

EXPLORE!



DISCOUNTED

Ancient Lands of the Maya

GUATEMALA, HONDURAS - TRIP CODE GM

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Guatemala is one of the only remaining places where the living Maya culture can be truly experienced. This trip contrasts old and new, visiting modern indigenous communities thriving in the highlands around Lake Atitlan, as well as the early Maya cities of Tikal, Quirigua and Copan (Honduras). Hitting the highlights as well as getting far off the beaten path, this trip encompasses the beauty and colour of ancient Central America.

- **Lake Atitlan** - Take a boat trip on this stunning lake, encircled by volcanoes, and visit the neighbouring Maya villages
- **Maya sites** - Discover the atmospheric site of Tikal, its spires poking out of deep jungle, and the peaceful site of Copan
- **Chichicastenango Market** - Throw yourself into the bustle and colour of this busy market, and see the modern Maya culture come to life

- **Festivals** - Witness the Holy Week celebrations in Antigua, or the giant kite festival celebrated as part of the Day of the Dead festivities in Sumpango

					
INCLUDED MEALS Breakfast: 14	TRIP STAFF Explore Tour Leader Boat Crew Driver(s) Local Guide(s)	TRANSPORT Bus Boat	ACCOMMODATION 5 nights standard hotel 6 nights premium hotel 2 nights simple hotel 1 nights lodge	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 in Guatemala City

Join tour Guatemala City and check-in to hotel. Guatemala City is the busy capital of Guatemala, most of which is modern build. However the colonial centre around the main square harks back to the time when the area was officially declared the new capital in the eighteenth century.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Pan American (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Short city tour of Guatemala City, head to Copan (Honduras)

We will start our day with a short orientation tour by bus of Guatemala City before heading to Copan in Honduras. This afternoon, you have free time to visit Macaw Mountain (optional).



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Plaza Copan (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Explore the Copan archaeological site, optional Macaw Mountain trip

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 are 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. The afternoon is free to either visit the museum dedicated to the site or visit Macaw Mountain.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Plaza Copan (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Drive to Puerto Barrios, boat to Livingston

This morning we will stop en route at Quirigua, renowned for its fine Mayan carvings, covered with intricate glyphs which still remain a mystery to scholars and archeologists. Quirigua was dominated by Copan but was valued as a trading centre for the jade that can be found throughout the surrounding area. Independence from Copan was finally achieved under Quirigua's most powerful leader, Cauac Sky in 737AD. We will then continue to Puerto Barrios where we will board our launch and cross the bay to the lazy, laidback town of Livingston on the Caribbean coast. Here we can enjoy the colourful, lively Garifuna town, with its unique racial blend. In the evening there may be the chance to hear the increasingly popular local music or enjoy the fresh seafood in one of the many restaurants along the main street.



ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Caribe (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Boat trip on the Rio Dulce, continue to Tikal

We start our day by heading west on the Rio Dulce by boat. The river squeezes through an impressive gorge of towering cliffs covered in a mass of jungle creepers with Egrets, pelicans and cormorants lining the shores. En route we will stop at the small community project of Ak Tenamit where you will have the opportunity to learn more about this educational support project that has been set up. From the town of

Rio Dulce we will continue by bus to Tikal, possibly the greatest of all the Mayan cities, located in the heart of the Peten jungle. The ruins of Tikal can easily be compared with the masterpieces of Egypt and Greece. Initially settled about 600 BC, Tikal was abandoned by its rulers around AD 890 and totally deserted a hundred years later, overgrown by the jungle. Rediscovered in 1848, they comprise many great temples and pyramids. The city covers an area of more than 16 square kilometres with temples, palaces, causeways, ballcourts, spacious plazas, and hundreds of other architectural ruins - a superb example of sophisticated Mayan engineering.



ACCOMMODATION:
Jungle Lodge (or similar)



Grade: Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Guided tour of Tikal, travel to Flores

We will have an early start to get into the site for a guided tour. The site is so large we leave you free time to explore at your own pace this afternoon. Those with a good head for heights could climb one of the pyramids which pierce the jungle canopy for splendid views over the whole area. In the afternoon we will drive to Santa Elena. This evening we have a chance to wander the streets of Flores Island. Situated on a small island in the tranquil Lake Peten Itza and joined to the mainland by a causeway, Flores remains a quaint and peaceful town.



ACCOMMODATION:
Maya International (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Visit Candelaria Caves before transferring to Coban

Leaving Flores behind we head south into the southern mountains for a long day's drive through varied scenery. We drive to Sayaxche where we cross the river by ferry before continuing to the Candelaria Caves. We make a tour of the caves before continuing onto Coban, where we will overnight.



ACCOMMODATION:
Park Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Drive to Nebaj; watch weaving demonstration from local co-operative

Today we embark on an adventurous journey into the Cuchumatanes Mountains, a spectacular drive winding west through valleys and passing gushing rivers. We stop at some of the small villages on route, but our destination is Nebaj, part of the Ixil triangle - three small communities of the Ixil Maya people who have lived in almost constant isolation for hundreds of years. This isolation has helped to keep the Ixil culture intact, despite the pervading Spanish language and modern influences. As part of our introduction to the village we see a weaving demonstration from a local co-operative. The Ixil are famous for their fine weaving (some of the best to be found in Guatemala), especially the geometric designs in purple, green, yellow and red on the huipiles (blouses) worn by the Indian women. Please note that accommodation available in this remote area is simple.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Villa Nebaj (or similar)



Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Explore the Nebaj Valley

We spend the day exploring and plan to follow a trail over and out of the Nebaj Valley to the neighbouring valley. Weather permitting, we will enjoy good views of the mountain range as we walk up over a pass and descend to the village of Acul. We are bound to come across colourfully dressed Ixil using the trails, but there are certainly few other foreigners in this isolated area.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Villa Nebaj (or similar)



Grade: Simple Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Visit the Solola Market, transfer to Santa Catarina

We start today with a visit to the colourful local market of Solola, before continuing to Santa Catarina, a small village on the shore of Lake Atitlan; there are always magnificent views of the impressive volcanic peaks of Atitlan (3537m), San Petrod (3020m) and Toliman (3158m) towering over the lakeside.



ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Santa Catarina (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - In Santa Catarina; boat trip to visit villages inhabited by Tzutuhil Indians

The volcano-ringed Lake Atitlan is a place of stunning beauty. Some 24km long by 16km wide, it lies at an altitude of 1585m. On the first day, we include a boat trip to visit villages inhabited by Tzututuls Indians, including Santiago Atitlan. Poignant reminders of the recent history of this village are visible as we visit the church, originally built in 1547, and we may see more traditional Mayan rituals at the shrine to Maximon.



ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Santa Catarina (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Free day; optional Panajachel visit

The second day is left free visit the popular town of Panajachel, where you can enjoy the comfortable climate, relaxed atmosphere and stunning setting. The lake changes hue at different times of the day and can appear green, deep blue, or grey, while at sunset it glows fiery red.





ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Santa Catarina (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Discover Chichicastenango Market, journey to Antigua

Early this morning we drive to the famous market town of 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. We will then continue to Antigua de Guatemala, set in a beautiful valley between the volcanoes Agua, Fuego and Acatenango.



ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Colonial (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 14 - Tour of Antigua; free afternoon

After an orientation tour this morning you will have free time to explore Antigua further. An orientation tour of this graceful old colonial city shows how it can justly claim to be one of the most charming in Central America despite the damage caused by a series of earthquakes and floods over the ages. The afternoon is free to wander the timeless streets and hunt for souvenirs. One of its lively restaurants makes a perfect setting for our last meal together.



ACCOMMODATION:
Villa Colonial (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 15 - Tour ends in Antigua

Our tour ends this morning in Antigua.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

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

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.

Copan - Macaw Mountain US\$10; re visit ruins US\$20.

Antigua - Coffee and Music Museum US\$8; Pacaya Volcano US\$65 (min group of 4); Jade workshop US\$48; La Casa del Ron - Rum tasting US\$13

Clothing

Lightweight clothing and a sunhat are essential in mid-summer though a warm sweater or fleece jacket is necessary for cool evenings in the highlands. A waterproof is essential. The jungle lowlands around Tikal are hot and muggy, and it can rain at any time of year. Long trousers and long-sleeved shirts are recommended on jungle walks. Bring a swimming costume.

Footwear

Comfortable trail boots with ankle support are essential for visiting Maya sites because of the amount of walking/climbing involved. Also trainers and/or sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of luggage and a day pack. Remember, you are expected to carry your own baggage - don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Bring insect repellent, sunscreen, a sun hat, torch and a waterbottle.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline

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, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 50, approx. 385 Quetzales for group tipping

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

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 (GTQ)

Recommended Currency For Exchange

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 GTQ is approximately GTQ 9.7 to the British Pound. Please check on line for up to date information

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 Guatemalan Quetzal. 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

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 (HNL)

Recommended Currency For Exchange

You can choose to either change your money in advance or on arrival at the airport/ border. At the airport you will find both ATMs and Bureau de Change and at the border there are exchange opportunities. We recommend you take your cash in USD as the GBP are hard to exchange. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they may not be accepted. The exchange rate with the HNL is approximately HNL 30 to the British Pound. Please check on line for up to date information

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 Lempira. 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

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

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

Guatemala: 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 nationals do not require a visa. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

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.

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.



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