

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Ancient Lands of the Maya (GM 2017 SANTO TOMAS)



TRIPDURATION
15
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: GM

Trip Highlights - Ancient Lands of the Maya

- ✓ Chichicastenango - Enjoy the colourful San Tomas Festival
- ✓ Antigua - Explore this elegant colonial city set in a valley between three volcanoes
- ✓ Lake Atitlan - Visit some of the villages and towns around this beautiful lake by boat
- ✓ Mayan sites - Discover the huge Maya site of Tikal deep in the Guatemalan jungle, and the beautiful site of Copan
- ✓ Nebaj - Stay in this remote town in the Ixil Mountains and experience local life

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 8 nights Standard Hotel
5 nights Premium Hotel
1 night Simple Hotel

Included Meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 1 dinner

Start Point: Join trip: Guatemala City

End Point: Trip ends: Antigua

Transport: Bus, Boat

Countries: Guatemala, Honduras



Ancient Lands Of The Maya

On this trip through Guatemala, we explore the ancient lands of the Maya. We visit the early Mayan cities of Tikal, Quirigua and Copan (in Honduras). We also travel through the Guatemalan highlands, spending time in traditional mountain villages and local markets, including the colourful San Tomas Festival in Chichicastenango. On the way, we explore Lake Atitlan by boat and search for the elusive Quetzal bird in Biotopo Nature Reserve.

Why Book this trip

We have planned the dates of this tour to coincide with the San Tomas Festival in Guatemala. This festival is a mix of Christian and native traditions centred around the famous church in Chichicastenango.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our 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.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

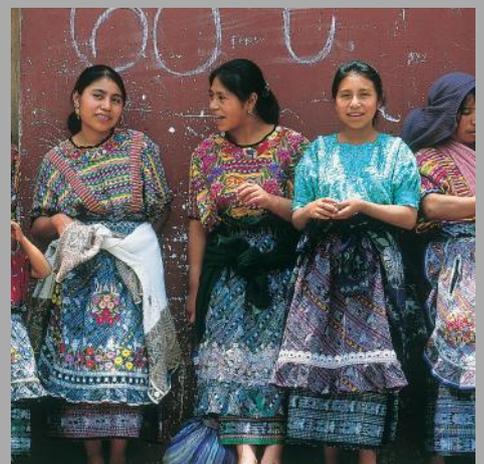
Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour in Guatemala City

Join tour Guatemala City and check-in to the 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



 **Included Meals:** 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).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** 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 archaeologists. 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.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** 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. 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

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 **Included Meals:** 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Visit Biotopo del Quetzal Reserve, transfer to Chichicastenango

This morning we have a very early start to travel the short distance to Biotopo del Quetzal Reserve, as it is the best time to go bird watching. We start the day with a walk in the cloudforest; if we are lucky we may see the elusive quetzal which feeds on the fruit of the aguacatillo tree at dawn. The quetzal was sacred to the ancients of Central America and the plumed serpent god Quetzalcoatl was a supreme deity. Killing a quetzal was punishable by death and the 2ft long iridescent green tail feathers were worth more than gold. Today the resplendent quetzal is the Guatemalan national bird. We then make the long drive to the market town of Chichicastenango, the 'sacred town' of the Indigenous Quiché, and take a walking tour of this colourful Mayan town.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 Santo Tomas celebrations in Chichicastenango

Today we join the celebration of Santo Tomas, one of the largest annual celebrations in Guatemala and a fusion of Mayan and Christian traditions. The celebrations are in honour of the town's patron saint, focussing around the central Church of Santo Tomas. The festival lasts a week and includes colourful processions, dancing and general merriment. One highlight is the 'Palo Volador' where participants throw themselves from a huge pole attached only by a rope that unravels and spins them around the pole at high speed. We visit for the main day of the fiesta, 21st December.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Journey to Nebaj, tour the local villages including Cotzal and Chajul

This morning we embark on an adventurous journey into the famous Ixil Mountains. The drive is spectacular as we wind our way up through valleys and over hills, passing gushing rivers, heading north from Sacapulas. Finally we arrive at Nebaj, part of the Ixil triangle. 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. We make a tour of the area including the local villages of Cotzal and Chajul. Accommodation available in this remote mountain area is simple.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Morning optional walks in the area; head to Santa Catarina

In the morning we have the opportunity to optional walk around the area. Later we drive 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 Pedro (3020m) and Toliman (3158m) towering over the lakeside.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 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. Today we include a boat trip to visit villages inhabited by Tzutuhil 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 Maximón. In the evening we celebrate Christmas with a Christmas dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 13 Explore the Solola Market then drive to Antigua

Today we make the long drive to the colonial city of Antigua, visiting the market town of Solola and the ancient ruins of Iximche on the way.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** 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.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Tour ends in Antigua

Our tour ends this morning in Antigua.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 1 dinner included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

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.

Guatemala

Lunch £: 4.00 - 6.00

Dinner £: 8.00 - 10.00

Honduras

Lunch £: 7.00

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Dinner £: 10.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Guatemala

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00 - 4.00

Water £: 1.00 - 2.00

Honduras

Bottle of Beer £: 1.75

Water £: 2.00

Other Sightseeing & 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.

Optional Excursions

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

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - 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\$50 for group tipping. 10% is expected in restaurants.

Foreign Exchange

Guatemala

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

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.

Honduras

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

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.

Joining your Trip

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 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 on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

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, 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 please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

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.

Important Information

Travel 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. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

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 follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

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.

Visa 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 to 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.

Vaccinations & Protection

Guatemala

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 certificate 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. 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 <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Honduras

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 certificate 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. 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 <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Guatemala

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.

Honduras

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.

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.

Equipment

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

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: On Tour

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

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Guatemala

Population: 13,276,517

Size of Country: 108,890 sq km

Major Language: Spanish

Religion: Catholic and Protestant

Time Difference to GMT: -6

Honduras

Population: 8,249,574

Size of Country: 112,492 sq km

Major Language: Spanish

Religion: Roman Catholic and Protestant

Time Difference to GMT: -6

Electric Supply & Plugs

Guatemala

2 Pin Flat

Honduras

2 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to - and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants,

allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

These trip notes were printed on 20/09/2017 02:24:51