

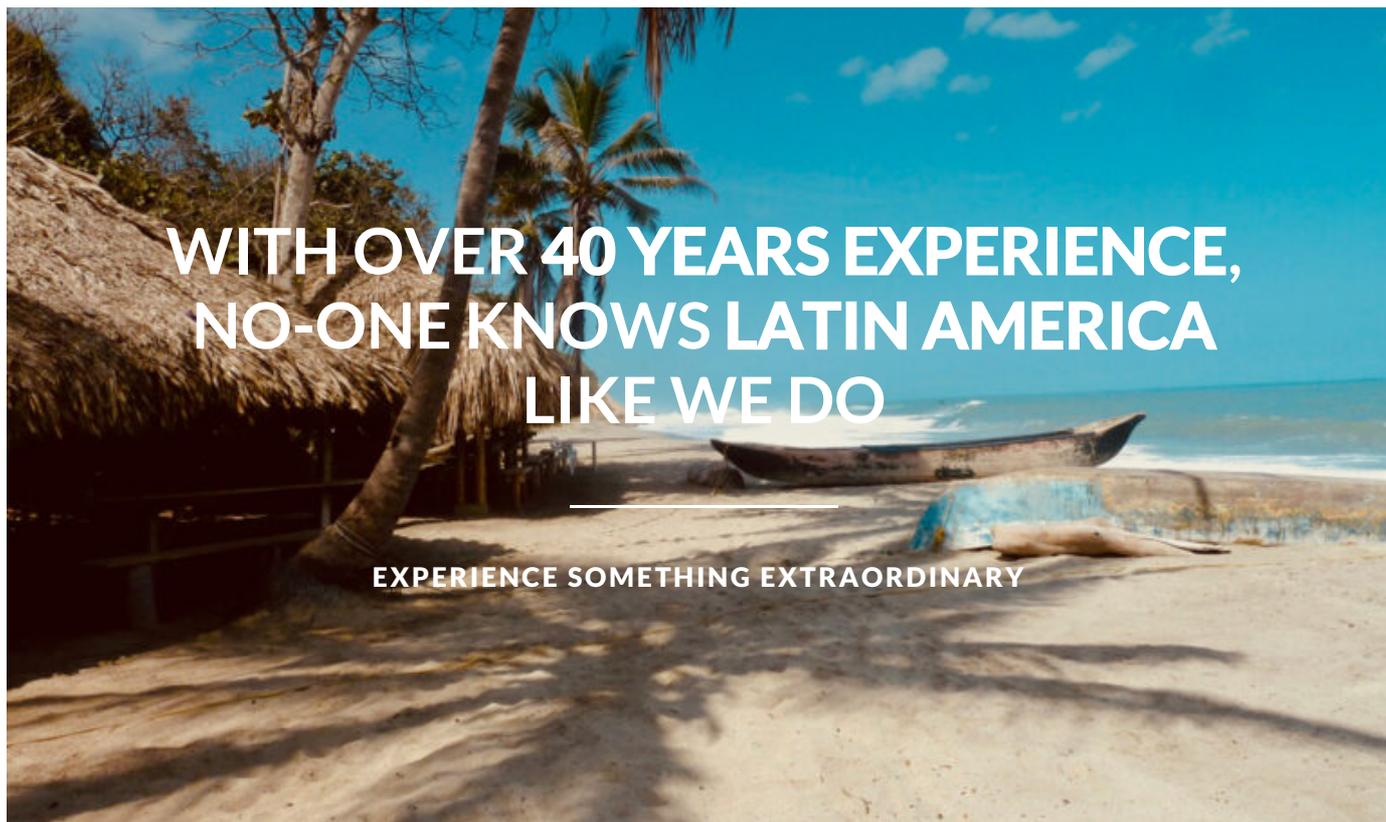


**CLASSIC GROUP TOURS**

# EAGLE: AZTECS, MAYAS AND CONQUISTADORES

15 days from **£4,598pp**

**MEXICO / MEXICO CITY / OAXACA / CHIAPAS, SAN CRISTOBAL AND PALENQUE /  
MÉRIDA, CHICHÉN ITZÁ AND THE YUCATAN / CARIBBEAN COAST: RIVIERA MAYA AND  
HOLBOX**



# WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

## 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

Mexico is one of Latin America's most vibrant and entertaining destinations, with a huge diversity of cultural and natural attractions. Get a flavour of it on this top quality escorted group tour that takes in ancient Aztec and Mayan sites.

	UK clients depart arriving Mexico City the same day.
<b>DAY 1</b>	Overnight in the capital.
<b>DAY 2</b>	Visit the Museum of Anthropology and Teotihuacán pyramids.
<b>DAY 3</b>	Visit to Coyoacán, Frida Kahlo museum and Xochimilco.
<b>DAY 4</b>	Drive to Oaxaca via the city of Puebla.
<b>DAY 5</b>	Visit pre-Columbian archaeological sites Mitla and Monte Albán.
<b>DAY 6</b>	Walking tour of Oaxaca and time at leisure to explore.
<b>DAY 7</b>	By air and road to San Cristóbal de las Casas via Sumidero Canyon.
<b>DAY 8</b>	Excursion to villages San Juan Chamula and Zinacantán.
<b>DAY 9</b>	Drive to Palenque via the waterfalls and pools of Misol-Ha and Agua Azul.
<b>DAY 10</b>	Guided tour of the archaeological site Palenque.
<b>DAY 11</b>	Drive to the historic city of Campeche.
<b>DAY 12</b>	Continue to Mérida via Mayan temples at Uxmal.
<b>DAY 13</b>	At leisure: explore Mérida or visit the gulf coast.
<b>DAY 14</b>	Drive to Mayan Chichén Itzá; guided tour of the ruins.
<b>DAY 15</b>	Depart from Cancún on international flight or extension. UK clients arrive home the following day.

## ITINERARY

On this escorted group holiday, visit the superb museums and teeming plazas of the megapolis Mexico City, wander the cobbled streets and soak up the Spanish colonial features of Oaxaca, Campeche and Mérida. Explore the glorious ancient Aztec and Mayan monuments which lay hidden, smothered and silent for centuries amid the deep valleys and jungles of the south, before ending your trip in the lush Yucatán Peninsula, fringed by white sand beaches.

From here you're well positioned to extend your trip to Mexico's Caribbean coast, to Cuba, or across the border to Guatemala.

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**UK clients depart arriving Mexico City the same day.**

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### DAY 1

#### **Overnight in the capital.**

Those passengers arriving on an international flight will be met at the airport by the tour leader or one of our local representatives and accompanied to your hotel. Mexico City, known by the local people simply as 'DF' (Distrito Federal), was built on the site of Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec Empire, and it lies at 2,250m above sea level. Vast, chaotic and vibrant, this sprawling megapolis of more than 20 million people has a multitude of attractions.

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### DAY 2

#### **Visit the Museum of Anthropology and Teotihuacán pyramids.**

Today you visit the famous Museum of Anthropology, one of the world's finest, housing remarkable displays of Aztec artefacts alongside crafts and tools from other ancient civilisations. It's a fantastic introduction to the superb and sometimes grisly artistic achievements of Mexico's early inhabitants.

Head out into the countryside towards the megalithic archaeological site of Teotihuacán. Teotihuacán dates from the time of Christ and was once one of the largest cities in the world. It is hugely influential in the historic narrative of modern Mexico and, although it had already been abandoned by the time of the Aztecs, even this great empire held it in awe. Stroll along the imposing Avenue of the Dead leading to the vast Pyramid of the Sun, and take the opportunity to climb its vertiginous, ancient steps for a panorama of both the ruins and surrounding countryside.

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### DAY 3

#### Visit to Coyoacán, Frida Kahlo museum and Xochimilco.

Your day begins in Mexico City's colossal main square (or zócalo), with visits to the cathedral and to see Diego Rivera's impassioned murals, which depict episodes in the country's history. Later you visit to the arty quarter of Coyoacán, on the outskirts of Mexico City, where Spanish conqueror Cortés set up one of his many homes. It is a colourful collection of colonial buildings, plazas, former mansions and museums. Visit the former studio of artist Frida Kahlo, with a touching display of her life and work, along with her relationship with both fellow artist Diego Rivera and Russian/Ukrainian radical Trotsky.

You can also join a tour taking you 10km south to the floating gardens of Xochimilco, which since Aztec times has been a major source of fruit and vegetables for the city. It is famous for its colourful gondola style punts known as 'trajineras' sometimes accompanied by mariachi bands who serenade you as you drift along.

### DAY 4

#### Drive to Oaxaca via the city of Puebla.

Leave the capital and travel south-east by road towards the southern highlands and the city of Oaxaca. En route you break the journey in Puebla, the most Spanish of Mexican cities, with its hundreds of churches and thousands of colonial buildings, many adorned with hand-painted tiles.

In the afternoon you will travel into the remote, rugged sierras and reach the city of Oaxaca. The population in this area is still dominated by Zapotec and Mixtec indians, while the town has many examples of well-preserved colonial architecture, some fine museums and a thriving artistic community, as well as a wonderful climate.

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**DAY 5****Visit pre-Columbian archaeological sites Mitla and Monte Albán.**

You'll head out of town to visit the nearby archaeological site at Monte Albán, a Zapotec ceremonial centre. Strategically located on an artificially levelled hill where 3 valleys meet, the site has superb views over the surrounding area. There is time to explore the strange carvings, burial chambers and temples.

Your excursion continues to Mitla; a name that translates as 'place of the dead'. Here you can explore the pre-Columbian ruins of four great palaces, their impressive mosaics and bas reliefs, many of which remain incredibly well preserved.

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**DAY 6****Walking tour of Oaxaca and time at leisure to explore.**

A walking tour is organised so you can explore this historical town. The peace and quiet of the cobbled streets is a welcome contrast to the busy capital and there is time to wander around at your leisure as well; relax in the zócalo with a margarita, and snack on chapulin, the local delicacy of fried grasshoppers, or sample some of the other excellent cuisine for which the town is famed.

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**DAY 7****By air and road to San Cristóbal de las Casas via Sumidero Canyon.**

Fly to Tuxtla Gutierrez, via Mexico City and continue by road to the town of San Cristóbal de las Casas (2 hrs). En route there is a stop at the Sumidero Canyon; this is a geological fault where the cliffs tower above at over 900m. The canyon is considered important in the region and features on the coat of arms of the state of Chiapas. Time permitting there is a boat trip through the huge gorge, spotting wildlife as you go.

San Cristóbal is a town of atmospheric streets, with a sprawling handicrafts market, bohemian cafés and hilltop churches. It is a heady mixture of wonderful colonial, baroque and neoclassical architecture, and indigenous culture and influences.

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**DAY 8****Excursion to villages San Juan Chamula and Zinacantán.**

A short drive away is San Juan Chamula, a small indigenous village with an adobe church. Entering its wooden doors is like passing into another world; local people clad in traditional blue tops weave through a forest of candles and Coca Cola bottle lids that cover the floor, performing mysterious rites amid a dense fog of incense and accompanied by incessant murmuring.

From here there may be time to visit the neighbouring village of Zinacantán, where local men wear bright red tasselled jackets and women a distinctive blue shawl.

**DAY 9****Drive to Palenque via the waterfalls and pools of Misol-Ha and Agua Azul.**

This morning you'll head north by bus, passing through highland forests and coffee plantations, before descending along a winding road out towards the Lacandon rainforest. As the journey progresses the air becomes more humid as you drop down from the highlands to the rainforest. You arrive in Palenque in the evening.

**DAY 10****Guided tour of the archaeological site Palenque.**

An early start today allows a chance to explore Palenque in the cool of the morning before the other visitors arrive. Perched on the edge of the foothills and surrounded by dense jungle vegetation, Palenque is perhaps the most beautifully situated of the classical Mayan sites. A maze-like palace and the impressive stepped Temple of the Inscriptions dominate; deep inside the latter there is a crypt containing the sarcophagus of Palenque's greatest ruler, Lord Pacal.

Discovered in 1952, the sarcophagus dates back to AD683. The great pyramids of the Maya were usually used as platforms from which to worship the gods, so this pharaoh-style burial is untypical. Exploring the ruins which emerge from the steamy rainforest, you feel as if you are discovering them yourself for the first time. Take some moments to wander off and be alone; it can be mystical experience.

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**DAY 11****Drive to the historic city of Campeche.**

Your journey continues northwards overland to the Gulf of Mexico and Unesco World Heritage city Campeche (5hrs). The city is rightfully proud of its status and has done much to restore and reconstruct its colonial heart, and along with the many Spanish built mansions that remain, there are still parts of the original city walls standing. A boulevard runs along the promenade which skirts the Gulf of Mexico, offering amazing sunsets as the clouds roll in across the sea.

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**DAY 12****Continue to Mérida via Mayan temples at Uxmal.**

North-east of Campeche lies the archaeological site of Uxmal, dominated by the majestic Pyramid of the Magician, alongside which is an elegant nunnery quadrangle with Puuc-style complex stonework pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle. Strolling through the ruins, cradled in dense vegetation shading the visitor from the scorching sun is a magical experience.

From Uxmal it's a drive of just 80km to the capital of the Yucatán state, Mérida. Today, Mérida retains a lovely colonial centre, with a mix of opulent and crumbly buildings but it is a modern, bustling, thriving city, with lots of local character, some excellent places to eat and good shops and markets. The inhabitants, descendants of the Mayans and the colonists, love a good fiesta, and you may well find one going on, with live music and market stalls, while you are there.

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**DAY 13****At leisure: explore Mérida or visit the gulf coast.**

For wildlife enthusiasts, an optional trip to Celestún can be arranged. Set in the middle of a wildlife sanctuary, this area abounds with resident and migratory waterfowl, with flamingoes being the main attraction. Combine some bird spotting with a stroll down the white-sand beach which stretches north from here for kilometres.

Alternatively you may prefer to spend a day at leisure, exploring the busy, cobbled streets of colonial Mérida, and browsing for souvenirs from the excellent selection of cotton handicrafts and jewellery (the town is known for its hammocks).

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**DAY 14****Drive to Mayan Chichén Itzá; guided tour of the ruins.**

From Mérida you are driven to Chichén Itzá (1.5 hrs), the grandest of all the Mayan sites, dominated by the huge, symmetrical, stepped El Castillo pyramid. The origins of the site are mysterious, and appear to have Toltec as well as Mayan influences. It has the largest and best-preserved ball court in the Americas; the venue for an ancient ritual game that was played throughout the continent, but which is still not fully understood. Archaeologists have not been able to determine whether the losers or winners were decapitated, but judging from the gory carvings along the base of the court's walls, someone certainly came to an unpleasant end. There is also a huge sacred well, the Cenote Sagrado, which was used for ritual purposes. Offerings (jade, gold and human) have been retrieved from its depths.

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**DAY 15****Depart from Cancún on international flight or extension.**

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UK clients arrive home the following day.

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## 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

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## INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

Mexico City: Museum of Anthropology  
Mexico City: Teotihuacán archaeological site  
Mexico City: City tour, Coyoacán, Frida Kahlo museum and Xochimilco  
Oaxaca: Walking city tour  
Oaxaca: Monte Albán and Mitla  
Sumidero Canyon boat trip  
San Cristóbal: San Juan Chamula and Zincantan  
Palenque Mayan ruins  
Mérida: Uxmal ruins  
Chichén Itzá: guided tour of Mayan ruins  
The October departure will include excursions around the Day of the Dead celebrations

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## 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

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## ESSENTIALS

### ABOUT OUR GROUP TOURS

To find out more about how our group tours including group sizes, solo travellers and why to choose us. Please click [here](#).

### TOUR LEADER

On this tour, you'll be accompanied from start to finish by one of **our exceptional Journey Latin America tour leaders**. From the moment you land in Latin America until the day the tour ends they will deal with all the practicalities, expertly adapting to the circumstances and individual needs of the group. Rather than different guides in different cities, your leader will get to know the group and keep you informed and entertained as you go.

### SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

15 days, 14 nights: Mexico City 3; Oaxaca 3; San Cristóbal 2; Palenque 2; Campeche 1; Mérida 2; Chichén Itzá 1.

### ACCOMMODATION

We use the following mid-range and upper mid-range hotels on this tour.

- Mexico City: Hotel Zocalo Central
- Oaxaca: Na'ura
- San Cristóbal: Diego de Mazariegos 2026/Sombra del Agua 2027
- Palenque: Hotel Chan Kah
- Campeche: Hotel Plaza
- Mérida: NH Collection Paseo Montejo
- Chichén Itzá: Hacienda Chichen

On very rare occasions these hotels can change, however please speak to one of our consultants who can provide full details for each departure if you have any doubts. Address and contact details will be sent out with your final documents.

### TRANSPORT

1 flight (1.5 hrs), 6 road journeys (longest 7 hrs with stops). All land transport is operated privately for the group.

### MEALS

Breakfast daily.

### OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

On this tour the price includes excursions in all the places you visit as per the itinerary. There will however likely be some free time when you may choose to take part in an optional excursion. These are booked locally through your tour leader once you are in Latin America, however we are more than happy to advise you of what is on offer in advance of your holiday so you can best plan the excursions that suit you.

### TRAVELLING ALONE

There is no extra cost for single travellers who are willing to share a room. You will be accommodated with another same-sex member of the group who is also travelling solo. For single travellers who wish to have their own room there are a limited number of single rooms available which carry a surcharge.

### TRIP SUITABILITY

This journey covers some large distances and although we try and make it as relaxed as possible there are some long days of travel. However all transportation is private and comfortable and accommodation is of a high standard. Walks and excursions are optional; ascents to some of the pyramids at the Maya and Aztec sites can be steep and vertiginous. Consult your tour leader if you have any doubts.

### CLIMATE

In Mexico City and the mountain towns the climate is temperate all year round. As you travel eastwards the hotter it gets, with temperatures consistently over 30 degrees Celsius all year round. The rainy season also falling from June to

September. A comprehensive overview of the weather in all the regions you are visiting can be found in our Destination pages. Our Travel Experts can answer your questions on climate and further details will be sent with your confirmation documents.

### **CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT AND LUGGAGE**

A daypack is essential for carrying rainwear, snacks, books/tablet and a water bottle as are comfortable walking shoes. Bring a hat with a visor, sunglasses and sun block. Binoculars are useful for bird and wildlife spotting. Because the weather can be changeable, we recommend wearing layered clothing for excursions. Some warm items. waterproof jackets mosquito repellent and swimwear are also necessary for all departures.

### **MONEY**

Please see the Country Info tab on this holiday for our latest currency information and advice about how to take your spending money. Tipping in Latin America is almost always done using cash. It is customary to tip tour leaders, local guides, drivers, boat crews and other service providers such as restaurant staff and porters. Full tipping guidelines are sent with your confirmation documents as is advice on local costs.

### **HEALTH, ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND INSURANCE**

For health information on travelling to Mexico including recommended vaccinations, please see <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/>

All Latin American countries have specific entry regulations related to Covid 19. Please also check our Travel Hub for further information.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports should be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Other nationalities should enquire with us or check with the consulates.

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on the Travel insurance website.

Our full briefing dossier contains more information on vaccinations, visas and insurance and will be provided with your final travel documents or can be requested from your travel consultant at any time.

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## GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

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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](mailto:tours@journeylatinamerica.com)