

EXPLORE!

Central American Explorer
25 days

Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama - Trip code CAE

Central American Explorer

From verdant rainforests to smouldering volcanoes and long sandy beaches, Central America is one of the world's most magnificent regions. On this epic 25-day adventure we discover the highlights of Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. Explore the colonial cities of Leon, Granada and Antigua. Relax on white-sand beaches in the Bocas del Toro archipelago and on Roatan Island. Visit the fascinating site of Copan and discover nature in Monteverde Cloudforest and Rincon de la Vieja.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Copan** - Learn more about the ancient Maya culture at this UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of the greatest Maya ruins in the Americas
- ★ **Antigua** - Explore this elegant colonial city, overlooked by three volcanoes
- ★ **Panama Canal** - One of the Modern Wonders of the World
- ★ **Monteverde** - Search for the beautiful quetzal in this remarkable cloudforest reserve
- ★ **Caribbean** - Relax on the beautiful Bocas De Toro archipelago and Roatan Island
- ★ **Leon and Granada** - Discover these lively colonial cities, historic rivals for the title of capital city of Nicaragua

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Full on**

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:**12 - 18**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour in Panama City (Panama)

Arrive Panama City and check-in to hotel. Panama City was built on the back of the trade and plunder from the Spanish colonies in South America, and was the start of the trans-isthmus trade route. Gold and silver were carried along the King's Highway by mule across the rainforest to the Caribbean, which naturally led to unwanted attention, specifically from the Welsh buccaneer Sir Henry Morgan, who led a raid resulting in the ransack of the original city in the 17th century.



Accommodation: Metro Hotel Panama (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Panama Canal visit; afternoon free to explore the city

This morning we will visit the Miraflores Locks to see the famous Panama Canal and appreciate the scale of this engineering miracle. Running 50 miles, the canal was carved out of the rainforest and through hillsides, lakes were dammed and locks built. After a serious French attempt costing in excess of 20,000 lives, the US successfully completed this remarkable endeavour after 10 years of toil in 1914. This afternoon has been left free for you to indulge in a little exploring of your own. You may like to visit 'Casco Viejo', the heart of colonial Panama City. Its ramparts were built to fend off marauders and encircle the promontory, and a stroll along the top affords us views of the 'Bridge of the Americas' and far in the distance the skyscrapers of the modern town, a total contrast to the Spanish plazas & colonial buildings all around you.



Accommodation: Metro Hotel Panama (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Public bus to David then head to Boquete

This morning we take a public bus to Panama's beautiful southwest Chiriqui Province. This region is home to the Volcan Baru, a volcanic peak that at 3475m is the highest point in the country. The volcanic soil makes this a productive region, abundant in coffee and banana plantations, sugarcane crops and livestock. Heading for the provincial capital of David, we transfer into the cool fertile highlands to the town of Boquete. Located amidst a spectacular natural setting Boquete is a perfect base for walking into the surrounding hills, relaxing, or bird watching.



Accommodation: Boquete Tree Trek Mountain Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Drive and boat to the Bocas del Toro Archipelago

With a morning to enjoy time in Boquete before we depart in the afternoon for Almirante Port, from where we take a boat to the Isla Colon and the small town of Bocas de Toro, our base for exploring the stunning archipelago and the equally spectacular Parque Nacional Marino Isla Bastimentos. The archipelago itself is made up of a number of beautiful forested islands lying in the warm Caribbean waters just to the south of Costa Rica and the laid back beaches and dazzling reefs make this the ideal Caribbean paradise to relax or explore.



Accommodation: Hotel Laguna (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - In Bocas del Toro, optional boat trip around the islands

We have a full free day today to enjoy fully this lovely island. There are a number of optional activities that you might like to try. The island is ringed with stunning beaches and there are opportunities to snorkel or dive the rich waters off shore. You may like to take a boat trip around the archipelago, which will go dolphin spotting or visit one of the outlying islands, such as Isla Bastimentos with its lovely beaches and tropical forests. The marine park itself can also be visited and is an important nesting ground for sea turtles, as well as being an important reserve for an abundance of marine and land based life.



Accommodation: Hotel Laguna (or similar)



Standard Hotel

DAY 6 - Journey to Sarapiquí (Costa Rica)

Returning to the mainland by boat we turn north and head on a full day's drive to the Costa Rican town of Puerto Viejo Sarapiquí. We cross the border at Guabito, into the Caribbean lowlands of Limon Province. Puerto Viejo lies at the confluence of the Puerto Viejo and the Sarapiquí rivers, an area of tropical rain forest that was once an important hub on the Caribbean trade routes. The area lies in the shadow of the Central Cordillera Mountains, sandwiched between the Braulio Carrillo N.P. to the west and the Tortuguero N.P. and Barra del Colorado National Refuge to the east.



Accommodation: Hotel Gavilan Rio Sarapiquí (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Travel to Arenal; optional evening bathe in hot springs

This morning we have a chance to explore a little more of Puerto Viejo and its environs. This area has been in the forefront of conservation for a number of years and La Selva biological station on the outskirts of town has done a great deal to involve the local community directly in the research and conservation of the area. You may like to take a walk along one of the many trails, or perhaps take a boat ride along the river, to see for yourself some of the beautiful forest that covers this fertile region. In the afternoon we drive, skirting the great central volcanic massif, past fertile farmlands, rich with a diversity of tropical crops, bringing us within sight of Arenal, Costa Rica's most active volcanic cone. This classic cone, which rises to 1,633m and is covered by a tangled mass of vegetation on one side whilst the other is starkly barren and scarred by lava flows. We recommend an evening bathe in the nearby thermal baths this evening (optional).



Accommodation: Hotel Arenal Country Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Drive to Monteverde Cloudforest Reserve via Arenal Volcano

This morning we visit the still active Arenal Volcano, set in an area of national park covering some 9,884 acres. The volcano has been fairly constantly active since the late 1960s and together with the impressive manmade Lake Arenal, the largest in Costa Rica, has helped the area to regenerate through tourism. After our visit we continue to the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, one of the last remaining habitats in Central America of the famous Resplendent Quetzal, only occasionally sighted by eager travellers. The reserve covers an area of 10,522 hectares and contains within it a staggering diversity of flora and fauna; 2,000 species of plant,

400 species of birds and 100 different species of mammals.



Accommodation: Hotel Monteverde Country Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Guided reserve walk; optional canopy tour and night walk

Rising early, we head into the reserve for a guided walk through the cloudforest, searching for a glimpse of the three-wattled bellbird or the Quetzal, whose feathers were traded as valuable items throughout pre-Columbian America. You have the afternoon free to explore this forest haven; you may wish to participate in the many amazing optional activities around the Reserve such as an exhilarating zip-wire experience as you whiz through the canopy, or perhaps exploring the forest on suspension bridges strung at canopy height. Alternatively the area's butterfly farm and orchid gardens are both well worth a visit. Tonight we also have the option to take a night walk, discovering how the forest comes alive after dusk.



Accommodation: Hotel Monteverde Country Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 10 - Transfer to Rincon de la Vieja and free afternoon for optional hiking

Our journey through Costa Rica's forests and jungles continues today as we head towards the Rincon de la Vieja National Park, an enormous adventure playground located close to the Nicaraguan border in the Guanacaste Province. The National Park has room for two volcanoes, of which one is still active, surrounded by a lush area of lagoons and craters, punctuated with steaming vents and pools of boiling mud. The changing elevation ranges of the park have resulted in an area of diverse habitats that house a variety of vegetation and wildlife. On arrival we will have the option to relax at our eco lodge, or alternatively we can choose to do some nature walks in the National Park, take a horseride to the Oropendola Waterfall, or walk to the park's mud and hot springs.



Accommodation: Buena Vista Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 11 - Visit the Rincon de la Vieja National park

This morning we visit the Rincon de la Vieja, with the aim of hiking along the Las Pailas Trail. This approximately 3 km hike is moderately difficult due to the uneven ground and the many large roots and rocks to tackle, but we'll take a leisurely pace and enjoy the diverse scenery of the trail. We'll be crossing bridges, walking through forest and across fields, all the while discovering the most impressive features of the park: the steam vents, or fumaroles. These incredible volcanic features pop out of the woods and forests as if from nowhere, along with bubbling ponds and mud pools from the underground volcanic heat and gases. During the first section of the trail we'll have the opportunity to spot wildlife in the forest, from a variety of bird species (toucans, blue-crowned motmots and flycatchers among many others), as well as spider monkeys, coatis or sloths if we're lucky.

This afternoon we have free time to enjoy some of the many optional activities on offer. There is plenty of hiking to be had nearby, as well as a walk to mud and hot springs, or if you're a fan of adventure, undertake the canyon swing at the Rio Blanco Canyon, or explore the surroundings on horseback or by bike.



Accommodation: Buena Vista Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Travel to Ometepe (Nicaragua); optional walks

Crossing the border into Nicaragua this morning a short drive brings us to San Jorge, the departure point for ferries to Ometepe Island. Ometepe is made up of two volcanoes connected by an isthmus; indeed its name comes from the Nahuatl language and means 'two hills'. The perfect cone of Concepción volcano soars from the depths of Lake Nicaragua to 1610m, only just dwarfing the neighbouring Maderas volcano at 1394m. We leave the time here free to explore at your own pace and there are many things to do during our time here. You can explore by local bus or truck, perhaps searching out pre-Colombian petroglyphs carved by the indigenous people, or taking in some of the highlights of the island and some short walks on the volcanic slopes (all optional). The forests echo with the sounds of howler monkeys and parrots and the canopy hides sloths and hawks amongst its lush foliage. Alternatively you could visit the San Ramon Falls. For the less energetic, some of the black sand beaches are the perfect spot to drink in the stunning views across the lake.



Accommodation: Hotel Villa Paraiso (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Free day to discover Ometepe Island

Today is left free to further explore these amazing volcanic islands.



Accommodation: Hotel Villa Paraiso (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 14 - Journey to the mainland and head to Granada

We return by boat to San Jorge this morning and from there drive to Granada. Atmospheric Granada is a colonial gem, situated at the foot of Mombacho volcano on the northwest shore of Lake Nicaragua. It was the first colonial city in Nicaragua, founded in 1524 by the conquistador Hernandez de Cordoba and is set off by baroque and renaissance buildings which is a pure visual delight. We plan a city tour this afternoon, which will include visits to the Parque Central, the Monument to the war of independence, the plaza and the convent of San Francisco, which holds the largest collection of stone sculptures from the early Americans who lived in Granada before the Spaniards.



Accommodation: Hotel Granada (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 15 - In Granada; free day to explore the colonial city

Granada is the perfect city to explore on foot, wandering the narrow lanes and alleyways, discovering hidden delights amongst the central Plaza and historic buildings. It is possible to visit Las Isletas by boat or sea kayak - a group of tiny islands dominated by the Volcano Mombacho, located just offshore. You can glide through the forest canopy on a zip line - a remarkable experience, or venture farther afield, into the surrounding area, a prosperous agricultural centre growing hemp and tobacco. There are also possibilities to arrange visits to the Mombacho Cloud Forest. Your tour leader will be more than happy to help arrange any excursions you may like to try.



Accommodation: Hotel Granada (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available

DAY 16 - Drive to Leon via Masaya Market

We drive to the old colonial capital of Leon today, lying in the shadow of the Cordillera de los Maribios Mountains. Heading northwest from Granada we stop at the famous market town of Masaya to visit the Masaya volcano. From here we continue to the Nicaraguan capital of Managua. In comparison with colonial Leon and Granada, Managua is not the most attractive of Nicaragua's cities but it does have its own curious, if somewhat unorthodox, charm. Badly damaged in the 1972 earthquake, the city is gradually being rebuilt. We plan a short tour to see some points of interest. We then drive to Leon, today considered the intellectual centre of Nicaragua, Leon was founded in 1525 and was the capital for 200 years. In the afternoon we will have a walking tour of Leon, where our local guide will introduce us to some of the city's most important sites visiting Plaza del las Armas, the Cathedral arguably the largest in Central America and a UNESCO heritage site and the Sandinista Murals and Ruben Dario Park, named after one of Latin America's most renowned poets. The city of Leon was home to the revolution that shaped Nicaragua's future, and since then it has played a crucial part in the social and political history of the country. On our walking tour we will see many murals depicting the civil war and the revolution - a testament to the importance of this movement in the country's turbulent history.



Accommodation: Las Mercedes Leon Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 17 - Drive to Tegucigalpa (Honduras)

Today our Explore Leader will make a decision on how best to proceed with our travel plans. As of January 2018, there are road repairs occurring on the road to Honduras, which (in conjunction with the lengthy border crossing procedure) is causing severe delays to groups travelling across to Tegucigalpa. It's likely that these delays will last until the end of 2018. As such, it is most likely that we will depart from Leon in the morning, crossing the border into Honduras and continuing our journey to the capital, Tegucigalpa. Founded by the Spanish in 1578, the city was once a trading centre for the locally mined gold and silver for its colonial masters and its ideal location must have made it a pleasant respite from the oppressive heat of the coastal regions.

If the maintenance work and road conditions change, we will have some free time in the morning in Leon. Optional activities include an intrepid ascent of Cerro Negro, an imposing active volcano just a short journey from the city of Leon. The ascent takes around an hour, and although the climb is only around 500m, the path is steep and tough. For something less exertive, you can relax on Las Penitas Beach, whilst a visit to San Juan Venado Mangrove Reserve provides the opportunity to spot a wealth of wildlife, including crocodiles, caiman and iguanas.



Accommodation: Hotel G&V (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 18 - Fly to Roatan

This morning we will fly to the beautiful Bay Islands, home to some of the best diving and snorkelling in the Caribbean. The 3 islands lying some 50km off the Honduran coast are a marine wonderland, with reefs that teem with life. For the next two nights we base ourselves on the island of Roatan, the largest of the islands and the perfect location from which to enjoy the spectacular beaches and rich waters of this underwater haven.



Accommodation: Hotel Splash Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 19 - On Roatan, choose to relax on beaches, kayak or snorkel

Here you are free to do as much or as little as you wish. The obvious activity for most people who come to these islands is to explore the offshore reefs, part of a chain that is only second in size to the Great Barrier Reef itself. There are a number of dive shops on the island for any qualified divers (don't forget to bring your certification with you) and the snorkelling is second to none, with reefs that are alive with corals and sponges and colourful reef fish of every size, shape and hue. It is also possible to hire boats and kayaks to explore farther afield, or go fishing. Those who prefer to stick to dry land might like to stroll through the palm fringed lanes and wander the island in search of macaws, toucans and parrots, or perhaps just some peace and quiet at the nearby Sandy Bay's resort or visit the nearby botanical gardens.



Accommodation: Hotel Splash Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 20 - Head back to the mainland and travel to Copan Ruinas

Leaving our island paradise early this morning, we head back to the mainland for a full days travel. Our destination today is the magnificent Mayan ruins of Copan. Travelling around the town of San Pedro Sula in the rich hot fertile lowlands of the Sula Valley, we arrive at Copan Ruinas, a lovely village of adobe buildings very close to the ruins themselves.




Accommodation: Hotel Plaza Copan (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: None


DAY 21 - Visit the UNESCO Site of Copan, free afternoon

This morning we visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site with a local guide. Everyone familiar with Catherwood's incredible drawings (which first appeared in John Stephens' 1841 narrative - 'Incidents of Travel in Central America and Yucatan') will recognise scenes and objects from this marvellous site. Stephens actually bought the entire site for US\$ 50 from a local farmer! The Great Plaza is one of the most amazing achievements of the Classic Maya period (AD 750) and contains the greatest collection of Maya sculpture anywhere in Meso- America. The famous Hieroglyphic Stairway is composed of 2500 individual glyphs; its sides flanked by serpentine birds and snakes. We have the whole day to enjoy this special place, leaving you plenty of time to explore on your own. In the afternoon you may like to visit the museum dedicated to the site, or visit some nearby hot springs or to Macaw Mountain (optional).

 **Accommodation: Hotel Plaza Copan** (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: None


DAY 22 - Drive to Antigua (Guatemala); walking tour of the town

We head into Guatemala this morning, to the stunning city of Antigua, set in a beautiful valley between the volcanoes Agua, Fuego and Acatenango. An orientation tour of this graceful old colonial city, with its cobbled streets and lovely old buildings identifies it as one of the most charming in the country and shows how it can justly claim to be one of the most picturesque in Central America, despite the damage caused by a series of earthquakes and floods over the ages. This afternoon we intend to take a walking tour of the town. Much of Antigua has been repeatedly devastated by earthquakes, but still it retains a graceful charm and its buildings and ruins give it the air of a snapshot in time.

 **Accommodation: Villa Colonial** (or similar)

 Premium Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: None

DAY 23 - Free day to explore Antigua or optional trip to Chichicastenango Market

The next two days are free to explore more of the city and its environs as you wish. Antigua itself deserves a day's wandering, you may like to visit churches, colonial buildings, museums as well as spending time shopping in its many markets. Today is also market day at Chichicastenango, the 'sacred town' of the Indigenous Quiche. The Thursday market is a colourful affair which attracts people from the surrounding countryside to trade their produce and handicrafts. It is also the perfect place to pick up souvenirs of your visit.

Alternatively, you may like to visit the close by Mayan site; Iximche, once the capital of the Cakchiquel Maya, founded in the 15th century. Set within pine forests the ruined city was once believed to be home to some 10,000 people at its height, until the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors resulted in its eventual destruction in 1526.



Accommodation: Villa Colonial (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 24 - In Antigua; choose to visit Lake Atitlan

For those not wishing to spend the day exploring the city, a day trip to Lake Atitlan is one of Guatemala's most stunning locations. Panajachel, on the shores of the spectacular Lake, is an old Spanish settlement that has attracted foreigners to its charming location for years. The lake itself is an old caldera, its deep waters surrounded by the towering volcanic peaks of its neighbours. This is an ideal place to shop for those last minute presents, or just enjoy the ambience of its lakeside setting. Alternatively, you could visit Guatemala City, the bustling country capital, is situated on a high plateau (1495m) and possesses all the usual contradictions found in large Latin American cities: elegant tree-lined boulevards and high-rise architecture alongside crowded shanties. It also has a number of sites and museums that are worth visiting, including the Ixchel Museum, with its displays of Guatemalan textiles and arts, or the majestic Palacio National in the Plaza Major.



Accommodation: Villa Colonial (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 25 - Tour ends Antigua

Our tour ends this morning in Antigua.



Meals Provided: None



Why book this trip

For those with time to play with, this is an epic adventure through 5 of Central America's 7 countries, exploring forests, beaches and volcanoes, discovering Maya ruins and hearing revolutionary history. This 25-day trip is varied, diverse and action packed!

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 10



Transport

Bus
Ferry
Flight



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Boat Crew
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

21 nights standard hotel
3 nights premium hotel

Trip information

Country information

Costa Rica

Climate

Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page. Costa Rica has a tropical climate with high temperature humidity and rainfall. The average temperature is 21°C in the highlands and variable in the lowlands. The rainy season is from May to November and the summer from December to April, but it does still tend to rain, usually in short bursts. Bear in mind that Costa Rica has 12 microclimates and weather can vary significantly in one day.

Time difference to GMT

-6

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Christian, Roman Catholic

Language

Spanish

Guatemala

Climate

In the high plains (1524m-1981m) the climate is temperate all year round. In lower areas the climate is semi-tropical. The mountains can be cool especially at night. In general, the dry season in Guatemala lasts from Nov - April. From May to October there are often fine mornings and clear evenings but afternoon rains tend to be heavy. The Peten lowlands tend to be rainy all year round though less so from February to April.

Time difference to GMT

-6

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Catholic and Protestant

Language

Spanish

Honduras

Climate

Climate change varies depending upon altitude. Mid range temperatures reach about 28°C. Rainfall is low to moderate with May to October being the wettest season. Temperature ranges in the lower reaches of the slopes and along the coast are more constant, with less rainfall.

Time difference to GMT

-6

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Roman Catholic and Protestant

Language

Spanish

Nicaragua

Climate

Tropical, with little seasonal variation in temperature. The heavy rainy season is May to October but it can rain at any time along the Caribbean coast of Rio San Juan. There are 3 main climactic zones, the hot tropical lowlands and the cooler hill region, which has a larger range of daily temperature.

Time difference to GMT

-6

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Spanish

Panama

Climate

Panama has a tropical climate with high temperature and humidity, the average temperature 30°C. The rainy season is from May to November and the summer from December to April. The rainfall is of a tropical nature, falling for 1-2 hours in the afternoon.

Time difference to GMT

-5

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Spanish

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Panama City tour US\$10

Boquete - Walking tour in the rainforest US\$25; Bird watching US\$35; Coffee tour US\$20

Bocas del Toro - Full day snorkel excursion US\$25

Sarapiquí - River boat trip US\$23

Arenal - Hotspring US\$65 (with dinner); US\$15 Las Termalitas.

Monteverde - Butterfly Gardens US\$15, Reptile and Amphibian Centre US\$15, Nightwalk US\$25, Hanging bridges US\$35, Zipwire Canopy US\$45.

Rincon De La Vieja - Horse riding US\$ 45

Ometepe - Guided tour US\$ 25, Volcano Maderas / or Concepcion walk US\$ 35 (min. 2 persons).

Leon - Las Penitas and Juan Venado Reserve US\$ 45; Iguana farm US\$ 25; Cerro Negro Hike US\$ 30

Granada - Boat to Las Isletas US\$ 25 based on 4 sharing, Mombacho Cloud Forest Canopy Tour US\$ 55.00 based on 4 sharing, Kayak US\$ 25

Roatan - Diving US\$ 30 one tank, Snorkel - US\$15, Glass bottom - US\$25

Copan - Visit to Hot Springs US\$ 35, Macaw Mountain US\$ 10 +US\$5 tpt

Antigua - All prices depending on numbers - minimum 3

Lake Atitlan inc. boat trip US\$80-23; Guatemala City US\$ 90-30; Pacaya volcano US\$65 (based on 5) and US\$39 (based on 15) ;

Chichicastenango US\$ 38-40 (min 5 people) ; Jade workshop US\$48; Day trip to Tikal US\$350 (inc guide and lunch) - subject to availability - please book with your Tour Leader on arrival

Clothing

Lightweight clothing is essential though a warmer sweater is advisable for cooler evenings in the highlands. A waterproof is essential. The jungle lowlands are hot and muggy, and it can rain at any time of year. Long trousers and long-sleeved shirts are recommended on jungle walks.

Footwear

Comfortable walking boots or shoes and trainers or sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of luggage and a daysack is essential for this trip.

Equipment

A torch, water bottle, insect repellent, high factor sunscreen, beach towel, camera film, waterproof bag for camera and motion sickness tablets/patches for the boat. If intending to snorkel you may wish to bring your own equipment and anyone intending to dive on Roatan will need to bring log books and certification. Binoculars are very useful for bird and animal spotting. An umbrella can be useful in short downpours.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$65 for tipping.

International Departure Taxes

Please allow US\$40 for border taxes.

Country Information

Costa Rica

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£13

Dinner price

£13

Beer price

£3

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Costa Rican Colon.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange. USD can be used in some places in Costa Rica. You may wish to take extra cash to cover the cost of optional excursions - please see the budget for your trip section on the trip notes.

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Guatemala

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket

restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£8.00 - 10.00

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Quetzal

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Honduras

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£7

Dinner price

£10

Beer price

£1.75

Water price

£2

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Lempira

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Nicaragua

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price
£10.00 - 12.00

Beer price
£2

Water price
£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Cordoba

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange. USD can be used in some places in Nicaragua.

Where To Exchange
Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability
Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance
Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques
Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Panama

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price
£7

Dinner price
£10

Beer price
£3

Water price
£0.7

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Balboa.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

US dollars are legal tender in Panama. Notes should be in good condition, otherwise they might be difficult to use.

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are not widely accepted outside Panama City.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Ferry, Flight

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Panama: Citizens from the UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canada do not require a visa for a stay up to 30 days. However, on entry you will be required to show that you have either 500USD in cash or a credit card.

Costa Rica: Citizens from the UK, US, Canada and most EU countries do not require a visa for a stay up to 90 days. Citizen of Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland do not require a visa for stays up to 30 days.

Nicaragua: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canadian citizens.

Honduras: Citizens from UK, New Zealand, Australia, New Zealand and most EU national do not require a visa.

Guatemala: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canadian citizens.

USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit)

For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

Costa Rica

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Guatemala

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Honduras

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Nicaragua

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. All travellers coming to Nicaragua from the following countries (even if only in transit) must present an international certificate of vaccination: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Panamá, Paraguay and Venezuela. From the African Continent, all countries are included except Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Sao Tomé and Príncipe and Somalia. This list is regularly updated please check NaTHNaC for the most up to date list. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Panama

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
