



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

LUXURY GUATEMALA AND BELIZE: TIKAL AND THE CARIBBEAN

15 days from **£5,570pp**

**GUATEMALA / ANTIGUA AND THE HIGHLANDS / TIKAL / BELIZE / MAYA MOUNTAINS
AND JUNGLE / CARIBBEAN CAYES AND 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

Visit Guatemala and Belize's top destinations while staying at three unique properties inspired by their owner Francis Ford Coppola.

Special offer: 3 extra nights free. Receive a complimentary night at each of the 3 Francis Ford Coppola lodges: La Lancha, Blancaneaux Lodge and Turtle Inn when you complete your stay by 31st August 2026.

DAY 1	Arrive in Guatemala and transfer to your hotel in Antigua.
DAY 2	Guided walking tour of Antigua.
DAY 3	Transfer across the Guatemalan highlands to Lake Atitlan
DAY 4	Boat trip on Lake Atitlan
DAY 5	At leisure by Lake Atitlan
DAY 6	Fly to Flores in the jungle Petén region.
DAY 7	Guided tour of the archaeological site at Tikal.
DAY 8	By road to the Belize border and over to your Lodge.
DAY 9	Excursion to Barton Creek Cave
DAY 10	Day at leisure or optional excursions
DAY 11	Transfer to Placencia on the Caribbean coast.
DAY 12	Manatee spotting expedition.
DAYS 13 - 14	At leisure on the beach.
DAY 15	Fly to Belize City.

ITINERARY

Guatemala and Belize are a winning combination for a holiday, two very contrasting countries which when explored together present an irresistible collection of travel experiences. On this holiday, travel is at a relaxed pace between three intimate properties owned by film director Francis Ford Coppola, and two more which are part of the Relais & Chateaux portfolio. Each is unique in its design and setting and at each and all the attention is on premium service.

Guatemala is steeped in indigenous and Spanish colonial tradition and religious mysticism where the modern Maya speak their ancestral tongue and observe age-old dress codes. Meanwhile Belize, on Central America's Caribbean coast, is English-speaking, utterly laid-back, and a popular destination for outdoor adventure enthusiasts.

Start off in Guatemala's highlands, staying at an hacienda near Antigua before several relaxing days by Lake Atitlan. Then fly to Flores and visit to Tikal, the vast Mayan ruined city where ancient temples and pyramids penetrate the rainforest canopy. Cross the border into Belize and visit the cool forests of Mountain Pine Ridge, before rounding off the holiday at the low-key Caribbean village of Placencia, with time for snorkelling or manatee watching.

DAY 1

Arrive in Guatemala and transfer to your hotel in Antigua.

You will be met by our local representative and taken to your hotel in the old colonial capital, Antigua. It's a journey of about one hour along a winding paved road.

DAY 2

Guided walking tour of Antigua.

Antigua 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 smoldering volcanoes and ruined churches and convents surrounded by parkland bears witness to the city's destruction by a volcanic eruption in 1773: but much has been painstakingly restored.

DAY 3

Transfer across the Guatemalan highlands to Lake Atitlan

Travel along the scenic mountain highway to the Mayan community of Santa Catarina Palopó, on Lake Atitlan. 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. Before the final winding descent to Lake Atitlán, stop at the traditional town of Solola where there's an impressive market on Tuesdays and Fridays.

DAY 4

Boat trip on Lake Atitlan

Take a motor launch across the lake to Santiago Atitlán, cruising over the calm and silent morning waters with the volcanoes towering above. 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. The town is an excellent place to buy brilliantly coloured textiles.

Although it's the largest and most visited of the lakeshore towns, Santiago remains a place of deep-rooted traditions, where many men continue to wear traditional dress (increasingly rare in Guatemala). Local people may 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, it's time to retreat from the non-stop hubbub of Santiago to your hotel on the opposite shore of the lake.

DAY 5

At leisure by Lake Atitlan

Today you may welcome the chance to unwind and appreciate the gorgeous views from your hotel. If you're keen to explore, the village of Santa Catarina is less than 20 minutes' walk away. Santa Catarina remains a rustic and traditional community. Deep blue huipil tunics – some of Guatemala's most beautiful – are woven by the women here.

We can also arrange optional excursions to other communities on the lake. If your visit coincides with a Thursday or Sunday, consider a visit to Chichicastenango, the largest and most celebrated Mayan market of the highlands, a 2-hour drive away.

DAY 6

Fly to Flores in the jungle Petén region.

Transfer to Guatemala City airport (3 hours) for an hour-long flight to Flores, in the sticky jungles of northern Guatemala, and from here continue to your lodge, arriving in the evening.

DAY 7

Guided tour of the 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 8

By road to the Belize border and over to your Lodge.

The drive across the border into Belize to the lodge takes about three hours. The first part of the journey is on the well paved Western Highway, the last section is mainly on dirt track heading to Mountain Pine Ridge to the Lodge, another ideal base to explore the surrounding forest, waterfalls, rivers and caves.

DAY 9

Excursion to Barton Creek Cave

Barton Creek Cave was an ancient Maya Indian burial site and to this day it remains accessible only by canoe. It's about an hour by road to the put-in point, a scenic drive which passes through the Barton Creek Mennonite community. Upon arrival at the cave complex, you will embark on canoes and glide through the darkness, armed with spotlights. The stalactites and stalagmites inside the cave are beautiful and original Mayan pottery as well as 2000-year skeletal remains can still be found. You will paddle for about a mile through the various chambers of the cave, your guide pointing out various magnificent formations and ancient relics and explain some of the beliefs and rituals of the ancient Maya. After the canoe trip, you may take a dip in the crystal-clear waters of Barton Creek before returning to your hotel. Being canoe-based, Barton Creek is considered a more easy-going alternative to the adrenaline-fuelled expeditions to the Actun Tunichil Muknal (ATM) Caves. This is still an option if you're up for the challenge. Or if you'd rather remain well above ground, we can organise something else entirely.

DAY 10

Day at leisure or optional excursions

There is a range of excursions available to pre-book, such as exploring horse riding to Big Rock Falls, hiking or visiting the Mayan ruins of Caracol. Alternatively, just relax at the lodge, treat yourself to a spa treatment or take a dip in the infinity pool or nearby natural pools.

DAY 11

Transfer to Placencia on the Caribbean coast.

This 3-4 hour journey takes you from the lush highlands to the coastal tropics. From a dirt road you join the Western Highway to the country's capital, Belmopan where you turn onto the Hummingbird highway with some outstanding views of the Maya Mountains and Victoria Peak in the Cockscombe reserve. The vegetation thins out as you approach the coast and your journey ends surrounded by water and driving down the peninsula to Placencia.

The village is a friendly and low-key beach resort typified by its ramshackle and colourful wooden houses built on stilts, linked by paths weaving under swaying palms. With some of Belize's finest beaches and one or two top notch hotels, it is developing into an increasingly popular tourist retreat. The nearby Monkey River and Placencia Lagoon provide good opportunities for spotting wildlife including the rare manatee.

DAY 12

Manatee spotting expedition.

Board a boat in search of the shy and elusive West Indian manatee. You'll slowly cruise Placencia Lagoon looking for neat trails of sea grass, the tell-tale sign that manatees have been munching their way along the bottom of the lagoon. The boat heads stealthily to where the manatee congregate at the mouth of a freshwater creek. If you're lucky you'll also spot Morelet's crocodiles or the bottle-nosed and Atlantic-spotted dolphins which frequent the lagoon.

DAYS 13 - 14

At leisure on the beach.

Placencia Lagoon, fringed by stifling mangrove forests and wild orchids, embraces a range of marine, estuarine and freshwater aquatic habitats providing various ecosystem services in which literally thousands of species can thrive. Over 70 species of fish are present and two types of crocodile. Kayak on the calm waters with an eye out for manatees on an optional adventure.

Alternatively just relax at the lodge, or choose another activity: there's complimentary use of bikes and kayaks, the dive shop (at extra cost) can organise scuba diving, snorkelling and fishing excursions, and a variety of land-based trips.

DAY 15

Fly to Belize City.

It's a 25-minute hop by Cessna to the international airport in Belize City. Every flight in Belize feels like an panoramic adventure as you fly over the forest, mangroves and coast.

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

Guided walking tour of Antigua
Boat trip on Lake Atitlan
Guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Tikal
Guided tour of Barton Creek Cave
Manatee spotting

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: Antigua 2; Lake Atitlan 3; Tikal area 2; Mountain Pine Ridge 3; Placencia 4.

ACCOMMODATION

The hotels we have selected for this holiday are of a high standard, prioritising originality and service levels to provide a varied and rewarding experience. In northern Guatemala and Belize the concept is best described as rustic luxury: lodge style properties in exuberant natural settings. As a rule we include lead-in room categories at each property so if you would like to upgrade we will be happy to discuss the options with you.

TRANSPORT

2 short internal flights, 4 scenic road journeys of around 3 hours each and several short hotel transfers,

MEALS

Breakfast daily; lunch day 7.

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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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