

8-day Guatemala Highlights SIB



Included services:

- 7 overnights in good country-typical 3* hotels or good standard 4* or boutique hotels or luxury 5* hotels
- daily breakfasts, except Day 6 (American or typical or Continental breakfast due to offered choice)
- all ground transfers, boat transportation and entrance fees as indicated in tour itinerary
- local English-speaking guide for half-day archeological tour in Tikal
- hotel taxes and VAT

Not included: Other meals, drinks, tips, additional transfers or extra guide services, border fees, departure tax.

PLEASE NOTE THAT AIR TRANSFER AND ENTRANCE FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE ANYTIME WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. ALTERNATIVE ARRIVAL DAYS POSSIBLE. TRANSPORTATION BASED ON COLLECTIVE SHUTTLES (SEAT-IN BASIS). ASK FOR ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION, EXTRA GUIDE SERVICES, MEALS, ADDITIONAL OVERNIGHTS ETC.

Program Itinerary:

Day 1 (Tuesday):

Reception at airport and transfer to hotel in Antigua. Depending on your arrival time, you can still enjoy a relaxed evening walk through the cobble stone streets of this colonial town. Overnight in colonial-style hotel.

Day 2 (Wednesday):

FREE DAY. Antigua Guatemala served as capital of all Central America from 1543 until 1773, when destroyed by an earthquake and the capital subsequently moved to its present location. The city was original known as *La Muy Noble y La Muy Leal Ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros*, it is located just 45 km from Guatemala City, its splendid beauty consists in its colonial architecture, its houses painted in Mediterranean colors, and its ruins and numerous churches. Antigua has been declared UNESCO World Heritage site in 1979. Options include: a) hike to Pacaya volcano; b) walking tour in Antigua - La Merced church, Santa Catalina arch, Central Plaza with cathedral and Palacio de Capitanes, University San Carlos, San Francisco church with the shrine of Guatemala's only saint - Hermano Pedro; c) visit to coffee plantation; d) visit to Macadamia Nut Farm; e) visit to Women's Weaving Cooperative in San Antonio Aguascalientes; f) visit to Don Filiberto, a farmer in San Miguel Escobar; g) Tour de Pueblos visiting surrounding villages. **PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR OPTIONAL TOURS IN ADVANCE.** Overnight.

Day 3 (Thursday):

Transfer from Antigua to Chichi. Visit the indigenous market, observe Mayan rituals in Santo Tomás church, and alternatively hike to nearby ceremonial site Pascual Abaj. The colorful town of **Chichicastenango** located 20 miles north of this volcanic lake, hosts every Thursday and Sunday one of the biggest indigenous markets in Guatemala, attracting traders from the highlands offering beautiful traditional textiles & handicrafts. Chichi offers lots of shamanistic overtones with numerous religious brotherhoods & a mystic-spiritual combination of Mayan pagan rites and traditional Catholic devotion. Then continue to Xela. Overnight.

Day 4 (Friday):

Visit **San Francisco El Alto market** and explore Xela surroundings - San Andrés Xecul, Copavic glass factory, Zunil & Almolonga valley. This small highland town built on a very large, steep hill which is located in the small Guatemalan department of Totonicapan. Situated at 8,500 ft above sea level, this village commands a great view of the enormous Quetzaltenango valley. The Friday market is the largest native market in Guatemala. Transfer to Pana. Overnight.

Day 5 (Saturday):

Boat tour of stunning Lake Atitlán - visiting San Pedro La Laguna, Santiago Atitlán with its great art galleries and the Maximón sanctuary, and San Antonio Palopó, offering a great selection of hand woven products and colorful ceramics. A natural treasure is the sapphire-blue **Lake Atitlán**, surrounded by 3 dormant volcanoes in the Western Highlands. Located around the lake's shore are 14 picturesque indigenous villages which are home to Kakchiquel and Tzutuhil families and where Mayan dialects are first language. Return to Pana and transfer back to Antigua. Overnight.

Day 6 (Sunday):

Early transfer to airport in Guatemala City and flight to Flores. You will be met by our representative and brought to Tikal National Park. Start guided tour of Tikal archeological site with bilingual local guide, visiting Complex Q, Main Plaza, North and Central Acropolis, Complex Lost World, Temple IV. Lunch (included). Once the ceremonial center of the ancient Maya, the ruins at **Tikal** were rediscovered in 1955 and comprise the largest collection of Mayan ruins ever excavated. Now, a National Park covering 358 square miles of prime rainforest, Tikal is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna, including spider and howler monkeys, ocelots, jaguars, and almost 250 bird species. UNESCO declared Tikal a World Heritage site in 1979 due to its exceptional natural and cultural value. FREE afternoon to explore and re-enter the archeological zone. Try to be in the park for sunset. Overnight in Tikal.

Day 7 (Monday):

Optional early morning bird-watching tours or canopy tours available. FREE morning to visit onsite museums and re-enter the archeological zone (approx. Q50 not included). Afternoon transfer to Flores airport and flight to Guatemala City. Transfer back to Antigua. Overnight.

Day 8 (Tuesday):

FREE morning in Antigua to take care of last-minute shopping at the local craft market and then it is time to say good-bye. Drop-off at airport.

END OF SERVICES