



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

EASTER IN GUATEMALA: SEMANA SANTA

8 days from £2,050pp

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

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

This short holiday in Guatemala, a deeply traditional Mayan country with a stupendous variety of landscapes, is based around the epic Easter celebrations in Antigua. Also visit indian markets and the jungle-swathed Mayan ruins at Tikal.

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| DAY 1 | Arrive in Guatemala City, transfer to your hotel in Antigua. |
| DAY 2 | Walking tour of colonial Antigua. |
| DAY 3 | Attend the Easter processions in Antigua. |
| DAY 4 | Visit Iximché ruins en route to Lake Atitlán. |
| DAY 5 | Guided tour of Chichicastenango market. |
| DAY 6 | Boat trip across Lake Atitlán to Santiago. |
| DAY 7 | Explore Tikal ruins on a guided tour. |
| DAY 8 | Transfer to the airport for international flight. |

ITINERARY

In just a week, you are invited to enjoy a holiday which not only embraces the pageantry of the world-famous Easter celebrations in Antigua, but manages to squeeze in the country's main highlights.

You'll be amazed by the variety in such a small geographical area: volcanoes, smoking or stifled by vegetation, glass-clear shimmering lakes, treeless grasslands and valleys choked with orchards and kitchen gardens.

Across all this the wonderful culture, a blend of Mayan, and Spanish colonial; pre-Columbian religion and ritual blended with Christianity – see it in the market at Chichicastenango, the pocket-sized rural communities on the fringe of Lake Atitlán, the long abandoned jungle-stifled Mayan temples and pyramids at Tikal. Imagine being able to do as much as this in 7 days at home...

DAY 1

Arrive in Guatemala City, transfer to your 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

Walking tour of colonial 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 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.

Today the city will be gearing up for the celebrations, but Antigua is always 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.

DAY 3

Attend the Easter processions in Antigua.

Good Friday sees you attending Antigua's 'Semana Santa' ('Holy Week') Easter celebrations, famous around the world for their spectacular colour and elaborate celebrations, in which the whole city takes part. Huge processions wind their way through the city's cobblestone streets carrying giant floats. Traditionally, men dressed in purple robes carry a float bearing a statue of Christ, followed by women dressed in black carrying a statue of the Virgin Mary.

The most visually impressive are the beautifully hand-made carpets of brightly coloured sand, sawdust and flowers, intricately interwoven, which are laid along the full length of the parade route. Vibrant patterns and images depicting scenes from the last days of Christ cover the streets, creating what looks like rivers of colour. You will be able to witness the San Cristóbal El Bajo and San Francisco processions today, and may be able to add your own touch of colour by contributing to the laying of the carpets.

DAY 4

Visit Iximché ruins en route to Lake Atitlán.

Head off west this morning to the highlands, dominated by watchful volcanoes and compact farming villages.

En route to Lake Atitlán, visit Iximché, an archaeological site which was the former capital of the Maya-Kaqchikel civilisation. In 1524, the first capital of the Kingdom of Guatemala was founded by the Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado. Today Iximché is still an important site with a ceremonial area used by the Kaqchikel Spiritual Guides to carry out their rituals. End the day at your hotel in Panajachel on the shores of Lake Atitlán.

This is one of the most captivating lakes 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 tour of Chichicastenango market.

Take a guided tour to Chichicastenango, a chilly mountain town with a mystical air. The symbols and practices of Catholicism sit alongside or even amalgamate with esoteric Mayan religious ceremonies, centred round the simple, whitewashed façade of the church. There is a vast, busy market on Sundays featuring 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 San Antonio Palopó, a lakeside village which lies in a natural amphitheatre formed by the mountains behind it. Ascending the hill from the dock, the village consists of narrow streets of adobe houses with roofs of thatch or corrugated tin, and a fine 16th century church. The inhabitants are renowned for their colourful costumes and headdresses. Return to Panajachel for the night.

DAY 6

Boat trip across Lake Atitlán to Santiago.

Take a motor launch across the lake to Santiago de Atitlán. Cruising over the waters, calm and silent in the morning, 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 which 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.

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 lodge.

DAY 7

Explore Tikal ruins on a guided tour.

There will be a guided tour of the Mayan 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.

Take to the air again and fly back to Guatemala City for the night.

DAY 8

Transfer to the airport for 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

Walking tour of Antigua

Easter processions in Antigua

Boat excursion to Santiago de Atitlán and San Antonio Palapó

Chichicastenango market

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

8 days, 7 nights: Antigua 3; Lake Atitlán 2; Tikal 1; 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); 2 scenic road journeys.

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, 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