

Great Mexico & Central American Journey - JXP

59 days: Mexico - Panama

What's Included

Orientation walk in Puebla, Oaxaca, San Cristóbal De Las Casas, Mérida, Antigua and Granada, Guatemala homestay experience, Mayan Riviera beaches, Excursion to Bay Islands, Trip to Bocas del Toro Archipelago.

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing December 31, 2011 - December 31, 2012.

Trip Style

yolo: Popular with younger travellers, YOLO trips are designed for those who thirst for adventure and want to take on the planet in a fast, raw and affordable way. With an average age of 25, our YOLO travellers make the most of their time, hitting the highlights by day and mixing it up at night. These trips often feature public transportation and basic accommodations and have been built for those on a budget.

Service Level

Basic:

- Excellent value, competitive price
- For travellers preferring flexibility, convenience and the security of small groups
- Simple and clean accommodations and/or well-maintained campsites
- Public transportation with occasional private vans or coaches. Overland trucks where noted

Physical Grading

3: May include moderate hiking, biking, rafting, kayaking and other activities that require only an average/moderate level of fitness to enjoy.

Itinerary



Day 1-2 Mexico City

Arrive at any time. Check into our hotel and enjoy the city. Please try to arrive before 6pm for an important group meeting where you can meet the Chief Experience Officer (CEO) and the other group members.

Explore one of the world's largest metropolitan areas or take an optional day trip to the famous archaeological site of Teotihuacán. Today, Mexico City is the world's fastest-growing urban centre, offering a great variety of impressive museums and galleries as well as a wealth of architectural styles likely unequalled anywhere else in the Americas. Mexico City--or D.F., as the locals refer to it--also hosts a variety of food to complement its impressive visual style. If you prefer to get outside the city, the pyramids of Teotihuacán and the canals and gardens of Xochimilco are two good places to start. A former Aztec capital, Teotihuacán was destroyed in the struggle against Cortez and the Spanish conquistadors who followed him. You can still see some of the ruins of the great Tenochtitlán in the city centre, and a subway takes you through one of the temples. At night, you'll have the option to witness the high-flying practitioners of "lucha libre," Mexico's world-famous brand of wrestling. Combatants don colourful masks and catapult themselves towards their opponents off of the ring's ropes, employing a variety of different moves and holds to pin them to the mat for a three-count. The largely Mexican crowds are usually rowdy, making "lucha libre" an entertaining way to throw yourself head-first into the local culture.

A word of caution: Mexico City may be slightly overwhelming at first. The world's most populous centre is a crowded, smoggy, urban place where the altitude combined with atmospheric conditions may cause irritation of eyes, nose and throat. Also be aware that the heat may affect you upon arrival, with a general sense of lethargy and/or loss of appetite. This is no cause for alarm; it is simply a reaction to the heat. Be sure to drink plenty of water (cold bottled water is available everywhere) and do not attempt too much in any given day. We prefer fan-cooled rather than air conditioned rooms to avoid having to acclimatize to the heat and humidity every time you go outside. This is also a more eco-friendly method compared to air conditioning.

Day 3 Puebla

We board one of Mexico's comfortable buses for the journey to Puebla, famous for its hand-painted tiles, unique handicrafts, and rich colonial history. We will start with an included orientation walking tour and then you'll be free to explore in more depth.

Also famous for its unique molé poblano (a mouth-watering spicy sauce made with cocoa and infinite varieties of chilies), Puebla has managed to incorporate its colonial past within a growing and progressive modern city centre. There are enough churches and well-maintained colonial buildings to satisfy the most ardent lover of architecture. The markets, of course, are also some of the best places for shopping, browsing or photographing. If you want to get out of town, you can head to nearby Cholula, home to a massive pyramid that hosts a church at the top and is now covered by the town, to catch an impressive sunset.

Estimated Travel Time: 2 hours

Approximate Distance: 130 km

Day 4-6 Oaxaca

Colourful and lively markets and the impressive Zapotec ruins of Monte Albán are just two of many reasons to visit wonderful Oaxaca. There is an included orientation tour and then plenty of time for you to explore this beautiful town. The conqueror of Mexico, Hernán Cortez, chose the Valley of Oaxaca as his personal domain in the Americas and many visitors have followed in his footsteps. Surrounded by the Sierra Madre del Sur and Sierra Madre de Oaxaca mountain ranges, Oaxaca is a lovely colonial city, which has maintained not only the physical structures, but also the serenity of an era gone by.

Monte Albán, a spectacular grouping of pre-Hispanic (Zapotec) mountain top temples, is just a short bus ride away, as is the Valley of Mitla with its colourful ruins and hand-loomed carpets. Stepping from the cultural to the culinary, Oaxaca is also a great area for

trying out new tastes and textures. From the sublime to the exotic, the restaurants and markets around town will challenge you to one adventure after another. After all, this is the home of Mezcal (look for the unfortunate worm at the bottom), Oaxaca chocolate, cheese, and yes, even dried grasshoppers covered with chili and lime, if you are so inclined.

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hours

Approximate Distance: 320 km

On the evening of day 6 we take a night bus to San Cristobal de las Casas.

Day 7-8 San Cristóbal de las Casas

Crossing into the highlands we make our way to the colonial city of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Known for its ties to the Zapatista revolution, San Cristóbal is also an architectural and cultural wonder. We have the option to take a trip to some of the outlying villages and learn how locals combine traditional beliefs and modern religion with intriguing results. Tours go into local homes to learn about day-to-day village life—an experience which should not be missed. You can also take a horse ride in the mountains, a day trip to Sumidero Canyon or mountain biking in the local hills.

The Highlands of southwestern Mexico retain a more traditional feel. Only about 210 km (130 miles) separate the Atlantic and the Pacific, at the hot heavily jungled Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Entering the state of Chiapas, you will see and feel its uniqueness. This is the richest area of Mexico in natural resources, yet it is also home to the poorest citizens of the country. The mountains of Chiapas are the birthplace of the revolutionary Commandante Marcos and the Zapatista movement. It is also home to some of Mexico's poorest people, the majority of whom are of pure or mixed indigenous descent.

San Cristóbal De Las Casas, the old State Capital, stands in a high mountain valley at 2110m (6921 ft). An included orientation tour will introduce you to the city and help give you your bearings. You will find fine examples of 16th century architecture, including a church whose engraved altar is solid silver, and a crown shaped fountain. The city enjoys a temperate climate and most visitors find that walking the old cobble-stoned streets is the best way to discover the city's past and present. The city's mountain valley setting and proximity to the jungle of the Chiapas lowlands, also allows various opportunities for outdoor activities like hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding, where you will appreciate the natural scenery of the area.

Most indigenous groups in this area are members of the Tzotzil and Tzeltal groupings. Within these groups are the Tenejapans who wear black knee-length tunics, the Chamulans who wear white wool tunics and the Zinacantecos who wear multi-coloured outfits, with the ribbons on their hats signifying how many children they have. The people here are as curious about foreigners as foreigners are about them. Please respect their traditions. Dress conservatively when visiting the villages and refrain from photographing religious ceremonies, or individuals who do not wish to be photographed.

Estimated Travel Time: 12 hours

Approximate Distance: 630 km

Day 9-10 Palenque

A travel day by bus through the mountains takes us to the outskirts of Palenque. We travel through the Chiapas highlands, passing spectacular Misol-Ha and Agua Azul waterfalls, considered sacred by the Maya. One of the most significant ruins in the whole Mundo Maya, Palenque is set within the lushness of the Chiapas jungle, and the colourful, riotous wildlife and profuse flora will impress you as much as the ancient structures will.

The ruins of Palenque are impressive indeed, particularly the central Temple of the Inscriptions. It was here in 1952 that a large sarcophagus was found by Mexican archaeologist Alberto Ruz; it contained the mummified remains of Lord Pakal, the last of the city's great rulers.

In Palenque temples abound, with over 200 buildings of varying size and complexity. The sculptured wall panels and fantastic comb-like decorations on their still-intact roofs are undoubtedly amongst the most exquisite achievements of the Maya. The surrounding jungle growth and its bird life are as fascinating as the ruins, with toucans, macaws and the unmistakable Howler Monkeys making the park their home.

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hours

Approximate Distance: 190 km

Day 11-12 Mérida

Hit the highway with the locals crossing the States of Chiapas, Tabasco, and Campeche to Yucatan state and its capital, Mérida. Mérida was founded in 1542 on the site of the Mayan city of Tihoo. An included orientation walking tour will help give you your bearings. The city's centre, the Plaza Mayor (or zocalo), is green and shady and is surrounded by the twin-towered 16th Century

Cathedral, City Hall, State Government Palace, and the Casa de Montejo. There are several 16th and 17th century churches scattered throughout the city, as well as some interesting museums. Mornings are the best time to visit the busy and colourful markets where you can buy traditional crafts, a good selection of Mayan replicas, or try out new and wonderful food items; nearby Calle 65 is the main shopping street.

Be sure to stroll down the Paseo de Montejo (or take a horse drawn calesa ride), lined with shops, restaurants and stately mansions dating from the late 19th century. Go see the murals at the Municipal Palace or visit the newly renovated Anthropological Museum to learn more about Mayan history. Mérida is a fascinating and beautiful city, and easy to explore on foot.

If cities aren't your thing, escape to the beach town of Progreso and see the Dzibilchaltun ruins on the way. Mérida is also the gateway to the Mayan ruins of the Puuc Route, the most famous of which is Uxmal, which rivals Chichén Itzá in its scale and extent of excavation.

Estimated Travel Time: 9 hours

Approximate Distance: 550 km

Day 13 Chichén Itzá/Playa del Carmen

Begin the day with a visit to the beautifully restored stepped pyramids of Chichén Itzá. The city of Chichén Itzá was founded in 432 and taken over by the Toltecs in the 10th century. Today it is probably the most visited and best-restored site in the Mayan world; it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988. Some of the finest examples of Mayan architecture ever excavated can be found here, including El Castillo with a balustrade of 91 steps up each of the four sides, a ball court with a grandstand and towering walls and the famous observatory. The attention to detail and fusion of architecture, science and religion within the structures and city itself is impressive.

Chichén Itzá is best known for an amazing phenomenon: during the spring and fall equinoxes, the light of the rising and setting sun projects the sun's rays into a diamond-back rattlesnake of light and shadow. The shadow forms the illusion of a snake ascending or descending the giant staircase of El Castillo, a reference to Kukulcan, the serpent-like god of the Maya.

An impressive cenote, or sinkhole, can be seen only five minutes walk from the main plaza. It's said that ancient ceremonies of offering and sacrifice were performed here for the Mayan rain god, Chac.

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hours

Approximate Distance: 340 km

Day 14-16 Playa del Carmen

The once sleepy village of Playa del Carmen is quickly becoming a destination among sun worshippers worldwide. Stroll along the cool, white sands of the Caribbean coast, spend your time snorkelling among the mangroves, diving in underground caverns, or simply sipping on cool margaritas and catching some rays. Playa del Carmen is also known for its vibrant nightlife.

Just off the coast is the island of Cozumel, renowned for its world-class diving. Take the ferry from Playa del Carmen (30 to 75 minutes depending on the boat) across the turquoise waters and explore the towns and the reefs of the island. For a first dose of ruins, Tulum is just a 45-minute drive south of Playa. Aside from its unusual late Mayan architecture, it offers possibly the most appealing setting for any ruins, as it is located on a palm-fringed, white-sand beach, where you can even go for a swim within the ancient walls.

Day 17-19 Caye Caulker

For many years Belize has been a relatively unknown destination, and tourists have only recently begun to explore this fascinating country. Mention Belize and you may conjure up visions of unbelievably clear blue waters, diving and snorkelling along the barrier reef and remarkable marine life. Belize also boasts huge swaths of jungle, ancient Mayan ruins, and above all, friendly, easygoing people. Belize is all this and much more!

As a peaceful, democratic and English speaking country, Belize is an anomaly in the region; it seems in many ways not to belong in Central America at all. In many ways, Belize has more in common with its Caribbean rather than its Latin neighbours, although it has plenty of distinctively Central American features as well. Its unique blend of cultures includes Maya, Mestizo, African, European, Arabic and Asian. English is the first official language (as a former British Colony) and Spanish runs a close second, though the locals speak Creole the majority of the time.

Caye Caulker is a relaxed and easy-going island with friendly and welcoming local residents. The main street is a sandy pathway through the centre of town surrounded by small bakeshops, seafood stands and bars. There is not much to do on the island except relax and explore the reef. Snorkel and dive boats leave daily for full or half-day outings to the reef, Hol Chan Marine Reserve, the

Blue Hole and manatee spotting tours at Swallow Caye.

The barrier reef is the world's second longest (after Australia's) and offers some truly amazing sights including coral canyons and an astonishing range of tropical fish, Manta Rays, sharks and barracudas, as well as the more mundane, edible varieties of fish.

Estimated Travel Time: 12 hours

Approximate Distance: 480 km

Day 20-21 San Ignacio

From the town of San Ignacio, opportunities abound for exploring Belize's little known inland scenic beauty. With your free time here, you may choose to explore the area by foot, canoe or horse, take a caving trip, or visit the Mountain Pine Ridge Area and swim in its inviting pools and rivers.

As a peaceful, democratic and English speaking country, Belize is an anomaly. It seems in many ways not to belong in Central America at all. To an extent, it is more a Caribbean nation than a Latin one, looking out from the coast rather than inland for its trade and alliances. On the other hand, it has plenty of distinctively Central American features. It offers a unique blend of cultures that includes, in a tiny population, people of Maya, Mestizo, African, European, Asian and Arab descent. Aside from the rich and lyrical local Creole, Spanish is also spoken throughout the country. For many years Belize has been a relatively unknown destination, and only recently have tourists begun to discover its wonders, including the western hemisphere's longest barrier reef (second only to Australia's).

The San Ignacio/ Mountain Pine Ridge area is the highlight of the trip for some travellers to Belize. The Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve covers almost 500 square kms (310 square miles) and only controlled logging is allowed. Interesting stops include Hidden Valley Falls, spectacular waterfalls dropping more than a 300 m (984 ft) over the granite edge of the jungle. Further along you will cross the Rio On, and a climb over an assortment of worn boulders and rocks will bring you to a delightful site with waterfalls and several warm water pools. The Mountain Pine Ridge area is also renowned for its system of caves, the biggest and most famous being the Rio Frio Cave. There is an enormous arched entrance into the kilometre-long cave, the largest in Belize.

Also well worth a visit, the Cave of the Stone Scepter, Actun Tunichil Muknal involves a 45-minute jungle hike to the opening of the cave, wading across a river three times before the adventure begins! Inside the cave, you'll find a Mayan ceremonial site. There you will be amazed by the natural museum of Mayan relics left just as it was by the Maya 1400 years ago. Ceramic pots, skulls, and calcified skeletons will enthrall even the most experienced speleologist.

Days trips can also be arranged to Xunantunich, an impressive Maya ceremonial centre located on a natural limestone ridge providing a grand view of the entire Cayo District and Guatemalan countryside. The tallest pyramid on the site, El Castillo, has been partially excavated and explored, and the east side of the structure displays a unique stucco frieze. The plaza of the ceremonial centre houses three carved stellae. You can get a group together and hire a taxi to take you to the site. Getting there includes crossing a narrow river by a hand-cranked ferry which shuttles you across! There is a small fee to enter the grounds and a guide can give you the lowdown on the site.

Estimated Travel Time: 3 hours

Approximate Distance: 110 km

Day 22 Flores

Cross the border into Guatemala and you immediately notice the difference in culture, with its heavy Mayan influence and Spanish language. Here we have entered Guatemala's northeast jungle Petén region. The descendants of the Maya of Chichén Itzá migrated to the Petén area several centuries after the collapse of the great Mayan cities in the Yucatán.

It was in this region of great natural beauty that their descendants founded the city of Tayasal, on an island in Lake Petén-Itzá. They lived here for about four hundred years, isolated and forgotten by the rest of the country, including the Spanish conquistadors. It was not until 1697 that this small city was finally conquered by a military expedition led by Martín de Ursúa, who stumbled upon the city by accident. The city of Tayasal was transformed into the city of Flores, officially founded by the Spanish in 1700. It remained an isolated area, relying on the subsistence farming of corn and beans and the gathering of chicle (gummy rubber obtained from trees).

Despite the recent growth in the Petén, Flores remains a small island town, with narrow, cobble-stoned streets, small, brightly painted houses and friendly people. Few modern conveniences are embraced here, and though the island is now attached to the mainland by a causeway, many of the locals still get around by cayuco (dug-out canoe). All in all, Flores remains one of the most scenic and charming towns in the Petén. It is particularly attractive to visitors because of Lake Petén-Itzá, a large lake (12 km long and 3 km wide) offering all sorts of possibilities for fun including swimming, boating, fishing, bird watching, a small zoo and a nature

preserve.

The sheer scale of the ruins at Tikal may at first seem daunting. If you make it only to the main plaza or spend an hour relaxing in deep contemplation, you certainly won't be disappointed. The central area, with its five main temples, forms by far the most impressive section. Explore beyond this and you can wander endlessly into the maze of smaller structures and outlying complexes hidden in the jungle growth. If your energy levels are high enough to make it to the top of Temple IV—the tallest structure in the Mayan world—spectacular views of the surrounding jungle canopy greet you. Peaks of the various temple complexes rise above the trees, giving a sense of the enormous scale of the site, impossible to gauge from ground level where the view is obscured by dense jungle. Occasionally you may spot toucans, macaws and other bright birds from this artificial perch within the greenery. Marvel at the engineering and organizational skills needed to construct this city within the jungle.

Note that the rainy season in the Petén is generally from mid-May until early January. Be prepared to get wet during this time. Make sure you have plastic bags to wrap around the items in your daypack while hiking, and bring a good (light) waterproof jacket. Also make sure that you have strong insect repellent. The dry season runs January until mid-May. During this time you need to make sure you have adequate sunscreen.

Estimated Travel Time: 3 hours

Approximate Distance: 130 km

Day 23-24 Río Dulce

Travelling by bus past dense jungle we arrive at Río Dulce, a small town on Lake Izabal and a port stop for boaters around the globe, on their way to/from Livingston and the Caribbean coast. Río Dulce is a popular destination for yachts cruising from the Lake to the Caribbean coast along the Río Dulce. There are plenty of opportunities for R & R aside from boating on Lake Izabal. There are optional tours in the area to view protected manatees, or you may opt to horseback ride through a rubber plantation, explore San Felipe fort in Livingston, cruise along the Lake Izabal to relax in the thermal springs or hike through the jungle-strewn trails in the Chocón-Machacas Natural Reserve area.

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hours

Approximate Distance: 210 km

Day 25-26 Antigua

Once the third largest city in all of Spanish America, Antigua served as Guatemala's capital city for more than 200 years until an earthquake destroyed it in 1773. In 1979 UNESCO declared Antigua a World Heritage site, and Antigua today is a peaceful colonial city that is a pleasure to explore. Your tour leader will give you an orientation walking tour to introduce you to the city. Walk through quiet cobblestone streets past rebuilt stucco homes with heavy, beautifully carved wooden entrances.

The point of reference for finding one's way around Antigua is the Central Park, and the place to be in the late afternoons/evenings. You can pick up a map from the tourist office located on the ground floor of the Palace of the Captains-General on the south side of the central park. Explore the museums and colonial buildings, or just soak up the atmosphere in this delightful city, one of the best-restored Spanish colonial cities in the world.

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hours

Approximate Distance: 290 km

Day 27-28 Chichicastenango/Panajachel/Lake Atitlán homestay (1D)

A visit to Guatemala would not be complete without the chance to visit to the famous market of Chichicastenango. Unless you can resist the wonderful handmade items for sale, you should sharpen your communication and bargaining skills. The Chichicastenango market is the best known, but there are a number of other markets around where you may wish to purchase any number of handicraft items. Renowned for its colourful handicrafts and intricate weavings, "Chichi" is also an important trading place for the local residents, and provides close views of daily life of modern Maya. There are also a number of community cooperatives that you may wish to visit. The proceeds from the sales return directly to the community and are a significant contribution to the local economy. Along with your souvenirs you'll take home memories to last a lifetime.

We then travel through the hills and fertile fields to the shores of Guatemala's most beautiful lake, Lake Atitlán. We can survey the surroundings by horse or on foot, or take a boat trip across the lake, from our base in the lake side town of Panajachel. Lake Atitlán is one of the most beautiful spots in Guatemala. Twelve native villages, blue/grey mountains and three volcanoes line the shores of this lake resulting in a wonderful combination of unusual natural beauty and traditional culture.

Panajachel is a relatively modern town with paved streets in its centre and a great deal of old world flavour and charm. The best way to see Panajachel is on foot, but pay attention to where you're going as there aren't any street signs. Visit the old churches and

explore the back streets to see the more traditional side of Panajachel. You'll have the opportunity to visit the villages on the lake by boat, departing in the mornings and returning in late afternoon. Get ready for spectacular views of the surrounding volcanoes, and everyday life in a highland village. The people of this area have received tourists for some time, and are friendly and ready to smile at strangers as readily as they will at a life long friend. The area is also ideal for outdoor pursuits like swimming, fishing, hiking, bird watching, kayaking, and horseback riding. Note: Please dress conservatively when visiting the villages and refrain from photographing religious ceremonies, or individuals who do not wish to be photographed.

We will overnight one night in the small town of San Juan la Laguna, home to 3000 inhabitants, mostly Mayas. Tonight, the group will be spread out among a number of homes, and you will sleep in a local home, where dinner will also be provided. This once in a lifetime experience will really help you to gain a better understanding of the day-to-day life of the locals in this region. G Adventures' partner organization in this town is working hard with the Tz'Utuil Maya to provide positive interaction with travellers through local tourism. The organization also works with the local schools to ensure needed materials are available to teachers and students.

Estimated Travel Time: 4 hours

Approximate Distance: 80 km

Day 29-30 Antigua

Next we travel through the hills and fertile fields back up to Antigua. The trip from Lake Atitlan is a 95km drive on winding mountain roads. The natural scenery is striking with high mountain peaks surrounding deep valleys, and every inch of land covered with lush growth.

Antigua has various specialties that make shopping here very worthwhile. Textiles sold here and in the nearby towns are of the highest quality, beautifully designed and woven on foot looms or the more traditional back-strap loom. Jade, in carved statues and jewellery, is sold in several factories and shops in town and silver jewellery is sold in the better shops and also in a silver factory in nearby San Felipe de Jesus. The city also offers good buys in ceramics and antiques as well. For the museum and gallery buffs, one of the best in the Central America is found in the Hotel Casa Santo Domingo. It houses colonial religious, contemporary Latin American and pre-Colombian art pieces. These form only part of the galleries and museums of the 5-star Hotel Santo Domingo, formerly a Dominican monastery.

Antigua is a popular centre for Spanish study, and here you will find dozens of schools and a collection of students from around the globe. Because of the international population, there is no shortage of restaurants, bars and activities available in Antigua. You'd have to try very hard to get bored!

There are also plenty of fun day trips available from Antigua, one of the most popular being a climb of still-smoking Pacaya Volcano.

Day 30 is our last day with those on the Mayan Sun tour, and a chance to meet new friends who are joining us on the Volcano Trail tour.

Estimated Travel Time: 4 hours

Approximate Distance: 80 km

Day 31-32 Copán

The Mayan ruins of Copán are fascinating, beautiful and unique among Mayan cities. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1980, Copán contains some of the most important Mayan ruins found to date, and many unusual artistic features. Visitors walk through grassy plazas filled with intricately carved and decorated monuments, statues and staircases. Huge carved faces stare at you from ancient walls and bring the place to life, causing renewed wonder at the mysterious disappearance of such a creative civilization.

The colonial highland town of Copán Ruinas is a charming and relaxing place. This town has a lot more to offer than just the ruins. Opt to explore the nearby hills on horseback and check out some lesser known Mayan sites along the way or check out a local private macaw reserve that is also home to a large variety of other birds on the property. If neither of those appeal, you can journey to some local hot springs for a relaxing soak.

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hours

Approximate Distance: 200 km

Day 33-35 Roatan Island

After another full day of travel through the hills of Honduras, we arrive at the coast and ferry across to paradise. A SCUBA diving haven amidst what is part of the second largest barrier reef in the world, Roatan is a Caribbean-style island made famous for its marine treasures. Crystal blue waters invite swimming, diving, snorkeling, or simply relax on the white, sand beaches of the Bay

Islands. You will also get a break from practicing Spanish because as a former British colony, many locals here speak English.

Roatan is surrounded by over 100km (62 miles) of living, protected reef that is home to thousands of species of fantastically coloured fish and marine life. The beaches of the western end are some of the most beautiful in the world, with clear turquoise water, powdery white sand and swaying coconut palms. While many people spend their days immersed in the warm, blue Caribbean waters and enjoying excellent fresh seafood, you may also opt to venture into the hilly interior by bicycle or scooter. The botanical gardens offer relaxed walking amidst exotic plants and racing “Jesus Lizards”, a species of lizard that runs on its hind legs, even over water! In nearby Sandy Bay the Institute for Marine Sciences and the Roatan museum are definitely worth a visit.

Estimated Travel Time: 12 hours

Approximate Distance: 350 km

Day 36 Tegucigalpa

Leave Utila by ferry and catch a glimpse of Honduras' famous Mosquito Coast. Spend the full day travelling from sea level to the highlands, through rainforest and along scenic mountain roads, ending in Tegucigalpa.

Tegucigalpa, or "Tegus" as it's known by the locals, has been the capital city of Honduras since 1880. Located in the southern part of Honduras, Tegucigalpa is nestled in a valley at an elevation of approximately 3000 feet, surrounded by a chain of tree-covered mountains. This creates an ideal climate; Tegucigalpa is tropical yet cool, with less humidity in comparison with other major Central American cities. Already a settlement of indigenous Lenca people, the Spanish arrived in the area during the mid-16th century and began transforming it into a major mining centre for silver and gold. Evidence of this can be seen in several colonial buildings such as the cathedral of St. Michael Archangel.

Estimated Travel Time: 9 hours

Approximate Distance: 350 km

Day 37-38 Granada

Nicaragua has flourished in recent years and boasts both friendly people and impressive natural beauty. The active volcanoes and lakes that surround it compliment Granada's colonial charm, and there are many fun easy day trips available. Hike, cruise, or just explore the city's markets and museums. Walking is probably the easiest way to see all the sights of Granada, your tour leader will give you an initial orientation walking tour of the city and then you have plenty of time to explore in more depth.

Located on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, Granada is Nicaragua's third largest and its oldest city, and it still retains its traditional Spanish colonial character. In the warm evenings you can usually find friendly neighbours visiting with each other and chatting from rocking chairs in the open front room of their homes. Frequently live local music is played in the square, and the city has a long park ideal for strolling.

Estimated Travel Time: 12 hours

Approximate Distance: 370 km

Day 39-40 Ometepe

The landscape on Ometepe, an island on Lake Nicaragua, is dominated by two towering volcanoes: Concepción at 1610 m (5281 feet), and Madera, at 1340m (4395 feet). If you enjoy a challenge, hiking Maderas volcano is an option...but not an easy one! Otherwise the island is ideal for swimming, as it is surrounded by beaches, and has several jungle swim-holes. The island is also famous for its stone statues and ancient petroglyphs made by the Chorotega people.

Also known as La Mar Dulce (the Sweet Sea), Lake Nicaragua is the largest lake in Central America and the tenth largest freshwater lake in the world. Forty-five rivers flow into the lake and it is home to the unique lake shark, the world's only species of freshwater shark. The wildlife on the island is abundant and includes several species of monkeys and green parrots. The otherworldly roar of a Howler monkey (you'll think it's a jaguar) can be heard for several miles.

Stay in a homestay in a small community on Ometepe and get to know how the locals live.

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 60 km

Day 41-42 Monteverde

Costa Rica is a natural gem because of its breathtaking flora and fauna. Travelling into the cool cloud and rainforests of Monteverde, we have a glimpse of how lush ecosystems truly are works of art. Take time to bird watch, ride a horse, mountain bike, or ride a zip line over the rainforest canopy.

Spend two days exploring Monteverde and the Forest Reserve, truly a nature lover's paradise. Local guides are extremely knowledgeable about the area and passionate about conservation of this precious ecosystem. The unique community has several local co-operatives worth visiting including artist collectives and a cheese factory. If you're there at the right time of year, you may be lucky enough to see the Resplendent Quetzal, one of the most beautiful and elusive birds in the world. Optional activities include the Sky Walk, a series of suspension bridges through the jungle canopy, a butterfly garden and a thrilling canopy zip line.

If you have pre-booked the Costa Rica Adrenaline Theme Pack, your ziplining experience will be on Day 42.

Monteverde or "Green Mountain", is exactly what you find at the end of the long, rutted dirt road through the mountains. The surrounding pastures were once covered with dense forest, but today only a small piece of it remains. That piece of forest has been preserved as the Reserva Biologica Bosque Nuboso Monteverde, the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve. Cloud forest is much like a rainforest, but much of the moisture comes not from falling rain but from the condensation left by the nearly constant cloud cover that blankets the tops of mountains in many parts of the tropics. Monteverde Reserve covers 1600 hectares of forest and is home to a great variety of wildlife. More than 2,000 species of plants, 320 bird species and 100 different species of mammals inhabit this small area. The Santa Elena Reserve, another park contiguous with Monteverde, is less well known and visited but also worth seeing. All proceeds from this park profit the local community.

The village of Monteverde was founded in the 1950s by Quakers from the United States. Looking to leave behind the constant fear of war and objecting to being forced to support continued militarism through their taxes, the Quakers chose Costa Rica because of its commitment to a non-militaristic economic path - Costa Rica's army was dissolved in the 1940s. Since its founding, Monteverde has grown slowly as others who shared the original Quaker founders' ideals moved to the area. Although the Quakers came here to farm the land, they recognized the need to preserve the rare cloud forest that covers the mountain slopes above their fields. The community is very different from those on the coast, and offers several souvenir shops and the Quaker cheese factory, which is definitely worth a visit. Make sure to try their ice cream!

Estimated Travel Time: 10 hours

Approximate Distance: 240 km

Day 43-44 La Fortuna/Arenal

La Fortuna, the town near the foot of Arenal Volcano is an excellent base for adventure. Hike the area's nature trails, swim in chilly La Fortuna waterfall or go canyoneering (rappelling) and catch a bird's eye view of the forest greenery. Other optional activities include full-day white water rafting on the Toro or Arenal Rivers, mountain biking, caving, horseback riding, or a tour of the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. Like much of Costa Rica, the area is a birders' paradise, with over 600 species as permanent residents. Finally, after a long day of exploring, take a relaxing soak in the lush, cascading hot springs of Tabacón Resort or Baldi Hot Springs. Soak in one of the natural thermal baths and rivers under the shade of the surrounding canopy.

If you have pre-booked the Costa Rica Adrenaline Theme Pack, your rafting and canyoneering adventures will be on Day 44.

Set on the northern plains of Costa Rica, Arenal Volcano sits on the southeast shore of artificial Lake Arenal (77 square kilometres, or 48 square miles). Separating the mountain ranges of Guanacaste and Tilarán, the lake was created by a hydroelectric dam. Winds sweeping off the Caribbean Sea reach speeds of 48 to 72 km/hr (30 to 45 mph), across Lake Arenal you can find one of the best locations in the world to go windsurfing. The volcano, once quite active, has been in a dormant state since the beginning of 2011 but still is a dramatic backdrop to the town of La Fortuna.

Estimated Travel Time: 4 hours

Approximate Distance: 50 km

Day 45-46 San José

Return to San José for our final night on the town for those on the Central American Journey. It is also the arrival day for passengers on our Panama Experience.

Located in the central highlands, San José enjoys a moderate climate. Like most cities, San José has its good and bad sides. It is the centre of government, theatre, and art, as well as of air pollution and congestion. It has beautiful parks and museums, and a few beggars on the streets. It is big and often noisy, but even from its crowded downtown streets, you'll often enjoy a view of the surrounding lush mountains.

Start your exploration of the city in the main plaza, a great place to people-watch. A mime, juggler, marimba band, magician, or storyteller may be performing for whatever is collected when the hat is passed. Artisan booths are common, creating a regular arts

and crafts fair atmosphere.

A source of pride for the Ticos (Costa Ricans) is the National Theatre. Inaugurated in 1897, the building was paid for by coffee growers through a voluntary tax on every bag of coffee exported. The National Museum, housed in the Bellavista Fortress, offers exhibits on pre-Columbian art, colonial art and furniture and religious art within a 19th century building that was converted from a military fortress after the army was abolished.

The Museum of Costa Rican Art, located in La Sabana Park, used to be the international airport and the museum is now housed in the old terminal building. The Jade Museum is on the 11th floor of the Instituto Nacional de Seguros building. In addition to the marvelous collection of jade objects, there are pre-Columbian ceramic and stone works as well as displays with archaeological and ethnographic information. The Gold Museum is located underneath the Plaza de la Cultura. Its spectacular collection of indigenous gold art belongs to the Central Bank of Costa Rica.

The best and least expensive places to buy souvenirs in San José are the markets. The two main ones are the ones in Plaza de la Cultura, which is an outdoor open market, and the Central Market, where handicrafts are sold along with boots, fish, flour, herbal remedies, shirts and everything else you can imagine. Always watch your belongings and be ready for crowds.

Probably the hardest thing you will do in San José, other than get safely across busy streets, is keep the street numbering systems straight. Street and avenue numbers are posted on buildings at the corners of some intersections. Keep looking as you walk, and you will eventually find one.

NOTE: Like any city where tourism is on the increase, crime also tends to increase and while San José is not a noticeably dangerous city, there are certain precautions you should take. Make sure that you are aware of your things at all times and don't go out carrying expensive gear or jewelry.

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 150 km

Day 47-48 Puerto Viejo de Talamanca

An incredible bus ride to Costa Rica's Caribbean coast brings us to the picturesque village of Puerto Viejo de Talamanca. Fourteen kilometres of incomparable white and black sand beaches are surrounded by exotic tropical vegetation. There are several optional activities available; rent a bike or hire a boat to Manzanillo, hike to Monkey Point through the Gandoca - Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge or try snorkelling. Or, just take it easy and explore La Isla Botanical Gardens.

Rent a boogie board if the waves are calling, dance the night away to reggae and calypso, taste flavourful Afro-Caribbean cuisine, and succumb to the natural beauty of this tropical paradise. This area of Costa Rica was quite isolated until a road was built a only a couple of decades ago, and it still hasn't lost its charm.

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 180 km

Day 49-51 Bocas del Toro

Crossing into Panama, we travel by means of buses then a boat to arrive at the Archipelago of Bocas del Toro, which means the bull's mouth. Our time here offers us plenty of opportunities to snorkel, scuba dive, or just relax on the beach.

The Archipelago of Bocas del Toro is made up of 6 islands, only 2 of which have roads and services for tourists. The islands are very unique in many ways. The islands and closest shoreline are an isolated pocket of lowlands, between the mountains and swamps of most of nearby mainland. Because of this, there is much wildlife and fauna, which are found only in this region and nowhere else! The islands are mostly covered in rainforest, and have spectacular beaches perfect for sunbathing, swimming, and snorkeling or diving.

Estimated Travel Time: 7 hours

Approximate Distance: 70 km

Day 52-53 Boquete

Leaving the coast we have a long day of travel on the mainland up into the mountain retreat of Boquete. A plethora of outdoor options await us here, including numerous hikes, white water rafting and a tour of a coffee plantation.

The picturesque town of Boquete is nestled in a green mountain valley, with a beautiful river running through it. The town is well known for its cool, fresh climate and unspoiled natural environment, making it an outdoor lover's paradise. There are numerous

hiking tours to choose from, as well as horseback riding and white water rafting. It is also a good place to just relax in the mountain climate as a break from the lowland heat. For the coffee lovers, there are many plantations that offer tours of their factories as well as taste tests.

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hours

Approximate Distance: 340 km

Day 54-56 Santa Catalina

This small, friendly and laid-back town on the Pacific coast is the perfect place to wind down. In addition to relaxing on one of the 2 black-sand beaches, your options include fishing, snorkelling, boat trips, diving and surfing as well as exploring numerous nature trails that lead to other remote beaches and wildlife viewing opportunities such as flocks of parrots which inhabit the hills around Santa Catalina.

The word “panama” is an indigenous word meaning an abundance of fish and Santa Catalina emphasises the origins of this name. Large schools of tuna, wahoo, and other game fish can often be seen as well as white tip reef sharks. Seeing eagle rays, barracudas, and turtles is also quite common. From June to September, sightings of humpback whales, wintering from South America are possible.

Santa Catalina is the closest access point to Coiba Island part of the nation's largest marine park which has been described as a cross between the Galapagos and Cocos Islands. Time and weather permitting it may be possible to organise an optional boat trip to explore this marine park.

Day 57-58 Panama City

Lying in the centre of Panama's southern coast, the country's capital is a modern, bustling city, thanks to the enormous trade and commerce that passes through each year. However, there are plenty of other reasons to visit the Panama City aside from the world-famous canal. The city has a long and varied history, and the site was an important stop on the “Gold trail” of treasures being shipped from the Spanish colonies in the Americas back to the motherland. For this reason, the early settlement was attacked numerous times and at one time the city was burned to the ground. This part of the city is now known as Panama La Vieja (Old Panama) and still has some great old buildings, as well as some interesting museums that document the history of the region.

After the fire, the city was relocated 8 km away, on a small peninsula planners felt would be easier to defend. This area is now known as the “Casco Viejo,” and is surrounded by sea on 3 sides and a moat on the fourth, making it a very strategic location. The area is beautiful, and great for a glimpse into history with its narrow cobblestone streets and colonial-style buildings. Heading out of the city there is a fantastic 2 km-long causeway linking the city with 4 small islands off the coast. The causeway has great views of the city and ocean, and if you are lucky you can sometimes spot dolphins.

The Panama Canal is a fabulous example of modern engineering and is considered to be one of the engineering wonders of the world. Many times before was a canal attempted to join the two oceans at this point. The first to try were the French, but they encountered endless trials and catastrophes, in the end claiming the lives of 22,000 people—and the canal was abandoned. The United States eventually completed the canal in 1914, and today it extends 80 km across the country. Gigantic lock systems raise and lower the water levels, allowing ships to go from lake to lake (the canal is made up of entirely fresh water), and eventually from ocean to ocean. According to statistics, more than 12,000 ocean-going vessels pass through it a year—over 30 a day! Watching a freighter pass through the locks is something not to be missed.

Day 59 Panama City

Depart at any time.

StartFinish

Mexico City to Panama City

Combination

This trip combines our Mexico Ancient Civilizations [MMC](#), Mayan Sun [CMCA](#), Volcano Trail [JGS](#) and Panama Experience [CRSP](#) tours.

What's Included

Orientation walk in Puebla, Oaxaca, San Cristóbal De Las Casas, Mérida, Antigua and Granada, Guatemala homestay experience, Mayan Riviera beaches, Excursion to Bay Islands, Trip to Bocas del Toro Archipelago.

Dossier Disclaimer

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

1. Please note that this tour is a combination of several G Adventures tours. As such, your group tour leader, fellow passengers, or vehicle may change between the individual tour sections.
2. As this trip crosses national borders, please be prepared to pay some border fees for certain countries ranging from \$1 to \$20 USD. Please check with your local embassy or consulate for up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent.

Reverse Itinerary

This trip also runs in reverse - see trip code [JPX](#).

Group Leader Description

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders, a G Adventures representative, or an expedition team. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds.

Group Size Notes

Max 15, Avg 10

Your Fellow Travellers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and are likely to be of a variety of ages too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Meals Included

2 breakfasts, 3 dinners.

Meals

Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. The above information applies to G Adventures group trips. Please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

Meal Budget

Allow USD1380-1800 for meals not included.

Transport

Public bus, boat, van, taxi, walking.

Single Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Simple hotels, (54 nts), overnight bus (1 nt), local homestay (3 nts).

My Own Room

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops, with the following exceptions:

Night 6: Night bus

Night 27: Lake Atitlán homestay

Nights 49-51: Bocas del Toro

Nights 52-53: Boquete

Nights 54-56: Santa Catalina

About Accommodation

Please note if you are a single traveller, you can expect to share accommodation with one or two other travelers of the same sex for the duration of your trip. Using multi-share accommodation when available helps us to keep our operating cost down, and these savings are passed onto you. If you are traveling with a friend or companion, we will attempt to keep your accommodation on a twin or double basis, however, ask you to be open to the idea of occasional multi-share rooms.

We will be travelling through countries where cold water showers are the accepted norm. In keeping with our authentic tours, some of our hotels will not have hot water showers.

We embrace local culture while staying in San Juan in a Mayan Homestay. Here, you will be staying in a private room, but don't expect luxury. Just as it is for the locals, there might only be cold water, and you may share the facilities with the family. It is an authentic glimpse into their lives.

Joining Hotel

Hotel Metropol

Luis Moya 39

Colonia Centro

Mexico City, Mexico

Tel.: +52 55 1085 0830

Fax: +52 55 5512 1273

Joining Instructions

The easiest and safest way to get from Benito Juárez airport in Mexico City to your joining hotel is by authorized yellow cabs.

Upon arrival, the ticket for the cab has to be purchased inside the airport at the ticket booth. The ticket booth can be found right after you have cleared customs (For domestic arrivals it is located in the arrival hall). You will be asked for the address of your hotel, which can be found in your trips dossier under "Joining Hotel". You will receive a ticket for your taxi ride to the hotel, take this ticket outside and hand to the cab driver of the next taxi available who will take you to the hotel.

The ride should cost you between \$15 - \$20USD.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, so you may arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day in which no activities are planned. Your Tour Leader will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. Your Tour Leader will contact you at the hotel on Day 1 and make sure you are settled comfortably. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact G Adventures during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call our local office in San José, Costa Rica. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so that we may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

G Adventures San José, Costa Rica,
Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm local time (GMT -6).
Tel: Int. Dialing Code +506 2224-5560.

Costa Rica Emergency Cell Phone: +506 8322 9140 (after office hours).

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office in Costa Rica, we have a toll-free line within North America (or our regular direct line), which will connect you directly with our Toronto office.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Outside North America, Australia and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

We recommend the use of a duffel bag or backpack (whichever you find easiest to carry). A good size daypack is also essential.

Checklist

- USD cash
- Credit and/or debit card (see spending money)
- G Adventures vouchers, pre-departure information and trip details
- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required
- Camera and memory cards
- Charger for camera, phone, music device

- Reading/writing material
- Binoculars
- Cover for backpacks
- Flashlight
- Concealable money belt
- Fleece top
- Windproof/waterproof jacket
- Small towel and swim wear
- 4 shirts/t-shirts
- Sun hat
- 2 pairs of shorts
- 1 pairs of long trousers
- 1 pair hiking pants/track pants
- Hiking boots/ sturdy walking shoes
- Sport sandals
- Sun block
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Watch or alarm clock
- Water bottle
- Pocketknife
- First-aid kit (should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids, anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, motion sickness tablets if needed, DEET bug repellant, extra prescription drugs you may be taking).

Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

Visas

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy, or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE THE CORRECT TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION.

Destination Guide

For practical information on weather, typical costs, visa information, special events and much more, our Destination Travel Guide is the place to visit! This handy guide will tell you everything you need to know about everywhere we go! Head to <http://www.gadventures.com/travel-guide> for detailed information on the countries and cities we visit.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

Credit cards and debit cards are very useful for cash advances. Visa cards are the most widely accepted cards. While ATMs are widely available, there are no guarantees that your credit or debit cards will actually work in Latin America. Check with your bank. You should be aware that to purchase products or services on a credit card a fee of 5%-10% usually applies. Do not rely on credit or debit cards as your only source of money. A combination of US dollars cash and cards with travellers cheques as backup is best. Always take more rather than less, as you don't want to spoil the trip by constantly feeling short of funds.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE TIP: Please be advised that slightly torn notes, notes that have been heavily marked or are faded may be difficult to exchange. It is best to bring notes in fairly good condition, in denominations lower than 100USD (or equivalent).

GUATEMALA ATMs: Please note that daily withdrawal limits in this country are extremely low, currently set at 1000 quetzales - less than 140 USD. It is advisable to arrive with enough cash, if your daily needs exceed this amount.

As currency exchange rates can fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Departure Tax

Mexico exit tax by land: MXN290 (USD21)
Departing Belize - \$18.75USD
Entering Guatemala - 10 Quetzales
Entering Honduras - \$3USD
Entering Nicaragua - \$12USD
Departing Nicaragua - \$5USD
Costa Rica exit tax: free
Panama entrance tax: \$3USD
Panama airport exit tax: \$40USD (if not already included in flight)

These costs are subject to change and fluctuate from day to day.

Tipping

It is customary in Latin America to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and an expression of satisfaction with the persons who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$5-10 USD per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your tour leader for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures Tour Leader did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

Optional Activities

CUSTOMIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

Our trip designers work very hard to assemble the life-altering experiences that fill this brochure. That said, our travellers are a diverse group driven by all sorts of different tastes, motivations and interests. What's a trip designer to do? The solution? Theme Packs! Specially designed for travellers with unique interests, theme packs are optional add-ons to your G adventures trip that make your adventure more you-centric. Theme Packs must be booked prior to departure.

Theme Packs available on this trip:

COSTA RICA ADRENALINE THEME PACK

Loaded with high-adrenaline pursuits like waterfall-rappelling, rainforest-ziplining, canyon-trekking, river-rafting and other so-amazing-they-need-a-hyphen activities, the adrenaline pack pushes Costa Rica to the limit and beyond.

CANYONEERING Arenal, Half-day Rappel, down-climb, river-trace and descend huge waterfalls in the rugged mountains and lush rainforests around Costa Rica's arenal volcano.

RAFTING Rio Balsa, Half-day Paddle through rolling rapids, then splash about in tranquil river pools in an isolated rainforest river canyon with the help of experienced river guides.

ZIPLINING Monteverde, Half-day Get a true bird's-eye view of the rainforest canopy as you soar through the trees on a tarzan swing, a giant rappel and a 450-foot-high zipline.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES ON TOUR

All prices are per person, in USD amounts and are subject to change as services are provided by third party operators.

Mexico City:

Teotihuacan Ruins tour \$20
Bosque de Chapultepec tour \$40
Museum of Anthropology \$8
Tenochtitlan ruins \$5
Mariachis Garibaldi Square (free)
Diego Rivera murals (free).

Puebla:

Cholula visit \$5

Oaxaca:

Monte Aban Ruins tour \$40
Folkloric ballet \$10

San Cristobal de Las Casas:

Villages tour \$10-\$12
Lagunas de Montebello \$25-\$30
Sumidero Canyon \$20-\$25
Bicycle rental \$2/hour
Horseback riding \$10-\$20

Palenque:

Jungle hikes guided (great bird watching, monkeys) approx. \$100/group
Ruins Entrance \$4
Agua Azul/Misol-Ha \$10-\$12
Bonampak Ruins Entrance \$2
Bonampak Camping \$ 73

Mérida (Mexico):

City tour \$10
Celestún Bird Sanctuary \$35
Chichen Itza Entrance \$ 9
Uxmal Ruins tour \$35-\$40
Cenotes Snorkelling Tour \$15

Playa del Carmen (Mexico):

Snorkel rental \$5
Ferry to Cozumel \$18 roundtrip
Tulum \$10-40
Diving course \$350
Scuba diving (for already certified divers) \$40-110
Bicycle rental \$16 day
Horseback riding \$35-40
Dos Ojos Cenote Snorkeling Tour \$35

Caye Caulker:

Snorkel trips \$25 - \$45
Blue Hole dive tour \$180
Manatee & dolphins tour \$60
Snorkel equipment rental \$5 (day)
Windsurfing \$15 (for board & instruction/hour)
Sea kayaking \$12.50 (half-day) Two-tank dive \$60 -75
Sunset Sail Rum cruise \$25

San Ignacio (Belize):

Canoe rental \$12

Barton Creek Cave \$25 (4-hour return trip)
Mountain Pine Ridge \$35
Half-day caving \$15
Full-day caving \$80
Horseback riding \$20-\$50
Bicycle rental \$2.50/hour
Butterfly farm \$7.50
Xunantunich \$8

Flores: Boat tour:

Boat tour: Lake Petén Itzá \$12
Guided tour of Tikal - \$60 divided by number of participants - approx. \$6-12
Entrance fee for Tikal ruins \$8
Transport to/from Tikal \$8

Rio Dulce:

Hot Springs \$18
Boat trip to Livingston \$18 (includes a swim in the hot springs)
El Castillo Fort \$5
Horseback Riding \$25
Birdwatching Boat Tour \$25
Nature Walk \$13
Howler monkey kayak morning tour \$13-26 (depending on number of people)

Antigua (Guatemala):

City tour \$5 - \$20
Climb volcanoes \$10-\$12
Bicycle rental/tour \$5 - \$19
Coffee /Macadamia nut Plantation tour \$10
Salsa lessons \$4/hr Massages \$25
Mayan Horoscopes \$20

Panajachel:

Boat trip \$12 (to Santiago de Atitlán and San Pedro)
Bicycle rental \$1.60/hr
Kayak rental \$2/hr
Horseback riding \$50 (full day)
Volcano climb \$10
Nature Hike \$5

Copan:

Copan ruins entrance \$10
Copan guide \$25 for the group
Copan Museum \$5
Horseback riding \$15/3 hrs

Roatan/Bay Islands:

Intro Open water course \$240
One tank dive \$25
Snorkel rental \$5 - \$10
Moped Rental \$40
Boat tours \$10 - \$20
Bicycle rentals \$12

Granada:

Las Isleatas Boat tour \$15
Laguana Apoyo & Mirador Caterina \$15
Kayaking \$30

Taxi to/from Masaya market \$15

Tour of Mombacho volcano \$25

Ometepe:

Climb Volcan Masaya with a guide \$25

Climb Volcan Madera with a guide \$25

Bike Rentals \$12

Ojo de Agua spring \$2

Petroglyphs & Chaco Verde \$25

Horseback riding \$20 (4 hours)

Monteverde:

Ziplining \$45

Hanging bridges \$25

Horseback riding (\$25 for 1 ½ hours, \$30 for 2 hours, \$45 for 3 hours)

Butterfly garden \$12

Trapiche Tour \$30

Coffee tour \$25

Frog Pond \$12

Serpentarium \$10

ATV \$50 for a single, \$75 for a double

Night Walk \$22

Orchid Garden \$10

Santa Elena Reserve \$14 entrance (guided tour \$15 more per person)

Monteverde Cloud Forest \$17 entrance (guided tour \$17 more per person)

Cheese Factory \$10

Bat Jungle \$10

La Fortuna/ Arenal:

Rafting Class III and IV (Full day – 7 hours) \$75 (includes fruit on the river and lunch)

Rafting Class II and III (half day – 4.5 hours) \$65 (includes fruit on the river and lunch)

Canyoning/Rappelling tour \$75 (includes breakfast or lunch depending on tour time – 4 hours)

Mambo Combo (Rafting II and III with Canyoning) \$139.50 (8 hours)

Venado Cave Spelunking \$55 (4 hours)

Stand up Paddle \$65 (4 hours)

Mountain biking \$59 (4 hours)

Caño Negro Reserve \$55 (8 hours)

Volcano walk/viewpoint/dinner and entrance to hot springs \$45 (incl. transportation)

Viewpoint/dinner/entrance to hot springs \$36 (incl. transportation)

Hot springs only \$20

Hot springs with dinner \$25

Cerro Chato Extreme Hike (6 hours) \$59

Safari float \$45 (4 hours)

Horse trip to waterfall \$42 (4 hours)

Bike Rental \$15/day

Volunteer Program at Proyecto Asis (feeding animals, playing with animals, baby monkey, and some physical work, includes snack) \$59 (4 hours)

San José:

Carara Reserve \$60 (full day w break & lunch)

Irazu, Orosi and Lankaster Garden tour \$55 (with lunch)

Grecia & Sarchi \$40 (oxcart & handicrafts)

City tour \$24

Poas Volcano \$51

Rafting (Pacuare) \$90

Rafting (Sarapiquí) \$75

Braulio Carrillo Reserve \$50-\$65

Café Britt tour \$20-\$30

Butterfly Farm \$20-\$25

Puerto Viejo:

Naturalist tour of Manzanillo \$30 (plus transportation)

Ziplining \$55

Bicycle rental approx \$10

surf lesson \$40

Sloth Rehab Center visit \$15 (plus transportation)

Whitewater rafting Pacuare \$95

Visit BriBri indigenous village \$50

Bocas del Toro:

Scuba diving \$60 (2-tank dive)

PADI open water course \$195

Snorkel trips \$15-\$30 (depends on location and operator)

Boat taxi to Red Frog Beach \$10 return, \$2 entrance

Boquete:

White water rafting \$70-\$95 (full day)

Naturalist tour \$25 per person

Kotowa Coffee factory tour \$30

Horseback Riding \$30

Hiking trips range from \$0 to \$120, depending on necessity of transportation and/or guide

Rock climbing \$30

Santa Catalina:

Surfboard rental \$10-15/day

2-tank dive in Coiba Nature Reserve \$180

Snorkeling in Coiba Nature Reserve \$80

Horseback riding \$15

Panama City:

Tour of city and Canal \$50

Self guided tour of same approx \$15 (for transportation, locks entrance, museum)

General Entrance to Canal + museum \$8

Panama Viejo \$3

Taboga Island Ferry \$10 (return trip)

Visit to Emberà village and waterfall \$50

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that quite often we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our group leader they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

- www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information. Please note that all passengers traveling to Antarctica are required to fill out this questionnaire.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Trip Specific Responsible Travel

On this tour you may have the opportunity to visit the following Planeterra projects:

OPEN WINDOWS FOUNDATION

Open Windows is a non-profit organization that provides educational opportunities for children in the community of San Miguel Dueñas. Programs offered by Open Windows are free and have supported over 1,500 children in the areas of literacy, computer skills, tutoring and art with priority given to those who have greater financial need. A scholarship program is offered to children who show great interest in learning and strong dedication to studying and for those in need of medical support, a health clinic is open free to the community twice each month.

Although the town of San Miguel Duenas is situated just twenty minutes from the wealthy tourist center of Antigua, it does not benefit from its proximity. It has a substantially lower standard of living (the average monthly income is less than \$80, and many homes do not have running water or electricity) and level of education. The need to improve education is huge. In Guatemala the literacy level is only 71%, the average child completes only five and a half years of school, more than half fail 1st grade, and only 1% of the population reads for pleasure.

San Miguel Duenas is an agricultural town of 12,000 people, of which 4,000 are school-aged children and yet only 2,000 attend school. The rest do not go for various financial and cultural reasons. Instead of attending school many children must help provide for their families by picking coffee. This has resulted in an exceptionally low literacy rate in this community.

There are NO other libraries or computer centers in San Miguel Dueñas (not even the four local schools have either of these facilities). Open Windows, therefore, aims to improve the living conditions of the economically deprived children from in and around the town, by providing access to important educational resources through its services which the community has come to depend on.

How You Can Help

Each year we work with the staff of Open Windows to identify the needs of the project. G Adventures pays all administration costs so that 100% of each donation goes to the projects we support. It costs \$500 USD to send one child to school for one year. This provides enough funds to cover the cost of the child's uniform, school fees, books and school supplies. Highschool is six years in duration which means that by raising just \$3,000 USD we can help one child further their education giving them the confidence and ability to access better jobs and create a brighter future.

While our goal is to raise funds to support the Open Windows Scholarship program, travellers can also help make a difference by visiting the Open Windows project while on your G Adventures tour and donating the following items:

- School supplies (i.e. pens, pencils, notebooks)
- Art supplies (i.e. yarn, crochete hooks, paint)
- Children's clothes (i.e. T-shirts)
- Running shoes (new and used)
- Mouse pads and earphones to be used with the computers
- Toys to be used for the reading points program
- Over the counter medicine to be used in the health clinic (i.e. Tylenol, cough medicine etc.)

It is possible to visit this project on most tours that pass through Antigua, Guatemala. To arrange a visit please speak to your G Adventures tour leader who can arrange this for you.

CORNERSTONE FOUNDATION

The Cornerstone Foundation is a registered non-profit humanitarian service organization that offers a variety of valuable programs to people in need in the small town of San Ignacio, Belize.

The programs offered through the Cornerstone Foundation have constantly been evolving and are based on specific needs within the community.

Relief & Aid

Through this program seniors, the ill and disabled are supported by a weekly food program whereby food such as rice, beans and meat when available are delivered to their homes. Children whose families cannot afford to provide them with food at lunch are able to participate in Cornerstones' basic but nutritious lunch feeding program.

HIV/AIDS Education

HIV infection in Belize is the highest in Central America. This program collaborates closely with other local efforts to raise community awareness of high-risk behaviors, provides support for those who are living with AIDS, and conducts activities to change attitudes and

reduce stigmatization.

Women's Issues

Supporting the move of local women towards greater independence and self-sufficiency is the focus of this program. Self-esteem building, ending domestic violence, training peer counselors, and teaching job skills are part of this program.

Disabilities

This program serves individuals, families, caregivers, teachers and others, helping to meet the physical, social, emotional, and material needs of the disabled. Belize has minimal information about special needs, limited physical therapy, nearly no equipment, and few professionals trained to work with learning and other disabilities.

Literacy

Although English is the country's official language, most Belizeans grow up speaking local indigenous languages instead. Cornerstone's Literacy and English Second Language (ESL) classes are offered to children, adults, developmentally disabled students which improves their ability to participate more fully in Belizean society and the economy.

How You Can Help

Each year we work with the staff of Cornerstone to identify the needs of their programs. In the past we have supported Cornerstone's Literacy and Disabilities programs and with your support we can help with continued annual donations through the Planeterra Foundation. G Adventures pays all administration costs so that 100% of each donation goes to the projects we support.

It is possible to visit the Cornerstone project office on some tours that pass through San Ignacio, Belize. To arrange a visit please speak to your G Adventures tour leader.

For more information about these projects and/or to make a donation please visit our website at www.planeterra.org or contact us at info@planeterra.org

Responsible Travel

Being a responsible tour operator is at the heart of what G Adventures is all about. From the start, G Adventures has been committed to offering low-impact tours that benefit traveler and host alike. While our sustainable tourism policies are constantly evolving, our commitment to socially conscious, grassroots style travel has never changed. We work with local communities, businesses and individuals to develop sustainable tourism opportunities that help local economies while minimizing negative environmental and cultural impacts.

We would like to give you a couple of tips to start you thinking about traveling sustainably.

-Please bring rechargeable batteries, a battery charger (and plug adapter if necessary). Batteries are incredibly toxic and many places that we travel do not have proper disposal facilities. Rechargeables are best but if this is not possible we recommend that you bring any used batteries back home with you for proper disposal.

-Please ask before taking pictures. Just as you would not like to have a stranger come up to you and take a picture of you while sitting on your front porch either do the locals of the places that we visit. As you can imagine pictures of their children are also not appreciated.

For more information about our commitment to responsible travel, please visit the Sustainable Tourism section of the G Adventures website: www.gadventures.com

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program

Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day

program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Associated Planeterra Project

On this tour you may have the opportunity to visit the following Planeterra projects:

OPEN WINDOWS FOUNDATION

Open Windows is a non-profit organization that provides educational opportunities for children in the community of San Miguel Dueñas. Programs offered by Open Windows are free and have supported over 1,500 children in the areas of literacy, computer skills, tutoring and art with priority given to those who have greater financial need. A scholarship program is offered to children who show great interest in learning and strong dedication to studying and for those in need of medical support, a health clinic is open free to the community twice each month.

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How You Can Help

Each year we work with the staff of Open Windows to identify the needs of the project. G Adventures pays all administration costs so that 100% of each donation goes to the projects we support. It costs \$500 USD to send one child to school for one year. This provides enough funds to cover the cost of the child's uniform, school fees, books and school supplies. Highschool is six years in duration which means that by raising just \$3,000 USD we can help one child further their education giving them the confidence and ability to access better jobs and create a brighter future.

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- School supplies (i.e. pens, pencils, notebooks)
- Art supplies (i.e. yarn, crochete hooks, paint)
- Children's clothes (i.e. T-shirts)
- Toys to be used for the reading points program
- Over the counter medicine to be used in the health clinic (i.e. Tylenol, cough medicine etc.)

It is possible to visit this project on most tours that pass through Antigua, Guatemala. To arrange a visit please speak to your G Adventures tour leader who can arrange this for you.

In La Ceiba, Honduras Planeterra supports the following project:

ADELANTE FOUNDATION

The Adelante Foundation was created in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch, one of the most powerful hurricanes to hit Central America. Causing over 7000 deaths, destroying 80% of agriculture, and leaving nearly 20% of the population homeless (Honduras Institute of Tourism), Hurricane Mitch decimated what little capital and material resources rural towns had to begin with. In rural areas where Adelante works, sixty one percent of families live in extreme poverty surviving on less than \$1 a day.

The Adelante Foundation is a non-profit organization that helps the poor to help themselves by offering short-term loans to women providing them with the capital needed to start their own small business ventures.

The majority of Adelante borrowers are women who work in groups of 4-6 to start up re-sale, service oriented and manufacturing

businesses. These are small businesses that generally involve selling items such as clothes, toiletries and food, or offering services such as washing clothes and working as seamstresses. The women are also provided with educational workshops to help them develop basic business skills.

How You Can Help

Each donation of \$50USD to the Adelante Foundation can change a life as it provides enough money for one woman to start her own small business. 100% of your donation through Planeterra – the G Adventures Foundation will go directly to the project of your choice.

For more information about these projects and/or to make a donation please visit our website: www.planeterra.org or contact us at info@planeterra.org

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that you'll receive a special discount code for free online prints and we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Please visit <http://www.gadventures.com/evaluations>

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletter_signup

Stay current on all things green by signing up to "The Village" e-newsletter. Check out Planeterra's exciting line up of voluntours, stories from the field, fun contests and upcoming events. Subscribe at - www.planeterra.org

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by [The Watering Hole](http://www.gadventures.com/wateringhole), our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the [Departure Lounge](http://www.gadventures.com/wateringhole) section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.

Keeping in Touch

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road, rather than relying on postal mail. Email cafes are becoming increasingly commonplace and cheap throughout the regions we visit, and have quickly become the preferred way for our CEOs and travellers to stay in touch. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency while you are on one of our trips we recommend that they contact your local booking agent, or refer to our Emergency Contact. We recommend that family and friends don't try to contact you through phoning hotels en route, as our hotels are subject to change, and our hotel receptions often don't have English speaking staff.

Highlights

Mayan Riviera's white sand, bustling Mexico City, bargaining at local markets, Mayan ruins, opportunity to snorkel coral reefs off Belize, the Bay Islands and Bocas del Toro, colourful colonial cities, Guatemala overnight homestay, breathtaking Ometepe Island, volcanoes, experiencing misty Monteverde.