

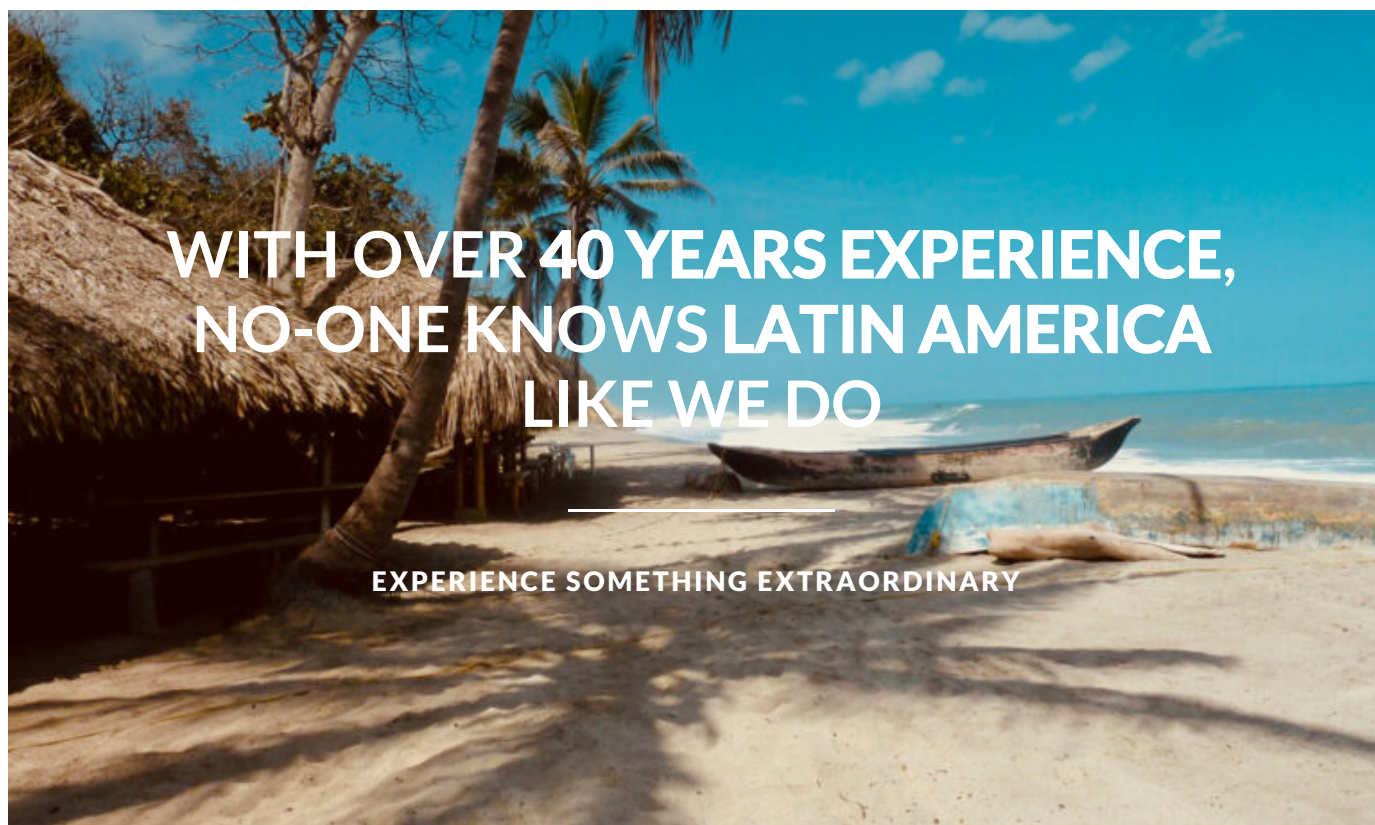


PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SIGNATURE GUATEMALA: MOUNTAINS, MARKETS AND MAYAN RUINS

12 days from **£2,620pp**

GUATEMALA / ANTIGUA AND THE HIGHLANDS / LAKE ATITLAN AND VILLAGES / TIKAL



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

On this fast-moving holiday you get a taste of Guatemala's volcanoes, remote highlands, pristine lakes, pre-Hispanic ruined temples and a vibrant traditional culture.

DAY 1	Arrive Guatemala City and transfer to Antigua.
DAY 2	Guided walking tour of Antigua.
DAY 3	At leisure in Antigua.
DAY 4	Drive to Lake Atitlán.
DAY 5	Guided day trip to lakeside villages.
DAY 6	Visit Chichicastenango market.
DAY 7	Visit the market towns of Quetzaltenango basin.
DAY 8	Visit Todos Santos Cuchumatán.
DAY 9	Guided tour of Tikal ruins.
DAY 10	Explore Tikal at leisure.
DAY 11	Fly to Guatemala City.
DAY 12	Transfer to the airport for your international flight.

ITINERARY

Guatemala is brimming with both obvious highlights and hidden attractions and we've packed loads of them in to this variety-packed holiday including Antigua, Lake Atitlán, Mayan Tikal and authentic markets in the remote, wildly beautiful western highlands.

Begin by exploring arty, volcano-framed Antigua, one of the continent's most beautiful Spanish colonial cities, and move on to atmospheric and spiritual Lake Atitlán, fringed by volcanoes, all the while visiting traditional villages where the indigenous population wear community-distinctive clothing and weave intricate, vibrant textiles. Continue into the wilder more remote region of the craggy Cuchumatanes mountains, and visit authentic, non-touristy markets trading in the produce of the richly fertile volcanic valleys. Finally fly to the vast complex of temples at Tikal, Central America's most overwhelming abandoned Mayan city, its haunting pyramids shrouded in exotic bird and monkey-filled jungle.

You'll mostly be staying in small, characterful colonial-style accommodation befitting the uniqueness of your environment.

DAY 1

Arrive Guatemala City and transfer to Antigua.

You will be met and escorted to your hotel in Antigua. It's a journey of about one hour along a winding paved road.

DAY 2

Guided walking tour of Antigua.

The city is a colonial work of art, with cobbled streets, overhanging tiled roofs and a beautiful, leafy central plaza. There's an abundance of huge ruined churches, convents and monasteries, testament to a time when Antigua was the country's capital and its main religious centre. You'll have plenty of time to absorb this fascinating city, including on a walking tour of the historic centre. It seems that every doorway opens onto a fragrant tiled courtyard. A dramatic backdrop of smouldering volcanoes and ruined churches and convents surrounded by parkland bear witness to the city's destruction a volcanic eruption in 1773.

DAY 3

At leisure in Antigua.

Antigua is a welcoming place to relax and unwind, do some shopping in tempting boutiques and art galleries, and enjoy the excellent food in a large range of restaurants and pavement cafés. Wander around the courtyards and enjoy the floral displays in beautifully tended gardens. There are also a number of optional activities and excursions you can choose from, including visiting a coffee farm, climbing a volcano, cycling, or taking a cookery lesson.

DAY 4

Drive to Lake Atitlán.

Travel by a gradually-ascending road to Lake Atitlán. The landscapes in the highlands west of Antigua are dominated by watchful racing-green and tawny volcanoes and compact farming villages. The lake is one of the most captivating in the world and its beauty has been eulogised by poets and travellers. On a sunny day, the closely forested volcanic cones are reflected in cobalt waters. Traditional villages and indigenous agricultural settlements skirt its fertile shores, each with its own character and identity, its own dialect and often a unique costume still worn by the proud inhabitants.

DAY 5

Guided day trip to lakeside villages.

Take a motor launch across the lake to Santiago de Atitlán. Cruising over the calm and silent morning waters, you'll have wonderful views of the various shoreline hamlets and pocket-sized cultivated fields alongside some grand houses, and beyond to the gently sloping bottle-green volcanoes that encircle the water. You are greeted as you alight at Santiago by enthusiastic children, and the town is an excellent place to buy brilliantly coloured textiles.

The children may also offer to guide you to the current resting place of the smoking, drinking, be-hatted and roguish local idol, Maximón, who is moved to a different house each year, and looked after by a diligent entourage. He's certainly not politically correct but he will help you with your problems in exchange for a suitable financial donation.

After time at leisure to explore, bargain with the traders and admire the costumes you will again be transported by boat to another village, San Antonio Palopó, about 10km from Panajachel. It lies in a natural amphitheatre formed by the mountains behind it. Ascending the hill from the dock, you reach the village consisting of narrow streets of adobe houses with roofs of thatch or corrugated tin, and a fine 16th century church. The village inhabitants are known for their colourful costumes and headdresses.

DAY 6

Visit Chichicastenango market.

It's a short drive to Chichicastenango, a frosty mountain town, which has a decidedly mystical air. The symbols and practices of Catholicism sit side by side or even amalgamate with esoteric Mayan religious ceremonies, centred round the simple, whitewashed façade of the church. There is a vast, bustling market, and you can wander the labyrinthine streets. Here are textiles, clothes and tapestries of striking colour and extraordinary intricacy, as well as extravagant hand-carved masks and good-quality leather goods. Local farmers both barter and sell an array of fruit and vegetables from the surrounding villages. Continue to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala's second city which has subdued provincial air.

DAY 7

Visit the market towns of Quetzaltenango basin.

Beyond a forested range of mountains west of Lake Atitlán lies a vast, fertile pan of fertile land known as Quetzaltenango basin. The ability to cultivate crops, especially vegetables there means that the area has been densely populated for centuries. Zunil and Almolonga are typical vibrant market towns, where women dressed in traditional coloured tunics (huipils) gather to trade in all manner of crops, including carrots and leafy green vegetables. You'll pass through these villages with time to stop and look around both villages which shelter at the foot of spectacular volcanoes. Continue to Huehuetenango, a relaxed country town.

DAY 8

Visit Todos Santos Cuchumatán.

Drive north through the Cuchumatanes mountains from Huehuetenango to Todos Santos Cuchumatán. This is a remote region of wild, craggy limestone outcrops rising to 3,837m cut through by fertile, closely cultivated river valleys. The town is inhabited by descendants of the Mayans who still wear their distinctive traditional dress – unusually the men as well as the women wear a striking costume incorporating bold stripy trousers. Their market day is Saturday; you'll be there on the right day to stroll around the stalls. From there retrace your journey and continue to Guatemala City, where you spend the night.

DAY 9

Guided tour of Tikal ruins.

Take a short flight to Flores, in the dense sticky jungles of northern Guatemala. You'll have a guided tour of the vast archaeological site at Tikal. Steep-stepped and vertiginous temples emerge high above the rainforest canopy; the views over the site from one of these ancient skyscrapers are unforgettable. Spend the day wandering through the palace complexes. Tikal was one of the largest and most important Mayan city states, reaching its peak around AD800 prior to its mysterious demise. The pyramids and temples seem frozen in time, but you're brought back to the present by the roar of curious howler monkeys and lithe spider monkeys as they swing through the trees; and by flashes of colour as toucans and parrots take flight.

DAY 10

Explore Tikal at leisure.

As your lodge is the best location of any from which to visit Tikal and you will have already been woken by howler monkeys we recommend you revisit the site first thing in the morning when fewer other visitors are around and the wildlife is at its most active.

DAY 11

Fly to Guatemala City.

Fly back to the capital and transfer to your hotel for the night.

DAY 12

Transfer to the airport for your international flight.

UK clients arrive home the following day.

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

Walking tour of Antigua

Boat excursion to Santiago de Atitlán and San Antonio Palapó

Chichicastenango market

Zunil and Almalongo market towns

Visit to Todos Santos Cuchumatán

Guided tour of Tikal ruins

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

12 days, 11 nights: Antigua 3; Lake Atitlán 2; Quetzaltenango 1; Huehuetenango 1; Guatemala City 1; Tikal 2; Guatemala City 1.

ACCOMMODATION

We use a mix of hotel standards from mid-range upwards, choosing accommodation we think is great value, comfortable, well-located and which showcases a touch of local character. Properties will vary in heritage from modern to traditional-style countryside properties (haciendas).

TRANSPORT

2 flights (longest 1hr); 4 scenic road journeys (longest 6hrs).

MEALS

Breakfast daily, lunch day 9.

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, this Private Journey includes 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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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