



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SIGNATURE EL SALVADOR: REVOLUTIONARY ROAD TRIP

11 days from £2,775pp

EL SALVADOR / SAN SALVADOR / RUTA DE LAS FLORES / GULF OF FONSECA AND
EASTERN EL SALVADOR / SUCHITOTO / 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

A unique opportunity to explore a rising star in Central America with forest-clad hills, volcanoes, quiet colonial towns, world-famous Pacific surf and exceptionally friendly people.

DAY 1	Arrive in El Salvador. Transfer to hotel in the capital, San Salvador
DAY 2	El Boquerón volcano; Mayan ruins of El Tazumal; colonial Ataco
DAY 3	Artisan villages along the 'Route of the Flowers'; visit coffee plantation.
DAY 4	Santa Ana volcano and Cerro Verde National Park; drive to Jiquilisco Bay.
DAY 5	Chocolate plantation tour and optional kayaking; on to La Union.
DAY 6	Boat trip on the Gulf of Fonseca; drive to Perquin.
DAY 7	Walks in Perquin. Discover El Mozote & Perquin's Peace Museum.
DAY 8	Drive to El Salvador's 'Pompeii' Joya de Cerén; continue to colonial Suchitoto.
DAY 9	At leisure in Suchitoto
DAY 10	Visit San Salvador's historic centre. Overnight on Pacific coast.
DAY 11	Transfer to airport for international flight.

ITINERARY

This holiday includes some remote rural areas where the friendly guides and general tranquillity will soon set you at ease. It's a broad-based trip, including gentle outdoor activities as well as visits to highlights by car and boat, delivering an authentic experience of the cultural as well as the natural richness and variety of the republic.

Owing to its complicated recent history El Salvador has yet to establish itself as a sought-after tourist destination, but this is one of its attractions: you will find truly unspoilt landscapes and a genuine welcome from the local population. It's a small country, easy to get around by land and you'll be distracted from some uneven road surfaces by the captivating scenery through which you will pass. Outstanding, both literally and metaphorically, are the dominant volcanoes which stud the countryside – you'll get to view the cones of el Boquerón, Santa Ana and Izalco as you visit national parks established between areas of, richly fertile, intensively farmed farming country peppered with coffee plantations. Also in the rugged interior you'll drive along the famed "route of the flowers", drop in on preserved colonial artisan towns such as Suchitoto and little-visited Mayan archaeological sites. The coast is not neglected, with a boat trip on the Gulf of Fonseca and a short time to view the surfing on a Pacific beach.

DAY 1

Arrive in El Salvador. Transfer to hotel in the capital, San Salvador

You will be met at the airport by our local representative who will accompany you on the 40min drive to San Salvador where you will spend the night in the quiet, upmarket Zona Rosa district.

San Salvador, established by the Spanish in 1525, it is a dynamic cosmopolitan city with a mélange of architectural styles reflecting a chequered history. It has an interesting colonial core, which you will visit on a daytime guided city tour at the end of this holiday.

DAY 2

El Boquerón volcano; Mayan ruins of El Tazumal; colonial Ataco

After breakfast, you'll be driven up the steep mountain road which flanks San Salvador toward the peak of El Boquerón volcano where, weather permitting you'll have expansive views over the capital and surrounding countryside. Volcanic activity here in the past wreaked havoc on the city, but now upon reaching El Boquerón National Park, you will take a 15 minute walk to the rim of the extinct volcanic crater, where a walkway offers impressive vistas into the crater, which is smothered in closely-packed foliage.

Continue by road to Santa Ana, El Salvador's second city, taking time to see the National Theatre and the gothic Cathedral in the vibrant main square. In the afternoon, you'll be driven to the archeological site of El Tazumal, El Salvador's most significant ceremonial Mayan centre, excavated and restored in the 1940s and 1950s. The site had been abandoned in 1,200AD but prior to that there is evidence of links with cities as far afield as Copán and Chichén Itzá. The complex sits right in the heart of the small town of Chalchuapa, where daily life continues on the very streets once trod by the Maya. A bust of Che Guevara stands just outside the ruins, marking his visit in 1954.

Later we continue to the cobbled colonial town of Ataco. Located in the heart of the coffee region, Ataco is an attractive cobbled town, with brightly coloured murals adorning the streets. With a wide choice of restaurants, cafes and shops to visit, it is a perfect place to take explore on foot and perhaps send a postcard home. Two nights in Ataco.

DAY 3

Artisan villages along the 'Route of the Flowers'; visit coffee plantation.

Today you will travel "La Ruta de Las Flores" – the Route of the Flowers. This 36km trip winds through the Cordillera Apaneca, which is dotted with colourful artisan villages embellishing a region which forms part of the UNESCO-MAB Apaneca-Llamatepec Biosphere Reserve. Rising from 250 to 2,365m above sea level, this fertile area has a pleasant climate, ideal for producing some of the world's finest coffee, and with its hidden lagoons, waterfalls and hot springs, the road offers wonderful views at every turn.

Steeped in cultural tradition, the Ruta de las Flores is great to visit any day of the week, although it really comes alive at weekends, and your tour is flexible to make the most of the day of the week and your particular interests, whether that's exploring the markets with their unique arts, crafts and furniture; visiting museums (don't miss the moving Museo General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez for an insight into El Salvador's history) and churches (with a 16th century black statue of Christ); or joining the lively weekly food fair in Juayúa, where you savour the local cuisine, including some truly exotic ingredients.

Visit a coffee plantation where you will discover the process of cultivation, harvest, and roasting, followed by a fresh cup of coffee prepared by the ancient method of 'chorreador', which strains the roasted coffee to allow delicious aromas to develop.

The rest of the day you have at leisure to explore the cobblestone streets of Ataco, admire the colorful murals on the walls of colonial houses and sit back and observe the gentle pace of life.

DAY 4

Santa Ana volcano and Cerro Verde National Park; drive to Jiquilisco Bay.

Depart Ataco and visit the Don Juan waterfalls, before continuing to Cerro Verde National Park in the heart of the Apaneca-Llamatepec Biosphere Reserve. Overlooking the country's oldest volcano, the breathtaking caldera now filled by Lake Coatepeque, Cerro Verde lies alongside the more recently formed cone of Izalco volcano and El Salvador's highest volcano, Santa Ana, which holds one of the largest craters in the world. Santa Ana erupted just a few years ago so you'll see the effects of the eruption together with incredible views of the nearby volcanoes during a short walk here.

In the afternoon continue to Jiquilisco Bay, the most important marine ecosystem of El Salvador and principal region for the spawning of hawksbill turtles (May-Sep). The reserve embraces a network of natural canals. Islands and exotic mangrove forests serve as a refuge for a vast diversity of birds and reptiles. Your accommodation is next to a pristine water channel, surrounded by mangroves, forests and working chocolate and banana plantations. Here you can sit by the pool with an iced coconut and enjoy the sounds of birdlife at dusk as the sun sets over the bay.

Jiquilisco Bay and its creeks and mangroves constitute an area of extraordinary natural beauty as well as providing the habitat for exotic birds including several endangered species. It is increasingly regarded as having much potential as a base for ecotourism ventures.

DAY 5

Chocolate plantation tour and optional kayaking; on to La Unión.

In the morning you'll meet the people working in the nearby chocolate plantation and learn about the processes involved in harvesting and preparing cocoa beans, which offers an insight into the lives of the inhabitants of the rural coastal communities.

There is also time to enjoy a range of optional activities in and around Jiquilisco Bay, including biking through the natural reserve, kayaking through the mangroves, sailing through the islands of the bay, or observing the activities of a project which aims to conserve marine turtles.

In the late afternoon, continue your overland journey to Puerto La Unión, with outstanding views over the Gulf of Fonseca. You will head for dinner to the nearby colonial town on the flanks of Conchagua volcano, where you will be invited to prepare, cook and eat El Salvador's most popular traditional dish, the humble pupusa. Overnight La Unión.

DAY 6

Boat trip on the Gulf of Fonseca; drive to Perquin.

After breakfast, set sail on the calm waters of the Gulf of Fonseca, where 260km of Pacific coastline is shared by El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Cross by boat from the port at La Unión and sail past local fishing villages and islands which seem to float in the water, with reflections and stunning views of a clutch of volcanoes. This region is a bird sanctuary and with a little luck, you may also see dolphins. Stop at Meanguera, the biggest of the islands, for a fresh seafood lunch.

After lunch, you will sail back to La Unión to continue your journey to the Ruta de Paz (Route of Peace) which winds its way through the mountainous northern region of the country. Surrounded by humid tropical forests, this area was stronghold of the guerrilla movement during El Salvador's civil war. Two nights in Perquin.

DAY 7

Walks in Perquin. Discover El Mozote & Perquin's Peace Museum.

Begin the day with an early morning hike on Cerro El Pericón where you can enjoy the natural beauty of this rugged, forested area. Your local guide will be able to share tales of the 1980s conflict as you walk through territory loaded with significance to the country. There may also be time for a refreshing wild swim in one of the rivers towards the end of the hike.

Afterwards, you can visit the village of El Mozote, focus of one of the biggest events in El Salvador's recent history during the conflict period, where local people aim to spread the word of peace to those who take the time to visit. Returning to Perquin, you will hear first-hand accounts of these difficult years from the veterans themselves, who will guide you through Perquin's simple and moving Peace Museum.

DAY 8

Drive to El Salvador's 'Pompeii' Joya de Cerén; continue to colonial Suchitoto.

Depart Perquin and drive to Joya de Cerén. Known as the 'Pompeii of the Americas', this is considered to be one of the most important archaeological discoveries in Latin America in recent years and has been declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Here a pre-Hispanic farming community was buried when the Laguna Caldera volcano erupted around 600 AD and the incredibly well preserved remains offer an insight into the daily lives of the rural communities of the time.

Continue to Suchitoto, where the rest of the afternoon is free to explore El Salvador's best preserved colonial town. Overlooking the waters of Lago Suchitlan, Suchitoto was an important centre for the indigo trade during Spanish colonial times, and today is a much loved, relaxed town of beautiful architecture, art galleries and cafés. Two nights in Suchitoto.

DAY 9

At leisure in Suchitoto

Before breakfast, we recommend an optional early morning boat ride to watch the sunrise on Lake Suchitlán, when the lake's islands and shores teem with birdlife and local fishermen head out in search of a catch.

Later, you will take the short journey to the small village of Cinquera, located in the middle of a tropical forest. Here, you visit the Cinquera Forest National Park, which was a guerilla bastion during the civil war, walk through the forest and learn how the rebels survived in their secret hideouts. At the end, there is an opportunity to swim in El Salton Natural Pool (subject to water levels), before making a brief visit to the village to see the unique war memorial in the main square.

This afternoon is free for you to enjoy Suchitoto, perhaps taking the time to visit an indigo workshop, where you can learn the ancient processes involved in preparing natural indigo and even create your own indigo-dyed clothing.

DAY 10

Visit San Salvador's historic centre. Overnight on Pacific coast.

Drive to San Salvador's historic city centre. Vibrant and chaotic, the downtown area is a mix of styles and while some buildings may be somewhat faded, they remain impressive. Walk through Plaza Barrios, visit the National Palace, El Rosario church and see the grave of the assassinated Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Oscar Romero in the striking cathedral overlooking the main square.

Drive on to Puerto de La Libertad on the Pacific coast and visit its local fish market, followed by the opportunity to savour some of the morning's catch for lunch. Continue to your hotel, with the rest of the day at leisure to enjoy the sun, surf, beach and sunset over the Pacific Ocean. Overnight El Sunzal.

DAY 11

Transfer to airport for international flight.

Free time to enjoy the beach and swimming pool before your transfer to San Salvador's International airport to board 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

El Boquerón volcano

El Tazumal archaeological site

Route of the Flowers excursion

Coffee plantation tour

Cerro Verde National Park visit

Chocolate plantation tour

Pupusa workshop – making El Salvador's national dish

Half day boat trip on the Gulf of Fonseca with lunch

Perkin: Peace Museum

Perkin: local hike

Perkin: El Monzote visit

Joya de Cerén archaeological site

Cinquera National Park walk

San Salvador city tour

La Libertad fish market and lunch

ESSENTIALS

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

11 days, 10 nights: San Salvador 1; Ataco 2; Jiquilisco Bay 1; La Union 1; Perkin 2; Suchitoto 2; La Libertad 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

Travel mostly by road; 1 boat trip.

MEALS

Breakfast daily, lunch on days 6,10; dinner day 5.

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

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