



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SIGNATURE GUATEMALA, HONDURAS & EL SALVADOR: MAYAN RUINS, COLONIAL CITIES AND PACIFIC BEACHES

15 days from **£3,950pp**

**GUATEMALA / LAKE ATITLAN AND VILLAGES / ANTIGUA AND THE HIGHLANDS /
HONDURAS / COPAN / EL SALVADOR / SUCHITOTO / RUTA DE LAS FLORES / PACIFIC
COAST**



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

A passion for the region runs through all we do

All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America

Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Fully bonded and licensed

ATOL-protected

On your side when it matters

Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks

We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions

Let us show you the Latin America we know and love



OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

Discover enchanting towns, Mayan archaeological sites, vibrant markets and Pacific beaches on this three week journey through neighbouring Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

DAY 1	Arrive in Guatemala City and transfer to your hotel.
DAY 2	Transfer to Lake Atitlan
DAY 3	Boat trip to Santiago Atitlan and San Antonio Palopo
DAY 4	Visit to Chichicastenango or Sololá markets
DAY 5	Transfer to Antigua
DAY 6	Community coffee farm visit & walking tour of Antigua
DAY 7	Transfer to Copan, Honduras
DAY 8	Guided tour of Copan archeological site and museum
DAY 9	Transfer to Suchitoto, El Salvador
DAY 10	Walking tour of Suchitoto & evening pupusa workshop
DAY 11	Transfer to Ataco via Joya de Ceren, Santa Ana & El Tazumal.
DAY 12	Exploring the Ruta de las Flores
DAY 13	Transfer to Barra de Santiago on El Salvador's Pacific coast
DAYS 14	Mangrove boat trip & time at leisure.
DAY 15	Transfer to San Salvador airport for your international flight.

ITINERARY

After flying into Guatemala City, head to Lake Atitlán, framed by volcanoes and traditional lakeside villages, with the opportunity to visit the markets of Chichicastenango or Sololá. Continue to Antigua, one of the Spanish Empire's most beautiful colonial cities, filled with elegant mansions, ornate churches and leafy plazas.

Travelling east into Honduras, you'll explore Copán, one of the Mayan civilisation's most remarkable archaeological sites. Your journey then carries you into El Salvador, beginning in the charming colonial town of Suchitoto before following the Ruta de las Flores, dotted with quaint towns and artisan communities. Round off your trip in Barra de Santiago, a peninsula on the western Pacific coast and home to one of the country's most important protected areas, before flying out of San Salvador.

With all three countries well connected by road, this is an ideal itinerary for travellers who don't like flying. Watch towering volcanoes, cobalt blue lakes, rolling highlands and sweeping Pacific beaches unfold from the comfort of a private vehicle.

DAY 1

Arrive in Guatemala City and transfer to your hotel.

Most flights arrive in the evening and it's just a 15-minute drive from the airport to your hotel in Guatemala City.

DAY 2

Transfer to Lake Atitlan

Leave Guatemala City behind and continue by private transfer to Lake Atitlán, a journey of 3-4 hours. The final dramatic descent to the lakeshore reveals a succession of wonderful views.

Lake Atitlán is one of the most captivating lakes in the world. On a still, sunny day, the surrounding volcanic cones are perfectly mirrored in its cobalt-blue waters. Traditional villages and indigenous agricultural communities line its fertile shores, each with its own character, dialect, and often a distinctive traditional costume still proudly worn by local inhabitants.

DAY 3

Boat trip to Santiago Atitlan and San Antonio Palopo

Take a boat across the lake to Santiago Atitlán, a Tz'utuhil Mayan town set on the southern shore beneath the San Pedro, Atitlán and Tolimán volcanoes. Santiago's inhabitants wear some of Guatemala's finest traditional costumes and pay homage to Maximón, the drinking and smoking saint of Folk Catholicism.

Industrious yet relaxed, the village's main street is lined with weaving shops, and a lively market takes place on Fridays and Sundays. With as many as 40 churches, the town reflects a blend of evangelical, Roman Catholic, and Tz'utuhil beliefs.

Continue across the lake to San Antonio Palopó on the eastern shore. Set in a natural amphitheatre, the village rises from the dock through narrow streets of adobe houses roofed with thatch or tin, and features a fine 16th century church. Residents are known for their colourful attire and headdresses. After exploring, return to Panajachel.

DAY 4

Visit to Chichicastenango or Sololá markets

Traditional markets abound in Guatemala, each with its own charm and rhythm. Two of the most notable – Chichicastenango and Sololá – are within easy reach of Lake Atitlán, though which one you visit will depend on the day of the week.

Chichicastenango – 'Chichi' for short! – lies 1½ hours from the lake, and its bustling Thursday and Sunday markets attract visitors from far and wide. Wander the labyrinth of streets in search of textiles, clothing and tapestries of striking colour and extraordinary intricacy, along with extravagant handcarved masks and good-quality leather goods. Local farmers also sell or barter an array of produce from the surrounding villages.

Sololá, just a 30minute drive away, is known for some of the country's most colourful traditional clothing. Its Tuesday and Friday market is less tourist-oriented and an excellent place to find superior crafts and textiles.

DAY 5**Transfer to Antigua**

Continue by private transfer (3 hours) to the country's former capital, Antigua.

Antigua is a masterpiece of the Spanish colonial grid system with cobbled streets, overhanging tiled roofs and a beautiful, leafy central plaza. Its many ruined churches, convents and monasteries stand as reminders of the era when it served as Guatemala's capital and was the main religious centre.

It's a welcoming place to relax and unwind, browse the boutiques and art galleries, and sample some of the country's best restaurants.

DAY 6**Community coffee farm visit & walking tour of Antigua**

Coffee has been produced in Guatemala since the late 1800s, and today you'll visit a coffee farm overseen by the Café de la Gente project – an organisation that champions the interests of smallscale coffee producers. Revenue from tourist visits helps support the initiative, and during your time on the farm you'll learn about the coffee making process from bean to brew, and of course, you'll be offered a fresh cup or two before returning to Antigua.

Antigua's rich historical legacy is best explored on foot, wandering through its grid of shaded cobbled streets and flowerfilled courtyards. Although now very much a vibrant, living city, the remains of this compact colonial centre – designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site – are dotted with monuments of the Spanish conquest. Known as Santiago de los Caballeros during colonial times, it served as Guatemala's capital until a devastating earthquake struck in 1773.

DAY 7**Transfer to Copan, Honduras**

Continue by private transfer (6–7 hours depending on border formalities) to Copan, a quaint colonial town just over the border in Honduras.

Surrounded by verdant hills dotted with coffee plantations, Copan serves as your base for exploring one of the most important archaeological sites of the ancient Maya world.

DAY 8

Guided tour of Copan archeological site and museum

Copan is believed to have been in its 'golden era' between 553AD and 738AD, before falling into decline soon after.

Although not as immense as Tikal or Chichen Itza, the Mayan's craftsmanship has survived the passing of time – most impressively evident in the intricate carvings of 21 stone stelae.

These 3-metre-high columns stand among temples, ball courts and the renowned hieroglyphic stairway with 1,250 blocks carved with glyphs – the longest inscribed text in the New World.

DAY 9

Transfer to Suchitoto, El Salvador

Continue by private transfer to Suchitoto in El Salvador (5-6 hours depending on border formalities).

Suchitoto is a charming colonial town whose name in the native Nahuatl language means "*place of birds and flowers*" – and for good reason – vibrant flowers adorn every building and nearby Lake Suchitlán provides an important sanctuary for birdlife.

During El Salvador's brutal civil war, Suchitoto was heavily affected. Fortunately, since the signing of the peace accords, extensive reconstruction has taken place, and today its cobblestone streets are a delight to wander.

DAY 10

Walking tour of Suchitoto & evening pupusa workshop

On a leisurely 2–3-hour walking tour, you'll explore the town's principal attractions, including the striking white Santa Lucía Church, which dominates the main square. You'll also discover Suchitoto's rich cultural identity with visits to the Arte Para la Paz (Art for Peace) Museum and the Teatro Alejandro Cotto – named in honour of the filmmaker, writer, and poet who played a key role in shaping the town's cultural life.

In the evening, you'll frequent a local restaurant and learn how to make El Salvador's most popular traditional dish, the humble *pupusa*, a thick corn pancake typically filled with cheese, refried beans, or meat.

DAY 11

Transfer to Ataco via Joya de Cerén, Santa Ana & El Tazumal.

Start by driving to the fascinating archaeological site of Joya de Cerén. Drawing comparisons with Pompeii, the pre-Hispanic farming community of Joya de Cerén was buried in up to 20 feet of ash when the Laguna Caldera Volcano erupted in AD 600, and the incredibly well preserved remains offer an insight into the day to day lives of rural communities of the time: how they cultivated their crops, built their homes and cooked and stored their food. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993 and houses an excellent museum with multilingual information boards.

Continue to Santa Ana, El Salvador's second city, taking time to admire the National Theatre and the impressive Gothic cathedral that dominate the vibrant main square, before visiting the archaeological site of El Tazumal, El Salvador's most significant ceremonial Mayan centre. Set in the heart of the small town of Chalchuapa, it's a place where everyday life continues along the very streets once trodden by the Maya. Just outside the ruins stands a bust of Che Guevara, commemorating his visit in 1954.

DAY 12

Exploring the Ruta de las Flores

Set off and explore the Ruta de las Flores, a 36kilometre winding mountain route linking Sonsonate to Ahuachapán and offering wonderful views at every turn. As the name suggests, you'll pass fields of tropical flowers and nurseries that thrive in the cool, pleasant climate.

Steeped in cultural tradition, the Ruta de las Flores is worth visiting any day of the week, though its towns truly come alive at weekends. Your tour is flexible so you can make the most of the day and tailor it to your interests, whether that's browsing craft markets, visiting historic churches (including one with a 16thcentury black statue of Christ), or joining the lively weekly food fair in Juayúa.

DAY 13**Transfer to Barra de Santiago on El Salvador's Pacific coast**

Continue by private transfer (2 hours) to Barra de Santiago, a peninsula tucked away on El Salvador's western Pacific coast, bordered by a calm estuary on one side and the Pacific ocean on the other.

It's also home to one of the country's most important protected areas: the Barra de Santiago Mangrove Reserve, a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance spanning more than 11,500 hectares of rich, biodiverse mangrove forest.

DAYS 14**Mangrove boat trip & time at leisure.**

Explore the Barra de Santiago Mangrove Reserve by boat and learn about the mangroves and their vital role in the local ecosystem. Glide through winding channels that teem with wildlife – from crocodiles and endangered blue crabs to fish darting beneath the roots – and spot a wide range of bird species including Boat-billed Herons, pelicans, egrets, and the American Pygmy kingfisher.

Barra de Santiago is a tranquil place to unwind at the end of a trip. Lounge by your hotel's swimming pool, take long walks along the beach, make use of the hotel's complimentary kayaks or stop for a fresh seafood lunch at one of the beachside restaurants.

DAY 15**Transfer to San Salvador airport for your international flight.**

It's a three-hour drive to San Salvador's airport for your flight back home.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Services of our team of experts in our London office

Services of Journey Latin America local representatives and guides

All land and air transport within Latin America

Accommodation as specified

Meals as specified

Excursions as specified, including entrance fees

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

Lake Atitlan: Santiago Atitlan and San Antonio Palopo

Lake Atitlan: Chichicastenango or Solola markets

Antigua: Community coffee farm & walking tour

Copan: Guided tour of archeological site

Suchitoto: Walking tour & pupusa dinner

Suchitoto: Tazumal, Santa Ana & Joya de Ceren

Ataco: Ruta de las Flores

Barra de Santiago: Mangrove boat tour

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Tips and gratuities

Meals other than specified

International flights to Latin America

Airport taxes, when not included in the ticket

Optional excursions

ESSENTIALS

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

15 days, 14 nights: Guatemala City 1; Lake Atitlan 3; Antigua 2; Copan 2; Suchitoto 2; Ataco 2; Barra de Santiago 2.

ACCOMMODATION

This trip features a mixture of colonial style and modern mid-range hotels.

TRANSPORT

This trip includes 7 long distance road journeys (ranging from 3-7 hours). There are no internal flights.

MEALS

Breakfast: daily

Lunch & dinner: days 13 & 14

GUIDES

Our local, trusted and carefully selected partners understand the expectations of our customers very well, and their staff and guides are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return.

On this holiday, you will be joined by different guides for each activity and or region, ensuring you benefit from specialised expertise and knowledge, often from someone local to the area.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

As well as any included activities, most Private Journeys include some free time for optional excursions. As optional excursions are often subject to availability, we recommend you discuss and arrange them with your Travel Expert as early as possible before you depart.



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LATIN AMERICA

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

GIVE US A CALL

We'd love to chat

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

tours@journeylatinamerica.com