

The Mayan Trail

22 days | Cancun to Playa del Carmen



Take an exhilarating 22 day journey of discovery through Mexico, Guatemala and Belize. Explore the incredible Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza, Palenque and Tikal, travel through vibrant colonial towns and breathtaking landscapes, soak up the scenery on beautiful Lake Atitlan and relax in idyllic Caye Caulker.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Tulum - visit the beautiful cliffside Mayan city of Tulum and explore the ruins
- Playa del Carmen - relax in Mexico's popular coastal resort with its beautiful palm fringed beaches
- Valladolid- enjoy a guided walking tour of this charming colonial city
- Chichen Itza - marvel at one of the New 7 Wonders of the World
- Merida - explore the capital of the Yucatan province
- Palenque archaeological site - roam around these remarkable Mayan ruins in the heart of the rainforest
- San Cristobal - experience life in the highlands and visit the Tzotzil community of San Juan Chamula

- Lake Atitlan - take a boat ride and soak up the spectacular scenery in Panajachel and San Juan La Laguna
- Agua Azul and Misol Ha - visit two of the most beautiful waterfalls in Mexico and enjoy a refreshing swim in a natural pool
- Antigua - explore Guatemala's most enchanting city which sits in the shadow of three large volcanoes
- Rio Dulce - take a tranquil boat ride along this beautiful river through the towns of Rio Dulce and El Rellenos
- Flores - wander around this charming island town on Lake Peten or choose from a range of optional activities
- Tikal - explore this remarkable Mayan archaeological site, deep in the heart of the rainforest
- San Ignacio - choose from a range of optional activities in Belize's adventure capital, including caving, hiking, kayaking and horseback riding
- Caye Caulker - soak up the sunshine and relax on this idyllic island
- Laguna Bakalar - relax by this spectacular lake of seven colours

What's Included

- 21 breakfasts
- 21 nights 3-4 star hotels
- Cancun airport arrival transfer on day 1
- Transfers and transportation in private vehicles

- Guided sightseeing in Valladolid, Chichen Itza, Palenque, San Cristobal, Tikal and Tulum
- Lake Atitlan boat trip to San Juan La Laguna
- Rio Dulce boat transfer to lodge
- Visit to Agua Azul and Misol Ha waterfalls
- Escorted by a local English speaking tour leader with specialist guides at certain sites of interest
- Entrance fee to Chichen Itza, Palenque, Tikal and Tulum
- Water taxi from Belize City - Caye Caulker - Chetumal

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture
- Airport departure transfer - can be booked at an additional cost upon request

ITINERARY

The Mayan Trail - 22 days

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The Mayan Trail

Day 1 : Cancun



Welcome to Mexico! Arrive into Cancun International Airport where you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Cancun. The rest of the day is free for you to explore this popular beach resort. Perhaps take a walk along the soft white sand and enjoy a swim in the crystal clear sea. **Overnight - Cancun**

Day 2 : Chichen Itza



Playa del Carmen - Chichen Itza - Merida. This morning meet your tour leader and head to vibrant Valladolid. During a guided walking tour of the city, see beautiful colonial buildings as well as the cathedral Iglesia de San Servacio. Afterwards we travel on to explore the famous Chichen Itza archaeological site - one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Chichen Itza was constructed between the 7th and the 10th Century AD and these incredible ruins are the best examples of Mayan architecture ever excavated. The highlight of our guided tour is the iconic El Castillo pyramid (aka the Pyramid of Kukulcan). Then we travel on to Merida, which is the largest city of Yucatan and called 'the white city' due to its numerous magnificent buildings. **Overnight - Merida (B)**

Day 3 : Free time in Merida



There are no activities planned for today so you can choose to independently explore Merida or enjoy one of the optional activities which are offered. You can go diving in the mysterious and beautiful cenotes of Cuzama, or take a day tour to Celestun National Park, home to many spectacular tropical birds. There is so much to discover! **Overnight - Merida (B)**

Day 4 : Campeche

Merida - Campeche. Today we leave Merida and travel onto the colonial city of Campeche. As you walk through the narrow streets of the old town, you will discover the fascinating stories and legends of pirates, conquistadors and the indigenous Maya. The city has conserved its huge bastions and ramparts which were formerly the city's major defence from pirate attacks! **Overnight - Campeche (B)**

Day 5 : Palenque Ruins



Campeche - Palenque. This morning we drive to Palenque and enjoy an informative guided tour of the Palenque Ruins in the afternoon. Surrounded by lush Chiapas jungle, Palenque represents tremendous achievements in Mayan art and urban design, and the ruins include a series of hilltop temples, towers, tombs and pyramids including the fascinating Temple of Inscriptions. **Overnight - Palenque (B)**

Days 6-7 : San Cristobal

Palenque - Agua Azul - San Cristobal. Today we visit the waterfalls Agua Azul and Misol Ha, two of the most beautiful waterfalls in all of Mexico. After a refreshing swim in a natural pool, we continue to the highland town of San Cristobal de las Casas, surrounded by traditional villages. San Cristobal is at the heart of one of the most indigenous areas in Mexico and this is reflected in the art and culture throughout this fascinating town.

The following day we visit the village of San Juan Chamula which is one of several Tzotzil communities in the area. Here we learn more about ancient Mayan traditions and observe cultural rituals. **Overnight - San Cristobal (B:2)**

Days 8-9 : Lake Atitlan



San Cristobal - Panajachel (Guatemala). On day 8 we bid farewell to Mexico and travel into Guatemala. The journey takes us through spectacular scenery as we travel through the beautiful Guatemalan highlands towards the Pan American Highway and down to Panajachel on the northern shore of enchanting Lake Atitlan, enjoying breathtaking views of the lake and its three volcanoes, San Pedro, Atitlan and Toliman.

The following day we take a boat across Lake Atitlan to San Juan La Laguna. This town is much quieter than many of the other ones around the lake so it's the perfect place to relax and enjoy the spectacular scenery or wander through the streets and shop for local handicrafts. In the evening we return to Panajachel. **Overnight - Panajachel (B:2)**

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Days 10-11 : Antigua



Panajachel - Antigua. On day 10 we travel to Antigua, which was the cultural, economic, religious, political and educational centre for the entire region until the capital was moved. The afternoon and day 11 are free to explore this picturesque colonial city, which cannot fail to enchant, with its cobbled streets, parks and plazas, ornate churches and colourful street markets, all set against a spectacular backdrop of awe inspiring volcanoes. Here, the local indigenous people dressed in their colourful costumes can be found selling their crafts and textiles and as the cultural centre of Guatemala, Antigua is an ideal place to experience the traditional music, architecture and art of the country. **Overnight - Antigua (B:2)**

Days 12-13 : Rio Dulce



Antigua - Rio Dulce. We enjoy scenic views of a tropical river as we travel from Antigua to the town of Rio Dulce on day 12. Rio Dulce ("Sweet River") is located in the northeast region of Izabal and it's part of the much larger Izabal lake. A bridge connects Rio Dulce with a town called El Rellenos. We take a short, tranquil boat ride to our lodge, where we spend the next two nights in cabins on the water.

The next day is free to participate in optional activities. We recommend visiting the impressive citadel Castillo San Felipe, the

ancient Mayan Ruins of Quirigua, the beautiful Finca Paraiso HotSpring- Waterfall and the Rio Dulce National Park. **Overnight - Rio Dulce (B:2)**

Day 14 : Flores

Rio Dulce - Flores. Today we're off to Flores, a beautiful island-town which is located in the centre of Lake Peten Itza. The afternoon is free to participate in optional activities like a visit to the Las Guacamayas Biological Station, the Mayan Ruins of Uaxactun, Ixpanpajul Nature Park, a round trip to Tzimin Chac to see the sunset, or just relax with a walk around the enchanting town. **Overnight - Flores (B)**

Day 15 : Tikal Ruins

Flores - San Ignacio (Belize). This morning look forward to a guided tour of the breathtaking Tikal Ruins. Nestled deep in the jungle, this complex is one of the largest Maya sites discovered. It was excavated in 1956 and 1969 and much of the site is yet to be unearthed. Tikal was once the capital of a conquest state and one of the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient Maya. The temples, residences and religious monuments decorated in hieroglyphic inscriptions provide a long list of ruling dynasties with many tombs of the once-ruling kings.

This afternoon we bid farewell to Guatemala and cross the border into beautiful Belize, where we spend the next two nights in San Ignacio. Nestled between Guatemala, Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea, Belize is a constitutional monarchy that was originally called British Honduras. Blessed with beautiful beaches and lush rainforests as well as a thrilling colonial history and significant cultural diversity, Belize is sure to captivate you. **Overnight - San Ignacio (B)**

Day 16 : San Ignacio

San Ignacio, or Cayo as it's called by the locals, is the adventure capital of Belize. There is nothing planned for today so you can partake in some of the many optional activities available here. San Ignacio is very close to Belize's famous Mayan ruins and offers plenty of exciting outdoor activities including caving,

hiking, kayaking, horseback riding, and more! **Overnight - San Ignacio (B)**

Days 17-18 : Caye Caulker



San Ignacio - Caye Caulker. Today we travel to Belize's capital where we take a water taxi to the small island of Caye Caulker. Belize is renowned for its laid back and relaxed pace of life and on the beautiful island of Caye Caulker, where their motto is "go Slow", we kick off our shoes and enjoy some R&R.

Make the most of the following day on the island, there are many things to do. You could visit one of the other Cayes or take a snorkelling trip to the stunning corals where you can see tropical fish, nurse sharks and manta rays to name a few. Another recommended excursion is to the Hol Chan Marine Reserve where you will find the incredible world famous Blue Hole and the world's second longest barrier reef. Caye Caulker is excellent for manatee spotting, a popular activity seeing these passive creatures. If exploring is not your thing you can just relax by the beautiful turquoise waters. Snorkel tours and dive boats leave daily for full or half day tours to the reef. There are also plenty of places to shop and to try the local food. **Overnight - Caye Caulker (B:2)**

Day 19 : Laguna Bacalar

Caye Caulker - Laguna Bacalar. After breakfast we take a scenic boat ride to the Mexican Chetumal before continuing by bus to the beautiful Laguna Bacalar, the second largest lake in Mexico. The rest of the afternoon is yours to relax and explore the seven cenotes that feed into the lake. **Overnight - Laguna Bacalar (B)**

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Days 20-21 : Playa del Carmen



Laguna Bacalar - Tulum - Playa del Carmen. After breakfast on day 20 we make our way to Playa del Carmen stopping off at the beautiful Cliffside Mayan city of Tulum where we have a chance to visit the famous ruins and immerse ourselves in the archaeological and colonial importance this city has to offer. We then continue our journey to Playa del Carmen, where you can spend some time at the beach or exploring the local area.

The next day is free to enjoy the white sand beach of Playa del Carmen, take a day tour, or just go shopping on 5th avenue. Enjoy your last full day, soaking up the vibrant Mexican atmosphere!

Overnight - Playa del Carmen (B:2)

Day 22 : Playa del Carmen

Our tour comes to an end today and it's time to return home. Arrangements end after breakfast and hotel check out. We can book a transfer to Cancun Airport upon request or some extra nights if you still do not want to leave!(B)

PRICES / DATES INFO

Prices shown are per person when there are 2 persons sharing a room. The 'Single supplement' applies for single travellers who require their own room and needs to be added to the per person price. If you are happy to be paired up with another single traveller of the same gender on your tour, this can be arranged provided there is another single traveller booked on the tour date

of your choosing. If a roommate cannot be found the single room supplement will apply.

PRICES / DATES 2019

| Date | Twin Share | Single |
|--------|------------|-----------|
| 02 Nov | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |

PRICES / DATES 2020

| Date | Twin Share | Single |
|--------|------------|-----------|
| 25 Jan | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |
| 22 Feb | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |
| 04 Apr | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |
| 16 May | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |
| 04 Jul | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |
| 01 Aug | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |
| 03 Oct | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |
| 21 Nov | GBP 3,825 | GBP 4,685 |

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