

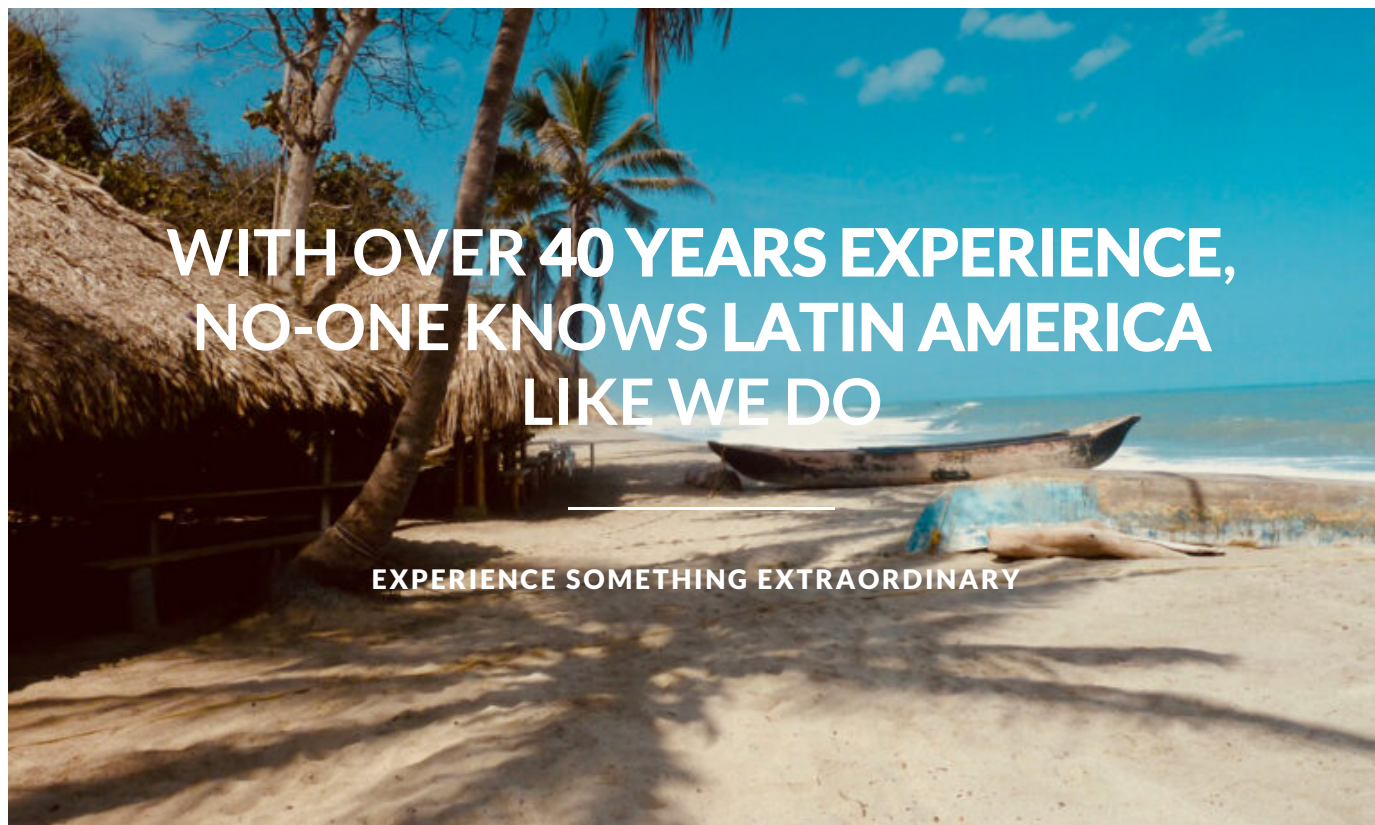


PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SIGNATURE GUATEMALA AND BELIZE: CULTURE AND CARIBBEAN

15 days from **£3,800pp**

**GUATEMALA / ANTIGUA AND THE HIGHLANDS / LAKE ATITLAN AND VILLAGES / TIKAL /
MAYA MOUNTAINS AND JUNGLE / BELIZE / 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 highlights tour to Guatemala and Belize can't be beaten for variety. Combine arty Antigua, Lake Atitlán and the jungle-clad Mayan ruins of Tikal with the tropical forest and coral island Ambergris Caye, near the dive sites of the Belize Barrier Reef.

DAY 1	Arrive in Guatemala City and transfer to hotel.
DAY 2	Guided walking tour of Antigua.
DAY 3	Drive to Lake Atitlán.
DAY 4	Excursion by boat to lakeside villages.
DAY 5	Day at leisure.
DAY 6	Drive to Antigua via Chichicastenango market.
DAY 7	Fly to Flores in the jungle Petén region; guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Tikal.
DAY 8	Day at leisure to explore Tikal.
DAYS 9-11	Drive into Belize to the San Ignacio area. Optional outdoor activities and excursions.
DAYS 12-14	Drive/fly to Ambergris Caye, coral atoll in the Caribbean. At leisure.
DAY 15	Fly to Belize City and connect with international flight.

ITINERARY

This highlights of Guatemala and Belize trip combines two very different countries in one experience-packed holiday. Guatemala is steeped in native Mayan and Spanish colonial tradition; you'll be introduced to both, including Antigua and Lake Atitlán. Belize, a truly Caribbean country, is laid-back and English-speaking. Here you stay at the remote Chaa Creek eco-lodge, and can go diving or snorkelling at Blue Hole on Ambergris Caye.

Start off in Antigua, Guatemala's colonial masterpiece, and continue to the serene setting of Lake Atitlán, encircled by volcanoes, handkerchief-sized fields and tiny indigenous villages. Continue to Tikal, the vast ruined Mayan city where ancient temples and pyramids emerge above the rainforest canopy. Crossing the border into Belize, stay at Chaa Creek, an award-winning lodge surrounded by tropical foliage rich in wildlife, where you can enjoy the thrills and spills of outdoor activities, or just relax. Round off the holiday on the coral beaches of Ambergris Caye in the turquoise Caribbean Sea, home to the world-renowned Mesmoamerican Reef.

📍 DAY 1

Arrive in Guatemala City and transfer to hotel.

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.

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.

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.



📍 DAY 3

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 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 4

Excursion by boat 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.



📍 DAY 5

Day at leisure.

Day at leisure to enjoy the tranquillity and the magical views, or you can take to the lake by canoe, hire a bicycle or visit a local market or tropical garden.



📍 DAY 6

Drive to Antigua via Chichicastenango market.

Return to Antigua via Chichicastenango. The latter is a chilly 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 of 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.



📍 DAY 7

Fly to Flores in the jungle Petén region; guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Tikal.

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.

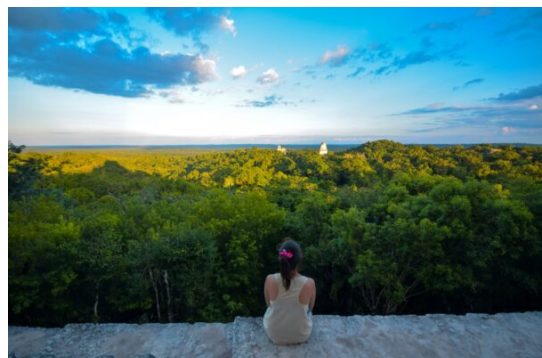
There will be a guided tour of the archaeological site at Tikal. Steep-stepped and vertiginous temples emerge high above the rainforest canopy; the views over the site from one of these ancient skyscrapers are unforgettable. Spend the day wandering through the palace complexes. Tikal was one of the largest 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

Day at leisure to explore Tikal.

Day at leisure, either to explore the site of Tikal further or hire bikes or kayaks from your hotel to explore the private reserve in which it is set, and the surrounding Petén rainforest.



📍 DAYS 9-11

Drive into Belize to the San Ignacio area. Optional outdoor activities and excursions.

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, based on the rain-forested banks of the Macal River.

The focus here is on the area's natural attributes, and activities available include a stroll along some of the many orchid-lined trails, a canoe ride through the mustard-coloured waters of the Macal River as you watch riverside creatures and birdlife emerge from its shoreline habitat.

If you're feeling more active you can explore the area on horseback or by bike. However, you may simply want to relax and enjoy the splendid tropical gardens, or be pampered in the spa. It's a little piece of paradise here, and the atmosphere is welcoming and informal.

You might visit Mountain Pine Ridge where waterfalls, rivers, lakes and caves are surrounded by savannah and pine forest. Other excursions from your hotel include visits to Mayan archaeological sites at Xunantunich and Caracol.



📍 DAYS 12-14

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

By road and air to Ambergris Caye, the most northerly and largest island in Belize, 46km long, and a breathtaking 20min 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.

This is your beach time.



📍 DAY 15

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

- ✈ Walking tour of 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

15 days, 14 nights: Antigua 2; Lake Atitlán 3; Antigua 1; Tikal 2; Belize interior 3; Ambergris Caye 3.

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

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

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