

## Journey Idea to Guatemala

12 Days



Flower Sellers, Chichicastenango Market

Prepared for  
Steppes Travel Clients

## QUICK REFERENCE ITINERARY

Day 1	Fly UK/Miami/Guatemala City
Day 3	Antigua
Day 4	Antigua/Atitlan
Days 5 & 6	Atitlan
Day 7	Atitlan/Lake Peten Itza
Day 8	Lake Peten Itza/Petexbatun
Day 9	Petexbatun/Lake Peten Itza
Day 10	Lake Peten Itza
Day 11	Fly Guatemala City/Miami/UK, flying overnight
Day 12	Arrive UK

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# DETAILED TRIP ITINERARY

## Day 1

### UK/Miami/Antigua

Depart the UK on the flight to Miami and connect with the flight to Guatemala City, a journey of approximately 14 hours.

You will be met upon arrival by the Steppes Travel representative at the airport and transferred to your hotel. All transfers are private (unless stated otherwise) and included in your trip, however it will not detail every transfer on this itinerary. Upon arrival to Guatemala City you will be met and transferred approximately 45 minutes (depending on traffic) to Antigua.



Antigua, Guatemala was founded in 1543 and declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. In 1566 King Phillip II awarded the city with the title of Most Noble and Most Loyal. Numerous great churches, a printing press and a university were built and art and culture emanated from the city to all the Americas, especially in its golden age from 1720 to 1773 when Antigua was finally destroyed by a violent earthquake. The city was abandoned until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and restoration began a century later when the immeasurable value of the remaining monuments was finally appreciated. Today you can explore these interesting monuments, stroll the ancient cobbled streets, and enjoy a good coffee overlooking the central plaza or bargain with the Indian families at the local markets.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in Antigua on a bed & breakfast basis.*

## Day 2

### Antigua



Morning walking tour of the city starting with a visit to the main square, the cathedral and the Palace of the Captains General. Continue to the Church of the Merced that dominates the plaza with its white and yellow facade and finally to the interesting jade factory.

Afternoon at leisure.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in Antigua on a bed & breakfast basis.*

## Day 3

### Antigua

At leisure today to enjoy this charming town and potter the cobbled streets where you will find many boutiques, silver shops, jade factories, restaurants and coffee shops where you can sample some fantastic local coffee. It is well worth too, a visit to some of the historical highlights of this colonial city including the Inglesia San Francisco, the Cathedral, and La Merced church.



If you want to venture further a field take a local taxi to:

#### **San Antonio Aguas Calientes**

Browse the vibrant textile market, and shop for quality fabrics. You will be able to see here too the local weaving technique used by the local women with the back strap loom.

#### **Jocotenango & Azotea Coffee Farm**

Visit the local workshops of local and traditional woodcarvers before joining a guided tour of the coffee farm.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in Antigua on a bed & breakfast basis.*

### **Day 4**

#### **Antigua/ Lake Atitlan**



Transfer to Lake Atitlan this morning stopping off at Chichicastenango on the way.

Visit (unguided) the famous and colourful open-air market of Chichicastenango where native handicrafts, vegetables, fruit, flowers and meat are traded. 20,000 or so Indians come down from the surrounding hills on market day and flood the town with vibrant colours and noises. It is both a photographers and shoppers paradise.



Lake Atitlan is a mile-high wonder of startlingly blue, wind-tossed waters set against a backdrop of three 3,000m high volcanoes - Tomilan, Atitlán and San Pedro - jabbing at the southern sky. Author Aldous Huxley once called it the most beautiful lake in the world and on first sight it would be difficult not to agree. Not only is it beautiful, the area is also interesting for the villages on its shores that are home to 3 tribes with distinct languages, costumes and cultures.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in Atitlan on a bed & breakfast basis.*

### **Day 5**

#### **Lake Atitlan**



After breakfast your guide shall meet you at the hotel to take you on a full day trip to the local villages of San Juan La Laguna, Santiago Atitlan & St. Catarina Palopo. You will be able to enjoy a scenic boat ride passing the three impressive volcanoes of Tolima, Atitlan and San Pedro.



At San Juan, guests can visit the women's textile cooperative to see hand weaving and natural dye process. Also here visit the studios/homes of the celebrated naif painters. Continue to the village of Santiago for lunch in a local hotel and tour the village visiting the Maya God Maximon and learn about the textiles, spiritualism and beliefs of the T'zutujil Maya. Return to hotel via St Catarina Village.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in Atitlan on a bed & breakfast basis.*

## Day 6

### Lake Atitlan



After breakfast you will be picked up by your guide and driver and transferred approximately half an hour up to the traditional town of Solola.

On market day this town is bursting with life and local Maya people from all around the area flock to the market to buy and sell their wares for the week ahead. Everyone is dressed in the brightly coloured local textiles and even the men here wear the traditional costume of the area. This is a fabulous and authentic market to visit, which gives the traveller a wonderful insight into Maya life in the Solola district of Guatemala.

Afternoon at leisure.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in Atitlan on a bed & breakfast basis.*

## Day 7

### Lake Atitlan/Lake Peten Itza

Morning at leisure.



Afternoon transfer to Guatemala city for your local flight to Flores.

Flores is a small lakeside town, on the edge of Lake Peten Itza in the lowlands of Guatemala. With a number of simple hotels in the centre, and some really lovely eco-lodges on its shores, Flores is the springboard for a number of excursions to impressive Maya ruins including the famous Tikal National Park, Yaxha and many more off the beaten track.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in the Flores area on a bed & breakfast basis.*

## Day 8

### Lake Peten Itza/Petexbatun



An hour's drive south-west from Flores, through the lowlands of Guatemala, small communities dot the area inhabited by those displaced by the Civil War.

This part of the country is used only for limestone quarrying and cattle grazing. The road finally ends at the small riverside town of Sayaxche. A small lancha will take you an hour up river to Lake Petexbatun, allowing great opportunities to see many species of birdlife including the Osprey and the very elegant Great Egret.



Visit the major ceremonial site of El Ceibal, which is situated on a hilltop, surrounded by lush vegetation and Ceiba trees. A beautiful 45 minute boat ride down La Pasion River takes guests to the entrance of the park and then a fairly strenuous 1.5km walk into the rainforest will bring visitors to the monuments. The site was at its height of activities from BC 800 to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD, then abandoned between AD 500-690 and repopulated again between AD771-889. El Ceibal is

most famous for its beautifully carved stelae, which depict rule, warriors and ball players.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in Petexbatun on full board basis.*

#### Day 9

#### Petexbatun/Lake Peten Itza

This morning enjoy a guided visit to Aguateca, just 10 minutes by boat from the Lodge.



Aguateca is a small site in a stunning setting. It was only in the last few years that the most recent mound was unearthed. Many temples are still unexcavated and this site really gives you the feeling of walking amongst an ancient civilisation where so much more is yet to be discovered.

A further attraction at Aguateca is the enormous crack that was created by a huge earthquake thousands of years ago. There is a section that one can walk into, and it's well worth it. It stretches about 150 metres, and is only 5 meters wide in places.

After lunch at the lodge transfer back to Flores.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in the Flores area on a bed & breakfast basis.*

#### Day 10

#### Lake Peten Itza



Full day tour of Tikal departing early in the morning in order to catch the ruins at their most mysterious and hear the sounds of the jungle before the heat of day sends the animals to sleep.

The tour will take you through complex 'Q', the North & Central Acropolis, the Main Square and Temple IV. Although these areas are only a small part of this massive city, you will gain a lasting impression of this formidable civilisation, their skill at adapting to their environment, their aptitude in science and astrology and their admiration and respect of the local flora and fauna.

*Overnight at your chosen hotel in the Flores area on a bed & breakfast basis*

#### Day 11

#### Lake Peten Itza/Guatemala City/Miami

Depart Flores for the local flight to Guatemala City in time to connect with the flight to Miami.

Depart Miami on the flight to the UK, flying overnight.

#### Day 12

Arrive UK

## TRIP PRICE

In each location there is a variety of different category of hotels, lodges and guest houses, therefore as a guide we have divided these into 3 categories; Traveller, Deluxe and Superior Deluxe. It is difficult to categorise each property as they vary so much therefore this is a general price guide only.

**Traveller price from £2,500 per person + flight taxes**

**Deluxe price from £2,795 per person + flight taxes**

**Superior Deluxe price from £3,185 per person + flight taxes.**

The rates quoted are subject to the availability of all services, currency fluctuations, written confirmation and Steppes Travels terms and conditions.

The price includes return flight from UK, internal flights, local transport, airport-hotel transfers and tours on a shared basis (or can be organised on a private basis), accommodation (twin/double with private facilities where available) and board. Accommodation is on a bed and breakfast basis, unless staying in a remote lodge when normally this will be on a full board basis.

The price excludes entrance charges to sites, parks and museums, extra local excursions and guided tours, international and domestic airport taxes. Travel insurance, visas, single supplements (if applicable) and items of a personal nature, such as laundry, drinks, etc.

**Please note** that the above is only a suggested journey, allowing in-depth visits to the highlights of the country and the chance to explore the wide range of possibilities this fascinating country has to offer. We have a separate list of escorted tours and specialise in tailoring individual itineraries to your particular interests and requirements. This journey idea serves more as a general guide on what there is to see and do, as well as a guide on price.

### Why Travel with Steppes?

Steppes Travel was founded in 1989 with the objective of creating a travel company where service and knowledge are of the highest priority. We aim to design itineraries and include the highlights of any country, whilst taking travellers off the beaten track to see lesser known, interesting places not frequented by large numbers of tourists. We offer individuals the ability to travel safely in remote areas, with the knowledge that we have travelled there before.

### Financial Protection

Steppes Travel is a fully bonded tour operator that complies with the Civil Aviation Authority bonding conditions of the UK. This fully guarantees your money in the unlikely event of us going out of business before you start your holiday. Our ATOL number is 6945 and we have full insurance to cover the financial failure of an airline. In addition, all accommodation-only bookings (such as hotels, lodges and boats) which are not covered by the ATOL regulations are financially protected with all payments being held in a separate trust account until the date of departure. This is in accordance with the Package Travel Regulations Act 1992.

### Specialist Knowledge

We demand and employ only a very high calibre of staff. All of our specialists have a wealth of travel experience and have travelled, and continue to travel, extensively throughout their regions of specialisation. You can therefore rely on their first hand knowledge and expertise. Some have been with us for more than ten years. They will tell you about those intimate, friendly hotels and introduce you to our charismatic guides - those little extra qualities that make your holiday both unique and special.

### A Tailor-made Journey

After an initial discussion with you, one of our specialists will create a unique itinerary for your trip, designed around your own interests, preferred style of accommodation and the pace at

which you like to travel. This will be fine tuned until you are completely satisfied with it. Throughout this whole process, you will be dealt with by the same specialist and you are welcome to call them at any time.

#### 24 hour Emergency Service

We have an emergency service so that we can be contacted 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

#### Recognition

More than 65% of our business is achieved through recommendations, referrals and repeat bookings. This, for us, is the highest endorsement we could have. In addition, our 20 years of experience in this specialist travel sector confirms our expertise.

**Please contact the Latin America team on 01285 885 333 or visit our website [www.steppestravel.co.uk](http://www.steppestravel.co.uk) for further information.**

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