

## Journey Idea to Guatemala & Belize

15 Days



Prepared for  
Steppes Travel Clients

## QUICK REFERENCE ITINERARY

<b>Day 1</b>	Fly UK/Miami/Guatemala City
<b>Days 2 &amp; 3</b>	Antigua
<b>Day 4</b>	Antigua/Lake Atitlan
<b>Days 5 &amp; 6</b>	Lake Atitlan
<b>Day 7</b>	Lake Atitlan/Lake Peten Itza
<b>Day 8</b>	Lake Peten Itza
<b>Day 9</b>	Lake Peten Itza/San Ignacio
<b>Day 10</b>	San Ignacio
<b>Day 11</b>	San Ignacio/Placencia
<b>Day 12 &amp; 13</b>	Placencia
<b>Day 14</b>	Fly Belize City/Miami/UK, flying overnight
<b>Day 15</b>	Arrive UK

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# DETAILED TRIP ITINERARY

## Day 1

### UK/Antigua

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

Upon arrival to Guatemala City you will be met and transferred to Antigua, a journey of approximately 45 minutes (depending on traffic). All transfers are private (unless stated otherwise) and included in your trip, however it will not detail every transfer on this itinerary.



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

Here you will find the textile market, and one of the best places to purchase good 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

Here you can visit the local workshops of the traditional woodcarvers of the area before visiting the coffee farm for a guided tour, where some of the world's most delicious coffee is produced.

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

## Day 4

### Antigua/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

### 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 naïf 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

### 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 Peten Itza

Morning at leisure.



Afternoon transfer to Guatemala city for a 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



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 9

### Lake Peten Itza/San Ignacio



Transfer by road (approximately 3 ½ hours) across the border with Belize and on to San Ignacio.

San Ignacio is in the Cayo District that is filled with vast areas of jungle rainforests, picturesque rivers, waterfalls, and limestone caves along with a people who embrace a remarkable cultural diversity and harmony.

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

## Day 10

### San Ignacio

Day at leisure to explore the local area.

Options include guided naturalist activities on foot or by horse, canoeing on the pristine Macal River, archaeology tours (including Caracol), mountain biking, caving expeditions and

trekking the nearby area of Mountain Pine Ridge with its spectacular waterfalls.

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

## Day 11

### San Ignacio/Placencia



This is a wonderful drive (approximately 5 hours) to Placencia. As you drive on to the Western Highway, you'll see how the landscape changes and the Maya Mountains come in to view. The Western Highway takes you through mile upon mile of stunning citrus groves before you turn off onto the Hummingbird highway that runs parallel to the coast.

The scenery changes again, to flat lands of dense jungle, before you reach the last 23 miles of red dirt road of the spit that divides the Caribbean Sea with the lagoon and finally brings you to the small town of Placencia.



The area of Placencia has sixteen miles of natural sandy beach, a wilderness of coral-studded cayes, a virgin mangrove-fringed lagoon, nearby jungle rivers and pristine rainforest. Swim with the many varieties of tropical fish in the warm Caribbean waters or venture into the dense jungle to spot for monkey and the ever-elusive jaguar.

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

## Day 12 & 13

### Placencia

Days at leisure to relax and unwind.



There are many activities on offer and you can enjoy everything from snorkelling to bird watching, scuba diving to rainforest hiking, sport fishing to kayaking in the Placencia Lagoon, or swimming in waterfalls to visiting ancient Mayan cities.

A visit to The Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary can also be arranged. This reserve is one of the best and most undisturbed nature centres in the country and easily one of the most beautiful, covering an area of about 150 square miles of tropical forest, and is the world's only Jaguar Preserve. The Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) is the third largest member of the cat family and endangered in most of its range. These wonderful animals are masters of stealth and their very existence is based on their seeing, but not being seen, so sightings are rare. Other cats that live in the reserve are the Puma, Ocelot, Jaguarundi and Margay, as well as Peccary, Paca, Brocket Deer, Tayra, Otter and Coatimundi.



Cockscomb is also renowned for its bird populations and boasts up to 300 recorded species. These include Macaw, the Great Curassow and Keel-billed Toucan.

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

**Day 14**

**Placencia/Belize City/Miami/UK**

Depart Placencia on the local flight to Belize City for the flight to Miami.

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

**Day 15**

Arrive UK

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## 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 £2,825 per person + flight taxes**

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

**Superior Deluxe price from £3,385 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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