



## Spirit of Guatemala Group Tour

### **Day 1: 27 Sep 2017 (Wednesday) – Arrive Flores**

Arrive any time before 5pm. Arrival transfer from Flores Airport to your hotel is included

#### **FLORES:**

Although it covers nearly one-third of the country, El Petén is Guatemala's most sparsely populated department. Here, parrots and monkeys far outnumber people, and the crumbling ruins of the ancient Mayas stand in for modern cities. A large tract of El Petén belongs to the Maya Biosphere Reserve, a wildlife haven that stretches from Belize through Guatemala to Mexico. The Tikal archaeological site is the department's biggest draw, though it's certainly not the only spot for ruins. Archaeology buffs will also enjoy Yaxhá, Ceibal, Aguateca, and Uaxactún (you can camp at the latter). El Petén's main towns include Flores and El Remate; both provide easy access to Tikal and the Mundo Maya International Airport. Visitors to El Petén should note that although the department is remote, it does have a handful of top-notch hotels and eco-lodges.

This evening enjoy a welcome dinner.

Overnight in a Standard Room at Villa Maya including breakfast (Superior Category Accommodation).

### **Day 2: 28 Sep 2017 (Thursday) - Tikal Full Day Tour with Lunch**

You will be met at your hotel by a private guide for a tour of Tikal National Park, where some 3,000 ancient structures rise from the rainforest floor. Not only you will enjoy a fascinating tour of this impressive UNESCO World Heritage Site, but you will also experience the sights and sounds of tropical birds and animals, including howler and spider monkeys, that live in the jungle canopy. Once home to an estimated at 50,000 residents or more, Tikal flourished from 800 BC to 900 AD. You will follow in the footsteps of Maya royalty and commoners as your guide leads you to such sites as the majestic Great Plaza and its Temple of the Jaguar (44 meters / 144 feet), Temple of the Masks (38m/125ft), the Acropolis and much more.



Lunch is provided at a local restaurant.

You can also explore the museum at the visitor centre before returning to your hotel.

Overnight in a Standard Room at Villa Maya including breakfast (Superior Category Accommodation).

### **Day 3: 29 Sep 2017 (Friday) Flores - Guatemala – Lake Atitlan**

Transfer from your hotel in Flores to Mundo Maya airport for your outward flight.

Fly from Flores to Guatemala.

Upon arrival at Guatemala Airport, you will be met by your private guide & driver for 1 hour transfer to the town of Comalapa. On arrival to the town you can see the famous painted mural that the school children of the town painted depicting major events in Guatemala's history up to the signing of the peace accords in 1996. From here you will visit some local painters who continue the tradition of naïve paintings that the town is so famous for. Finally, you can visit the wonderful authentic market of Comalapa to see the local people go about their daily life buying produce and goods for the rest of the week still dressed in the traditional textiles of the area. You can also visit the small museum dedicated to the composer who wrote Guatemala's national anthem who came from Comalapa.

Lunch will be enjoyed at a local restaurant

After lunch your journey continues to Lake Atitlan and your hotel

#### **LAKE ATITLAN**

Surrounded by rugged hills, a trio of towering volcanoes, and a handful of small villages, it's easy to wax poetic about Lake Atitlán. Located in the Guatemalan highlands, the lake was formed more than 80,000 years ago during a violent volcanic eruption. Tz'utujil and Kaqchiquel Mayas have plied its shores for centuries and continue to do so today, wearing vibrant traditional clothing and practicing age-old Maya customs, particularly in towns like Santiago Atitlán and Santa Catarina Palopó. Panajachel is the lake's main hub. From here, boats depart regularly for destinations like San Juan La Laguna, which is known for its hand-woven, naturally dyed textiles, and San Pedro, where intrepid visitors can summit a 3,020-meter (9,908-foot) volcano.

Overnight in a Standard (No Breakfast) Room at Hotel Atitlan (Superior Category Accommodation).

### **Day 4: 30 Sep 2017 (Saturday) - San Juan & Santiago Full Day Lake Tour**

You will be picked up at your hotel and transferred to San Juan La Laguna Village where you'll visit a local textile cooperative to see the back strap loom in use and to see how they still dye with natural dyes. You will also visit the home and workshop of local naïf painters before boarding the boat onto Santiago Village for lunch. After lunch you will walk with your guide to find the house where the Maya God Maximón is living. Each year a different "brotherhood" has the privilege of taking care of their God so his location changes. Once with Maximón you may see local shaman performing rituals for local people. After visiting Maximón you can visit the local church and learn about the history of this very traditional town and also see the market and learn about the distinctive textiles and primitive art that is famous from this area. When you are ready you will be transferred back to your hotel.



Overnight in a Standard (No Breakfast) Room at Hotel Atitlan (Superior Category Accommodation).

### **Day 5: 01 Oct 2017 (Sunday) - Chichi Market & Transfer to Antigua**

You will be met at your hotel by your private driver & guide for the 1hr transfer out to the highland town of Chichicastenango. Along the way you will pass through the central highland region and see the local Maya people in their traditional dress going about their daily lives - working in the fields, collecting firewood, travelling between markets, selling their wares. Upon arrival at Chichicastenango your guide will take you to explore this famous market both the local areas of the fruit & vegetables & everyday items as well as the craft area where you can find endless variety of beautiful textile, wooden & ceramic crafts. You can also visit the famous St Tomas Church where local Maya people come to perform Maya rituals within the Catholic church - demonstrating the interesting way the two faiths have combined in recent times. If you want to you can also hike up the hill to the Pascual Abaj ritual site to see if any local shaman are performing rituals and/or to the cemetery on the outskirts of town. Lunch is provided. When you are ready you will be driven to Antigua



### **ANTIGUA**

Founded in the sixteenth century, Antigua is a cosmopolitan destination with a rich colonial past. Its cobblestone streets are lined with pretty, pastel-hued homes, luxe boutique hotels, and an exceptional selection of smart restaurants and shops. A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979, this city of 35,000 people sits in valley between coffee farms, indigenous villages, and three imposing volcanoes. At the heart of town is the parque central, a European-style plaza busy with shoe-shiners, ice cream vendors, families, and tourists. During its architectural peak, Antigua was home to dozens of colonial monuments, churches, and monasteries, but an earthquake in 1773 damaged or reduced most to rubble. In the centuries thereafter, efforts were made to rebuild and restore, and the city today is filled with melancholy but gorgeous relics and ruins.

Overnight in a Standard Room at Hotel Meson de Maria including breakfast (Superior Category Accommodation).

### **Day 6: 02 Oct 2017 (Monday) - Antigua Walking Tour**

You will be met at your hotel reception by your private guide to begin your half day walking tour of Antigua. This tour explores this colonial city's cultural, architectural, and social history with a behind-the-scenes look at some of Antigua's ornately decorated churches, Spanish colonial-era ruins, and the tomb of the first Guatemalan saint. Entrance fees for the Cathedral of San Jose and the San Francisco el Grande and La Merced churches are included. If you wish to visit other monuments you will need to pay the entrances directly. At the end of the tour, the guide will accompany you back to your hotel



Overnight in a Standard Room at Hotel Meson de Maria including breakfast (Superior Category Accommodation).

## **Day 7: 03 Oct 2017 (Tuesday) - Antigua Free Day - Optional Excursions**

Today is free to explore Antigua at leisure.

Optional days tours can be pre-booked (additional costs apply):

Chicken Bus, Carpentry & Local NGO School  
Street Food Tour  
Antigua Valley Hike  
Antigua Valley Bike  
Coffee & Canopy Finca Feladelfia  
Pacaya Volcano Hike w Picnic & Thermal

Please ask your Travel Advisor for more details.

Tonight enjoy dinner at Fonda de la Calle Real

Overnight in a Standard Room at Hotel Meson de Maria including breakfast (Superior Category Accommodation).

## **Day 8: 04 Oct 2017 (Wednesday) – Tour Ends.**

Departure day. Say farewell to wonderful Guatemala,

Depart anytime. Transfer from hotel to Guatemala Airport (please allow at approx. 2 hours)

### **EXTEND YOUR STAY:**

Why not continue your journey with us through to Costa Rica.. Or Start your journey in Mexico & enjoy our Magical Mexico tour before continuing on to join this Guatemala adventure. A wide variety of pre & post tour options available. Please ask your Travel Advisor for more details.

**Included:** Accommodation, daily breakfast, other meals where stated, tours with professional English speaking guide on a shared service basis unless otherwise stated, airport transfers where stated, most entrance fees and local taxes (some exclusions apply).

**Excluded:** Any meals not mentioned in the above itinerary. Travel Insurance and tips. Any flights or services not mentioned in this itinerary.

**Please Note:** This itinerary and/or hotels quoted within this itinerary may change due to local operating conditions or availability at the time of booking or before departure. Please see our terms and conditions for more details. Please note that all flights are non refundable and non changeable unless advised otherwise. Viva Expeditions accepts no responsibility for flight delays and subsequent delays on tours.

Please be aware that many of our products are operated in US Dollars and therefore subject to currency fluctuations. Viva Expeditions will do its utmost to avoid passing on any additional charges however if there is a significant change in exchange rates then we will be required to add a currency surcharge without warning. If you would like to remove this currency risk you do have the option of paying in full at the time of booking.

Final payment on bookings are due 95 days prior to departure.

## Hotel Information

### Villa Maya

#### *Superior Category Accommodation*

Villa Maya is a larger hotel decorated with local wood and Guatemalan textiles offering guests a beautiful location on the shores of a lake in a rainforest setting. The hotel has extensive grounds, inside and outside dining, a small pool, and bar. The hotel is a comfortable and friendly place to stay for couples, families and groups and is well located to get to and from the airport and to the main archaeology sites in the area.

Facilities: Approx. 55 Rooms, Small Pool, Restaurant, Bar

Location: 15mins drive to the airport and Flores. 60mins from Tikal and Yaxha. 15mins from Ixpanpajul



### Hotel Atitlan

#### *Superior Category Accommodation*

Hotel Atitlan is a larger hotel decorated in colonial style offering guests a beautiful location on the shores of Lake Atitlan. The hotel has beautiful gardens, inside and outside dining, a small pool, and bar. Its lakeshore location offers guests stunning views of the lake and its three surrounding volcanoes from most areas of the hotel. Just behind the hotel is the Reserva Atitlan which offers moderate hiking in cloud forest, a butterfly farm and zip line. The hotel is a comfortable and friendly place to stay for couples, families and groups.

Facilities: 65 Rooms, Small Pool, Restaurant, Bar, Gardens, Meeting / Conference Room, Helipad

Location: 10mins drive outside of Panajachel located on the lakeshore



### Hotel Meson de Maria

#### *Superior Category Accommodation*

This is an excellent mid range hotel with 20 rooms and beautiful colonial décor. They offer a bed and breakfast service and due to the central location it is no trouble to go out into Antigua for dinner in one of the many nearby restaurants. There are standard rooms and suites available all decorated in tasteful colonial style with local textile adornments and a nice roof terrace from where to enjoy the central views of Antigua. This is great value for money.

Facilities: 20 Rooms, Roof Terrace, Bed and Breakfast

Location: Very central Location. 2 Blocks from the Central Plaza and 1 Block to the main Arch Street



### Colonial Hotel

Colonial Hotel is located downtown San José, very close to many important governmental buildings,

museums and parks as well as nice restaurants, stores and supermarkets.

It is an elegant restored neocolonial mansion that once belonged to the owners of a well-known furniture store.

The house has many elegant details such as hand carved mahogany beams and tropical redwood floors. All rooms have ceiling fans, telephone and cable TV; some of them also have air conditioning. Some additional services available are laundry service, money exchange, luggage storage and free wireless Internet access.

### **Pre-booking Advice**

Please click on the below link which includes some detailed information on common destinations. Please read this information prior to approving your quote with your sales consultant as the items mentioned in this document can be difficult (and/or expensive) to change after your booking is confirmed.

[Itinerary Planning Advice](#)

### **Important Information on Facebook and Twitter**

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