EXPLORE!

Why book this trip?

This trip crosses four Central American countries in just two weeks, taking in rich wildlife, rainforests and volcanoes, as well as sacred Maya sites, revolutionary cities and local indigenous villages. From the avid people-watcher to the wildlife spotter and mountain lover, this trip will capture the imagination of all.

- **Departures in April 2019 do not include Nicaragua** - click on your preferred travel dates to read the correct itinerary for your trip.
- **Volcanoes** - Active and dormant volcanoes pepper this region. Discover the impressive cones overlooking the picture perfect city of Antigua, Guatemala, and see lava bubbling in Nicaragua's Masaya volcano
- **Land of the Maya** - Take in the sights and smells of the indigenous market at Chichicastenango and the villages around Lake Atitlan, where the modern day Maya culture still thrives

- **Suchitoto** - Enjoy the charms of this pretty colonial town beside the shores of Lake Suchitlan, and take the opportunity to learn the art of pupusa-making - an El Salvadorean speciality

INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 5

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

TRANSPORT
Bus
Boat

ACCOMMODATION
1 nights standard camping
4 nights premium hotel
2 nights simple hotel
8 nights standard hotel

TRIP PACE:
Full on

GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join tour Antigua (Guatemala)

Our tour starts in Antigua de Guatemala, where we will check-in to our conveniently-located hotel which will be our base for the next two nights. Famed for its well-preserved Spanish Mudejar-influenced architecture, this graceful colonial city was founded early in the 16th century. Set in a beautiful valley between the volcanoes of Agua, Fuego and Acatenango, its cobbled streets and pastel-coloured buildings make it one of the most charming and picturesque cities in Central America. Despite the damage caused by a series of earthquakes and floods over the centuries, Antigua's colonial heritage has seen it designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Colonial (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Walking tour of Antigua, free afternoon to explore

This morning's walking tour takes us to some of the spectacular colonial churches for which the city is famed, including those of San Francisco, Santa Clara, La Merced and Las Capuchinas. Some of the churches have museums and ruins attached which you can choose to enter later in the afternoon. The city is also famous for its jade, not only green but the rarer black and lilac, and we will visit a museum explaining more about this industry.

This afternoon has been left free for you to continue exploring at your own pace. You may choose to do a short hike up Cerro de la Cruz for panoramic views of the city, or enjoy a bit of bargain hunting in what is regarded as one of the best cities for shopping in Central America. There is everything here, from high-end jewellery to street vendors selling locally-produced crafts and textiles. Alternatively, try the choco-museum for a Mayan hot chocolate, which comes with pure chocolate, hot milk, honey and chili powder to mix to your personal taste.

ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Colonial (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Travel to Panajachel; boat trip on Atitlan Lake

This morning, we continue our journey to the town of Panajachel on the shores of Lake Atitlan, which

will be our base for the night. An old volcanic caldera, Lake Atitlan is considered to be one of the most spectacular lakes in the Americas and is certainly the deepest in Central America. Encircled by the volcanoes of Toliman, Atitlan and San Pedro, the lake's fertile shores are sprinkled with small communities of farmers and fishermen who still uphold the traditions of their Maya ancestors.

Panajachel itself is an old Spanish settlement which has attracted visitors to this charming setting for years. Today, it is one of the region's most popular tourist spots, filled with galleries, handicraft shops and cafes, and is a good place to start our exploration of the area.

This afternoon, we head out by boat to explore two of the many Mayan villages surrounding the lake. Santiago Atitlan lies at the base of the volcanic peaks of Toliman and Atitlan, and is home to the Tzutujil Maya people. The Tzutujil can trace their ancestry back to the post-classic period of the Maya (around 900-1500 AD). They still wear a traditional form of dress, with the women in particular sporting colourful blouses with embroidered geometric and bird designs. This is a busy village with lots of visitors and locals going about their business. Our second stop, on our return to Panajachel, is to the quieter island of San Antonio and the textile and ceramic co-operatives found there.

Returning to Panajachel by boat, we have the remainder of the evening to explore the town and enjoy dinner in one of its many excellent restaurants.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Posada K'amol Bey (or similar)

Grade: Simple Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Chichicastenango Market then drive to Guatemala City

After an early start, we will head north towards the highlands of the El Quiche Province and the bustling town of Chichicastenango. Steeped in Maya culture, the town is famed for its market, where you can buy everything, from chickens and copal, to pigs and pottery. The best way to enjoy the market is to throw yourself into the melee and haggle with the traders, or escape to the beautifully colourful cemetery located just a short walk from the market.

Following our visit, we travel to Guatemala City. Time allowing, we may enjoy a city tour in our vehicle before arriving at our hotel.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Pan American (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 5 - Visit the UNESCO Site of Copan, free afternoon

Today we need to depart at around 4.30am to beat the traffic in Guatemala city and get on the road to Copan. The journey takes approximately 6 hours including the border crossing into Honduras, and we arrive into Copan where a local guide will escort us around the spectacular ruins - one of the richest archaeological sites to be uncovered in Central America and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Anyone 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 from a local farmer for just $50.

The Great Plaza is one of the most amazing achievements of the Classic Maya period and contains the greatest collection of Maya sculpture anywhere in Meso-America. Next door is the Acropolis - a group of massive pyramidal structures where royal power was once concentrated. Ascending one structure is the famous Hieroglyphic Stairway. Composed of some 2500 individual glyphs, its sides flanked by serpentine birds and snakes, this is the New World's longest inscribed Pre-Colombian text.

Copan has been the subject of exploration and investigation since the 1830s. Remarkable finds continue to be unearthed by archaeologists, making it the most thoroughly researched and understood of all Maya sites.

This afternoon has been left free for those who want to explore the site independently, or visit the accompanying museum of statues found in the site (not included). Alternatively, you may choose to participate in one of several optional activities in the area including horse riding or visiting the macaw mountain project, a tropical bird reserve that cares for rescued or endangered birds of the American tropics.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Plaza Copan (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 6 - Journey to Suchitoto (El Salvador)

This morning we have 2 border crossings, passing back into Guatemala before crossing through another Honduran border and then through into El Salvador. Driving through scenic countryside, we arrive at the pretty town of Las Palmas, with its charming walls covered with drawings by the town's children. We make a little stop at the town's handicraft markets before continuing on to Suchitoto. Nestled between the mountains and Suchitlan Lake, this charming colonial town, with its cobblestone streets and pretty houses, is a little slice of El Salvador at its timeless best. The town was once at the heart of the country's indigo trade. Today, as a rapidly developing centre for art and culture, Suchitoto is filled with craft shops and a rich vein of historic and cultural highlights, making it a wonderful place to explore and spend the next two nights.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Almendros de San Lorenzo (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 7 - In Suchitoto, optional boat trip on the lake

Today has been left free for you to spend as you wish. In the morning you may take a boat trip out onto the lake, where over 200 bird species have been recorded, including hawks and falcons. In the afternoon, options include paying a visit to the nearby Cascada Los Tercios - a 30 metre-high waterfall which flows over an impressive cliff of tightly packed hexagonal basalt rocks, or making pupusas, the typical food of El Salvador. These corn or rice 'tortillas' are stuffed with cheese, refried beans, meat, herbs and vegetables, before being grilled on a hot plate. They are sold throughout the country and are part of the staple diet of any self-respecting Salvadorean.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Almendros de San Lorenzo (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Transfer to the colonial town of Leon (Nicaragua)

Before leaving El Salvador this morning, we will stop off in Ilobasco - a town famous for its ceramics. The journey today is a long one, and including the stops totals approximately 13 hours. We travel through rich agricultural land towards the Honduran border, following the Gulf of Fonseca before crossing from Honduras into the Pacific lowlands of Nicaragua. We finish our journey in the charming colonial town of Leon, where we will spend the next two nights.

As the country's capital for 200 years, Leon is still considered the intellectual centre of Nicaragua, and was at the heart of the revolutionary years of 1978 to 1989. Lying in the shadow of seven volcanoes, its old buildings and massive cathedral contribute to the elegant atmosphere of a city that seems almost to have been trapped in time.

ACCOMMODATION:
Las Mercedes Leon Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Free Day; optional hike to Cerro Negro Volcano

After yesterday's long travel day, today has been left free to explore this colonial gem at your own pace. Alternatively, you may choose to enjoy one of the optional excursions available in the area. One option is a hike on the nearby Cerro Negro Volcano - one of the most active volcanoes in Nicaragua. The hike takes approximately 1.5hrs at a moderate pace, and there are stunning views across to the Pacific ocean as well

as the surrounding countryside. The fun is in bouncing down the volcano, as we run/jump/walk down through the scree. For something less exertive, Las Penitas Beach is a great place to relax for the day, whilst a visit to San Juan Venado Mangrove Reserve provides the opportunity to spot wildlife including crocodiles, caiman and iguanas.

ACCOMMODATION:
Las Mercedes Leon Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 10 - Travel to Granada via Masaya Volcano National Park

This morning we depart for the volcanic landscapes of the Masaya Volcano National Park. Before our arrival, we take a stop at Nicaragua's capital, Managua, for a short tour of the city and views over Lake Managua. From there, we continue to one of Nicaragua's most stunning natural highlights, the Masaya Volcano National Park, which was the country's first national reserve and is home to two volcanoes and five craters. All being well, we will view the simply astounding geothermal activity at the Santiago Crater, before paying a visit to the park's visitor centre, where we will learn a little more about Central America's seismic history.

Leaving the park, we head to Masaya market to appreciate the town's leather goods as well as other handicrafts. We'll end our day in another of Nicaragua's colonial gems. Atmospheric Granada is situated at the foot of Mombacho Volcano on the north-west shore of Lake Nicaragua. It was the first colonial city in Nicaragua, founded in 1524 by the conquistador Hernandez de Cordoba. Its magnificent setting, set off by baroque and renaissance buildings, is a visual delight and a superb location for our next two nights' accommodation.

On arrival, our city tour will take in highlights such as the Parque Central, the monument to the War of Independence, the plaza and the San Francisco Convent. We also aim to visit the Casa des Tres Mundos and the neoclassical Bishop's Palace.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Granada (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 11 - In Granada; explore the city or optional sea kayaking

Today has been left free for you to discover more of the city at your own pace. Granada is the perfect city to explore on foot, wandering through narrow lanes and alleyways and uncovering hidden delights amongst the lush greenery and historic buildings.

Alternatively, you may choose to visit Las Isletas by boat or sea kayak. This group of tiny islands just offshore is dominated by the Volcano Mombacho. Your Tour Leader will be more than happy to help arrange any excursions that you are keen on.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Granada (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 12 - Head to San Juan del Sur on the Pacific Coast

This morning, we head for Nicaragua's Pacific Coast for a chance to relax. Basing ourselves in San Juan del Sur for the night, this once sleepy fishing village is now a thriving coastal resort and a favourite for travellers and locals alike. The variety of restaurants that line its waterfront overlook a bay that is lined with fishing boats and yachts. The town itself still retains a laid back ambience, providing us with a

perfect place to break the journey and enjoy some welcome beach time. You may wish to visit some of the neighbouring beaches at Playa Mayagal or Maderas.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Colonial (or similar)

Grade: Simple Hotel

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 13 - Travel to Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge (Costa Rica)

This morning, we cross the border into our final country of Costa Rica, with distant views of the Rincon de la Vieja Volcano. Our destination is the Cano Negro National Wildlife Refuge, where we will spend the afternoon enjoying a walk. Cano Negro lies in the centre of a flight path for millions of migrating bird species, making it an ideal stopping off point for glossy ibis, green backed herons, Nicaraguan grackle and roseate spoonbills.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel De Campo Cano Negro (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 14 - Optional wildlife boat trip, before driving to Sarapiqui

This morning, there is the option to take an early morning boat trip along the Rio Frio, in search of monkeys, sloths, iguanas and caimans. After breakfast, we continue on to La Virgen de Sarapiqui. A magnet for adventure-seekers, the Sarapiqui region contains a number of national parks and reserves,

including the Braulio Carrillo National Park and the Sarapiqui Protected Zone. It is famed for its rich natural diversity and is home to the endangered Green Macaw.

Tonight, we will camp among the flora and fauna of this rainforest setting. Our accommodation is in fixed tents with en suite facilities - for anyone worried about camping, this is luxury. Each tent has two large beds with proper mattresses and blankets. There are tables and nightlamps in the tents, and each one has its own balcony, so that you can sit outside and listen to the wildlife in the evening.

ACCOMMODATION:
Pozo Azul Tent Suites (or similar)

Grade: Standard Camping

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 15 - Morning free. Afternoon head to the capital, San Jose

This morning has been left free to enjoy any number of optional excursions in the area. You may choose to hike, horse ride, or 'fly' through the jungle canopy on a zip-wire, some 20-30 metres above the rainforest floor. Costa Rica has been rated as one of the best whitewater rafting destinations in the world and this morning also provides an opportunity to tackle the foaming torrents of the Sarapiqui River. Classified as a Grade III river, the Sarapiqui is fringed by lush vegetation that provides an ideal refuge for toucans, monkeys, parrots and all manner of birdlife. This makes it the perfect setting in which to combine exhilarating rafting with a stunning natural backdrop. All safety equipment will be provided and the excursions are run by professional and trained guides.

This afternoon, we continue through the scenic grandeur of the Braulio Carillo National Park to San Jose, Costa Rica's colourful capital. Founded in 1738 and set in a fertile valley blanketed in a lush abundance of coffee and sugar cane plantations, the city is one of the youngest and most cosmopolitan capitals in Central America. A final evening in the city provides a fitting end to our remarkable journey across this incredible region.

ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Tournon (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 16 - Tour ends San Jose

Our tour ends after breakfast this morning.

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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	Plugs	Religion	Language
-6	2 Pin Flat	Christian, Roman Catholic	Spanish

El Salvador

Climate

Has a tropical climate with wet and dry seasons. The Pacific lowlands are hot; the central plateau and mountain areas are more moderate. The rainy season extends from May to October. Rainfall during this season generally comes from low pressure over the Pacific and usually falls in heavy afternoon thunderstorms. From November through April, El Salvador is dry and hot.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
-6	2 Pin Flat	Roman Catholic	Castilian

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	Plugs	Religion	Language
-6	2 Pin Flat	Catholic and Protestant	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	Plugs	Religion	Language
-6	2 Pin Flat	Roman Catholic and Protestant	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	Plugs	Religion	Language
-6	2 Pin Flat	Roman Catholic	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.

Antigua - Coffee Finca - US$ 25; Jade workshop US$48
Copan - Macaw mountain US$ 15, Horse riding US$ 25, Hot Springs - USD$ 35
Suchitoto - Indigo Dye Museum US$ 25; Lake Suchitlan US$ 25 (based on 4 people), Cookery classes USD$ 12 per person (minimum 5 people)
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, Kayak US$ 35, Canopy/zip lining US$ 40
San Juan del Sur - Surf lessons US$ 35hr. Board hire US$ 10 per half day
Cano Negro - Boat trip US$ 30 pp; Night walk US$ 20pp (minimum 6 people)
Pozo Azul - Nature walk US$ 27, Canopy/zip lining US$ 56, Rafting US$ 58 Snake garden US$ 30

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 day bag. Remember, you are expected to carry your own luggage - don't overload yourself. Sleeping bags are not required.

Equipment

Bring a torch, water bottle, insect repellent, high factor sunscreen, beach towel, and a waterproof bag for your camera. Binoculars are very useful for bird and animal spotting. An umbrella can be useful in short downpours.

Tipping

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

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$ 50 for tipping.

International Departure Taxes
Please allow US$30 for border crossings

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£13	£13	£3	£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Costa Rican Colon

Recommended Currency For Exchange
Local currency in Costa Rica is the Colon. You can choose to either change your money in advance or on arrival at the airport. Here you will find both ATMs and Bureau de Change. The exchange rate with the Colon is approximately 790 CRC to the British Pound. Please check on line for up to date information We recommend you take some emergency cash in USD as the GBP exchange isn't very good. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they may not be accepted.

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

ATM Availability
ATMs can be found in the major towns and cities for cash withdrawals in Colones. Always have some cash back up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance
Credit card are widely accepted in many shops and restaurants but some may be subject to a service charge

Travellers Cheques
We do not recommend Travellers Cheques

El Salvador

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8	£12	£1.2	£1.7

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
US Dollar

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
Most major towns. Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival. Exchanges at border.

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	Beer price	Water price
£8.00 - 10.00	£2.00 - 4.00	£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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£7	£10	£1.75	£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	Beer price	Water price
£10.00 - 12.00	£2	£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

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

Accommodation notes

During this trip you will be spending one night in a fixed camp in Costa Rica. These tents are very large, walk-in tents with two large single beds in each, a fan, bedside table and lamp and duvets. Each tent has ensuite toilet and shower facilities.

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

El Salvador: Citizens of the UK and most EU citizens do not require a visa. Nationals of Canada, Greece, Portugal and USA must buy a tourist card (current cost 10USD)on arrival, this is valid for 30 day from entry.

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.

Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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.

Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

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.

El Salvador

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.

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