1-3

From the bustling capital of San José, head to the Caribbean Coast and explore the sinuous creeks of Tortuguero National Park. An astounding variety of wildlife shelters here including nesting turtles, monkeys, and three-toed sloths.



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### DAYS 4-6

Bathe in naturally heated thermal springs in the shadow of the picture-perfect Arenal Volcano, and cruise through wetlands sheltering thousands of migrating birds.

### DAYS 7-8

Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve lies over rolling hills cloaked in mist-soaked tropical foliage where you can spot many tropical birds – with luck, the bright iridescent red and green plumage of the country's iconic quetzal.

### DAYS 9-12

Continue to Nosara on the Nicoya Peninsula for endless sandy beaches, and hiking and birdwatching in local nature reserves. Nearby Playa Ostional is also one of the world's largest nesting grounds for olive ridley sea turtles.

### WHAT WE LOVE

Take your car and get away from the sometimes busy tourist hubs, where you can still find hidden gems to enjoy the authenticity of Costa Rica. I found this the perfect way to visit beaches, wildlife and adventure in easy striking distance.

Paul Winrow-Giffin



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### Arenal



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### “ WHAT YOU SAY

The whole trip was really enjoyable, the amount of wildlife (turtles, crocodiles, armadillo, anteater, monkeys) and scenery we saw met all expectations. All well organised.

HT, Cardiff



Red-Eyed Tree Frog

### Some of our favourite experiences



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Costa Rican Tourist Board



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### Canopy adventures

In a conservation-friendly country well set up for active adventures, choose between flitting over the canopy on a zipline eye-to-eye with tree-top wildlife or swaying over a bubbling creek on a hanging bridge.

### River raft to your hotel

Pass waterfalls cascading into the river from steep rock faces above while spotting birds flying overhead – before a rushing sound preludes the rapids ahead, as you approach your riverside lodge.

### See nesting turtles

Whether you watch giant female turtles crowding the beach to lay their eggs or palm-sized babies emerging and courageously dashing into the sea, it's an extraordinary moment.

### Kayak through the mangroves

Glide over silent waters among the spindly, grasping roots of twisted mangroves and spot white-faced monkeys, anteaters, sloths, tree iguanas and caiman, whilst colourful tropical birds fly overhead.

### Quetzal spotting

The shady, dripping cloud forest is the habitat of the resplendent quetzal, whose brightly coloured plumage will leave you in awe. Worshipped by Aztecs and Mayans, it's justifiably the country's best-loved bird.

### Soak in volcanic hot springs

In a natural river gorge, free-flowing pools connected by rippling waterfalls are encircled by overhanging trees, vines and ferns: an idyllic setting for a dip in undisturbed tranquillity.

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# PANAMA



## Panama highlights

Panama, the bridge between the Americas, is home to the vast Panama Canal which links the oceans. You can visit some of nature's richest forests which teem with wildlife and luscious plants. The capital city is one of the world's most cosmopolitan, while the pearl-white beaches remain undeveloped.

There are plenty of remnants of a wild history of piracy: colonial forts, shipwrecks, cannons and towering city walls tell a colourful story.



- 1 **Panama Canal** A colossal project with its formidable locks and museum is a must-see for all visitors.
- 2 **Panama City** Casco Viejo's colour-splashed Spanish colonial streets are alive with cocktail bars and live music.
- 3 **The Pacific coast** The beach-fringed Azuero Peninsula is dotted with sleepy country towns and ranches.
- 4 **Boquete** Rugged mist-shrouded volcanoes, cloud forest and boulder-strewn rivers create a dramatic landscape.
- 5 **Bocas del Toro** Isolated, pristine Afro-Caribbean islands of mangroves and coral reefs burst with marine life.

## Signature Panama: Canal, Wildlife and Beach

10 days from £3,200pp

**DAYS 1-3** Explore Panama City, where soaring skyscrapers are the backdrop to forts, Spanish convents and sumptuous French-style mansions, reminders of its colonial heyday. The bubbly population loves a fiesta, pavement cafés are heaving, the harbour-side fish market buzzing. Then it's all aboard to rise and fall through the locks of the jungle-fringed Panama Canal.

**DAYS 4-5** The cloud forests in the Chiriquí highlands have a different feel. Go quetzal-spotting, stroll through verdant coffee plantations, dip into an active adventure by zip-line or hanging bridge.

**DAYS 6-10** With rocky outcrops and reefs ideal for snorkelling and diving, Bocas del Toro is a marvellously laid-back hang-out. The islands shelter profuse wildlife – tropical birds, frogs and butterflies – and are blessed with golden sunsets. Spot more rainforest creatures back at Soberanía National Park close to the capital.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

My highlight was going through the Canal to explore Panama City and the surrounding area. I was surprised to find that there is more to Panama than just the Canal Zone.

MM, Haverhill



Ancon Expedition

### WHAT WE LOVE

Hiking the Ruta de los Quetzales through the Parque Nacional Volcán-Barú, home to 280 species of bird and six different microclimates, was definitely worth the effort to appreciate the magnificent views of the volcano.

Paul Winrow-Giffin

## Some of our favourite experiences



### Transit the Panama Canal

From your vessel, negotiate the Canal's giant locks and pass through Lake Gatún where rainforest birds and monkeys gather in frenzied numbers.

### Authentic encounters

Visit indigenous communities leading a traditional lifestyle from their bamboo, palm-thatched homes, living from fishing and farming. The Emberá of Rio Chagres are famed for their basket weaving.

### Watch the whales

The Pearl Islands are a prime site for whale watching – they congregate here to breed and give birth. On a boat trip you can observe these huge and dignified creatures up close.

# COLOMBIA



Colombia has some of the greatest variety of flora and fauna, and the friendliest people in Latin America. Andean peaks dominate the skies above a blanket of coffee plantations, giving way to virgin rainforests. Caribbean waters lap white sand beaches, pre-Conquest ruins and exquisite colonial cities dot the landscape.

The atmospheric towns and cities resonate with joyful salsa. Cocktail bars, impromptu bands and extravagant street art are welcome signs of the country's new-found peace.



## Colombia highlights

- 1 Bogotá** A historic capital with excellent museums, colourful colonial centre and trendy neighbourhoods dotted with glamorous restaurants, bars and boutiques.
- 2 Cartagena and Caribbean** The romantic walled city of flower-decked balconies and Tayrona National Park's golden palm-shaded beaches make this region magical.
- 3 Coffee region** Lush, green mountains envelop coffee plantations and brightly-painted villages. Savour the delicious products on a traditional estate.

- 4 San Agustín** Amidst the wild landscapes of Colombia's southwestern Andes, this region hosts South America's largest treasure trove of religious megalithic sculptures.
- 5 The Llanos** Tropical prairies, which morph into shimmering wetlands after rain, teem with a breathtaking profusion of wildlife.
- 6 Colombian Amazon** River port Leticia and nearby Indian settlements are isolated but super friendly. View pink dolphins here.



### “ WHAT YOU SAY

Medellín was amazing. Everything about it. Overall the meals were excellent. The people are very friendly and helpful everywhere.

MC, Purley

### “ WHAT WE LOVE

Off-the-beaten track Colombia is what fascinates me, lesser-known towns such as Mompox teeming with wildlife and history and yet always with the same smiling faces and warm Colombian welcome.

Carrie Gallagher

## Signature Colombia: Coffee & Culture

**15 days from £3,625pp**

### DAYS 1-5

After exploring the streets around Bogotá's Plaza de Bolívar, travel to the exquisite coffee-blanketed slopes of the western Andes: learn the intricacies of the coffee production process as you hike through the verdant rolling countryside and sample coffee at local farms.



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### DAYS 6-8

Continue to Medellin, a city barely recognisable from the anarchic days of Pablo Escobar and the Medellin cartel. Witness its transformation in Comuna 13, an enterprising place with amazing works of street art and performances by dance troupes and musical groups.

### DAYS 9-15

Hike through thick jungle to stunning stretches of golden sandy beach in Tayrona National Park before moving on to Cartagena, with its brightly painted buildings, labyrinth cobbled streets and floral balconies. Walk the city ramparts, built to repel pirates, and soak up the atmosphere of this charming and romantic city.

### WHAT WE LOVE

Visiting Comuna 13 in Medellín is a must – once controlled by narcos, it's now regenerated and has some of the best street art I've seen, each one with its own story of the turbulent past.

Sophie Barber



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Bogota



Tom Parrot

### WHAT YOU SAY

Visiting the coffee region we found relaxing and enjoyable, especially learning about coffee and cocoa production. Also, seeing all the beautiful birds and flowers.

CTR, London



Islas de Rosario

## Some of our favourite experiences



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Caroline Maber



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### A big welcome

The friendliness of the people is legendary. Meet hipsters in Bogotá, cowboys in the savannah, artistic Amazonian Indians and smiling coffee farmers.

### Wildlife safari by horse

From the saddle of a horse and with a cowboy guide, you could see monkeys squabble in the canopy, alligators sprawl on watery beaches, giant capybara roaming the paddy fields.

### Three nations of the Amazon

Set foot in three countries where Colombia meets Peru and Brazil. From Leticia's endearing port take a boat ride down a Peruvian creek, finish with a sunset caipirinha cocktail.

### Bean to brew – coffee zone

On a guided tour of a traditional estate you'll learn how coffee is produced in Colombia's green hills adorned with lofty wax palms.



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# GUYANA, FRENCH GUIANA AND SURINAME



Kaieteur Falls

## Highlights

These outposts of British, French and Dutch colonisation have a medley of personalities you can revel in – Caribbean, Amerindian, even Chinese. All have untouched Amazonian rainforest and savannah hinterlands with rivers sheltering giant otters and bird-flecked waterfalls.

- Kaieteur Falls** A massive drop of foaming water five times higher than Niagara thundering through tropical rainforest.
- Iwokrama rainforest** This huge area of rainforest is a haven for wildlife including tapirs, harpy eagles, reptiles, exotic birds, monkeys and jaguars.
- Rupununi savannah** Bird-rich prairies inhabited by anteaters and storks are cut through by rivers teeming with caiman and otters.
- Paramaribo** Suriname's capital is a cultural mélange with mosques, churches and synagogues and is renowned for its ornate wooden Dutch colonial buildings.
- Kourou** The French space centre on the Caribbean coast launches several rockets per year.



## Discovering the hidden Guianas

15 days from £8,140pp

**DAYS 1-5** Explore Suriname's capital Paramaribo, soaking up a small-town atmosphere with its vibrant fusion of Dutch/indigenous/African architecture and street life. Head inland by canoe to jungle-fringed Danpaati river and visit a village inhabited by Maroons; descendants of enslaved Africans

**DAYS 6-8** Cross into French Guiana and discover Devil's Island, which once hosted a notorious penal colony; wander the cells reclaimed by voracious vegetation, then visit the fascinating space centre near Kourou.

**DAYS 9-15** In Guyana, atmospheric Georgetown is filled with Caribbean architecture. Head into the wild interior of jungle-clad hills and grasslands: flying over giant Kaieteur Falls is a real thrill, while in Iwokrama you'll view the rainforest canopy wildlife from a high-level walkway with the howler monkeys. Climb Surama mountain to spot birdlife, and seek out curious otters on Buro-Buro River.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

As someone who likes to wander, there was enough free time to explore independently. Stumbling across Chinese celebrations in Paramaribo was an unexpected highlight.

AB, Cardiff



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### WHAT WE LOVE

An opening emerged through the greenery and there was the Kaieteur Falls, thundering away. The pilot did a couple of loops to help us take photos.

Ben Line

## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Visit space centre Kourou

Be amazed by a guided tour of the futuristic European Space Agency launch centre. You'll be ultra-lucky if you're around when one of the Ariane-5 rockets lifts a satellite into space.

### Fly over Kaieteur Falls

An incredible experience, powered by the lack of human impact – the view is one of untarnished natural beauty, unchanged since it was discovered by the outside world over 150 years ago.

### Seek out a harpy eagle

Guyana is a birdwatcher's dream. Spotting the harpy eagle's distinctive crown of feathers is a privilege, but species such as the cock-of-the-rock and pompadour, are equally stunning.

# ECUADOR AND THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS



Ecuador boasts a battalion of snow-capped volcanic Andean peaks, luscious Amazon rain and cloud forests and wild golden-sand Pacific beaches. Everywhere feels remote but is easily accessible. Embedded in the velvety landscapes are colonial towns, historic haciendas and traditional indigenous villages where you can soak up a traditional atmosphere.

1,000km off the mainland coast, the lava-strewn Galápagos Islands are home to an extraordinary array of impressive creatures – get up close to giant tortoises, albatrosses, sea lions, blue-footed boobies and more.



## Ecuador and the Galápagos highlights

- 1 **Quito** The Andean capital's historic centre is crammed with cobbled lanes, whitewashed façades and ornate baroque churches.
- 2 **Mindo and northern Andes** The cloud forests of Mindo are a bird-watcher's dream; craft villages dot the countryside around Otavalo market.
- 3 **Avenue of volcanoes** A chain of snow-capped cones frame colonial estates where cattle graze, and cobbled trails are shaded by eucalyptus.

- 4 **Cuenca** This stately colonial city is an artisan craft centre famed for the Panama hat, which originated in Ecuador.
- 5 **Amazon** Highland moors fall away to exuberant Amazonian jungle speckled with remote indigenous communities.
- 6 **The Galápagos Islands** The clutch of volcanic islands hosts a phenomenal array of diverse bird, reptile and marine life.



### “ WHAT YOU SAY

Snorkelling with penguins, turtles, sea lions and marine iguanas was unbeatable.

DJ, Saltash

### “ WHAT WE LOVE

The Ecuadorian Amazon fascinated me with its enormous butterflies, weird and wonderful insects, charming locals, peace and tranquillity and the drive down through the cloud forest from Quito was an experience in itself.

Sally Dodge

## Signature Ecuador & Galápagos: Volcanoes to the Ocean 14 days from £7,520pp

### DAYS 1-4

Explore the renovated cobbled centre of the 16th century capital and hit the road north to the indigenous mountain market town Otavalo, where stalls are laden with tapestries. From your hacienda, climb to a cobalt blue crater lake.



Tren Crucero

### DAYS 5-9

Travel down the Avenue of Volcanoes to marvel at the perfect cone-shaped Cotopaxi volcano, capped with shimmering ice and surrounded by flowery highland moors. Drop in at indigenous villages and drive through the Andes towards Cuenca.

### DAYS 10-14

On a small motor yacht, cruise around the Galápagos Islands, to view up close the unique wildlife which thrives among the lava fields: giant tortoises, marine iguanas, penguins, frigate birds, waved albatross and blue-footed boobies stand out.

### WHAT WE LOVE

My favourite island is Isabela with five active volcanoes, the most extensive wetlands of the archipelago, and a glorious beach. I walked past giant tortoises, snorkelled with turtles and kayaked alongside rays.

Sophie Barber



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South Plaza, Galápagos Island



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### WHAT YOU SAY

Everything about our Galápagos cruise was brilliant. The cabin was spacious, staff were excellent and the guide was superb. The little touches were really appreciated. Food was very good and very plentiful.

CD, Ilkley



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Cotopaxi

### Some of our favourite experiences



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Tropic



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#### Self-drive to the Amazon

You don't have to fly – you can descend by a quiet road from the spiky high Andes through hummingbird-filled cloud forest to the succulent jungles of the Amazon.

#### Explore Galápagos

From a motor yacht, hotel or tented camp, discover the Galápagos National Park's untouched beauty. Climb an ashy volcano, rub shoulders with giant tortoises, spot playful sea lions off pristine beaches.

#### Walk the volcanoes

The Andean volcanoes have remarkable hiking trails, from modest strolls around crater lakes to crampon-clad ascents of the highest peaks – frosty landscapes are soothed by the golden rays of the sun.

#### Jungle immersion

Explore from a rainforest lodge, take a river cruise, go rafting, or camp: all great ways to discover the secrets of the Amazon and visit its remote indigenous communities.

#### Watch the wildlife

From snorkelling with a whale shark in the Galápagos to condor-watching in the Andes and cock-of-the-rock spotting in the cloud forest, you'll be elated by the theatre of wildlife on display.

#### Learn an artisan craft

Andean craft villages have kept their ancient skills going over the centuries. Learn from the masters how to weave a colourful carpet, polish a leather bag or bake a bread figurine.



Tropic

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# PERU



Machu Picchu

Sublime ice-carved mountains, prolific wildlife from condors to jaguars, Inca temples and fortresses perched above fruitful valleys, a desert coastline etched with the symbols of mysterious civilisations, cities of Spanish colonial grace – Peru has more than its fair share of treasures.

But modern day culture is thriving too. Don't miss a pisco sour in one of Lima's stylish bars or a locally-inspired meal in a world-class restaurant. The markets, joyous music and fiestas just add to the colour.



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## Peru highlights

### 1 Peruvian Amazon

Discover the rainforest's magic, its abundance of exotic birds, monkeys, alligators and flowering tropical plants.

### 2 Northern Peru

Colonial Trujillo sits beside the adobe pyramids of Chan Chan. Venture up to mountain-top temple Kuelap and thundering Gocta Falls.

### 3 Cusco and Machu Picchu

Baroque façades jostle with Inca walls in Andean Cusco. Inca citadel Machu Picchu embellishes a rainforest-clad mountain.

### 4 Paracas and Nazca

Sea lions and pelicans flock to the desert peninsula; inland the Nazca Lines are huge pre-Inca geometric figures.

### 5 Colca Canyon and Arequipa

At the foot of a volcano sits the pearl-stone city Arequipa, whilst condors glide overhead in Colca Canyon.

### 6 Lake Titicaca

Sapphire waters shelter the floating Uros reed islands, pre-Inca funeral towers are perched at Sillustani above timeless shoreline villages.



### “ WHAT YOU SAY

It was all very well constructed. Favourite parts were the floating islands, the nocturnal canoe trip and the trek to Machu Picchu. Organisation was brilliant and it all hung together very well. Thanks!

AMW, Letchworth

### “ WHAT WE LOVE

Ayacucho, a little-visited but divine colonial city with over thirty churches, took me back to the Peru of my youth, a pre-internet era of gentle exploration on unpaved roads.

Stuart Whittington

## Signature Peru:

### Classic Highlights

15 days from £3,940 pp

#### DAYS 1-5

Explore imperial Lima, its regal palaces and colossal churches, sculptured parks and pulsating Pacific-side nightlife. Arequipa, with its flowery plazas, secluded convents and shady lanes has a mellower vibe. A volcanic Andean drive delivers you to Colca Canyon, with its elaborate terracing and traditional communities.



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#### DAYS 6-8

By road to the shores of shimmering Lake Titicaca, where you visit indigenous villages for a taste of local life, and set foot on the reed-built Uros islands floating atop the lake surface.

#### DAYS 9-15

Cross the llama-flecked Altiplano and grain-laden Urubamba valley to Cusco, Latin America's crown jewel, crammed with baroque churches, monumental Inca walls, fruit-filled markets and cocktail bars. Beyond, meet the skilled weavers of the Sacred Valley and continue to the pinnacle of Inca achievement, evocative Machu Picchu, bedecked with terraces and temples.

#### WHAT WE LOVE

Cusco remains one of my firm favourites in Peru. It has a charm of its own, so much history to discover at every twist and turn, incredible architecture, museums, markets, food and scenery. Stay a few days to really get a feel for it.

Sally Dodge

Lake Titicaca



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#### “ WHAT YOU SAY

I really liked the variety on this trip – amazing culture, history, nature all in one holiday. Machu Picchu tour was great; excursions in rainforest were very memorable.

MG, Hampton



Paracas

## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Beyond Machu Picchu...

The pre-Columbian heritage is an embarrassment of riches, and there are multiple ways to discover them. Trek to a lost fortress at Choquequirao, clamber among Inca aqueducts, drive to the Moche mummies at Sipán.

### Active adventures

Exhilarating day walks, longer treks with camping under the stars or comfortable fire-lit lodges, breath-taking white-water rafting, gentle horse-riding and cycling are thrilling ways to explore the Andes.

### Sleep on a floating island

A village of reed structures floats upon Lake Titicaca, with a church, a school, simple restaurants and a football pitch. Set foot on the spongy surface and overnight there to witness the islanders' unique way of life.

### Peruse a traditional market

Haggle for handicrafts at Chinchero's Sunday market, a busy hive of commerce and local colour. It's not just for the tourists – locals trade upland potatoes with tomatoes from the warmer valley below.

### A foodie paradise

Peru's gastronomy is a sensual delight. From sophisticated top-class restaurants to ceviche bars and chocolate, coffee and pisco tasting you can savour the best of Latin American cuisine.

### Wildlife wonderland

Seek out a spectacled bear or spot pink dolphins on a luxurious Amazon cruise, watch condors soar above vertiginous canyons, admire the cock-of-the-rock performing its mating ritual.



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# BOLIVIA



Uyuni Salt Flats

## Bolivia highlights

Dramatic lunar landscapes, subtropical valleys and florid costumes make Bolivia a captivating land of variety. Age-old communities live at a pace dictated by the harmonies of the pan pipe, watchful llamas stride mountain-fringed plains and colour-soaked markets resonate with enchantment.

**1** **Amazon** The lush bio-diverse rainforest shelters ancient tribes and offers spectacular wildlife spotting.

**2** **Lake Titicaca** A spectacular mountain backdrop offsets the sublime deep-blue lake; home to highland cultures.

**3** **La Paz** A jumble of brick homesteads, elegant colonial houses and glittering skyscrapers stride down canyon beneath an ice-capped cordillera.

**4** **Bolivian Oriente** Eastern Bolivia is home to prosperous Santa Cruz, the hiking paradise of Amboró and the Che Guevara Trail.

**5** **Sucre and Potosí** Graceful Sucre contrasts with formerly grandiose Potosí on the chilly altiplano.

**6** **Uyuni** A surreal lunar landscape of sun-blistered salt flats, steaming geysers and emerald lagoons.



## Signature Bolivia:

### The Final Frontier

14 days from £4,410pp

**DAYS 1-7** Explore prosperous Santa Cruz, a dynamic city forged from oil and trade. Head into the hills to summer-cool Samaipata, then follow in the footsteps of Guevara along the canyon-fringed Ruta del Che and on to sunny, cloistered Sucre. Among the sedate churches of Potosí, surrounded by mine-burrowed hills, you'll view the treasures of the former Imperial Mint.

**DAYS 8-9** An ethereal atmosphere pervades the dazzling Uyuni salt flats, scoured by bitter gales, where cut-glass lakes reflect the vast dome of an icy sky. Glide over them by four-wheel drive.

**DAYS 10-14** Experience the contrast of traffic-stifled La Paz, with its warren of overladen street markets, followed by a scenic drive framed by icy peaks leading to mystical Lake Titicaca and its sunny islands.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

At the salt flats, the lack of tourists during the long drive was something else. We saw hardly any other people at the attractions we stopped at. At some places we were the only people. Truly magical.

ND, London

### WHAT WE LOVE

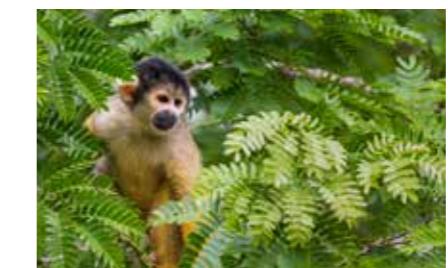
I was fascinated by the variety of goods at La Paz's markets, especially the unique talismans and trinkets at the witches' market. After a day of souvenir shopping, I revived myself with an ice cold Paceña beer.

Heloise Buxton



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## Some of our favourite experiences



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### La Paz by cable car

Zip over the maze of streets in a gondola suspended in the ice-clear air – gaze over leafy plazas and look into simple adobe homes and luxurious mansions alike, it's a level playing field from the air!

### Amazon surprise

A sunset canoe ride on the serene waters of Lake Chalalán in the parrot-chattering rainforest introduces you to gangs of monkeys, prehistoric birds and a congregation of alligators.

### Stay on a Titicaca island

Feel the magic on the vehicle-free Island of the Sun, birthplace of the Inca Sun God. Quiet paths offer panoramic views of the lake's sapphire surface.

# BRAZIL



Rio de Janeiro

Whether it's the tribe of chattering monkeys atop Rio's Sugar Loaf, hilltop baroque churches of Ouro Preto, a languid anaconda spotted at dusk in the Pantanal or the ornate, dusky pink Opera House in Manaus, Brazil will amaze you. Take time to absorb the magic of the tropical rainforests and the samba, football and carnivals of the vivacious cities.

Lesser-known highlights delight as well: the dramatic canyons of the south and exquisite blue Portuguese tiles in the unreconstructed port of São Luís in the north.



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## Brazil highlights

- 1 The far north** Lençóis Maranhenses National Park has a surreal, shifting landscape of rippling sand dunes, pitted with aquamarine lagoons.
- 2 Brazilian Amazon** The green heart of Brazil shelters sharp-toothed piranhas, pink river dolphins and secretive Amazonian communities.
- 3 Pantanal** A wildlife lover's paradise, these vast wetlands support a multitude of anteaters, caimans, macaws, giant storks and rosy spoonbills.

- 4 Iguazú Falls** Hundreds of foaming veils of water crash over a lofty cliff through a tangle of tropical rainforest.
- 5 Rio de Janeiro** The effervescent city mesmerises with its sporty golden beaches, palm-studded parks, stately architecture and world-famous views.
- 6 Bahia** Exuberant and exotic Salvador, the heart of Afro-Brazilian culture has a hiker's rugged hinterland and an apron of dreamy beaches.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

The whole trip was memorable because it was one fantastic adventure in four parts. We absolutely loved the stays in the Amazon and the Pantanal. We saw and experienced great things and have so many lovely memories.

GHS, Iver

### WHAT WE LOVE

We took a dawn canoe trip from our lodge in the Pantanal to be greeted by a family of giant river otters who joined us to celebrate the sunrise – it was unforgettable.

Laura Rendell-Dunn

## Signature Brazil:

### At a Glance

15 days from £4,375pp

#### DAYS 1-3

Dive into joyous Rio de Janeiro, where glamorous apartments fringe the glossy beaches, a lively colonial centre hosts baroque churches and street art, and Sugar Loaf Mountain overlooks a boat-speckled cobalt bay. Survey it all from the cable car, and from the Christ statue atop Corcovado. On a golden evening, sip a caipirinha and relax to the rhythm of a sultry bossa nova.

#### DAYS 4-9

At Iguazú Falls you'll explore the thunderous veils of water from above and below, while toucans and parrots flit drunkenly aloft. Turn north to the Amazon jungle to walk rainforest trails, or glide through hidden creeks by canoe, your guide's expert eye revealing shy wildlife.

#### DAYS 10-15

Revel in the port atmosphere of Salvador, with capoeira martial dances and spicy cuisine, where Afro-Brazilian fusion music takes to the air. Kick back and relax on the sweeping palm-fringed beaches of Praia do Forte just a short distance up the coast from Salvador.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

Every day was special and we have many happy memories but probably the highlights were the views from the top of Sugar Loaf, getting up close to waterfalls, swimming in the Rio Negro and whale-watching.

LL, Tonbridge



Tom Parrott



Chapada Diamantina National Park, Bahia



Rio de Janeiro

### Some of our favourite experiences



Amazonian Nature Tours



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#### Kayak the Amazon

Propel yourself along the tranquil teal-coloured waters of Amazonia, viewing and listening to wildlife – look out for a family of hyacinth macaws screeching across the setting sun.

#### Hike tabletop mountains

In the heart of Brazil is a plateau of Lost World tabletop mountains, defined by steep canyons and rock-strewn rivers. From quaint colonial Lençóis, follow hiking trails to panoramic summits.

#### Feel the force of Iguazú Falls

Get close by boat to where a foaming tumult of water plunges into the agitated river. You may get soaked, but it is totally exhilarating.



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# CHILE



Atacama Desert

Chile has much to offer, but it's the mesmerising scenery which will stagger you most: wildlife-filled countryside from scorched volcano-dotted desert through a forested land of lakes to a Patagonian wilderness spliced by enormous glaciers.

The great cities of Santiago and Valparaíso offer a history narrated in vivid street art along with fine-dining: but it's mostly a country of the great outdoors, with a range of activities to match.



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## Chile highlights

- 1 **Santiago area** The capital's busy colonial centre is offset by skyscrapers and leafy boulevards. Nearby is the bohemian Pacific port of Valparaíso.
- 2 **Central valley** The fertile region of sunny slopes is dotted with prestigious wineries, many offering charming rural accommodation.
- 3 **Lake district** Royal blue lakes surrounded by snow-throttled volcanoes, crystal clear rivers and ancient monkey puzzle forests.
- 4 **Patagonia** This wildlife-rich wilderness is sculpted by ruthless glaciers, granite massifs, blue-green lakes and remote forested fjords.
- 5 **Atacama desert** A primeval weather-sculpted landscape of geysers, volcanoes, salt flats, multicoloured lagoons, ancient ruins and quaint adobe villages.
- 6 **Easter Island** This remote rural South Pacific island, famed for its gigantic stone head carvings, has a unique Polynesian culture.

6 Distance to mainland: 3,500km



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### “ WHAT YOU SAY

The whole experience of Atacama and Torres del Paine was amazing. In between, Puerto Varas provided a relaxing contrast. The tours of Santiago and Valparaiso worked very well and the guides were great.

KH, London



## Signature Chile: Atacama Desert to Patagonian Glaciers 13 days from £6,050pp

### DAYS 1-4

After exploring Santiago fly to the Atacama Desert where tiny oasis villages are surrounded by volcanoes and geysers steaming and hissing into life, and where pink flamingos dot the dazzling chalk-white salt flats.



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### DAYS 5-7

Travel south to the gorgeous lake district. Here, pine-whispered parks sit beside the snowy flanks of sky-grazing volcanoes. Explore by bike, on foot, white-water raft or kayak. Chiloé Island beckons with its quaint wooden churches, fishermen's homes on stilts, oysters and lazy-paced rural traditions.

### DAYS 8-13

Continue further south to Patagonia's Torres del Paine National Park. Stunning trails will lead you to rivers ridden by icebergs, mint-green lagoons, sapphire lakes, ice-tipped granite spires and grassy plains with huddles of grazing Guanacos. Watch condors soar high above you and, with luck, you may even spot a puma.

Why not extend your trip to Easter Island? This mysterious island, 3,500km off the coast of Chile, is a beautiful open-air museum and home to 600 giant moais (stone statues).

### WHAT WE LOVE

On my last trip to Torres del Paine I was astonished to round a bend and see a family of pumas feasting on an unlucky guanaco. They were annoyed by our interruption and reluctantly sloped off.

Kathryn Rhodes



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### Death Valley



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Torres Del Paine

### WHAT YOU SAY

All parts were memorable, but probably the sunrise excursion on Easter Island took top spot.

JW, Bedford

## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Torres del Paine hiking

The Patagonian scenery is humbly huge: the trek to the French Valley reaches an extraordinary three-pronged amphitheatre of vertical glacier-mantled peaks.

### Easter Island Moai

Moai (the island's famous carved stone heads), gaze inwards to the grassy landscapes of the faraway island. Discover them sitting on rocky plinths above the sparkling Pacific shores.

### Valley of the Moon, Atacama

Explore wind-eroded tunnels and caverns; climb the tallest dune to see the valley at the height of its magic, painted by the fiery tones of the sunset.

### Cruise glacial fjords

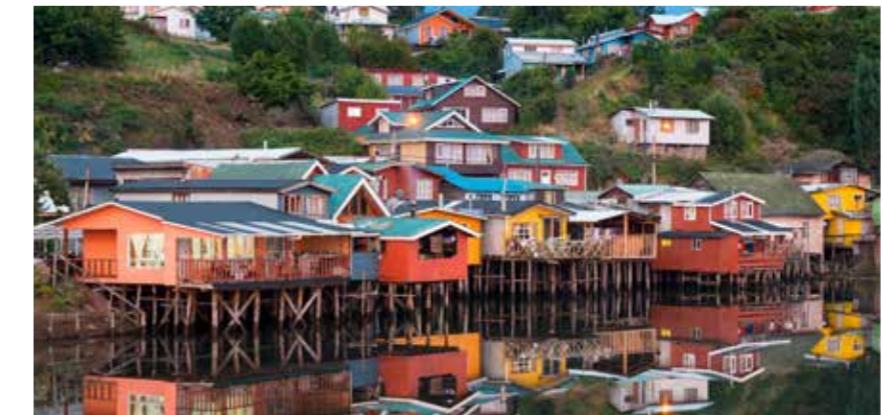
Sail through southernmost Patagonia's shattered landscape of forested fjords and deserted islets, marvelling at hanging glaciers, colonies of chattering penguins and playful sea lions as you journey all the way to Cape Horn.

### Self-drive in Patagonia

Vast frost-bitten landscapes are wonderful to explore in your own car – discover gravel roads winding alongside shadowy forests, passing isolated farmsteads as the icy form of an Andean peak looms into view.

### Microbreweries by bike

Artisan beer is all the rage: Cycle along the pretty shores of Lake Llanquihue popping into cute Bavarian-style towns for liquid refreshment.



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# ARGENTINA



Iguazú Falls

This is a country which tempts with open-air adventures in lofty deserts and among ice-stifled peaks. The profusion of wildlife is astonishing – mammals, reptiles and birds abound in marshes, rainforest, and yawning pampas along the blustery Patagonian coast.

But beyond the infinite skies, shimmering glaciers and horizon-bending pampas, Argentina is the cradle of the tango and a premier producer of fine wines and juicy grass-fed beef. Its capital, Buenos Aires, is one of Latin America's most stylish.



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## Argentina highlights

- 1 **Northwest Andes** Rust red canyons, pre-Columbian ruins, lonely lime-washed chapels and a necklace of baroque colonial towns.
- 2 **Iguazú Falls and Iberá** At Iguazú 275 waterfalls crash through the rainforest. Abundant wildlife inhabits the wetlands of Esteros del Iberá.
- 3 **Buenos Aires** Colourful clapboard houses abound in arty La Boca, fine-dining in glitzy Recoleta, tango and flea markets in San Telmo.
- 4 **The Pampas** The home of the gauchos, it's a region of wide-open ranches with succulent beef-cattle pastures.
- 5 **Andean lake district** Sapphire-hued glacial lakes, snowy volcanic cones and pine-forested national parks festoon the photogenic landscape.
- 6 **Patagonia** A wilderness of granite towers, colossal glaciers and ancient mossy forests. Whale-watching in the Valdés peninsula is a real highlight here.



### WHAT YOU SAY

I was wonderfully surprised by the drives from Salta to Cachi and Cafayate with our fantastic English-speaking guide who really knew his stuff and we had plenty of time to stop for photos.

AC, Bristol

### WHAT WE LOVE

Piatelli winery in Cafayate was one of my favourite vineyards... amazing wines, views over the vines stretching out to the far off horizon and where I first discovered the delights of Torrontes wine.

Charlie Thomas

## Signature Argentina: Patagonia, Lake District and Iguazu Falls 13 days from £4,950pp

### DAYS 1-3

Explore Buenos Aires, an effervescent city which never sleeps, its stately boulevards, sculptured parks and plazas swarming with life. The Teatro Colón is homage to opulence, while a tango show will have you tapping your feet.



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### DAYS 4-6

Head to Patagonia and the Perito Moreno glacier, where the thundering shards of falling ice are a breathtaking spectacle. Travel by boat through iceberg-choked waters to a pioneering ranch.

### DAYS 7-9

Delight at the chocolate-box pretty pastoral landscapes of the lake district, with a couple of trips to survey craggy Andean mountain peaks brooding over a tightly wooded landscape pitted with lakes.

### DAYS 10-13

You have plenty of time to explore subtropical Iguazú Falls on a wild boat ride, by helicopter or on foot.

### WHAT WE LOVE

Hiking in the Fitzroy ranges, one minute walking through a wooded area opening up to glaciers and towering ice-topped mountains, bright red fire bushes in full colour, condors overhead, never have I felt so happy and humbled.

Carrie Gallagher



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Mt Fitz Roy



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### WHAT YOU SAY

Each day gave us stunning scenery, amazing sights and the friendliness of the Argentinian people. Although one particular highlight was seeing an armadillo crossing the road in El Calafate.

YGG, Wirral



Perito Moreno Glacier

### Some of our favourite experiences



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#### Food and wine

Argentina's hearty cuisine is as tantalising as anything in this sensual country. Savour oozing steaks, buttery empanadas and aromatic Malbecs at street stalls, fine restaurants, wineries and on gourmet cruises.

#### The Porteños of Buenos Aires

Bring this epic city down to human scale with a leisurely bike tour, seat at a football match, night tour, tango or cookery lesson.

#### Ice-trekking

Explore the jutting blue pinnacles of a glacier. Dazzling turquoise pools gather where the ice melts, creating a landscape of wintry wonders on the top of the glacier.

#### Whales, seals and water-birds

At the Patagonian Valdés peninsula, spot whales breaching in the ocean and gaggles of penguins or harems of lumbering elephant seals on a deserted beach.

#### Hike at the end of the world

View the unnamed spiky peaks of remote island Tierra del Fuego on a short day walk or longer hike with camping under the stars.



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# URUGUAY



Colonia

## Uruguay highlights

Mingle with celebrities on Punta del Este's golden beaches, plunge into the art scene on Montevideo's waterfront, get up at dawn to watch birds on one of the sprawling ranches. Uruguay's laid-back vibe and superb places to stay make it a firm favourite of those in the know.

- Colonia** A timeless little Portuguese port with vintage cars resting in narrow cobbled streets shaded by sycamores.
- Montevideo** The capital, on the shores of the River Plate, has a monumental historic core and lively port area.
- Atlantic beaches** A sunny coastline of unspoiled stretches of sandy beach. Trendy José Ignacio offers cutting-edge boutique hotels and gourmet dining.



## Signature Uruguay: Land of Vintage Charm

14 days from £4,100pp

**DAYS 1-7** Following a few days in Buenos Aires, take a more leisurely pace as you cross the River Plate estuary to fortressed Colonia, where you can soak up the lazy colonial atmosphere and sample delightful cafés. Journey by road to art-deco Montevideo, eat lunch at the port market or visit one of the vineyards which are putting Uruguay on the wine-lover's map.

**DAYS 8-10** Drive deep into the countryside to a rural estancia enveloped with meadows and pastures. Experience authentic cuisine and local hospitality, relax or wander in the countryside. Uruguay is also one of South America's prime spots for birding.

**DAYS 11-14** Continue to sophisticated Punta del Este, a chic resort on a peninsula with excellent beaches and gourmet dining.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

Our highlight was the Vendimia festival which took place while we were at the wine lodge. This event was brilliant leaving us with lots of fond memories to take home.

KB, Leeds

### WHAT WE LOVE

There was a laid back feel to Travel in Uruguay and you feel a slower pace of life. The people are incredibly friendly and welcoming and love to show off their beautiful country.

Sophie Barber



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## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Explore by car

Uruguay is safe, slow-paced and full of intriguing little corners making it perfect for exploring by hire car. Revel in your independence, arriving at a cosy pre-booked lodge, winery or ranch in dusk's golden light.

### Estancia stay

Get close to Uruguay's heart on a working ranch, participating in the farm activities, rounding up cattle with the gauchos, winding down over a Victorian-style afternoon tea on a shady veranda.

### Relax on a wine estate

Close to the cozy port Carmelo are some attractive wineries welcoming visitors, hidden in pretty countryside. Savour the delicious wines, listen to the birdsong and sniff the scent of the eucalyptus trees.

# PARAGUAY



Asuncion

## Paraguay highlights

Subtropical, land-locked Paraguay, with its welcoming people entices adventure-seekers: wild, uncrowded, often unusual and always authentic. Beyond its vast wilderness and evocative ruined missions, modern Paraguay is a fascinating cultural mélange, where almost everyone speaks indigenous Guaraní and where its unique melodious harp music, bottle dance and dainty lace sets it apart.

**1 The Chaco** The sweltering undeveloped savannahs support huge ranches and wildlife thrives undisturbed.

**2 Asuncion** The sultry riverside capital's eventful history is revealed in crumbling public buildings.

**3 Itaipu Dam** The massive dam straddles the Brazilian frontier close to Iguazú Falls. House-sized turbines sit in vast concrete walls.

**4 Jesuit missions** Southern Paraguay's countryside is dotted with the evocative ruins of the Spanish Jesuit Reductions.



## Signature Paraguay: The Missions and The Chaco

11 days from £3,550pp

**DAYS 1-5** Following a stroll round the sleepy capital, visit a countryside cemetery for old rusting steam engines – Paraguay's railway was one of Latin America's first. Travel by road to the scorched Chaco plains, where egrets and storks inhabit the lagoons and bush, to reach the curious Mennonite town Filadelfia – High German is still spoken here. Take a safari to identify the myriad birds populating the savannah.

**DAYS 6-8** Visit the abandoned Jesuit mission at Trinidad where the vast colonnaded plaza hosts an elaborate carved church and the humble houses of the indigenous Guaraní inhabitants.

**DAYS 9-11** Head to the gigantic tropical Iguazú Falls over the border in Argentina visiting one of the oldest ruined missions, San Ignacio Miní (1610) en route.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

Paraguay is an excellent destination... We would highlight the special trip to Itaipu Dam; it is mind blowing.

ME, Hove

### WHAT WE LOVE

I had the Trinidad mission ruins to myself: the night-time walking tour was magical, evocative of extraordinary times in the little known history of the religious order in Latin America.

David Nichols



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## Some of our favourite experiences



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### Off grid in the Chaco

Chaco is one of the continent's vast wildernesses, where roaming cattle, trees and salty pools attract easily spottable ostriches, deer, caimans and colourful aquatic birds.

### Delve into Jesuit Missions

In the 17th century Jesuit missionaries established grandiose missions to convert the indigenous Guaraní people, to whom they also taught art, music and architecture, leaving a unique heritage visible to this day.

### Lost railways

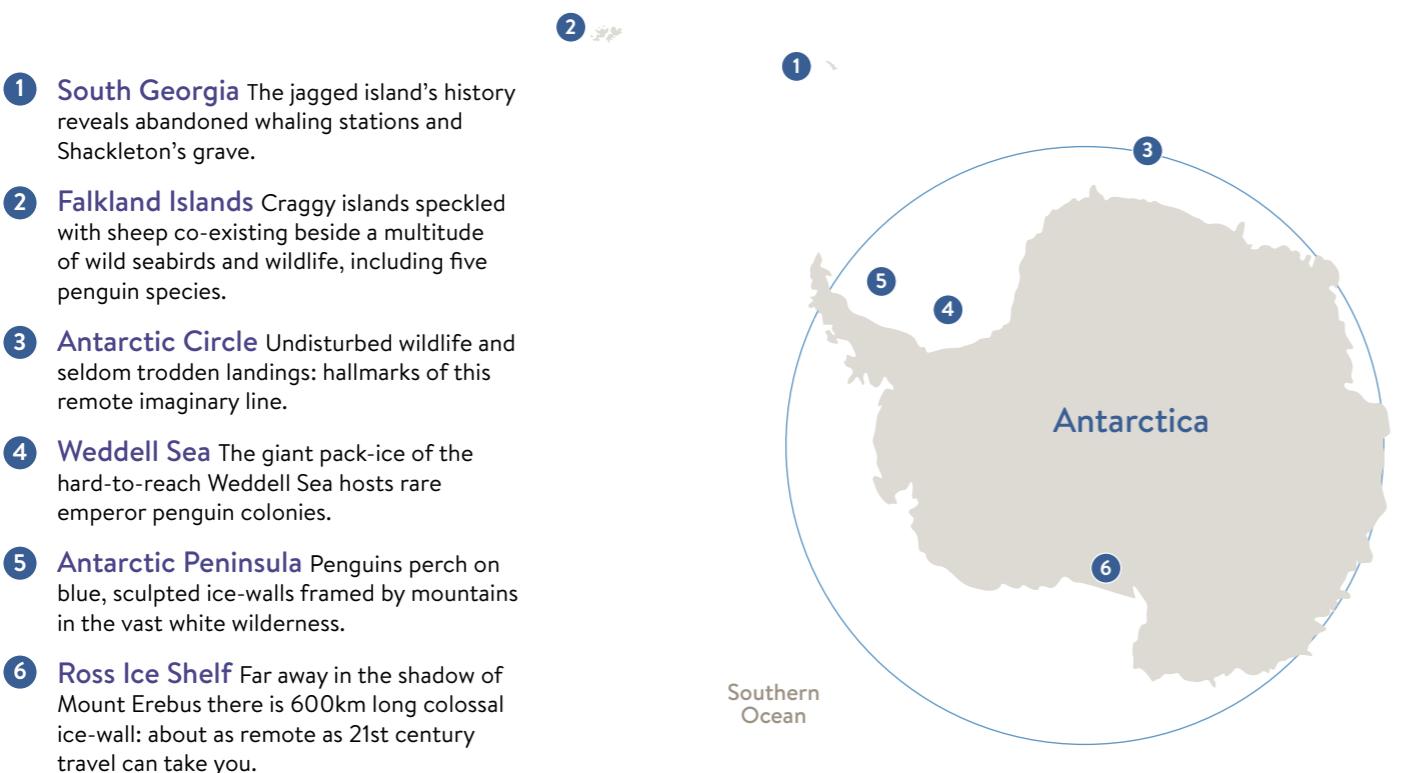
Recall a bygone era, as you wander down a pioneering long-abandoned line, which was littered with defunct steam locomotives that now congregate in a quirky outdoor museum.

# ANTARCTICA, THE FALKLANDS AND SOUTH GEORGIA



## Antarctica, South Georgia & The Falkland Islands highlights

Antarctica's icebergs, glaciated mountains and abundant wildlife colonies populate the remote Southern Ocean promising you a once-in-a-lifetime experience following in the footsteps of the great explorers. The rugged Falkland Islands are home to an astonishing variety of wildlife. Mountainous South Georgia's spectacular glacial beaches see elephant seals tussle with vast king penguin colonies for space.



## Highlights of the Antarctic Peninsula

13 days from £8,700pp

**DAYS 1-3** Spend a couple of days experiencing the hectic lifestyle of energetic Buenos Aires before heading south to the port of Ushuaia, crouching on the chilly shores of Tierra del Fuego, launch-pad for voyages to Antarctica. It's a truly exciting moment when you board your ship.

**DAYS 4-5** Whales and dolphins can often be seen on the Drake Passage crossing to the Antarctic Peninsula along with an abundance of marine birds such as petrels and albatrosses.

**DAYS 6-10** Your ship edges her way through the fractured sea ice circling the glistening icebergs and mountains of the Peninsula – you'll see noisy penguins squabbling over pebbles, hear the boom and crack of a calving glacier, watch leopard seals diving for lunch: awestruck by the utter majesty of it all.

**DAYS 11-13** Cross the Drake Passage, disembark in Ushuaia and fly to Buenos Aires, from where you can either fly home or continue your adventure.



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### WHAT YOU SAY

The whole trip (to Antarctica) was an outstanding experience. Very well organised with excellent accommodation. It would be hard to improve it....

JH, Bedford

### WHAT WE LOVE

We climbed a steep hill for stunning views over Paradise Harbour, then back on the zodiacs for a land-hugging cruise – we saw humpback whales, some in couples, and icebergs with crabeater seals.

Mary Anne Nelson



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## Some of our favourite experiences



### Wildlife encounters

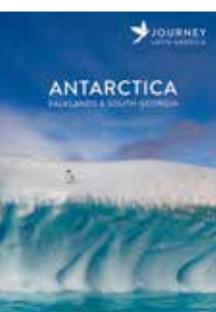
The creatures of Antarctica have no fear of humans – you can gaze into the doleful eyes of seals, marvel at playful whales, and listen to the plaintive whistle of penguins.

### Active in Antarctica

Get off your ship and jump into the freezing waters, kayak up to icebergs, climb a frosty mountain, snow-shoe up to penguins or spend a night camping in the open.

### In Explorers' footsteps

Peer into the intrepid Victorian explorers' huts, frozen in time and still provisioned. Peer into long abandoned huts, once used by intrepid explorers, and imagine the hardships encountered by Shackleton and his crew on their epic crossing of South Georgia.



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You can also browse our online magazine, Papagaio, for an exciting range of articles on all things Latin America. Researched and written by our knowledgeable travel specialists, you'll discover blogs about iconic destinations, lesser-known cultural gems, delicious recipes and much more. You'll also find exclusive tips from our expert staff, first-hand client reviews, and get your personal questions answered by one of our experienced sales team.

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AITO is the Association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Our member companies, usually owner managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating.

### EXCLUSIVE MEMBERSHIP

AITO sets criteria regarding ownership, finance and quality which must be satisfied before new companies are admitted to membership. All members are required to adhere to a Code of Business Practice which encourages high operational standards and conduct.

### FINANCIAL SECURITY

An AITO member is required to arrange financial protection for all holidays and other arrangements (including accommodation only) booked by the customer with the member under the AITO logo. This financial protection applies to customers who are resident in the UK at the time of booking and to most overseas customers who have booked directly with the member. In doing so, the member must comply with the UK government regulations. Members are required to submit details of their financial protection arrangements to AITO on a regular basis.

### ACCURATE BROCHURES AND WEBSITES

All members do their utmost to ensure that all their brochures and other publications, print or electronic, clearly and accurately describe the holidays and services offered.

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS

All members are committed to high standards of service and believe in regular and thorough training of employees. Members continually seek to review and improve their holidays. They listen to their customers and always welcome suggestions for improving standards.

### MONITORING STANDARDS

AITO endeavours to monitor quality standards regularly. All customers should receive a post-holiday questionnaire the results of which are scrutinised by the Association.

### SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Members acknowledge the importance of AITO's Sustainable Tourism ethos, which recognises the social, economic and environmental responsibilities of tour operating.

### CUSTOMER RELATIONS

All members endeavour to deal swiftly and fairly with any issues their customers may raise. In the unlikely event that a dispute between an AITO member and a customer cannot be settled amicably, AITO's low-cost Independent Dispute Settlement Service may be called upon by either side to bring the matter to a speedy and acceptable conclusion.

Journey Latin America is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators. To contact the Association visit [www.aito.co.uk](http://www.aito.co.uk) or call 020 8744 9280.

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### ABTA

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LA, Manchester



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