JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SIGNATURE GUATEMALA AND BELIZE: CULTURE AND CARIBBEAN

15 days from **£3,795pp**

GUATEMALA / ANTIGUA AND THE HIGHLANDS / LAKE ATITLAN AND VILLAGES / BELIZE / MAYA MOUNTAINS AND JUNGLE / CARIBBEAN CAYES AND COAST



WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This highlights tour to Guatemala and Belize can't be beaten for variety. Combine arty Antigua, Lake Atitlán and the jungle-clad Mayan ruins of Tikal with the tropical forest and coral island Ambergris Caye, near the dive sites of the Belize Barrier Reef.

DAY 1	**Arrive in Guatemala City and transfer to your hotel in Antigua.**
DAY 2	**Walking tour of Antigua.**
DAY 3	**Day at leisure in Antigua - optional excursions available.**
DAY 4	**Transfer to Lake Atitlán.**
DAY 5	**Excursion by boat to San Juan La Laguna**
DAY 6	**Visit Chichicastenango or Sololá markets.**
DAY 7	**Fly to Flores in the jungle Petén region**
DAY 8	**Guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Tikal.**
DAY 9	**Cross the border into Belize and continue to the San Ignacio area.**
DAY 10	**Optional outdoor activities and excursions.**
DAY 11	**Guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Caracol.**
DAYS 12	**Transfer to Belize City and fly to Ambergris Caye.**
DAYS 13 -14	**At leisure on Ambergris Caye**
DAY 15	**Fly to Belize City and connect with international flight.**

ITINERARY

This highlights of Guatemala and Belize trip combines two very different countries in one experience-packed holiday. Guatemala is steeped in native Mayan and Spanish colonial tradition. Belize, a truly Caribbean country, is laid-back and English-speaking.

Start off in Antigua, Guatemala's colonial masterpiece, and continue to the serene setting of Lake Atitlán, encircled by volcanoes, handkerchief-sized fields and tiny indigenous villages. Discover Tikal, the vast ruined Mayan city where ancient temples and pyramids emerge above the rainforest canopy.

Crossing the border into Belize, enjoy a variety of outdoor activities at a lodge close to San Ignacio, and visit Caracol, the largest Mayan site in Belize. Round off the holiday on the coral beaches of Ambergris Caye in the turquoise Caribbean Sea, home to the world-renowned Belize Barrier Reef.

DAY 1

Arrive in Guatemala City and transfer to your hotel in Antigua.

You will be met by our local representative and taken to your hotel in Antigua, a journey of about one hour.



DAY 2

Walking tour of Antigua.

Antigua is a colonial work of art, with cobbled streets, overhanging tiled roofs and a beautiful, leafy central plaza. There's an abundance of huge ruined churches, convents and monasteries, testament to a time when Antigua was the country's capital and its main religious centre. You'll have plenty of time to absorb this fascinating city, including on a walking tour of the historic centre. It seems that every doorway opens onto a fragrant tiled courtyard. A dramatic backdrop of smouldering volcanoes and ruined churches and convents surrounded by parkland bear witness to the city's destruction a volcanic eruption in 1773.



DAY 3

Day at leisure in Antigua - optional excursions available.

Antigua is a welcoming place to explore independently, do some shopping in tempting boutiques and art galleries, and enjoy a large range of restaurants and pavement cafés.

However, you may wish to do another excursion today and we can easily arrange this for you. Options include hiking up Pacaya volcano (2,552m), cycling through the Almolonga Valley, visiting the lesser-known Mayan site of Iximché, or partaking in a cooking class.



DAY 4

Transfer to Lake Atitlán.

Travel by a gradually-ascending road to Lake Atitlán. The landscapes in the highlands west of Antigua are dominated by watchful volcanoes and compact farming villages.

The lake is one of the most captivating in the world and its beauty has been eulogised by poets and travellers. On a sunny day, the closely forested volcanic cones are reflected in cobalt waters. Traditional villages and indigenous agricultural settlements skirt its fertile shores, each with its own character and identity, its own dialect and often a unique costume still worn by the proud inhabitants.



DAY 5

Excursion by boat to San Juan La Laguna



Take a boat across the lake to San Juan La Laguna, a village on its western edge. The journey itself is beautiful with views of the various shoreline hamlets and pocket-sized cultivated fields alongside some grand houses, and beyond to the gently sloping bottle-green volcanoes that encircle the water.

San Juan La Laguna is a predominantly Maya Tzutujil village and you'll visit a number of artisans and workshops that still use traditional methods, including a woman's weaving cooperative that uses natural dyes to colour their vibrant textiles, as well as a project where local producers make black honey from the Mayan stingless bee.

DAY 6

Visit Chichicastenango or Sololá markets.



Traditional markets abound in Guatemala and each one has its own charm and schedule. Two markets in particular – Chichicastenango and Sololá – are within easy reach of Lake Atitlan, but which one you visit will depend on the day of the week.

Chichicastenango – 'Chichi' for short! – is 1½ hours from Lake Atitlan and its bustling Thursday and Sunday markets draw visitors from far and wide. Wander the labyrinthine of streets in search of textiles, clothes and tapestries of striking colour and extraordinary intricacy, as well as extravagant hand-carved masks and good-quality leather goods. Local farmers both barter and sell an array of fruit and vegetables from the surrounding villages too.

Sololá is closer to Lake Atitlan, just a 30-minute drive, and the traditional clothes worn here are some of the most colourful in the country. The market, which takes place on Tuesdays and Fridays, is less tourist-orientated than many and is a good place to buy superior crafts and textiles.

DAY 7

Fly to Flores in the jungle Petén region

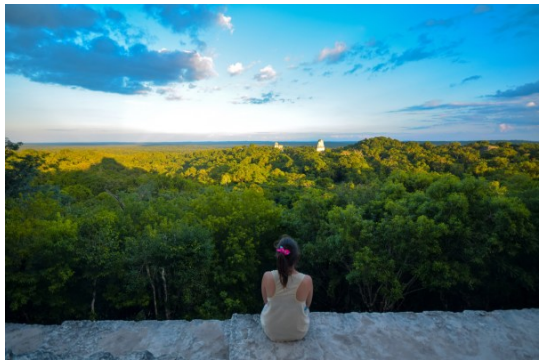
Drive to Guatemala City and take an hour-long flight to Flores, in the dense sticky jungles of northern Guatemala, and from here continue to your lodge.



DAY 8

Guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Tikal.

An hour from Flores is the archaeological site of Tikal, one of the largest and most important Mayan city states, reaching its peak around AD800 prior to its mysterious demise. Steep-stepped and vertiginous temples emerge high above the rainforest canopy; the views over the site from one of these ancient skyscrapers are unforgettable. Spend the day wandering through the palace complexes – the pyramids and temples seem frozen in time, but you're brought back to the present by the roar of curious howler monkeys and lithe spider monkeys as they swing through the trees; and by flashes of colour as toucans and parrots take flight.



DAY 9

Cross the border into Belize and continue to the San Ignacio area.

It's a two-hour drive from Flores to the border with Belize, and then a further 30 minutes to your lodge on the banks of the picturesque Macal River.

Western Belize is unspoilt and sparsely populated with lush hills, spliced by rivers and waterfalls.

The regional capital, San Ignacio, is a cheerful town of its own with a lively market and a population composed of Mayans, mestizos and Garifuna as well as a sprinkling of immigrants from Europe and North America.



DAY 10

Optional outdoor activities and excursions.



Your lodge offers a variety of optional excursions which you can book in advance with us or via the lodge's concierge once you're in Belize. The 400-acre private reserve which surrounds the lodge has a large network of well-maintained trails ideal for early morning birdwatching, hiking, and horseback riding in the company of a naturalist guide. You can also rent a canoe and paddle down the serene Macal River – a terrific experience as you watch riverside creatures and birdlife emerge from their shoreline habitat.

Outside of the reserve, you might consider visiting Mountain Pine Ridge where waterfalls, rivers, lakes and caves are surrounded by beautiful pine forest; whizzing through the forest canopy on a zipline; or exploring the Actun Tunchil Muknal (ATM) Caves. The local market at San Ignacio, bulging with fruit and vegetables, is well worth a visit if you're there on the right day, and the Mayan archaeological sites at Xunantunich and Cahel Pech are nearby too.

However, you may simply want to relax and enjoy the splendid tropical gardens, cool off in the infinity pool, or be pampered in the spa. It's a little piece of paradise here.

DAY 11

Guided tour of the Mayan ruins at Caracol.



Deep within the Chiquibul Forest Reserve, a two-hour drive from your lodge, Caracol is the largest Mayan site in Belize, and once supported a population of around 180,000. At the heart of the site lies the massive pyramid of Caana (Sky Palace) which rises 42m and is the largest man-made structure in Belize. Over 70 tombs have been excavated, and many hieroglyphic texts have been found on altars and wall façades.

The drive to the site in the early morning occasionally offers glimpses of tapir, jaguar or ocelot as they break their forest cover to cross the road, and the area is an excellent place to observe birds.

DAYS 12

Transfer to Belize City and fly to Ambergris Caye.

It's 2 ½ hour drive to Belize City, and then a 15-minute flight by light aircraft across the turquoise waters of the Caribbean Sea to Ambergris Caye, the most northerly and largest island in Belize. It's a convenient spot to unwind at the end of a trip and although ever popular it remains relaxed: golf buggies still outnumber cars!



DAYS 13 -14

At leisure on Ambergris Caye

Enjoy a couple of days relaxation at the end of your trip, lounging by your hotel pool, or taking advantage of the first class snorkelling and diving on offer just off the Caye which you can book locally through your hotel.



DAY 15

Fly to Belize City and connect with international flight.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Antigua: walking tour (private)
- Lake Atitlan: boat trip to San Juan La Laguna (private)
- Lake Atitlan: Chichicastenango or Solola markets (private)
- Flores: Tikal ruins (private)
- Chaa Creek: Caracol ruins (shared)

ESSENTIALS

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS
15 days, 14 nights: Antigua 3; Lake Atitlán 3; Tikal 2; San Ignacio 3; Ambergris Caye 3.

ACCOMMODATION
We have chosen a variety of upper mid-range hotels for this holiday: comfortable, great value, well-located and which showcase a touch of local character. Accommodation varies in heritage from colonial-style properties, to lakeside hotels and remote lodges.

TRANSPORT
2 internal flights (longest 1 hour); 4 scenic road journeys (longest 4 hours); a couple of boat trips; and several short hotel transfers

MEALS
Breakfast daily, lunch day 8.

GUIDES
Our local, trusted and carefully selected partners understand the expectations of our customers very well, and their staff and guides are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return. On this holiday, you will be joined by different guides for each activity and or region, ensuring you benefit from specialised expertise and knowledge, often from someone local to the area.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS
As well as any included activities, this Private Journey includes some free time for optional excursions. As optional excursions are often subject to availability, we recommend you discuss and arrange them with your Travel Expert as early as possible before you depart.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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