

# EXPLORE!



**BEST SELLER**

**Contrasts of Mexico + Yucatan Peninsula Extension**  
21 days

Belize, Guatemala, Mexico - Trip code **MXY**

## Contrasts of Mexico + Yucatan Peninsula Extension

This exciting journey explores the fiery and mysterious land of the Aztecs and the Maya. From the valleys of Oaxaca in Mexico to the jungles of Guatemala, we tour colonial cities, discover ancient sites and search out the perfect locations for some down time. We visit the impressive Mayan sites of Tikal and Palenque, as well as lesser known sites such as Monte Alban, Bonampak and Yaxchilan, and the pyramids at Teotihuacan. We also take a boat trip through the impressive Sumidero Canyon and visit the Mayan towns of San Cristobal and San Juan Chamula.

This tour coincides with the Day of the Dead Festival. This festival is celebrated throughout Mexico and focuses on family and friends praying for and remembering loved ones who have died. We will witness the celebrations from Oaxaca.

The origins of the Day of the Dead Festival can be traced back as far as the indigenous people of Mesoamerica. The Zapotecs, Mayans and Aztecs all had ancient rituals for celebrating the deaths of ancestors. The modern day festivities take place between the 31st October and 2nd November each year, when it is believed to be easier for the souls of the departed to visit the living. Relatives tend to gather in cemeteries where they build private shrines and altars and bring along food, toys and other sentimental items. One of the most common symbols of the Day of the Dead is the skull which many people wear as masks during parades and festivities. The ceremonies are a fascinating insight into local culture and beliefs.

There are three dates available, departing one day after the other. Those on the 28th October departure will spend the nights of 31st October and 1st November in Oaxaca (days 4 and 5); those joining on the 29th October will spend the nights of the 1st and 2nd November in Oaxaca (days 4 and 5), and those joining on the 30th October will spend the nights of the 2nd and 3rd November in Oaxaca (days 4 and 5). Oaxaca is one of the best places to witness the Day of the Dead as the streets become alive with parades and markets selling flowers and local delicacies fill the air with colour and perfume. Many of the festivities take place at night in the local cemeteries and there is a carnival-like atmosphere that brings the streets of Oaxaca to life.

## Trip highlights

★ **Palenque** - Arguably the most enchanting of the ancient Maya ruins, set in dense jungle

- ★ **Oaxaca** - Explore the streets and markets of this delightful UNESCO World Heritage city
- ★ **Tikal (Guatemala)** - Discover this Mayan metropolis, where temples scattered over a vast area stand tall above the surrounding jungle
- ★ **Mexico City Anthropological Museum** - An impressive collection of precolonial artefacts
- ★ **San Cristobal de las Casas** - A beautiful highland colonial market town, surrounded by modern day Maya villages

#### 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 Mexico City

Check-in at hotel in Mexico City. Modern day Mexico City was built on top of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan by the Spaniards, after their conquest of the city. Today this busy, lively city boasts a wealth of historical buildings, museums and markets.

#### Historico Central Mexico City

Exactly as it says in the name, this hotel is located in the historic centre of Mexico City. It's within walking distance of the Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral, the Palacio de Bellas Artes, and several forms of public transport if you wish to go further afield. The hotel offers large moderns rooms, with air-conditioning and Wi-Fi. It also has a beautiful interior courtyard where you can relax and enjoy your breakfast.




**Accommodation: Historico Central Mexico City** (or similar)



Premium Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: None

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## DAY 2 - Mexico City tour including the Museum of Anthropology

On our first day in Mexico City we visit the Zocalo (main square) area. The Cathedral and National Palace with many of Diego Rivera's remarkable murals on the history of Mexico are all built on top of Tenochtitlan the old Aztec capital. Afterwards we will visit the museum of Anthropology, one of the finest museums in the world, its exhibits offer a taste of the history ahead of us.




**Accommodation: Historico Central Mexico City** (or similar)

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 Premium Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: None

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## DAY 3 - Visit the Teotihuacan Pyramids and the Basilica de Guadalupe

The next day we will drive out to the mysterious pyramids of Teotihuacan. Although abandoned thirteen centuries ago, they are still an unbelievable sight. Once the largest city in the Americas with perhaps 100,000 inhabitants, its influence continued through Middle America, and Maya craftsmen borrowed its decorative motifs and building designs. Centuries later the Aztecs revered Teotihuacan as 'the Place of the Gods'. Returning downtown we visit the Basilica de Guadalupe.




**Accommodation: Historico Central Mexico City** (or similar)

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 Premium Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: None

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## DAY 4 - Journey to Oaxaca; Day of the Dead celebrations

Leaving the capital we drive south through cactus country to Oaxaca, one of the most charming colonial cities in Mexico. Arriving in the afternoon, we will have some free time to explore the city on foot. The colonnaded Zocalo comes alive at night as families come to stroll in the shade, while street vendors and entertainers vie for their attention. Oaxaca also has several colourful markets.

### Hotel Victoria Oaxaca

Situated just on the outskirts of central Oaxaca, this hotel is surrounded by gardens and has excellent views of the mountains. The Hotel Victoria also offers its own restaurant, a pub, a heated outdoor pool and a poolside bar. If this isn't enough to keep you busy, there is also a free shuttle bus into town.



**Accommodation: Hotel Victoria Oaxaca** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 5 - Visit the ancient complex of pyramids of Monte Alban

Colonial Oaxaca was built with stones taken from ancient temples a few miles away. We explore the complex of temples, pyramids and enigmatic rock carvings at Monte Alban, a high spur that looms over the fertile valley. This mystical site was created by Zapotec Indians, who flourished here a thousand years ago. This afternoon there may be the chance to see some of the exquisite treasures of Monte Alban in the Regional Museum (known as the Louvre of Oaxaca) in town (optional).



**Accommodation: Hotel Victoria Oaxaca** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 6 - Journey to Chiapa del Corzo via Mitla

Today is a full day's journey through the mountainous Sierra Madre range, through the hot and windy isthmus of Tehuantepec and on to our hotel in Chiapa del Corzo, the provincial capital of Chiapas state, which we will explore over the next few days. We will stop to visit the 2000-year-old swamp cypress tree in Santa Maria del Tule just outside Oaxaca for a quick photo and then continue to the Mixtec/ Zapotec site of Mitla where we will have a picnic breakfast. There are plenty of stops to stretch our legs, eat and drink during the 10 hour car journey.

### Hotel la Ceiba

Hotel la Ceiba is set in a Spanish colonial-style building, located in Chiapa de Corzo district. The hotel offers a large restaurant and bar, an outdoor pool, a spa and a tropical garden. The historic centre of Chiapa de Corzo is just 15 minutes\ walk, and Tuxtla Gutierrez is a short taxi ride away.



**Accommodation: Hotel la Ceiba** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 7 - Sumidero Canyon boat trip then head to San Cristobal

This morning we visit the spectacular Sumidero Canyon, a unique rift 41km long and up to 1000mts deep, cut by the Rio Grijalva. This is the spot where, in the 16th century, some 1000 Chiapa indigenous people committed suicide rather than submit to Spanish rule. We take a trip on a speed boat to fully appreciate the towering gorge, before driving up a scenic mountain road to San Cristóbal de las Casas. On route we will visit San Juan Chamula, a small indigenous village which practices an interesting blend of Catholicism and traditional Maya beliefs, evident from a visit to the local churches, before continuing to San Cristobal. At 2210m above sea level, it can get quite cold at night!

### Casa Mexicana

Casa Mexicana is in a perfect location, as it's within walking distance of the town centre, the coral reefs monument and the museum of Cozumel. It also has a restaurant of its own, which opens up to an inner courtyard with luscious gardens. There's also a bar and Sauna/massage services available.



**Accommodation: Casa Mexicana** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 8 - Free day to explore San Cristobal de las Casas

There is a unique atmosphere to this small colonial town, high in the scenic Chiapas range. The indigenous groups from the surrounding hills fill the town and marketplace with their colourful dress including the distinctive Tzotzil community who still retain much of their Mayan customs and language. They are noted for their bright textiles and weavings in bold designs and this is the place to bargain for some colourful souvenirs. Today is left free for you to explore the area. You may wish to visit the Na Bolom, the House of the Jaguar, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Lacandón tribe and displays many of their artefacts or the Kakaw museum where you can learn about the history and production of chocolate in the area.



**Accommodation: Casa Mexicana** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 9 - Travel to Palenque via the Agua Azul Waterfall

Leaving the highlands, the road is slow and winding, but there are scenic views as we descend from the highlands to the jungles of Palenque. We plan to bathe at the waterfalls of Agua Azul before driving onto our hotel. The river tumbles over a series of limestone travertines, forming natural jacuzzis, and is a popular Sunday picnic spot for Mexicans and travellers alike.

### Hotel Chan-kah

The rooms in the Hotel Chankah are situated in individual small cabins or 'casitas' which are nicely furnished with all the necessary facilities. The hotel boasts a large pool and a restaurant that serves a good mix of local and international food. The location is also ideal, being just a short distance from the ruins of Palenque, also hidden in the rainforest.



**Accommodation: Hotel Chan-kah** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 10 - Discover the important Mayan site of Palenque

One of the highlights of our tour is today's guided visit to the famous jungle ruins of Palenque, a fascinating and important Mayan site. Once the choking forest was cleared, the ruins revealed the tomb of the high priest Pakal, his body adorned with a marvellous jade death mask - one of the most prized relics of the Maya culture, discovered only in 1952. The entire site, shrouded by the steamy rainforest, has an aura of deep mystery. During the afternoon you can continue to explore the site, or take a bus back to the waterfall of Misol Ha for a refreshing swim (optional). The stunning 30m high waterfall was featured in the titles of the movie 'Predator'.



**Accommodation: Hotel Chan-kah** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 11 - Drive to Frontera Corozal; travel by boat to Yaxchilan

Today we head into the Lacandon area to the ruins of Bonampak. The discovery of the well preserved murals at this site had a profound impact on our understanding of the Mayans. Continuing to Frontera, we board our lancha (river boat) on the Ucumacinta river and head for the remote site of Yaxchilan, famous for its stelae and roof combs. We continue back up the river through the rainforest to our overnight lodge near where we boarded our boat earlier today.

**Hotel Casona Del Lago**

Located in Santa Elena City, the Hotel Casona Del Lago rooms are spacious and comfortable, offering good facilities, whilst outside the pool makes a great place to relax and retreat to after a day of sightseeing. The hotel restaurant is renowned for its excellent cuisine.



**Accommodation: Hotel Casona Del Lago** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

## DAY 12 - Head to Flores, optional boat trip on Lake Peten Itza

Our Mayan rainforest experience continues up river by boat to the small settlement of Bethel on the Guatemalan side before progressing by road to Flores, on Lake Peten Itza. The afternoon can be spent enjoying a leisurely boat trip on the blue waters of the lake (optional).

### Hotel Tikal Inn

Hotel Tikal Inn is located in the Tikal National Park - it sits on the edge of the jungle only ten minutes' walk from the centre of the Mayan Ruins, Plaza Mayor. The hotel has traditional Mayan architecture and provides a comfortable setting to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the Tikal National Park.



**Accommodation: Hotel Jaguar Inn** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 13 - Explore the great Mayan metropolis of Tikal (Guatemala)


Today we visit Tikal, the great Maya metropolis set in the midst of the rainforest, which can justly be compared with the celebrated ancient cities of Egypt and Greece. Initially settled in about 600BC, Tikal was abandoned by its rulers around 890AD and totally deserted a hundred years later. The city covered an area of 16 square kilometres. Re-discovered in 1848, only a few of its great temples and pyramids have been excavated. The site is extensive, so we include a guided tour in the morning with the afternoon free to let you explore. We can appreciate the prolific birdlife in the surrounding rainforest and take in amazing views of the forest canopy from the tops of the pyramids.




**Accommodation: Hotel Jaguar Inn** (or similar)



Standard Hotel

 Standard Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: None

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## DAY 14 - To San Ignacio (Belize), optional Macal River canoeing

Today we drive over the border to San Ignacio in Belize. You may like to visit one of the nearby and little visited Mayan sites of Cahal Pech or Xunantunich.

### Hotel Cahal Pech


The Hotel Cahal Pech is located at the top of a hill, so it offers some spectacular views of the town. It's also across the way from Cahal Pech Archaeological Reserve, and a short taxi ride to the Xunantunich Mayan Ruins. The hotel also has its own restaurant, bar, spa facilities and 3 outdoor pools to choose from.

 **Accommodation: Hotel Cahal Pech** (or similar)


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 Standard Hotel

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 Swimming pool available

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: None

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## DAY 15 - Drive to Belize City and boat to Caye Caulker

We drive to Belize City for our first view of the Caribbean and board our water taxi for the one-hour journey to the enchanting tropical island of Caye Caulker. Once a pirate lair, this tiny but beautiful island lies 34km northeast of Belize City and about 1.6km inside the greatest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere.

### Seaside Cabanas


Located right on the beach, this is a perfect spot for some down time - it's also right next to the dock, so you're right off the boat and straight into relaxation mode. This small hotel has a unique yet modern style and offers an outdoor pool that looks directly out to sea. Most rooms also have a balcony or an outside space for you to relax with a drink in the evening.

 **Accommodation: Seaside Cabanas** (or similar)


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 Premium Hotel

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 Swimming pool available

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: None

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## DAY 16 - Relax on Caye Caulker; optional trip to observe manatees

The island remains uncrowded and unluxurious, and the local fishermen catch lobster, conch, fish and crab to supply domestic and foreign markets. It's a popular place with backpackers, so there is a proliferation of good, reasonably priced restaurants. There's time to relax or enjoy a number of optional trips. You may take a snorkelling trip out to the nearby Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Shark and Ray Alley, or take a full-day trip out to Goff's Caye to observe manatee in their natural mangrove habitat. Scuba diving is also available.



**Accommodation: Seaside Cabanas** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 17 - Boat back to the mainland then drive to Valladolid

We leave Caye Caulker by boat this morning, sailing back to the mainland, and driving up to the Belize-Mexico border. We then continue to Valladolid, where we have the rest of the afternoon free to explore its colonial centre.



**Accommodation: Hotel Meson De Marquez** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 18 - Discover Valladolid before continuing to Piste via Ek Balam

You may wish to opt to swim in one of the local cenote's this morning (optional) - these underground pools are naturally formed in limestone, and were used by the ancient Maya as a source of water. This afternoon we will drive to Piste, via Ek Balam. This Maya site contains the biggest pyramid in the Yucatan with incredible views out across the peninsula.



**Accommodation: Hotel Mayaland** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 19 - Explore Chichen Itza; travel to Merida

This morning we visit the ruins of Chichen Itza. Founded in AD432, re-founded in 987 and conquered by the Toltecs in the 10th century, the culture of the Maya and the Toltec gradually fused. The pyramids, palaces, temples and ballcourt (where death was the penalty for defeat) are adorned with astonishing sculptures. Under the pressure of the civil war, the great monuments deteriorated and the Maya civilisation collapsed. Chichen Itza remains one of the most outstanding sites in the Americas. We then drive via the colonial backwater of Izamal to Merida, famed for its beautiful Spanish-Moorish style architecture.

### Hotel La Misión de Fray Diego

This converted mansion is located right in the heart of Merida, and only a few minutes' walk from the main square and Merida Cathedral. Due to the size of the property, the hotel offers large rooms with a traditional style. It also has its own restaurant, as well as an outdoor pool, gardens and spa facilities available for an extra cost.



**Accommodation: Hotel La Misión de Fray Diego** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 20 - Visit the ancient Mayan city of Uxmal

This morning we will visit the site at Uxmal. Encircled by hills, Uxmal is expansive in its design with majestic palaces and pyramids. Long geometrical friezes rank among the most splendid examples of ancient American Art. The incredible Pyramid of the Magician and the beautiful Governor's Palace are two of the finest examples of Mayan art anywhere. Later in the day we return to Merida, where we have time to wander along the narrow streets watching the horse-drawn carriages rattle past. Alternatively there

is an option to visit Celestun, the pink flamingo sanctuary.



**Accommodation: Hotel La Misión de Fray Diego** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 21 - Tour ends Merida

The trip ends this morning in Merida.

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 Meals Provided: None

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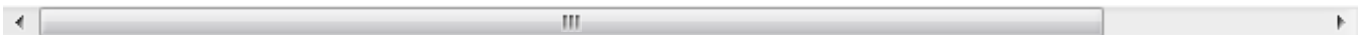


## Day of the Dead Festival

We have timed certain departures to coincide with the Day of the Dead Festival, experiencing the celebrations from Oaxaca.

The origins of the Day of the Dead Festival can be traced back as far as the indigenous people of Mesoamerica. The Zapotecs, Mayans and Aztecs all had ancient rituals for celebrating the deaths of ancestors. The modern day festivities take place between the 31st October and 2nd November each year, when it is believed to be easier for the souls of the departed to visit the living. Relatives tend to gather in cemeteries where they build private shrines and altars and bring along food, toys and other sentimental items. One of the most common symbols of the Day of the Dead is the skull which many people wear as masks during parades and festivities. The ceremonies are a fascinating insight into local culture and beliefs.

Oaxaca is one of the best places to witness the Day of Dead as the streets become alive with parades and markets selling flowers and local delicacies fill the air with colour and perfume. Many of the festivities take place at night in the local cemeteries and there is a carnival-like atmosphere that brings the streets of Oaxaca to life. Depending on your departure date, you will be in Oaxaca on one or two of the nights of the 31st, 1st and 2nd, and you will experience the different festivities taking place on those days.



# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 1  
Dinner: 1



## Transport

Bus  
Boat



## Trip staff

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



## Accommodation

15 nights premium hotel  
5 nights standard hotel

# Trip information

## Country information

### Belize

#### Climate

Sub-tropical with a brisk prevailing wind from the Caribbean. Summer highs are rarely above 35°C, winter lows rarely below 15°C. Annual rainfall ranges from 107cm in the north to 364cm in the south and humidity can be high at any time of year. The rainy season extends from June through October with a short dry period in August, but some rain can be expected throughout the year.

#### Time difference to GMT

-6

#### Plugs

2 Pin Flat

#### Religion

Christian

#### Language

English

### 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

# Mexico

## Climate

Mexico is a vast country whose weather varies by season and region. The optimum time to travel is generally between December and April when rainfall is at a minimum. Temperatures are coolest between December and February and temperatures start to rise from March and the hottest months are May, June and July. The rainy season runs from May until October when humidity and temperatures are highest. The rains tend to be intense and short, clearing the humidity before building up again. The Caribbean coast can be affected by hurricane season between June and November. Please bear in mind that at altitude the temperatures can drop considerably at night and sudden changes can occur at any time.

## Time difference to GMT

-6

## Plugs

2 Pin Flat

## Religion

Roman Catholic, Protestant

## Language

Spanish is the official language, but around 50 languages/dialects are also spoken by the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

## 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.

Mexico City - Ballet Folklórico - US\$80-120; Coyoacán Frida Kahlo Museum US\$12 (plus transport)

Oaxaca - Regional Museum US\$ 5

San Cristóbal - Na Bolom US\$5 ; Kakaw Museum US\$2 ; Kakaw Chocolate workshop US\$20; Folklórico dancing US\$25

Palenque - Misol Ha waterfall US\$2 entry plus transport US\$70 (up to 4)

Flores - Boat trip on Lake Peten Itza US\$ 20; Tikal Canopy - US\$50

San Ignacio - Iguana Farm US\$12; Cahal Pech site US\$15; Xunantunich site US\$30

Caye Caulker - half day snorkel US\$35; Full day Snorkel US\$65 inc. lunch; Manatee search US\$85 inc. lunch

Merida - Celestun US\$ 135pp (min 5 pers) ; Mundo Maya Museum US\$9

## Clothing

Warmer clothing is needed in the highlands (San Cristóbal and Mexico City), which are mostly mild, but temperatures can drop dramatically at night. Pack a fleece and some long sleeved clothing for protection from sun and insects. Lightweight rainwear is essential. In general, winter is dry and summer wet. Casual clothes are acceptable. Shorts are acceptable everywhere except in churches.

## Footwear

Bring walking boots if you have them, otherwise comfortable shoes/trainers with a good grip and sandals.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac. Remember - you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself. Please note that in the Yucatan luggage is stored on a roof rack and you must be able to lift it.

## Equipment

An umbrella is useful for tropical downpours. A torch and waterbottle are recommended. Bring insect repellent, sunscreen and a sunhat. Binoculars.

## 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\$ 60 for group tipping if on MX, 15% is expected in restaurants.

### International Departure Taxes

Mexico: there is a 550 Pesos (approx. US\$30) departure tax payable pre entry to Guatemala.

Guatemala: there is an entry tax of US\$2 / exit tax US\$2

MX only -

Belize: there is a US\$20 departure tax

Mexico - 550 Pesos (approx. US\$30) will be payable on the Yucatan Extension

## Country Information

### Belize

#### 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

£20

##### Beer price

£1.5

##### Water price

£1

#### Foreign Exchange

##### Local currency

Belize Dollar

##### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$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 are legal currency in Belize and can be used to pay everywhere

##### Where To Exchange

Most major towns - 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

We do not recommend Travellers cheques, they are difficult to exchange.

## 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

## Mexico

### 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.

**Breakfast price**

£5

**Lunch price**

£7

**Dinner price**

£13

**Beer price**

£2

**Water price**

£0.7

### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Mexican New Peso

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**



We recommend to take a minimum equivalent of GBP 300 - 400 of your total spending money in cash for a two / three week trip (approx. GBP 200 for the CMX). USD are not widely accepted in stores and restaurants however they can be exchanged in all major towns and cities. Sterling can only be exchanged in Mexico City. Mexican cash can be obtained from ATMs that are available in most major cities. Sterling or Dollar notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange. MX/MXY/MXS customers – on arrival in Mexico city airport we recommend that you use one of the many ATM's at the airport to directly get local currency, or change GBP or USD at a currency exchange for the start of your trip. For those continuing to Guatemala on the MX/Y we also recommend you change approximately GBP 50-60 into Guatemalan Quetzals at Mexico city airport as there is no longer an exchange at the border crossing into Guatemala.

#### **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**

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

## 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

Mexico: Citizens from UK, New Zealand, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada require a Mexican Tourist Card to enter. This is obtained from the consular office or at the check-in desk of the airline you are travelling with and will need to be kept until exit.

Guatemala: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. Belize: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. 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](http://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.

## Belize

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, TB, 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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## 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.

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## Mexico

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, 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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