

Guatemala

Rafting & Mayan Archeology

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



Itinerary





Guatemala • Rafting & Mayan Archeology

10 Days • 9 Nights

Guatemala City – Coban – Lanquin – Rio Cahabon – Chulac – Flores – Sayaxche – Ceibal – Lake Petexbahun – Aguateca – Tikal

Optional: Extension at black sands of Monterrico OR Belize

HIGHLIGHTS

-  3 days whitewater rafting the rapids of the Cahabon River.
-  Experience the Guatemalan rainforest and marvel at the large variety of fauna and flora.
-  Exploring the ancient city of Tikal, one of the most impressive in the Mayan world.
-  Swim in the enchanting pools of Semuc Champey.

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Rafting & Discovering Expedition
Tour Start	Guatemala City
Tour End	Tikal
Accommodation	Hotel, Camping, Lodge
Included Meals	9 Breakfasts, 7 lunches, 9 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium

This expedition meanders through the impressive and ever changing scenery of Guatemala and combines white water (class IV) rafting, pristine pools and Mayan archaeology. During our time in this intense country, we will raft the exciting white waters of the Rio Cahabon & Rio Dulce and swim in the enchanting pools of Semuc Champeu. We then transfer to the rainforest to explore the Mayan archaeology including the ancient city of Tika.

Overview

Guatemala ('place of many trees') lives up to its name and gives visitors an thrilling view of Central America. The country with the highest and most active volcanoes, remarkable Mayan ruins, dense jungles and an indigenous culture that flourishes through its traditional music, lively dance and colourful embroidered clothing. The Mayan heart of Central America, Guatemala borders Mexico to the north and west, Belize to the northeast and Honduras and El Salvador to the east. Scattered around this mountainous and jungle covered country, the impressive ancient Mayan ruins and colonial buildings are a reminder of Guatemala's heritage and civilised past. Until recently, Guatemala was little visited and this culturally rich, archaeologically fascinating country, with its diverse natural environment, is a one-off that must be visited to be understood. At the end of this trip you have an optional 3 day extension to visit Monterrico on the Pacific Coast. This all black sand beach is a haven for turtles and you can visit the nurseries of the Parlama turtle as well as enjoy a mangrove tour or simply relax on the beach listening to the ocean.

Itinerary



DAY 1: ARRIVE GUATEMALA CITY (D)

On arrival at "La Aurora" international airport in Guatemala City, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. You will have time to relax at your leisure before meeting the group and enjoying a welcome dinner.

Overnight hotel



DAY 2: COBAN AND LANQUIN (B,D)

We make an early start to rendezvous with our rafting guides and travel through the local countryside to Lanquin. We will stop en-route at the Quetzal Reserve on the way, giving you the chance to walk through one of its natural trails through the forest with the possibility of seeing monkeys and birds including the national bird of Guatemala - the Quetzal. We lunch in Coban enroute to Lanquin, where upon checking into the hotel we immediately set off to visit the beautiful travertine pools of Semuc Champey. We can enjoy swimming in the tranquil waterfalls and travertine pools of mineral water that have formed a natural bridge over the Cahabon River. With utmost caution we will also be able to walk to the violent entrance of the river that appears to be swallowed by the earth bridge.

Overnight hotel

DAY 3: BEGIN RAFTING EXPEDITION (B,L,D)

This morning we transfer in pick up trucks to the banks of the Lanquin River, a few kilometres out of town, which is our raft put in. After a safety and orientation talk, we board the rafts and begin descent of the Rio Lanquin to its confluence with the Rio Cahabon. We continue on the Cahabon, navigating some of the river's largest and most exciting rapids. The day is full of excitement, a perfect combination of rapids, tranquil pools, friendly Maya-Keck' chi Indians and wildlife. Enjoy the subtropical jungle with its large variety of orchids and bromeliads blooming throughout the year. Marvel at the local bird life like Montezuma Oropendula, Bluebelted and Amazon kingfishers, Amazon parrots or a glimpse of the Keel Billed toucan. In the afternoon we arrive at the small village of Tamax where we will camp on an inviting beach.



Overnight camping

DAY 4: RAFTING THE RIO CAHABON (B,L,D)

After breakfast, we continue on through more challenging and exciting rapids, placid pools perfect for swimming, pristine side creeks, colorful bird life and beautiful scenery of remote and seldom seen regions of the Alta Verapaz. Dinner and camp upstream of the spectacular Cataract of Chulac.

Overnight camping

DAY 5: RAFTING THE RIO CAHABON (B,L,D)

Following breakfast and campsite breakdown, our rafts and equipment are transported around the unrunnable and deadly cataract known as Chulac Falls. After a short walk around the falls, we board our rafts at the base of the last drop. We continue downstream through the Lower Gorge, where the river enters a rugged canyon of unspoiled natural beauty with a perfect mixture of exhilarating rapids, tranquil pools and natural hot springs we've dubbed 'The Little Paraiso'. By mid-afternoon we reach our take-out point at the small village of Cahaboncito. Switching from rafts to an awaiting vehicle, we transfer overland a short distance to the town of El Estor set on the shores of Lago Izabal (Guatemala's largest freshwater lake).

Overnight lodging in El Estor



DAY 6: TO FLORES (B,L,D)

Today we have an early breakfast and board vehicle for land transfer to Flores. On the way we can make a short visit to the hot springs of "Finca Paraiso" or to Castillo de San Felipe, at Rio Dulce Bridge. Here you will have the opportunity to practice Bungee jumping if you wish - 100 feet drop before splashing into the deep waters below. We will also stop at the new Canopy and Sky walk bridges (1 hour away from Flores) which are set in the high jungle Canopy and we will may see spider monkeys among other jungle animals and birds.

Overnight in hotel

DAY 7: MAYA RUINS & LAKE PETEXBATUN (B,L,D)

After breakfast we drive to the frontier town of Sayaxche, on the banks of the Río Pasión. Here we take an outboard boat to the start of a short jungle trek to explore the intriguing ruins of Ceibal. NOTE: Ceibal is now being excavated by Takeshi and his team during the months of Jan-May, until 2011. The ruins are surrounded by forest and shaded by huge ceiba trees and have some outstanding and well-preserved carvings. We have plenty of time to study the unusual stelae and experience the surrounding rainforest's flora and fauna. Return to Sayaxche and continue to the Lake Petexbatun for lodging and dinner.

Overnight in lodge

DAY 8: AGUATECA (B,L,D)

First thing today, we visit the site of Punta De Chimos right outside our hotel door. Later, we board a boat to arrive at ruins of Aguateca. We spend the day walking in the protected jungle, visiting the plazas and experiencing the natural cliff boundaries that eventually led to its demise. Although there are no imposing temples here, the ruins are among the best preserved and restored in Guatemala. We have a picnic lunch at the site and continue to explore the chasm which was the natural barrier of defense for the ancient Maya city. At the end of the day, we re-board the boat to travel back (upstream) to our hotel.

Overnight in hotel

DAY 9: ANCIENT CITY OF TIKAL (B,L,D)

After breakfast, we board the boat to travel upstream to the town of Sayaxche. Here we will board a van for our transfer to the magnificent National Park of Tikal. All afternoon we can explore this incredible ancient city, considered

by most to be the most impressive in the Mayan world. You will note that most visitors to Tikal are "day trippers" arriving in the morning and leaving in mid-afternoon. As such, we will have the park largely to ourselves in the afternoon, as we will be staying overnight at the Jungle Lodge, located in the park itself. Staying in the park will give a much greater appreciation for the area and its abundant flora and fauna especially the howler monkeys and coatimundis!

Tikal and the lost world

The first beginnings of Tikal, the most impressive ancient Mayan cities, was started over 2,500 years ago. The city of Tikal hosts



more than 4,000 structures. It is surrounded by 576 square kilometers of national park where jungle wildlife roam freely without the threat of man. On our tour to Tikal we will visit the Great Plaza, the Lost World Complex and the intricate architecture of the Central and Northern Acropolises. Climb one or all of the pyramid temples which tower up to 65 meters above the jungle floor to witness the breathtaking view of the thick, rainforest, which still covers many monuments and stelae. You will be astonished by the myriad of flora, fauna and sounds of the forest as you walk through this peaceful timeless space. We will also have the opportunity to admire many of the jade artifacts, ceramics and tomb contents discovered during the excavation of Tikal which are on display at the Museum of Tikal.

Note: All hotels located in Tikal Park have generated electricity, which is turned off at 9-10pm. They do have hot water.

Overnight in hotel

DAY 10: TIKAL / EXPEDITION ENDS (B)

After breakfast and an early morning tour to view the wildlife of Tikal, we have some free time before our transfer back to the airport for your flight back to Guatemala City Airport.

Note: While our intention is to adhere to the day to day route as printed, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary and night stops may vary from those suggested. The day to day schedule should be taken only as a general guide. We cannot accept responsibility for changing the proposed itinerary or any inaccuracies or errors. A variety of factors, including adverse weather conditions and difficulties with transportation, can lead to enforced changes. Your guide will discuss with you and make any changes where necessarily.

What our clients have said

"The trip was fab - we loved all of it and the last few days in Belize were really relaxing. Special mention for Max (whitewater raft guide) and Carlos (guide on the trip). They were both fantastic. We thought the balance of activities was just right".

-Walcott Family



Important Information

INCLUDED

- 🌍 All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- 🌍 Accommodation based on double occ.
- 🌍 Camping and Rafting Equipment
- 🌍 Private transfers, Guides and drivers as mentioned
- 🌍 Tours and entrance fees as mentioned
- 🌍 Rafting Team
- 🌍 Domestic flights as appropriate (Flores – Guatemala)

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Meals other than mentioned
- Personal Expenses
- Tips for Guides and Drivers
- Drinks during meals at restaurants (alcoholic or non-alcoholic)

Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION

2 – 5 hours per day

SEASON

Jan - Dec

BEST TIME TO GO

Dec – May

GROUP SIZE

Max group size 4 - 8

GROUP DEPARTURE

We have a couple of annual group departures – please see website or contact us for exact dates. Alternatively we are happy to arrange tailor-made or private departures to suit – this is a great trip for a group of friends or a family.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'Medium' level (2 – 5 hours of activities per day). This means that you will need an average level of fitness.

