

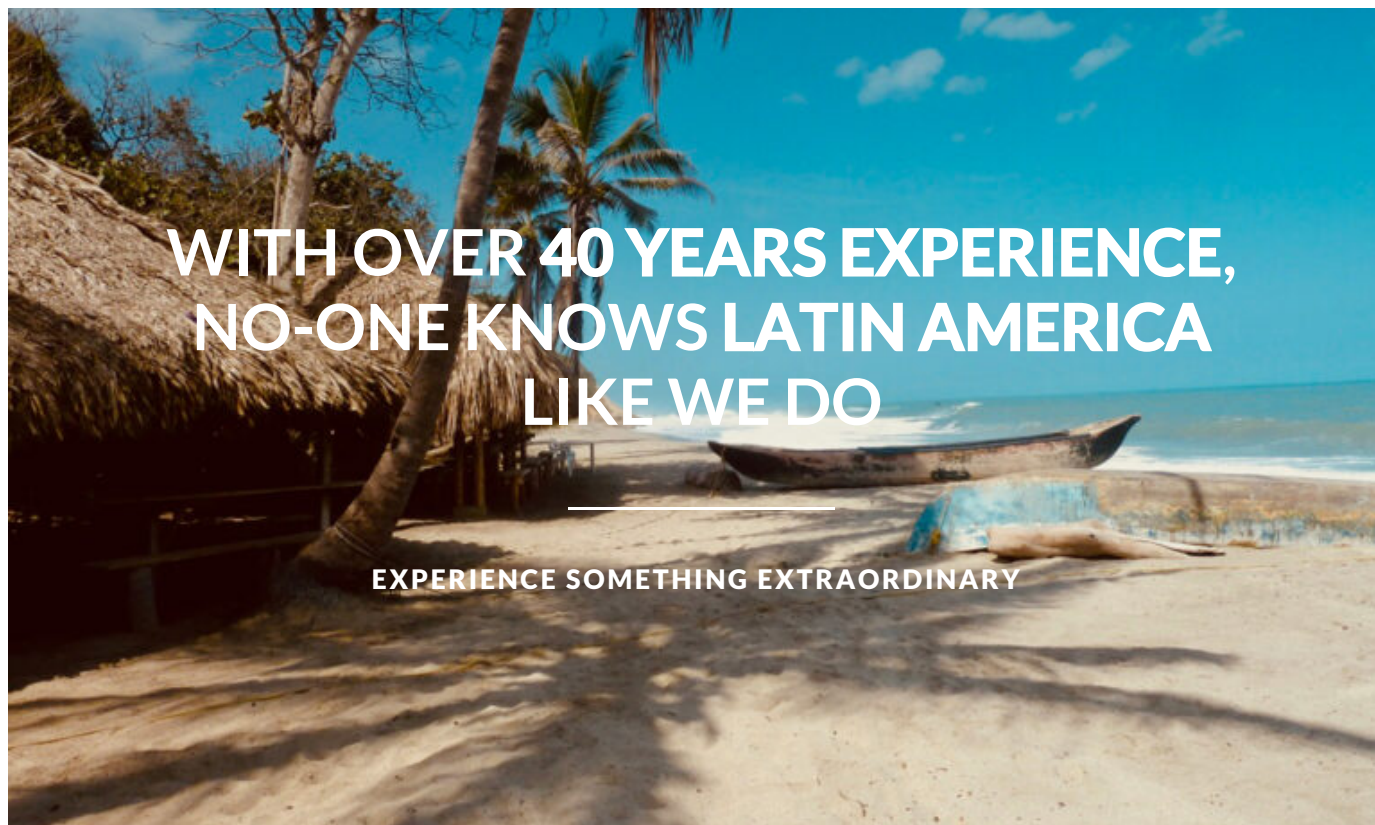


PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

FAMILY GUATEMALA AND BELIZE: ANCIENT TEMPLES AND CARIBBEAN ISLES

14 days from **£4,050pp**

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

This action-packed family holiday has something to satisfy each one of you. There's absolutely no time to get bored, with a mix of Spanish colonial, indigenous indian and British Caribbean cultures all in a relatively small area where it's easy to get around.

DAY 1	Arrive in Guatemala City and transfer to hotel in Antigua.
DAY 2	Guided walking tour of Antigua and a coffee farm.
DAY 3	Drive to Lake Atitlán via Chichicastenango market.
DAY 4	Kayaking on Lake Atitlán.
DAY 5	Visit to San Juan la Laguna community.
DAY 6	By road to Guatemala City; fly to Flores in the jungle Petén.
DAY 7	Guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Tikal.
DAY 8	Drive into Belize to the San Ignacio area.
DAY 9	Visit a butterfly farm
DAY 10	Kayak on the Macal river.
DAY 11	Drive/fly to Ambergris Caye, coral atoll in the Caribbean.
DAYS 12-13	At leisure on Ambergris Caye.
DAY 14	Fly to Belize City and connect with international flight.

ITINERARY

This family holiday offers adults and children alike a range of experiences in two contrasting countries. Guatemala is steeped in native Mayan indian and Spanish colonial tradition and religious mysticism. Belize, a truly Caribbean country, is English-speaking, utterly laid-back, and a popular destination for outdoor adventure enthusiasts. Kids will love spotting the howler monkeys in the jungle, clambering over the ancient pyramids and snorkelling in the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea.

You start off in Antigua, Guatemala's colonial masterpiece, and continue to the serene setting of Lake Atitlán, encircled by volcanoes and tiny indigenous villages. Head out onto the water in a kayak before continuing to Tikal. Children will marvel at the fantasy-style vast ruined Mayan city where ancient temples and pyramids emerge above the rainforest canopy; adults will find the Mayan history and culture fascinating.

Crossing the border into Belize, stay at a remote riverside cabin camp surrounded by tropical foliage rich in wildlife; enjoy the thrills and spills of outdoor activities, or just relax. Round off the holiday at the pearl white beaches of Ambergris Caye, maybe with a bit of snorkelling.

📍 DAY 1

Arrive in Guatemala City and transfer to hotel in Antigua.

You will be met by our local representative and taken 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 and a coffee farm.

Begin the day by travelling to the village of San Antonio Aguas Calientes, 10 mins' drive from Antigua, famous for its textiles and handicrafts. Continue to the Centro Cultural La Azotea, where you will be guided on a tour of a coffee farm and Casa K'ojom, a Mayan traditional music museum. Afterwards, head back to the cobbled streets of Antigua's historical centre for a walking tour. The city is a colonial work of art, with overhanging tiled roofs and a beautiful, leafy central plaza.

There's an abundance of huge ruined churches, convents and monasteries, testimony to a time when Antigua was the country's capital and its main religious 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.

Antigua is a welcoming place to relax. You may have some time to do some shopping in tempting boutiques and art galleries, and in the evening enjoy the excellent food from a large range of restaurants and pavement cafés. Wander around the courtyards and enjoy the floral displays in beautifully tended gardens.



📍 DAY 3

Drive to Lake Atitlán via Chichicastenango market.

Travel by a gradually-ascending road to Lake Atitlán. The landscapes in the highlands west of Antigua are dominated by watchful volcanoes and compact, busy farming villages. You'll stop at Chichicastenango, a chilly mountain town, which has a decidedly mystical air. The symbols and practices of overt 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 Lake Atitlán. 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 4

Kayaking on Lake Atitlán.

Kayaking on Lake Atitlán offers your family immersion into one of the most important activities of the local people. Entering the water at Panajachel and or San Pedro you will have the opportunity to view the lake from both villages. Having enjoyed views of the lake from the shore, you will now get to enjoy the stunning 360° panorama of the surrounding mountains and villages.

Stopping along the way to visit native Mayan communities you will also get to relax and bathe in the warm waters of the hot springs that are dotted around the lake's edge. The trip is led by an English-speaking guide, and life-jackets are included.



📍 DAY 5

Visit to San Juan la Laguna community.

A private boat will transport you across the full length of the lake from Panajachel to the village of San Juan La Laguna on its western edge. Here you will have a unique opportunity to interact with the local indigenous people and gain first-hand insight into and understanding of the Maya Tzutujil way of life. You will visit a number of artisans and workshops that still use traditional methods, including natural dyes to colour their vibrant textiles.



📍 DAY 6

By road to Guatemala City; fly to Fly to Flores in the jungle Petén.

Drive to Guatemala City and take an hour-long flight to Flores, in the dense, sticky jungles of northern Guatemala, and from here you continue to your secluded lodge. Spend the rest of the day at leisure. From the lodge you might venture out on a bike or on horseback; there is an attractive swimming pool and a restaurant overlooking the lake.



📍 DAY 7

Guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Tikal.

There will be a 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

Drive into Belize to the San Ignacio area.

Enjoy a beautiful drive across the border into Belize; pass through the town of San Ignacio and into the low-lying Cayo district (3hrs). Spend a couple of days in the country's lush, unspoilt and sparsely populated hilly interior. You're based in an isolated and peaceful location on the rain-forested banks of the Macal river, yet the nearest town of San Ignacio is less than 30 mins' drive away.



📍 DAY 9

Visit a butterfly farm

The Blue Morpho Butterfly Farm is a major attraction at the property and you can marvel at the splendid iridescent wings of these magnificent butterflies. The "Belizean Blues" can be observed during every stage of their life cycle. It begins its life as a pale green egg, which looks like a dewdrop, soon after it changes into a voraciously hungry caterpillar, then into the bizarre form of a dormant pupa, and finally into a dazzling beauty that delights the public in butterfly houses throughout the world.



📍 DAY 10

Kayak on the Macal river.

From Chaa Creek you can set off in a canoe to explore. The verdant banks of the Macal river are home to numerous species of tropical birds as well as giant green iguanas. You can just potter around the lodge, or if you want to go further afield, for an extra charge you can take a trip upstream, paddling up as far as you wish, or head downstream, paddling and floating to San Ignacio for a couple of hours. The lodge staff will pick you up for the drive back to the lodge. The concierge will advise you on what to bring, best times to leave and sights along the way. There are also mountain-bike trails around the property (bike hire is charged extra) where you will be accompanied by an experienced guide.



📍 DAY 11

Drive/fly to Ambergris Caye, coral atoll in the Caribbean.

By road and air to Ambergris Caye, the most northerly and largest island in Belize, 46km long, and a breathtaking 15min flight low over transparent turquoise waters from Belize City. The island offers a splendid vantage point from which to enjoy the Belize Barrier Reef, less than a kilometre from the shores of the relaxed main town of San Pedro, with its wide choice of restaurants and bars. The island's main attraction is the first-class diving, snorkelling and fishing on offer.



📍 DAYS 12-13

At leisure on Ambergris Caye.

This is your beach time. Your hotel couldn't be more conveniently located for taking advantage of the town's restaurants, bars, shops and water-based activities. The hotel lies directly behind a small sandy beach with a wooden-decked freshwater swimming pool area.

Excursions to local dive sites and PADI tuition can be organised from the hotel's dive centre. Other activities include fishing, windsurfing, bicycle rental and beach volleyball.



📍 DAY 14

Fly to Belize City and connect with international flight.

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

- ✈ Antigua: City tour and visit to a coffee farm
- ✈ Chichicastenango market
- ✈ Kayaking on Lake Atitlán
- ✈ Lake Atitlán: Boat excursion to San Juan la Laguna
- ✈ Tikal: Guided tour of the Mayan ruins
- ✈ San Ignacio: Butterfly Farm

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

TRANSPORT

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

ACCOMMODATION

This tour uses small or medium-sized, family-friendly properties with plenty of local colour and special features, very comfortable but not necessarily offering all the facilities of a top-of-the-range property.

The accommodation on days 8-10 is a camping lodge.

MEALS

Breakfast daily, lunch on day 7

GUIDES

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by the latter on their return.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

14 days, 13 nights: Antigua 2; Lake Atitlán 3; Tikal 2; San Ignacio 3; Ambergris Caye 3.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Guatemala is the quetzal. In Belize it's the Belize dollar.

HOW TO TAKE IT

Cash machines are available in all major cities and towns, and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds.

We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency, and possibly some travellers' cheques, though these are gradually falling out of use (American Express are the most widely accepted). Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

In Guatemala, the exchange rate of the quetzal against the \$US is variable. In Belize the rate is fixed at \$2 Belize dollars to 1 \$US, and \$US are widely accepted in cash.

DAILY SPEND

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US\$35 per day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants and you will pay considerably more. As a rule of thumb Belize is generally more expensive than Guatemala.

TIPPING

Tips are expected and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants..

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

VISAS

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

TRIP SUITABILITY

There are no long non-stop days of travel on this trip; journeys are broken up at places of interest. This holiday is suitable for families with children of all ages. If you have a disability or other special requirements, please call us. In the summer the weather can be extremely hot and humid, you might bear this in mind if travelling with small children or elderly persons.

CLIMATE

Travellers on May to October journeys should encounter high temperatures (around 35°C) and high humidity in the lowlands. There are likely to be some short bursts of heavy rainfall during these months. December to May visitors will still encounter high temperatures in the lowlands, but cool evenings in the Guatemalan highlands, with temperatures falling to around 5°C. Rainfall and humidity will be lower at this time.

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Bring plenty of light cotton clothing and good, comfortable walking shoes. Some warm items and good waterproof jackets are also necessary. We suggest that you plan to 'layer' your clothing; it is easier and more efficient to put on a couple of light layers than one thick jumper, and sensible to have long sleeves for areas where mosquitoes may be hovering around.

Protection against the sun (sun-block, sun hat) and mosquito repellent are essential and you should bring swimwear. A daypack is useful for carrying sun block, guidebook, water and any extra layers.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts. Good equipment is very important and hard to come by in Central America.

VACCINATIONS

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following: typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. You should consult your GP for specific requirements, including advice on yellow fever and malaria tablets (unlikely for this holiday). For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

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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