

# HIGHLANDS OF GUATEMALA

9 days/8 nights



**WILDLAND  
ADVENTURES**

**AUTHENTIC WORLDWIDE  
EXPLORATIONS**

Visit us at [www.wildland.com](http://www.wildland.com)

## Itinerary Overview

Enjoy our in-depth, highly personal, guided exploration of the dramatically scenic and culturally rich highlands of central Guatemala. Lush forests, farmlands of rich volcanic soil, crater lakes, and volcanic peaks accent a land of ancient and contemporary Maya life. Explore beyond the main village streets to witness ancient native rituals, and cultural traditions. Visit ancient Maya and Spanish colonial cities, including the UNESCO World Heritage site of Antigua and the Mayan ruins of Tak'alik Ab'aj and Iximche. At Lake Atitlán we take time to experience the natural beauty of Guatemala's scenery and natural history. Immerse yourself in color, handicrafts and techniques passed on for generations by visiting famous craft markets and workshops of local artisans. Led by experienced local guides, you'll have opportunities to make life connections with people as you walk their land, learn about daily life and listen to stories about their resilient past. Overnight in Antigua at Palacio de Doña Leonor or similar.

DAY	DATE	OVERNIGHT	HOTEL	MEALS	HIGHLIGHTS
1	Saturday	ANTIGUA	Palacio de Doña Leonor	D	Arrive and transfer to hotel
2	Sunday	LAKE ATITLAN	Hotel Atitlan	BLD	Chichicastenango market visit
3	Monday	LAKE ATITLAN	Hotel Atitlan	BLD	San Juan village, weaving cooperative, easy hike, boat tour of Lake Atitlan
4	Tuesday	TAK'ALIK AB'AJ	Takalik Lodge	BLD	Totonicapán market visit, Fuenes Georginas hot springs
5	Wednesday	LOS TARRALES	Los Tarrales Reserve	BLD	Takalik Abaj ruins exploration, coffee plantation tour
6	Thursday	TECPAN	San Ricardo Farm & Lodge	BLD	Exotic flowers & birding tour (coffee tour when in season)
7	Friday	ANTIGUA	Palacio de Doña Leonor	BL	Xenotox village and farm and Iximche ruins tour
8	Saturday	ANTIGUA	Palacio de Doña Leonor	BL	Antigua city tour, independent exploration
9	Sunday	RETURN HOME OR BEGIN EXTENSION	---	---	Home or extend your adventures to Copan, Tikal or Belize

## Itinerary in Detail

### DAY 1: 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: 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 K'iche 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 Atitlan. [BLD]



### DAY 3: LAKE ATITLAN

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: malty-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 dyeing methods used by the Maya for generations. Depending on your interests, you may also visit a medicinal plant and natural products cooperative or the local Mayan-Catholic deity, "San Simon" and learn about the unusual gifts and rituals offered by local people in hopes of bringing good luck. 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, we'll return to Hotel Antigua in the late afternoon. Overnight at **Hotel Atitlan** on Lake Atitlan. [BLD]

#### **DAY 4: TOTONICAPÁN**

This highland city is nestled in a valley at 8,000 feet and boasts the highest concentration of Maya people in Guatemala, many of whom have retained their ancient traditions. Your full day walking tour includes visits to artisan's workshops, homes, and a colorful non-tourist market. Learn from weavers about Mayan looms, explore a potter's studio, and enjoy an informal lecture and colorful ceremonial demonstrations at the Morera, the center for traditional dance and costume making. Lunch is delicious home-cooked fare, served in a small, private courtyard, accompanied by a live marimba band. This afternoon, as you descend from the highlands to the Pacific plains, you'll stop to soak in the hot springs Fuentes Georginas, high above the agriculturally important villages of Zunil and Almolonga. Overnight at the **Takalik Maya Lodge. [BLD]**



Photo credit: Jennifer Crane

#### **DAY 5: TAKALIK ABAJ**

The pre-classic Mayan site of Tak'alik Ab'aj is well preserved and plays a significant role in the archaeological record by bridging the intriguing gap between the Olmec and Maya Civilizations. Here you will have the opportunity to view the remnants of both cultures lying in the same surroundings. After a morning visit to the site view one of Guatemala's most important exports - coffee. Walk through fields in the lush coastal atmosphere, feel the soil and see why this environment produces such rich and earthy beans that are enjoyed worldwide. This afternoon enjoy spectacular views of the Sierra Madre volcanic chain as your private driver/guide follows the coastal route of the Pacific plains to overnight at the **Los Tarrales Reserve. [BLD]**

#### **DAY 6: LOS TARRALES RESERVE**

This morning enjoy a walk through a tropical flower farm and coffee plantation and mill (during harvest time October - May). Many trails lead out from the plantation into primary lowland forest and cloud forest that has been dutifully preserved along the volcanic steeps surrounding farm. This is an excellent area for spotting birds that are exclusive to the southern coast such as the long-tailed manakin, cinnamon hummingbird, berylline hummingbird, azure-rumped tanager, and three types of parakeet. Continuing north you'll enter the Maya Cakchiquel region where the first Spanish capitol city of Guatemala was founded in 1524 to overnight at a local farm and ranch. Overnight at **San Ricardo Farm and Lodge. [BL]**

#### **DAY 7: CAKCHIQUEL REGION**

Today you'll be immersed in the culture of the Maya Cakchiquel region and explore the pre-Columbian Mayan capitol city of Iximche. For those interested in active pursuits, you can explore the 140 acres of nature trails around San Ricardo and choose to ride mountain bikes along an easy trail to the Iximche ruins. For lunch, you'll visit the indigenous village and the farming community of Xenotox. Guided by local farmers, you'll walk through the fields and discuss how their farming techniques relate to Mayan spirituality, their modern way of life, as well as the economics of small town subsistence. You'll be warmly welcomed into your host's home for an authentic lunch and back-strap loom weaving demonstration. This technique is passed down through generations and is still widely used today to make textiles. Late in the afternoon, transfer to Antigua for dinner and overnight at **Palacio de Dona Leonor** or similar. Tonight you can explore the excellent cuisine and nightlife of Antigua at your leisure. Your guide will give you personal recommendations for where to dine and drink! **[BL]**



### **DAY 8: ANTIGUA**

Today with your guide by your side, walk along the cobblestone streets among the monasteries, restored churches, and old haciendas of Antigua for a stunning and informative inside look at the former colonial capital of Guatemala and a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our guides will help make the most of a free afternoon to explore, shop, and dine on your own. Overnight in at **Palacio de Dona Leonor**. [BL]

### **DAY 9: DEPART**

Transfer to the airport for your return flight home or extend your trip to explore more of Guatemala's natural wonders. [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](#)

Private departures can be arranged. Please ask the Guatemala Program Director for more information.

### **INCLUDED SERVICES**

- All guided tours and excursions
- English-speaking naturalist guides
- Airport-hotel transfers, land and sea 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

**NOTE:** Wildland Adventures, Inc. has arranged your trip utilizing the travel services of local in-country ground operators who are independent contractors. These local outfitters, lodges, hotels and other suppliers of your travel services will make every effort to conduct this trip as described in the itinerary. It is however possible that due to transportation schedule changes, weather, delays and unforeseeable acts of God, humans or nature, this itinerary may vary from what is described. Participants must assume all risks whether identified in advance or unforeseen. All optional activities are at your own risk. Extra costs due to unexpected changes in your itinerary for reasons beyond our control are not included. We highly recommend purchasing traveler's insurance for trip delay, trip cancellation, baggage, accident or sickness. Representatives are available for assistance at any time during your trip. If preferred hotels are not available, every attempt will be made to reserve alternative accommodations of similar quality. (If upgrade is necessary, higher rates may apply.) All information and services provided are subject to our Reservation Form Terms and Conditions.

## Accommodations



### **PALACIO DEL DONA LEONORA, ANTIGUA**

Palacio de Doña Leonor is a 16th century mansion that was built and occupied by the daughter of the Spanish conqueror Don Pedro de Alvarado. Doña Leonor, the first mestiza born in Guatemala, was well known for her inner strength and resolve during a very tumultuous time in history. Once you step behind the heavy oak doors of the Palacio you will enter a time 500 years past and experience the splendor of Doña Leonor's home. Palacio de Doña Leonor is a magnificent hotel with central garden, warm fires, and sumptuous bedchambers. Its excellent

location in the city's cultural center places its visitors only half a block from the first structures in Antigua Guatemala: The Cathedral, Palace of the Captain's General, Main Plaza and the Palacio itself.



### **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 individual 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.



### **TAKALIK MAYA LODGE**

Located in the former Mayan city of Tak'alik Abaj, The Takalik Maya Lodge now rests within the National Archeological Park of Tak'alik. The hotel was once part of the main house of a 100-year old coffee plantation, which is still in production today. Giant water wheels that were imported from England during the late 1800's to run the coffee business, are now used as an environmentally-friendly, alternative energy source. With a unique historical diversity that combines the ancient cultures of the Maya, Barrigon, and Olmeca, guests will have an opportunity to experience the mysticism and spirituality of the on-site collection of 230 sculptures, altars, and monuments.

The hotel offers a restaurant, café, bar, pool, and individually-designed suites each with bathrooms, hot water, and a private entryway. Guests may enjoy horseback rides through the coffee fields, visits to the rubber and macadamia nut plantations, a dip in the natural mountain waterfall and pool, bird-watching tours, and explorations of the ancient ruins.



### **SAN RICARDO FARM AND LODGE**

San Ricardo is a 100 year old family owned and operated farm and lodge nestled in the foothills of the Nimajuyu Mountains. Six cozy casitas offer comfy respite from your adventurous days visiting the nearby town of Xenotox or the Mayan ruins of Iximche. Each casita features a private bathroom and internet access is available in the lounge. A welcoming bar and restaurant serve up home cooked meals prepared with organic vegetables and herbs grown right on the property.



### **LOS TARRALES RESERVE**

Los Tarrales is a private coffee and exotic flower farm in which an abundance of exploration can be found. Thanks to the pains of the owners, a large private protected area of primary forest has been preserved, with numerous walking trails and excellent opportunities to spot exclusive bird species only found in the Southern coastal areas of Guatemala. This rustic lodge has ten rooms with double or twin beds. Try a cup of their homegrown Los Tarrales coffee while enjoying meals prepared with fresh local ingredients from the market in Antigua. Internet is available and electric power is generated with a small

hydroelectric generator. During the dry season (October to May) power shortages may occur and candles are provided in each room.

# 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](mailto: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](mailto:info@wildland.com). We're here to help and are happy to provide you with references from previous Wildland travelers.