

Guatemala Private Journey

TIKAL AND THE LAND OF THE MAYAS



WHEN TO GO

January to December

For our Private Journey trips, you choose your own group and your preferred dates—there are no set departure dates. Private Journeys are available to groups as few as two people or as large as you like. While many guests choose to book this tour exactly as is, our Area Specialists can work with you to customize it to your wishes. Contact us for availability, questions, or to book your adventure!



Wilderness Travel

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Guatemala Private Journey

TIKAL AND THE LAND OF THE MAYAS

Enter the heart of El Mundo Maya, with its intriguing Mayan culture and lavish temple cities rising out of misty rainforests. Our Private Journey in Guatemala features elegant Antigua, colonial capital of the Spanish realm in Central America, the mysterious mountain village of Chichicastenango, with its famous open-air market, and the stunning volcano-ringed lake called Atitlán, surrounded by traditional Mayan villages. For a grand finale, explore Tikal, the greatest Mayan religious center yet discovered, where thousands of structures have been cleared from the surrounding jungle. Tikal is magnificent not just for its towering temples and pyramids but also for its situation within a vast canopy forest of mahogany, cedar, palm, and ceiba where you'll see playful monkeys and fantastic birdlife. We also offer an optional extension to the extraordinary Mayan city of Copan in Honduras.

ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel's escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions—even if it's just the two of you—yet still enjoy a guided adventure.



Wilderness Travel

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Itinerary

Please Note: If you wish to visit Chichicastenango on market day (either a Sunday or Thursday), your journey must begin in Guatemala on a Tuesday or a Friday.

DAY 1

GUATEMALA CITY / ANTIGUA

Afternoon arrival in Guatemala City, where you are met by your guide for an hour-long drive along the Pan-American Highway to the enchanting city of Antigua. Dinner on your own and overnight at hotel...Meals on your own

Classic Accommodation: Casa Santo Domingo

Optional Upgrade: El Convento Boutique Hotel

(See Lodging pages for description and photos)

DAY 2

ANTIGUA

Enjoy a guided morning walking tour of this beautiful city, with its cobblestone streets, fine public plazas, and ornate churches. Antigua's beautifully preserved examples of Spanish Renaissance art and architecture make you feel as if you've stepped back in time 300 years. Founded in 1543, Antigua was the seat of Spanish colonial government for the Kingdom of Guatemala, which stretched from Chiapas (southern Mexico) to Costa Rica. It was one of the first planned cities in the Americas, and the Spanish Colonial style permeates every part of the town. Antigua sits in a highland valley at about 5,000 feet and is surrounded by spectacular Volcano Agua (12,400'), Volcano Acatenango, and Volcano Fuego. The city also offers an introduction to the modern-day Maya culture. Some of Guatemala's most skillful Mayan artisans work and sell their wares here through Antigua's galleries and art exhibits, with wares including intricate weavings that express the history and traditions of the Mayan people. The afternoon is free to explore on your own. Overnight in Antigua...B

DAY 3

CHICHICASTENANGO / LAKE ATITLÁN

With your guide and driver, set off on a two-hour morning drive through green mountain highlands to Chichicastenango (6,500'), a small town famous for its open-air market, the largest in Central America (held Sundays and Thursdays). This handicraft market draws not only the Maya of the surrounding region, but vendors from all over Guatemala, representing such linguistic groups such as the Mam, Ixil, Kaqchikel, and others in a densely packed outdoor market full of color and costumes. After you roam the market, visit the adjacent Santo Tomás Church, built in 1540 on the site of an existing Mayan altar. Shamans still use the church for their rituals, burning incense and candles and, in special cases, a chicken for the gods. Each of the 18 stairs that lead up to the church stands for one month of the Mayan calendar year. In the afternoon, continue across the mountains to your lakefront hotel at magnificent Lake Atitlán, a huge mountain lake of cobalt-blue wind-tossed waters set against a backdrop



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length:	8 days
Arrive:	Guatemala City, Guatemala
Depart:	Guatemala City, Guatemala
Lodging:	7 nights in comfortable, well-appointed hotels
Meals:	All breakfasts and 3 lunches included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity:	Archaeology, Cultural Adventures, Walking
Trip Level:	1 2 3 4 5 6 Easy day hikes, exploration of ruins

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Antigua's colonial Spanish architecture engulfed by spectacular volcanoes
- Stroll through the largest open-air market in Central America in lush Chichicastenango
- Witness the towering temples of Tikal soaring from the rainforest
- Stay in charming villas and lakeside lodges surrounded by wildlife



“Far exceeded my expectations.
Well done! Would definitely
travel with Wilderness again.”

Richard B., Philadelphia, PA



of three 10,000-foot volcanoes—Toliman, Atitlán, and San Pedro. Overnight at hotel...BL

Classic Accommodation: Villa Santa Catarina

Optional Upgrade: Casa Palopó

DAY 4

LAKE ATITLÁN VILLAGES

Lining the shores of Lake Atitlán are a dozen Mayan villages where life and customs have changed little over the centuries. Today you will visit an array of intriguing lakeside villages, traveling village to village by private motor launch. In one of the larger villages, Santiago Atitlán, you can visit the historic cathedral and the shrine to Maximón, a colorful pagan saint. Overnight at hotel...BL

DAY 5

GUATEMALA CITY / FLORES

Drive back to Guatemala City and, time permitting, visit the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, with its extraordinary collection of indigenous clothing from various regions of Guatemala, or the Museo Popol Vuh to view its collection of pre-Hispanic art (stone sculpture and ceramics) as well as Pre-classic, Classic, and Post-classic Maya exhibits. In the afternoon, transfer to the airport and fly to the pretty lakeside city of Flores, gateway to Tikal. Flores is built on an island in Lake Petén Itzá. A short causeway connects Flores to its sister town, Santa Elena, rising out of Lake Petén Itza. Overnight at hotel...B

Classic Accommodation: Villa Maya

Optional Upgrade: Las Lagunas Hotel

DAY 6

TIKAL

Enjoy a glorious day of exploration at Tikal with your local guide, beginning with a morning drive through the Petén rainforest to Tikal National Park. The park is a wildlife preserve covering 222 square miles, the centerpiece of which is the ancient Mayan metropolis of Tikal. Today you'll explore the towering pyramids, ball courts, steep-sided temples, baths, multilevel palaces, and much more. Tikal is not only an ancient Mayan city—it is also a fantastic rainforest world of screeching howler monkeys and squawking parrots. Wildlife in the surrounding forest ranges from monkeys to white-lipped peccary, brocket deer, coatimundis, toucans, scarlet macaws, parrots, and ocelots. Return to Flores for overnight...BL

Tikal: Once a wealthy metropolis of 100,000 inhabitants, Tikal was the seat of power for the great Jaguar clan lords. Reconstructed over the past 40 years by the University of Pennsylvania and the Guatemalan government, it is one of the grandest archaeological sites in the world. The ruins of Tikal include more than 3,000 structures extending over six square miles and including palaces, temples, ceremonial platforms, ball courts, terraces, plazas, avenues, and steam baths. The

most spectacular structure in Tikal is the Great Plaza, surrounded by stelae and sculpted altars, ceremonial buildings, residential and administrative palaces, and a ball court. On one side of the plaza is the Temple of the Great Jaguar (Temple I), more than 150 feet high and constructed about 700 AD by order of Ah Cacao, whose tomb was discovered inside. Temple II stands at the western end of the Great Plaza and rises to a height of 120 feet. It was also constructed by Ah Cacao around 700 AD. Literally thousands of structures have been cleared from the jungle at Tikal, most notably the famous Temple IV, the highest Maya temple still standing.

DAY 7

TIKAL / OPTIONAL ZIP LINE

Today you have the option of returning to Tikal for a half-day tour on your own or to explore the seldom-visited Maya ruins of Yaxha with a guide. Set on the northern shores of a lagoon, Yaxha was discovered in 1904 and is spread across nine plazas. Shrouded by rainforest, it hints at what Tikal may have looked like prior to its restoration. (Yaxha may look somewhat familiar—it was the setting for season 11 of the TV reality series, *Survivor*.) A boat tour to Topoxte, a Maya archaeological site located on an island in the lagoon at Yaxha, can be included with this tour. Other optional tours include a nature walk along the hanging bridges and/or a zip line ride through the treetops of the Petén rainforest near the Tikal National Park entrance (optional tours at your own expense). Return to Flores for overnight...B

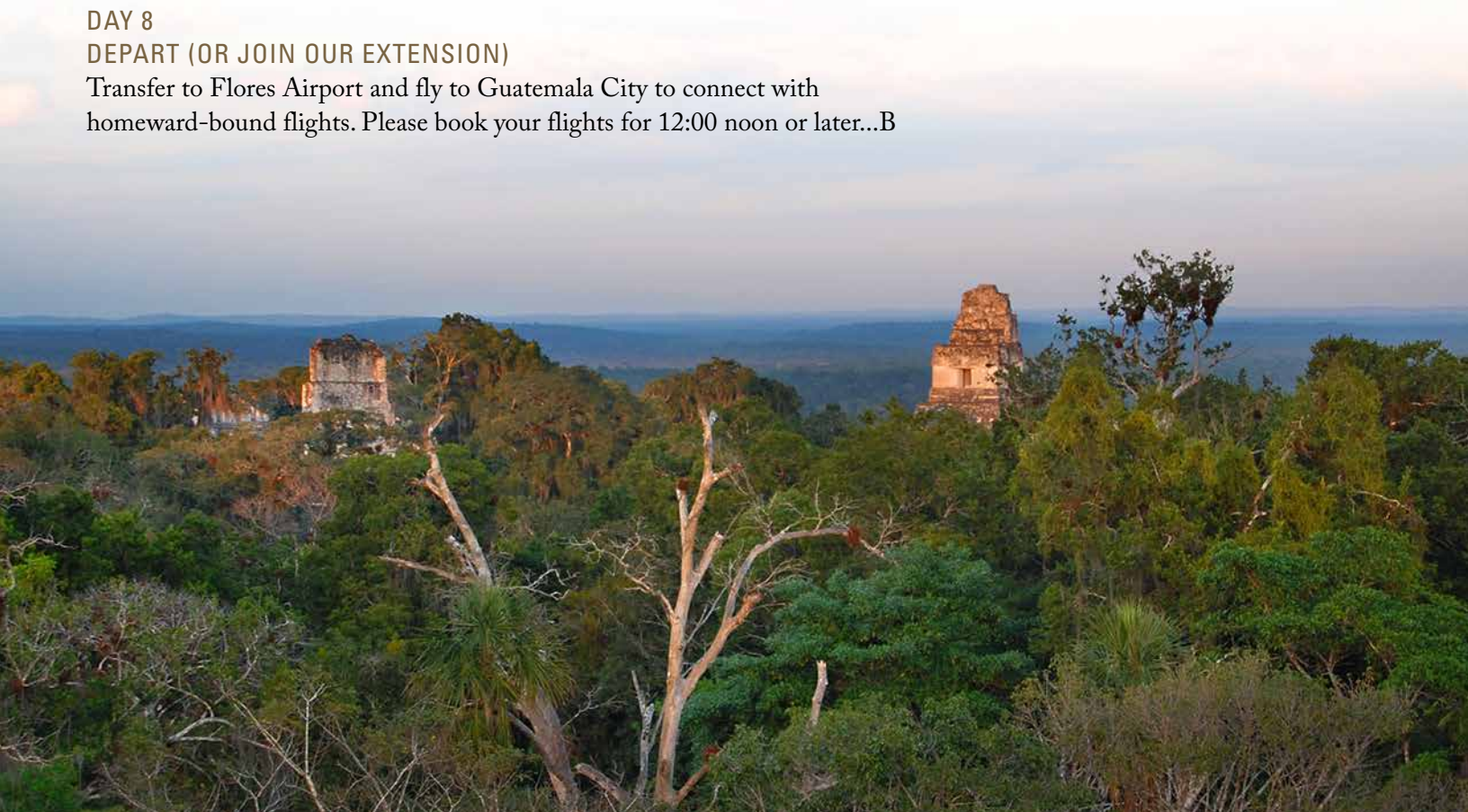
DAY 8

DEPART (OR JOIN OUR EXTENSION)

Transfer to Flores Airport and fly to Guatemala City to connect with homeward-bound flights. Please book your flights for 12:00 noon or later...B

“Highest praises for both our guide and driver. They were very knowledgeable, thoughtful, considerate, and funny. We enjoyed every moment we spent with them and are so grateful to have met them.”

Radha N., Hillsborough, CA



Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through 2024

\$3495 (4-10 members)

Single supplement: \$995

Internal airfare: \$422 (subject to change)

Peak season rates Easter and Christmas are quoted separately

Hotels can be upgraded. Call for details.

Prices are based on double occupancy and not guaranteed until services are confirmed.

Make it Your Trip!

The prices above are for the ready-to-book adventure outlined in this Detailed Itinerary, a popular option that has been handcrafted by our Area Specialists to include the best of every destination. While many travelers choose to book this tour as is, our Area Specialists are also happy to work with you to customize this Private Journey to suit your specific interests and style of travel. We can arrange for longer or shorter stays, or add an extension to additional places of interest. We can even add special activities or customize excursions depending on your interests. We invite you to contact us to discuss your options!

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Private guides
- Accommodations as noted, based on double occupancy
- All breakfasts and 3 lunches included as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Land transportation and airport transfers as noted

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, optional activities, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to staff, additional hotel nights made necessary by airline schedule changes or other factors, pre-trip expenses such as medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas; and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

SIGNING UP FOR A TRIP

Early reservations are recommended since accommodations often sell out far in advance. Please call 1-800-368-2794 and ask for our Latin America Manager or email us at latinamerica@wildernesstravel.com with any questions that you may have about this trip. To reserve your Private Journey, we will need to know your preferred dates of travel. We will then check availability and send you a proposed itinerary with exact pricing for your adventure. We can typically hold a provisional booking for one week. At that time, we must collect your initial deposit or accommodations will be released. We accept Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card. Upon receipt of your deposit, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a letter of confirmation, Detailed Itinerary, Trip Application, Medical Form, and Pre-Departure Information Booklet with information to help you prepare for your adventure. Please see our Cancellations and Transfer Fee Schedule for specific payment information.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation	\$1000
90 days prior to departure	Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee: \$500 per person

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

*Please note that this differs from our regular catalog departures.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details:

<http://www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan/travel-insurance>

Extend Your Adventure

To help you make the most of your adventure, we've created an exciting trip extension. For detailed information, including full itineraries and complete pricing, please visit our *Guatemala Private Journey* webpage and click on the "Extensions" tab: www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/guatemala/guatemala-private-journey/extensions



ANCIENT COPAN EXTENSION

Set on the banks of the Río Amarillo in Honduras, the World Heritage Site of Copán is the most artistically advanced of all Mayan cities, surpassing other Mayan sites in its wealth of sculptures, hieroglyphics, and beautifully carved stone stelae. This can be booked as a pre- or post-trip extension. *4 days. From \$1395*



Lodging

DAYS 1 TO 2 (2 NIGHTS), ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

In Antigua, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



CASA SANTO DOMINGO

With beautiful gardens and traditional courtyards and fountains, the Casa Santo Domingo is an oasis in the heart of Antigua. A former 16th century monastery, the hotel is about a 10-minute walk from Antigua's main plaza. The spacious guest rooms have private baths and many rooms have in-room fireplaces. The public rooms, including a small museum on the premises, feature a collection of colonial objects and the works of local artists. The hotel has appeared on Travel & Leisure's "World's Best Hotels" list.



EL CONVENTO BOUTIQUE HOTEL (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Serene and private, the El Convento combines the beautiful colonial ambiance of Antigua with state-of-the-art amenities (even an ipod dock so you can play your favorite music in the room). This hotel's 20 guest rooms surround a beautifully landscaped courtyard garden, and each features an in-room fireplace, spacious marble bathroom, and a private patio (the Suites and Grand Suites also offer private Jacuzzis). El Convento is close to the center of town (great restaurants and shopping) but far enough away to avoid the hustle and bustle. Be sure to order a mojito at the rooftop lounge/bar, which has a marvelous view of Agua Volcano. A nice touch: at night the hotel is lit by flickering candles, contributing to its warm and welcoming ambiance.

DAYS 3 TO 4 (2 NIGHTS), LAKE ATITLÁN, GUATEMALA

In Lake Atitlán, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



VILLA SANTA CATARINA

The Villa Santa Catarina, a peaceful retreat right on the shores of volcano-ringed Lake Atitlán, conveys a Spanish-Colonial flavor and a relaxing ambiance. Guest rooms feature private bathrooms and balconies; the hotel's pool offers views of the lake and its volcanoes. The Villa Santa Catarina is located in the village of Santa Catarina Palopò, just south of Panajachel, famous for its beautiful locally produced textiles.



CASA PALOPO (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

This enchanting hotel, perched high on a hillside overlooking Lake Atitlán, was once a stunning private home. The main building features seven unique, cozy, and comfortable rooms, each with a terrace (knockout views of the lake and volcanoes), and richly decorated with colorful art, textiles, and furnishings. The on-site gourmet restaurant offers fine dining in an elegant, romantic setting (the sunset views are out of this world), and there is a gym for those so inclined, as well as a solar-heated lap pool. Need to stay connected? The hotel offers free Wi-Fi in the reception area.

DAYS 5 TO 7 (3 NIGHTS), FLORES, GUATEMALA

In Flores, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



VILLA MAYA

The Villa Maya is a quiet retreat located on the shores of Petenchel and Monifata lagoons in a private natural reserve just 45 minutes from Tikal. The hotel's 56 simple but stylish guest rooms (arranged in separate bungalows, with four rooms each) feature en suite bath, air conditioning, and private veranda with views of the lagoon, tropical forest, and gardens (and great bird-watching right from your room). Nature trails lead around the lake and through the gardens, and there's a flock of resident macaws right on the property. Sunsets from the bar are terrific and you can enjoy tasty meals in the open-air restaurant built above the lagoon. A triangular swimming pool and hot tub overlooking the lake offer a refreshing respite after a day exploring the ruins of Tikal.



LAS LAGUNAS HOTEL (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

In a private reserve in the heart of the Maya world, Las Lagunas Hotel has 19 jungle view and waterfront suites overlooking the peaceful Quexil Lagoon and Monkey Island. Each suite has air conditioning, a cascade shower bathroom, and a private deck with Jacuzzi. In this tranquil hideaway, you can walk along elevated paths to the shaded pool or spa to enjoy a wide range of body treatments, as well as the spa's sauna, steam room, and hot tub. The restaurant features fresh ingredients from the local market, and you can relax with a tropical drink or a glass of wine at the poolside bar. The hotel has kayaks, bicycles, and a small museum with archeological pieces that reflect the history of fascinating Flores.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Guatemala Private Journey* webpage and click on the "Lodging" tab.

Arrival & Departure

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

The trip begins on Day 1 in Guatemala City, Guatemala. You will be met and transferred to Antigua. At the end of the trip on Day 8, you are transferred to Flores Airport for a flight to Guatemala City. Your homeward-bound flight from Guatemala City must depart after 12 noon.

It is best to arrive by midday for your transfer to Antigua. If you arrive later, we can still transfer you to Antigua, or to your hotel in Guatemala City if you are arriving prior to Day 1. Please review your air schedule with us before you book your flights.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Trip members are responsible for making their own arrangements for air transportation. Please do not purchase your airline tickets until you are confirmed on the trip and have reviewed your proposed air schedule with our office. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so that we can send it on to the local guide (make sure to include your Trip Name and Trip Dates on it). Note: The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly; otherwise you may be denied boarding. Please remember this when reserving your flights. In addition, your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US (in most cases).

Trip Details

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is Level 2, Easiest. It features vehicle-based sightseeing and day walks, with hotel accommodations throughout. The walking at the ruin sites sometimes involves stairs or rough, uneven surfaces, and that can be strenuous. We do recommend that everyone make special efforts to get in good physical condition for the trip, as it will greatly increase your enjoyment.

WEATHER

This journey can be enjoyed year-round. Altitude is the biggest climatic consideration in Guatemala. In the highlands, including Antigua, Guatemala City, Atitlan, and Chichicastenango, the altitudes are between 4,300 and 6,900 feet and the daytime temperatures are usually 65°F to 80°F. Humidity is rarely a problem in the highlands. At night in the highlands, have a jacket handy because temperatures can drop as low as the 30s. However, in the lowland Petén jungle at Tikal, it is very humid and daytime temperatures are in the 80°Fs. There are two general seasons in Guatemala. From May to October, skies are a mix of sunshine and clouds and you can expect periodic short tropical downpours in the late afternoons, clearing for the evening. From November to April, it is cooler, with clearer skies and cold nights, especially in December and January.

PRIVATE JOURNEY GUIDED SERVICES

You will have one private guide with you in the highlands, and one private guide with you in the rainforest, with additional specialist guides in specific areas. A single private guide for the entire trip can be provided at an additional cost. Call us for details.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Latin America Manager or email us at latinamerica@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

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TOUCAN CLUB

Please note that Toucan Club discounts do not apply for our Private Journeys. However, your participation on these trips will count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular expeditions. For more information regarding our Toucan Club bonus program, please visit our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and special WT Expeditions that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access a complete library of our detailed itineraries and browse the customized reading guides for each of our adventures.

HELPFUL LINKS

Wilderness Travel has compiled a list of useful websites for travelers. Find the Client Forms & Helpful Links page of our website: (<http://www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan/links>).



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Condé Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*

Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

July 3, 2024 8:48 AM