



Guatemala | Tours | Archaeology and Ecology in Guatemala



**Itinerary**

**Day 1: Welcome to Guatemala (transfer to Antigua)**

Upon arrival to Guatemala City you will be met by STP Guatemala staff for the transfer to Antigua.

**Day 2: Antigua Guatemala + Pacaya Volcano**

Visit Antigua Guatemala, a colonial city declared by UNESCO “Cultural Heritage of Humankind”. We begin in Antigua’s Historic Centre, starting from the Main Plaza and visiting the main monuments of the city. Afterwards we will continue towards the pacific coast to climb the Pacaya Volcano. The Pacaya Volcano (2,500masl) is an impressive active volcano, Strombolian type. We start climbing from the San Vicente de Pacaya village, and can be ascended in approximately 1 hour 30min. Return to Antigua Guatemala.

**Day 3: Iximché/Lake Atitlán**

In the morning we head to the highlands. On the way to Lake Atitlán we will visit Iximché, an archaeological site located in the town of Tecpán. Iximché was the former capital of the Maya-Cakchiquel, place where in 1524 was founded Guatemala’s first capital by the Spanish conqueror Pedro de Alvarado. After the visit we

continue to Lake Atitlán. Time at leisure to enjoy the town of Panajachel.

**Day 4: Santiago Atitlán**

Lake Atitlán was formed by a caldera (collapsed volcanic cone) and is surrounded by three impressive volcanoes (San Pedro, Atitlán and Tolimán) and 12 picturesque Maya-Cakchiquel and Maya.Tzutuhil villages.

Today you will visit Santiago Atitlán, one of the twelve villages that surround the lake.



Departure in the morning by boat to the Maya-Tzutuhil village of Santiago Atitlán, famous for Maximón, a character that is widely worshiped by the inhabitants of Santiago. Santiago also offers a variety of handicrafts, colorful textiles, woodcarvings and naïf paintings. In the afternoon return to Panajachel and afterwards continue to Guatemala City.

### **Day 5: Yaxhá**

The Northern part of Guatemala was the birthplace of the great Mayan Civilization. The region witnessed the rise and fall of this ancient culture that was a very advanced stratified society which lived harmoniously with nature. The Maya were excellent astronomers and mathematicians and developed a complex hieroglyphic scripture. They were also very skilled in arts, stone carving and architecture, and established a vast commercial net-work from the North of Mexico to Costa Rica. The fall and collapse of this great civilization is still a true enigma.

Early in the morning, transfer from the hotel to the airport, to board the flight to Flores, Petén and continue to Yaxhá ("Turquoise Water"), considered an important civic and ceremonial site during the Mayan Classic Period; it is settled on a hill overlooking the beautiful Laguna de Yaxhá and Laguna Sacnab. Epigraphic evidence assures that it had important relationship with Tikal, as a "satellite" of Tikal during the Classic Period (300-950 A.D.). Yaxhá is the only site in Petén, besides Tikal, that has a "Twin Pyramid Complex".

### **Day 6: Tikal**

The majestic city of Tikal, considered the largest and most monumental of all sites discovered in the Mayan World, was declared by UNESCO as a "World Heritage Site". Enjoy a guided walking tour to visit the most important plazas, complexes, temples, ball courts, palaces and stelae. Also enjoy the tropical forest, nesting place of hundreds of exotic birds and the habitat of a wide variety of wildlife. Picnic lunch included.

### **Day 7: Ixpanpajul (Hanging bridges and Canopy)**

Enjoy a great adventure in Ixpanpajul Natural Park, where you will walk in the Sky Way: a series of 6 linked suspension bridges through the upper levels of the forest and paths, which will give you the opportunity to enjoy the lush tropical forest and wildlife of the region. After this 2 hour walk, you will enjoy the "Tarzan Tour", a serious fun and full of adrenaline canopy tour, where you will fly through the jungle in a safe way.



**Day 8: Ceibal**

We depart by road to Sayaxché, where we take a boat through the La Pasión River, and continue to Ceibal. The archaeological site of Ceibal flourished from 200 A.D. to 900 A.D. and has an extraordinary number of Mayan stone carved monuments and temples. The stelae of Ceibal are one of the finest and best preserved which is why Ceibal is known as "The Gallery of Mayan Art". After the visit we continue to Cuevas de Candelaria National Park in Alta Verapaz.

**Day 9: Candelaria Caves/Cobán**

This morning we visit the Candelaria Caves, the largest found in Central America, located at the foot of the Chamá Mountain Range. "... It is one of the most extraordinary underground systems on Earth... How to define "Candelaria", if not by the light effects created by the rays of the sun that run through the surrounding green foliage and crystal clear waters, dividing themselves into a thousand shapes on the walls adorned with ghostly figures, and the Maya's Sacred River.."

(Daniel Dreux- French Speleologist that discovered the caves). Afterwards we continue to the city of Cobán. We visit the Calvary Church where the Maya-Kekchí practice ceremonies to worship their pre-hispanic gods.

**Day 10: The Quetzal Biotope**

After breakfast we drive through the mountains to visit the lush cloud forest ecosystem of the Biotope "El Quetzal - Mario Dary Rivera," natural habitat of the national bird, the Quetzal. After the visit we continue to Guatemala City passing through a varied topography, from the misty cloud forests in Alta Verapaz, to the hot, dry tropical climate of the Motagua river valley where dinosaurs once roamed, to a cooler climate of Guatemala City.

**Day 11: See you soon**

At the specified time, transfer from the hotel to the airport for your flight back home.



**Excelsior Travel & Tours**

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**The Package Includes:**

**Prices include:**

- Itinerary and described hotels (subject to availability)
- Ground transportation with tour guide (private services).
- Daily American Breakfast (10) and lunch in Tikal
- Boat ride in Lake Atitlán (SIB for 2 to 3 pax), and Ceibal
- Entrance fees

**Not included:**

- Personal expenses
- Flight GUA/FRS (see supplement). Subject to change)
- Airport security tax (\$3.00)
- Tips for bellboy, maid, tour guide and driver
- Beverages and meals not mentioned

**Notes:**

- “Transfer In” with guide only for 7 + pax
- No guide services for days 7 and 11