

GREAT CITIES OF THE MAYA

9 days/8 nights



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ADVENTURES**

**AUTHENTIC WORLDWIDE
EXPLORATIONS**

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Itinerary Overview

Explore the vast Mundo Maya combining the most fascinating ancient Maya archeological sites in three Central American countries with the vibrant culture of the living Maya around Antigua and Lake Atitlan in the Guatemala highlands. In-depth, expert guided exploration of Xenotox, Tikal, Palenque, Yaxchilan, Bonampak, and Piedras Negras highlight the history, legends and current archaeological knowledge of the most important cities of the Classic Maya. Jungles envelop stunning archeological monuments where you will have the opportunity to experience the diverse flora and fauna of the rainforest. Accommodations include historical boutique hotels and jungle lodges.

DAY	DATE	OVERNIGHT	HOTEL	MEALS	HIGHLIGHTS
1	Saturday	ANTIGUA	Palacio de Doña Leonor	D	Arrive in Guatemala and transfer to Antigua
2	Sunday	LAKE ATITLAN	Hotel Atitlan	BL	Chichicastenango market visit
3	Monday	LAKE ATITLAN	Hotel Atitlan	BL	San Juan village, weaving cooperative, easy hike, boat tour of Lake Atitlan
4	Tuesday	TIKAL	Nitun Ecologe	BLD	Xenotox village visit, afternoon flight to Flores and transfer to Nitun
5	Wednesday	TIKAL	Nitun Ecologe	BLD	Tikal ruins and museum tour, afternoon relaxation
6	Thursday	PALENQUE	Villas Kin-Ha	BL	Transfer to Palenque – Palenque site tour
7	Friday	PIEDRAS NEGRAS	Escudo Jaguar Lodge	BLD	Piedras Negras tour
8	Saturday	BOMAMPAK & YAXCHILAN	Villas Kin-Ha	BL	Bonampak & Yaxchilan tours
9	Sunday	DEPARTURE	---	B	Transfer to Villahermosa airport for international flight home

Itinerary in Detail

DAY 1, SATURDAY: ANTIGUA

Met and warmly received after your international flight touches down in Guatemala City by your guide, a 45 minute drive brings you to Antigua, Latin America's premier colonial city. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this former capital of Guatemala is a strikingly beautiful city, rich in history. Visitors and locals alike casually congregate in the central plaza sitting and strolling, watching the world go by. Overnight at the centrally located **Palacio de Dona Leonor**. [D]

DAY 2, SUNDAY: CHICHICASTENANGO

Arise early to visit the famous market of Chichicastenango, a magical and sometimes misty highland town surrounded by valleys and looming mountains. The setting is captivating and the lively Kiche Maya indigenous market draws craftsmen and villagers from all over the highlands. The market is not only the main economic focus of this highland village but an important social and cultural event where K'iche indigenous people gather to barter, buy, and sell. Take ample time to stroll through the streets, browse and purchase native handicrafts, and observe ancient native rites of burning incense, spreading flower petals, and burning candles in the Santo Tomás Church. Although the rites are Mayan and not Catholic, the Catholic Church has allowed the Maya to practice religion in their own manner since the 17th century. After lunch, depart for the shores of Lake Atitlan, a caldera lake whose crystal blue waters are flanked by three spectacular volcanoes. Overnight at **Hotel Atitlan** on Lake Atitlán. [BL]



DAY 3, MONDAY: LAKE ATITLAN AND SAN JUAN LA LAGUNA VILLAGE

Ringed by rugged green ridgelines, towering volcanoes and twelve indigenous villages, the sparkling deep blue Lake Atitlan is truly one of the most beautiful lakes in the world. After enjoying breakfast at your lakeside accommodations, you board a "lancha" for a boat tour of the lake, en route to the village of San Juan La Laguna. The boat ride across the lake takes about an hour. Along the way, you'll spot several red-roofed villages perched on the steep hillsides cascading down to the lake and wave to fisherman in traditional dugout canoes pulling in their early-morning catch. San Juan La Laguna is a traditional Mayan community where most speak Tz'utujil, one of 23 indigenous Mayan dialects in Guatemala. Closely related to the larger Kaqchikel and K'iche native tongues, there are about 84,000 native Tz'utujil speakers today, concentrated in the southern corner of Lake Atitlan. Spanish is a distant second language for many in the community, so practice your Tz'utujil phrases! (Here's a primer: *thank you: malyt-ush; good morning: sack-iri; how are you: uutz-aawach*).



With your guide, you'll explore the town and witness the strong sense of community pride which exists there. You'll visit a women's weaving cooperative and sitting side by side with these artists, learn the traditional weaving and dying methods used by the Maya for generations. Depending on your family's interests, you may also visit a medicinal plant and natural products cooperative or the community's fair-trade, shade-grown coffee plantation: La Voz Cooperative. Started in the 1985 with the help of Heifer International, 120 indigenous families grow their coffee using traditional organic methods in small plots on the slopes of the volcanic ridgelines ringing the lake. You can also do an easy

hike up above the village through the coffee fields to a lookout point over the lake with spectacular views of San Pedro volcano. The viewpoint gives you a new perspective and the chance to learn more about the complex of volcanoes surrounding Lake Atitlan and how the lake itself was formed by a collapsed volcano. After this full day of exploration, you'll return to Hotel Antigua in the late afternoon. Overnight at **Hotel Atitlan** on Lake Atitlán. [BL]

DAY 4, TUESDAY: XENOTOX / NITUN

Leaving Lake Atitlan behind, drive to the traditional village of Xenotox to visit a Mayan family and witness the ancient art of back strap loom weaving. This technique is passed down through generations and is still widely used today to make textiles. Explore the village and enjoy a traditional lunch in the home of a Mayan family observing the kindness, generosity, hard work, and family values displayed by your hosts. You continue back to the airport in Guatemala City and leave the highlands to catch a late afternoon flight (included) to Flores, the gateway to the Maya ruins of Tikal. After landing, transfer 1 hour by van to the shores of Lake Peten Itza and your overnight accommodations at lakeside **Nitun Reserve and Ecolodge**. [BLD]



DAY 5, WEDNESDAY: TIKAL

Arise early and perhaps catch a little more sleep on the early morning (hour and fifteen minute) drive to the majestic Mayan ruins of Tikal. Rising out of the jungle canopy where Howler monkeys swing through the trees and parrots are frequently heard squawking, a visit to Tikal is unforgettable. Once the most powerful city in the ancient Americas, this huge complex of temples, altars, pyramids, plazas and palaces, includes more than 3,000 structures and is a testament to the sophistication and scope of the Mayan people. The Maya were one of the most advanced civilizations of the ancient world producing many

works of literature, philosophy and architecture as well as a precise calendar. One of the greatest cities of the Maya, Tikal is known for its vast concentration of temples and ruins surrounded by pristine rain forest. At its peak the population of Tikal was estimated to be 100,000 individuals residing in a 25-square-mile area. Over 285 species of birds have been identified here including toucans, hawks, motmots and parrots. Frequently seen are Howler and Spider monkeys, coati, peccary and deer. The elusive jaguar and ocelot also survive in this pristine rain forest habitat. Your local naturalist guide will illuminate the nature, archeology, and ancient culture of Tikal as you explore pyramids soaring above the jungle canopy and innumerable multi-leveled palaces, ball courts, plazas, temples, terraces, shrines and carvings. Return in the afternoon to the comfortable and beautiful surroundings of Lake Peten Itza and the **Nitun Reserve and Ecolodge** for lakeside relaxation and a delicious meal. [BLD]

DAY 6, THURSDAY: PALENQUE

This morning you drive in the jungles of the Peten and cross the Mexican border, destination – the epic Mayan ruins of Palenque. Discover the ancient city of Palenque in the company of expert local guides who will further illuminate the complex relationships between the different Mayan city-states and the various periods of Maya development. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is distinguished for its well-preserved buildings, carved stucco and detailed relief ornamentation, and lengthy hieroglyphic texts. Palenque sculptors were able to create intricate detail using a mixture derived from tree bark and clay to make the stucco dry more slowly. You can see the influence of Palenque’s architecture in the ruins of Tikal and Copan in Honduras. The tomb of Pacal the Great, in the Temple of the Inscriptions, remains one of the greatest discoveries of Mayan archaeology. Overnight at the **Villas Kin-Ha**. [BL]



Note: The drive today crosses the Guatemala/Mexico border and is nearly 5 hours on paved roads.

DAY 7, FRIDAY: PIEDRAS NEGRAS

An all terrain vehicle is required to reach the Usumacinta River (1 hr) where you will travel by boat (15 min) to the hidden jewel of Piedras Negras Archaeological Site, lying on the Guatemalan side of the Usumacinta River. Tour this seldom visited area that has remained almost untouched since Tatiana

Proskouriakoff and other archaeologists worked there in the 1930's. This prominent Classic Mayan site is famous for its collection of clay figurines and well preserved temple inscriptions that aided in the deciphering of the Mayan Calendar. Overnight in the **Escudo Jaguar Lodge**. [BLD]



DAY 8, SATURDAY: BONAMPAK AND YAXCHILAN

This morning you will drive into the Lacandon Forest Reserve (2 hrs), home to the Lacandon people and Bonampak Archaeological Park. The ruins at Bonampak were hidden from the outside world until the site was rediscovered in 1946. Explore the well preserved southern group containing Templo de los Frescos, three rooms covered with paintings depicting ancient Maya ceremonies and customs. The elaborate and colorful frescoes reveal much about Maya life and the murals are complete with glyphs. Continue on to the Usumacinta River, and embark on a scenic boat ride through rich rain

forest habitat to the Maya site of Yaxchilan (1 hr). Dramatically perched above the banks of the river, Yaxchilan was first inhabited around 200 AD. Statues of jaguars and crocodiles adorn the Central Plaza and adventurous travelers may want to climb the highest temple for the outstanding views of the Rio Usumacinta and surrounding jungle. Return to overnight in the **Villas Kin-Ha**. [BL]

DAY 9, SUNDAY: DEPART

Transfer to Villahermosa Airport for your international flight home. [B]

END OF SERVICES

Actual routes and activities may vary. Local trip coordinators reserve the right to change accommodations to similar quality alternatives.

PRICING AND DATES:

For current pricing please click here: [Pricing](#)

For scheduled departure dates please click here: [Dates](#)

This trip is designed to begin in Guatemala City on Saturdays and end in Villa Hermosa, Mexico. Custom dates are available upon request please contact the Guatemala program director for more information.

INCLUDED SERVICES

- All guided tours and excursions
- English-speaking naturalist guides
- Airport-hotel transfers, land and internal air transportation
- 8 nights hotel accommodation as indicated
- Meals as indicated [B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner]
- Wildland Adventures travel consultation and pre-departure services

NOT INCLUDED SERVICES

- International airfare
- Tips and gratuities
- Airport departure taxes
- Drinks, alcoholic beverages, and meals other than listed above
- Personal expenses for extra services, optional activities, or changes in your itinerary for reasons beyond our control
- Travel insurance for trip cancellation, medical services, or evacuation
- Any other items not mentioned above

[Accommodations](#)



PALACIO DE DONA LEONOR, ANTIGUA

Palacio de Dona Leonor is a 16th century mansion that once belonged to the Spanish conqueror Don Pedro de Alvarados' daughter, Dona Leonor. Once you step behind the heavy oak doors of the palace you will travel back in time 500 years to the splendor of Dona Leonor's home. It is a beautiful boutique hotel with a central garden, warm fires and sumptuous rooms, each with individual décor and named after a member of the family of Doña Leonor. Each room features a separate private bathroom with shower, bathtub and hairdryer, as well as

satellite TV, an in-room safe, direct dial telephone, wireless Internet access and a private terrace. It is located on one of Antigua's finest cobblestone streets, surrounded by many shops and restaurants and just steps from the central plaza.



HOTEL ATITLAN, LAKE ATITLAN

Once a historic coffee plantation, Hotel Antigua is built on the fertile lakeshore edge of the legendary Lake Atitlan. Sixty rooms are individually crafted and decorated in the traditional colonial hacienda style and feature exquisite textiles and furniture from local artisans. Goose down comforters, large beds, ceramic tile bathrooms, and marble walls make this one of the most comfortable and exquisite traditional properties on the lake. Outside of the rooms is an elaborate tropical garden featuring roses, hibiscus, heliconias, passion flowers, and bougainvilleas which surround the entire property. Hotel Atitlan is located just outside of the bustling little village of town of Panajachel, which acts as an axis point for visitors in the area and features a wide selection of restaurants and small shops.



NI'TUN RESERVE AND ECOLODGE, LAKE PETEN ITZA

This beautiful lakeside lodge and rainforest reserve has four guest houses built in rock, sand, wood and thatched with palm leaves. Most of Ni'tun's walls were built in the antique Colojché style which consists of putting together sticks and small rocks and plastering it up with a sand and water mix. Some of the walls were left without the plaster so the beautiful art of wood and sticks that lies beneath can be fully appreciated. All rooms are decorated with handcrafted lamps, original paintings, and beautiful indigenous bedspreads and carpets. All of the houses have private bathroom with spacious hot and cold water showers. All rooms have views to the forest or to the lake. The

center of Ni'tun is the two-story open house with restaurant, kitchen, and bathrooms in the lower level and bar and living room in the second level. The heart of Ni'tun is certainly in the kitchen where we love to cook and prepare daily dishes... most of the recipes are our own and our ingredients are fresh.



VILLAS KIN-HA HOTEL, PALENQUE

Villas Kin-Ha Hotel in Palenque is a charming example of ecologically minded development within a natural tropical habitat. In addition to its close proximity to the ancient hub of the Mayan world, the grounds feature a large swimming pool, lush gardens, and of course the excellent regional meals and refreshments at the spacious open air restaurant and bar. The spacious thatched roofs bungalows all have a small terrace perfect for taking in the sounds of the jungle.

Booking your Wildland Adventure

HOW TO RESERVE A TRIP

You can book online using our [Reserve a Trip form](#) or by calling 1-800-345-4453. Your space on a trip is confirmed once we receive your reservation form and initial trip deposit. All travelers must sign and submit a [Release of Liability](#).

Deposit requirements are as follows:*

- \$700 per person for all trips in Central America, South America, the Middle East, Asia and the Far East, the Mediterranean and North America.
- 20% of land cost for all trips in Africa. This deposit is generally non-refundable.

*Some trips require additional non-refundable deposits, especially when yachts have been chartered, or if permits to visit archaeological or wildlife sites have been purchased in advance.

CUSTOM TRAVEL

This trip isn't exactly what you're looking for? We are happy to design a private custom itinerary to accommodate your travel dates, interests and style of accommodations. Call us at 1-800-345-4453, send an email to info@wildland.com, or use the Ask The Program Director button on the trip itinerary page on our website.

PAYMENTS, CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Full payment of the trip balance is due 90 days prior to departure. If you must cancel before departure, money will be returned less the cancellation fees charged by WA Inc. plus any additional non-refundable cancellation fees and payments already advanced to airlines, hotels and local operators:

Days Prior to Departure: Fee per person

91 or more:	\$300
61-90 days:	Initial deposit amount
31-60 days:	50% of land cost
30 or less:	100% of land cost

PRE-DEPARTURE SERVICES

Upon receipt of your deposit and completed reservation form, we will send you a comprehensive Pre-departure Dossier. This contains important information to help you prepare including immunizations, visas, trip insurance, packing checklist, reading list, maps, cross-cultural information, optional trip extensions, and more. You will receive a final trip packet including Final Reminders and local contact information in your destination 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

REFERENCES AND QUESTIONS

Have any questions or concerns? Call us a 1-800-345-4453 or email info@wildland.com. We're here to help and are happy to provide you with references from previous Wildland travelers.

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