



RAINBOW TOURS

LATIN AMERICA





YOUR CHOICE IN LATIN AMERICA

*Welcome to our 2019 Latin America brochure, a collection of our favourite inspiring places, hotels and experiences in South and Central America. Whether you want to live like a local in Buenos Aires, witness the grandeur of the Iguazu Falls or feel the hair on the back of your neck tingle when you catch your first glimpse of Machu Picchu, we are here to build your perfect trip. Our first-hand knowledge of the continent comes from years of travel, so we can create your dream trip. Visit our website for more inspiration or call a Rainbow Tours Travel Specialist on **020 7666 1260** for expert advice.*

Our Commitment to You

Every trip to Latin America is special. For many people, it genuinely is a once in a lifetime experience and we take this responsibility seriously by doing all we can to make sure that every holiday we create lives up to the highest expectations.

Specialist Knowledge

Our London-based team of Travel Specialists travel frequently and extensively so that they can offer specialist advice to help plan your ideal Latin America holiday. It's this knowledge and experience that allows us to craft personalised itineraries that perfectly suit you and your interests.

Tailor-made Journeys

We specialise in tailor-made holidays. Whether you want to stay in simple or luxurious accommodation, travel solo or with a guide, spend a week travelling or a month, we can create a holiday to fit your budget and requests. In this brochure you will find a selection of suggested itineraries. However, these are just for inspiration, and can be adapted to create your perfect trip.

Holidays Protected by ATOL

Your financial protection is important to us, which is why we are fully bonded by ATOL. Our ATOL licence (2786) protects any Rainbow Tours package that includes a flight, and ensures that your money would be refunded or that you would be repatriated in the unlikely event of our insolvency. We are also a member of ABTA (ABTA number V2359), which means we are obliged to maintain a high standard of service to you. Also, if your holiday does not include flights, ABTA will financially protect your holiday by ensuring you receive a refund or, if your arrangements include return travel to the UK (other than flights), you are returned to the UK if your holiday cannot be provided as a result of our insolvency.



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#ResponsibleRainbow

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100 RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER



Mexico

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Brazil

Venezuela

Guyana

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French Guiana

Belize

Honduras

Gulf of Mexico

Caribbean Sea

Atlantic Ocean

Pacific Ocean

Galapagos Islands

Easter Island

South Georgia

Falkland Islands

Antarctic Peninsula



ARGENTINA

With its dramatic landscapes, cosmopolitan cities and lively culture, Argentina is a country of immense beauty, a true traveller's delight.

Latin flavour meets influence from European settlers in Buenos Aires, showcased in much of its architecture and elegant boulevards. Near Buenos Aires, The Pampas offer a unique insight into the gaucho way of life on traditional estancias, teeming with cattle and horses. Make sure to try Argentine beef cooked on a quincho barbecue.

With a spectacular backdrop of the Andes, the vineyards around stylish, tree-lined Mendoza produce some of Argentina's best wines; tipples so good it would almost be rude not to sample them.

In the north west, towards Salta, the landscape changes to rocky desert and you'll find the Hill of Seven Colours and the Humahuaca Gorge. In the north east, the thundering Iguazú Falls straddle the Argentina/Brazil border – a

'must-see' on any trip, especially when combined with the wildlife-rich Iberá Wetlands.

The beautiful Lake District is home to over 20 deep-blue lakes, pristine forests and the snow-capped Andes. Bariloche, an alpine town and the lakes' central point, is an ideal base for hiking and kayaking. Meanwhile on the east coast, Peninsula Valdes is a renowned marine mammal mecca, home to penguins, whales, sea lions and elephant seals.

The wild region of Patagonia spans the southern reaches of Argentina, boasting estancias home to cattle-ranching gaucho, and Ushuaia, the stepping-off point for Antarctic explorations. Head to El Calafate to access the iconic El Perito Moreno Glacier, located within Los Glaciares National Park.

“
...tipples so good it would
almost be rude not to
sample them
”





El Perito Moreno Glacier

Top Tips

- Explore cosmopolitan Buenos Aires
- Admire dramatic desertscapes around Salta
- Gaze over the mighty Iguazú Falls
- Wonder at the awe-inspiring Perito Moreno Glacier
- Visit Argentina's world-famous wineries

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

Covering a large distance, Argentina can be visited all year round. However, the southern half of the country is best visited between October and April, with the peak months being December to February. Even in these months, the weather can be unpredictable and windy. The northwest of the country is best visited between April and December when the weather is characterised by sunny days. The Iguazú Falls are an all year round destination and can become very hot and humid between December and April, but cooler at other times of the year.

GETTING THERE

British Airways operates a direct service from London Heathrow and Norwegian Airlines operates a direct service from London Gatwick to Buenos Aires.

GMT -3 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Argentina.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Argentina.



La Boca

BUENOS AIRES

With its classic European architecture, plazas, fountains and wide boulevards, Argentina's dynamic capital city is often called the Paris of South America. It's a fantastic city from which to get a real feel for Argentine culture and lifestyles, with a buzzing café culture, interesting museums and galleries, steakhouses serving mouth-watering prime cuts of beef, and tango shows dancing the evenings away. It's also the place where most visitors to

Argentina begin their trip. The city is split into very different and unique neighbourhoods. The areas of most interest to visitors include the colourful old port district of La Boca, the trend-setting shops and restaurants of Palermo, the modern skyline of Puerto Madero, the Parisian architecture of Recoleta and the Art Deco cafés and restaurants of Retiro.



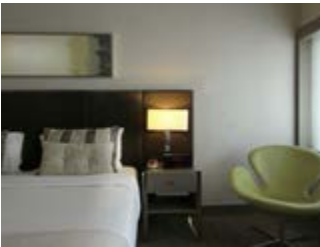
chef and L'Orangerie serves delicious afternoon tea.

Alvear Palace | Located in the heart of upmarket Recoleta and surrounded by the finest city shops, this elegant hotel has 197 rooms and suites. The restaurant offers fine French cuisine prepared by the hotel's Relais & Châteaux



feature all modern amenities and en-suite bathrooms.

Sofitel Buenos Aires Recoleta | Also located in Recoleta, this hotel is close to many restaurants, cafés and boutiques. The open-kitchen restaurant serves up delicious local and international dishes and the elegant rooms



restaurant for delicious meals in a sophisticated atmosphere or Club 31 for informal meals, cocktails and snacks.

Recoleta Grand | Situated in the heart of the fashionable Recoleta neighbourhood, this modern and stylish hotel has 90 modern suites with spa-quality bathrooms – and a rooftop spa. Dine at the Jenny



plenty of the city's most stylish bars and restaurants on the doorstep.

Legado Mitico | Delve into Argentine history at Legado Mitico in the Palermo Soho district. Choose one of the 11 individually decorated rooms, inspired by the lives of famous Argentineans such as Che Guevara and Eva Perón. This hotel oozes old-world style yet has



IGUAZÚ FALLS

Situated in north east Argentina, Iguazú Falls is one of the world's most impressive natural wonders. It lies on the border between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay and consists of a network of 275 different waterfalls spanning an area 3km wide. A wildlife haven for birds and butterflies, Iguazú has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986 and is a 'must-see'

when visiting Argentina or Brazil. A series of pathways running through the national park allow for exceptional views from a number of vantage points. The infamous Devil's Throat, where the largest proportion of water plummets down 90m into a U-shaped chasm, is best enjoyed from the boardwalk out over the edge!



Awasi Iguazú | Just 15 minutes from the falls, each of Awasi Iguazú's 14 villas offers seclusion and a private plunge pool, despite being just a short walk from the main lodge, restaurant and bar. Access the National Park after the gates

close and take advantage of the hotel's on-site experts and your personal guide and driver.



Melia Iguazú | Melia Iguazú has amenities aplenty, with a poolside bar and a gym, tended gardens and a range of guest room categories to choose from, with views across lush jungle or the mighty falls themselves. A variety of

food is offered at the buffet-style restaurant and the spa is always worth a visit.



MENDOZA

Argentina is South America's number one wine producer. With altitudes ranging from 450m to 1,100m and a variety of microclimates, it's no surprise that Mendoza is the wine capital of Argentina. Here you'll find wide, breezy avenues lined with trees, a mix of modern and art deco buildings, atmospheric plazas, and a cosmopolitan café scene; while the surrounding countryside is home to magnificent wine-producing estates.

You can practise your wine-tasting skills at any one of the well-known wineries in the region, or spend a day or two exploring the city of Mendoza with its tree-lined streets and pretty squares. From Mendoza, you can travel overland through the Andes, crossing a high pass via Aconcagua, taking you through spectacular scenery towards Santiago in Chile.



Cavas Wine Lodge | Delightfully situated in the foothills of the snow-capped Andes, this lodge with its 14 Andean-view rooms sits at the heart of 35 acres of lush vineyards. This secluded hotel

has an outstanding wine cellar and you can taste a selection of its 250 Mendoza-region wines with the sommelier or during a private dinner.



Entre Cielos | Nestled between peaceful vineyards and the mighty Andes, Entre Cielos is idyllic. The hotel offers a range of rooms with stylish interiors and floor-to-ceiling windows showcasing the stunning surrounds. Sample local

ingredients at Katharina or stop by the spa to make use of Latin America's first traditional hammam.



SALTA & THE NORTH WEST

Salta and the north west of Argentina have a very different feel to the more cosmopolitan parts of the country. Home to some of the most spectacular natural landscapes in the country, this is a land of rich red desert earth, vivid blue skies and awe-inspiring mountainous panoramas. Founded in 1582, Salta is one of Argentina's most attractive cities, retaining much of its colonial

charm, and offers a great base from which to explore the north west, home to many indigenous villages. Visitors can explore the Calchaquí Valley and the wineries of Cafayate; visit the fort at Quilmes, which once marked the southern boundary of the Inca Empire; or take a 4WD to the Humahuaca Gorge, leading into the Andes towards the Atacama Desert.



▲ La Merced del Alto |

Located at the top of the valley, this hotel boasts sweeping views over the scenic landscape as well as 14 large bedrooms, a pool, living room and spa with outdoor jacuzzi and massage rooms. Guests can dine at

the gourmet Andean á la carte restaurant and enjoy after-dinner drinks at the bar.



▲ Viñas de Cafayate |

Viñas de Cafayate is located just outside Cafayate and is set in beautiful vineyards, with 22 rooms, some of which boast a private balcony, and a lovely swimming pool.

On the terrace guests can enjoy a glass of wine from the extensive cellar, and at the gourmet restaurant eat fresh produce from the organic garden.



ARGENTINA'S LAKE DISTRICT

The Lake District of northern Patagonia is renowned for its beautiful scenic lakes set against the backdrop of the Andes, bordering Chile. There are some 20 lakes in the region, the largest being Lake Nahuel Huapi on the shores of which sits the pretty town of Bariloche. It has an alpine feel with Swiss-chalet-style wooden architecture. Both the town and the surrounding

lakeshore region make an ideal base for hiking, rafting, kayaking, climbing, fishing and cycling, with skiing available in the winter months near Cerro Catedral. A few hours drive north of Bariloche along the Seven Lakes road lies the picturesque town of San Martín de los Andes – the gateway to the stunning Lanin National Park and a haven for lovers of the great outdoors.



▲ Llao Llao | Llao Llao is located within the Nahuel Huapi National Park in the centre of the Lake District with the feel of a grand mountain lodge. The 205 rooms are spread over two wings and a vast number of outdoor activities are

offered including an 18-hole golf course, kayaking, mountain biking and abseiling.



▲ El Casco Art Hotel |

El Casco Art Hotel is set in the heart of the Argentine Lake District with breathtaking views over the Nahuel Huapi Lake. The restaurant serves food made with local produce, which the

sommelier can match to perfection with wine, and the hotel is filled with art you could spend all day browsing.



IBERÁ WETLANDS

To the south of Iguazú, the Iberá Wetlands are the second largest marshlands in South America and are double the size of the Everglades in Florida (the largest wetlands being Brazil's Pantanal). Still a relatively remote region, the area is home to an

abundance of wildlife, including anacondas, capybaras, caiman, marsh deer, howler monkeys and giant storks. We recommend a stay on an estancia where you can explore on horseback as well as by boat.



△ Puerto Valle | This beautifully restored traditional estancia features 13 rooms, all with stunning views of the Paraná River and private balconies or verandas. In the evening enjoy great food made from local ingredients complement-

ed by a specially selected wine menu.



△ Estancia Rincón de Socorro | This refined, eco-tourist estancia is a 12,000-hectare former cattle ranch, now a dedicated nature reserve, in the heart of the Iberá Wetlands. Choose from the three small

bungalows or the six rooms in the main house, and take advantage of superb wines and free-range meats in the dining room.



VALDES PENINSULA

For wildlife enthusiasts we recommend a visit to Patagonia's Valdes Peninsula, which juts out into the South Atlantic Ocean to the east of Patagonia and is a haven for marine wildlife. The peninsula is an important breeding ground for the Southern Right whales that occupy these waters between July and November to mate and give birth. It is also an opportunity to

visit the Punta Tombo penguin rookery, south of the peninsula. This important site is the largest breeding ground for Magellanic penguins in South America with up to half a million arriving every year to breed. The best months to see penguins are from September to March, but the babies are hatched from November onwards.



△ Bahia Bustamente | This beautiful lodge sits on the seaside and is surrounded on all sides by nature. Eleven cabins and the Main Lodge offer beautiful views and comfortable accommodation with a classic

Patagonian atmosphere. The restaurant serves local food, with the fruit and vegetables all from the hotel's own organic garden.



△ Estancia Rincon Chico | This remote lodge was constructed in the style of old English houses imported in the 19th century and is full of character. The eight rooms are rustic and comfortable, and during the day are powered exclusively by

renewable energy. Enjoy activities such as whale-watching and even sheep-shearing, if you arrive in the right season!



ARGENTINIAN PATAGONIA

Patagonia encompasses a huge area of southern Argentina and Chile and its very name conjures up images of remote, uncharted territory. Inland, Argentina's lowlands give way to the Southern Andes mountain range characterised by majestic peaks and sparkling lakes with pebble beaches. Further south, glaciers fill the valleys in the Andean foothills and flow into glacial lakes, with Perito Moreno in Los Glaciares National Park the

most famous. El Calafate is the perfect base from which to visit the mighty Perito Moreno, Upsala and Onelli glaciers or from which to cross into Chile, while El Chaltén offers spectacular trekking through Fitzroy National Park. Patagonia stretches to the very southern tip of the continent to Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn.



Eolo | Occupying an idyllic location on a 3,000-hectare property, Eolo offers uninterrupted views towards the valley and Lago Argentino. The lodge has 17 suites, a restaurant, bar, library, indoor swimming pool and sauna. Eolo is a

member of the prestigious Relais & Chateaux group, so you can be assured of excellent service.



Esplendor El Calafate

This boutique hotel is situated a 15-minute walk from the centre of El Calafate. Choose from the 57 rooms and suites with beautiful views. There is a restaurant with views of the town and lake, an

in-house bakery, cocktails served at the bar and a wine cellar, along with a very relaxing spa and swimming pool.



USHUAIA & TIERRA DEL FUEGO

Right at the southernmost point of the continent, sitting between Cape Horn and the Magellan Strait, the windswept Tierra del Fuego archipelago is shared between Chile and Argentina, and is home to glaciers, snowy mountains and trees bent into an array of spectacular shapes by the wind. Here visitors will visit the world's most southerly town of Ushuaia,

which is the hub for exploring the region and the jumping-off point for expedition boats setting sail for Antarctica. Nature lovers set their sights on Ushuaia for the fantastic sea lion, Magellan penguin and pilot whale sighting opportunities, and the town is also home to fascinating frontier history, spanning the first primitive inhabitants to the early Antarctic explorers.



Los Cauquenes | This hotel offers 54 spacious bedrooms, including five suites, great views and direct beach access. At the Reinamora restaurant, enjoy traditional Patagonian food such as king crab and fantastic Argentine

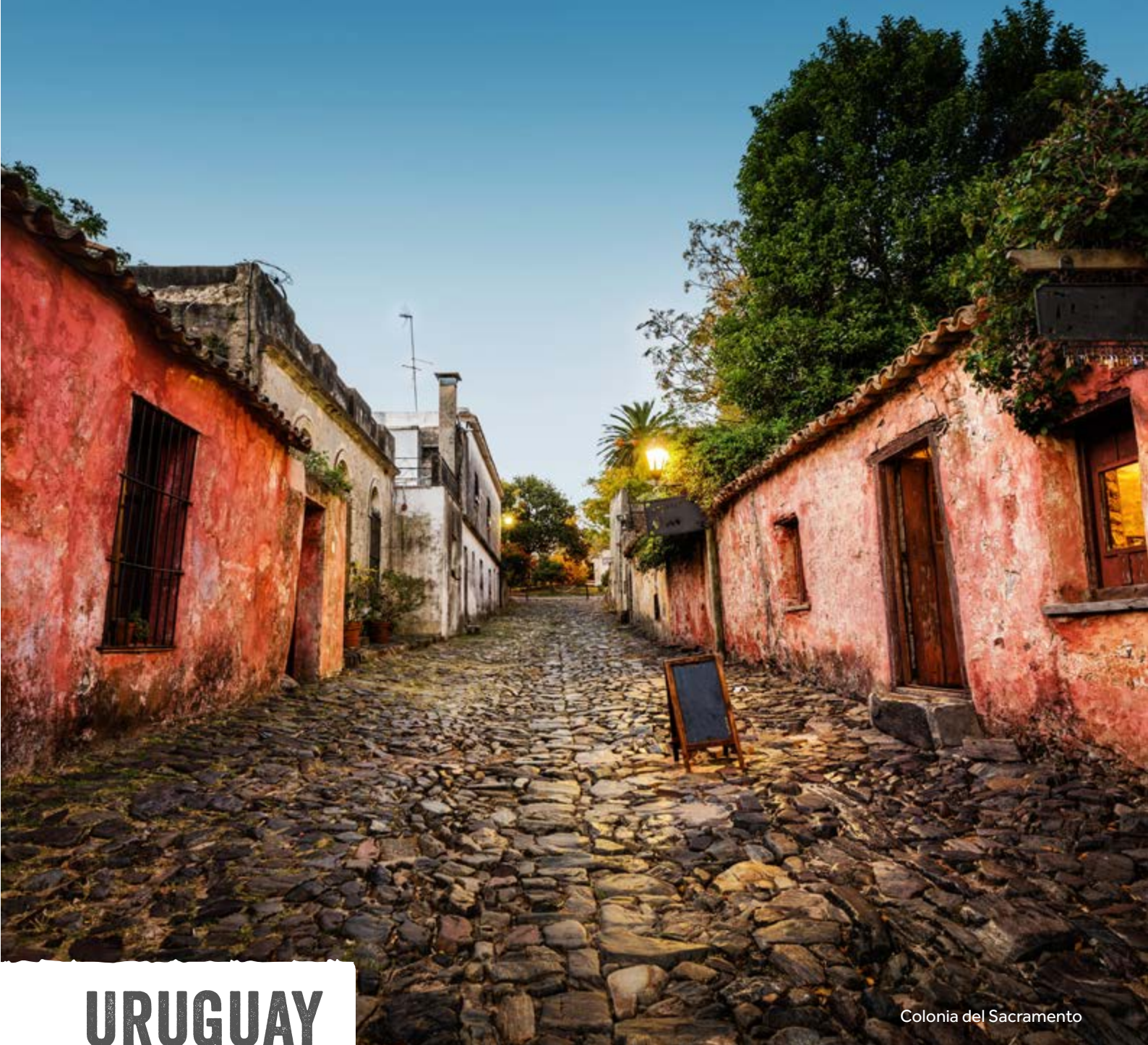
wines. Relax at the swimming pool or indulge in a soothing massage in the End of the World Spa.



Arakur Resort & Spa |

Inside the Cerro Alarken Natural Reserve, Arakur Resort & Spa commands a spectacular view over the water. On a natural balcony 800 feet above sea level, the hotel features 114 stylish rooms and three

spacious suites. Enjoy superb city views from La Cravia restaurant or head to the Lobby Bar for a relaxed evening.



Colonia del Sacramento

URUGUAY

Often overshadowed by Argentina and Brazil, its vastly larger neighbours, little Uruguay is incredibly lovely but relatively unknown outside South America. Visitors can cross the River Plate by hydrofoil in a few hours from Buenos Aires or fly into Montevideo or Punta del Este. A capital city with a seriously laid-back vibe, Montevideo has a crumbling 'ciudad vieja' at its heart, surrounded by fine neo-classical and Art Deco buildings that fight for space with worn out 70s-style skyscrapers. Ancient Colonia, with its cobblestone streets and many Portuguese

and Spanish colonial buildings, was once a rival to the Spanish dominated Montevideo. Today, Uruguay's oldest town has retained its immense charm and its compact city centre is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Uruguay's coastline offers laid-back seaside retreats and upmarket beach resorts. Its interior is full of quiet pastures, rolling hills and sleepy villages. Incredible food and wine is to be found here, and Rainbow recommends taking the time to sample plenty of local dishes and vintages.



Estancia Vik | Set on beautiful land with panoramic views all around, this exclusive estancia offers only 12 suites, each uniquely decorated with beautiful artwork. Spend time in the elegant dining room and explore the vaulted cellar

with around 5,000 wines or enjoy a barbecue under the starry skies.



Charco Hotel | Each of the seven guestrooms at Charco Hotel, situated within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Colonia de Sacramento, is spacious, individually decorated and boasts a private balcony. Spend an evening in the

hotel's restaurant, dining al fresco as the sun sets, enjoying the dishes made from carefully selected fresh ingredients.



Iguazú Falls

HIGHLIGHTS OF ARGENTINA

Begin this tour in the intoxicating buzz of Buenos Aires. Visit legendary neighbourhoods, take in a tango show and soak up the city's vibrant atmosphere. Next, delve into nature and wonder at the mighty Iguazú Falls, then fly into the wild terrain and mesmerising mountains of Patagonia with its picture-perfect vistas and incredible walking trails. End your tour with three blissful days in and around Mendoza, tasting delicious Argentine wines, before heading back to Buenos Aires for your flight home.

Day 1 Fly to Buenos Aires | Depart the UK on your overnight flight to Buenos Aires.

Day 2 Buenos Aires | Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure. Discover the classical architecture, plazas, fountains and wide boulevards in the 'Paris of South America'.

Day 3 Buenos Aires | Take a private, guided tour of Buenos Aires. Visit the colourful district of La Boca with its quirky caminitos, upmarket Recoleta and trendy Palermo, among other famous neighbourhoods.

Day 4 Buenos Aires | Today is at leisure, so why not book an optional excursion? Visit an estancia out in the Pampas to enjoy a gaucho show and sample a delicious Argentine quincho barbecue, or perhaps a tango show and steak dinner in the city.

Day 5 Buenos Aires to Iguazú | Fly to Iguazú and enjoy a tour of the Argentine side of the falls before transferring to your hotel. The rich sub-tropical forest surrounding the falls is home to a vast array of wildlife including tropical birds, butterflies, monkeys and coatamundis.

Day 6 Iguazú | Cross the border to visit the Brazilian side of the falls. Walk the 3km paved trail to a point where you can see the earth appear to open as thundering falls crash over a horseshoe-shaped precipice nearly 5km wide and 90m high.

Day 7 Iguazú to El Calafate | Fly via Buenos Aires to El Calafate in the heart of Patagonia. This is a land of colossal mountain ranges crowned in snow and pristine glaciers descending into turquoise lakes.

Day 8 El Calafate | Visit the Los Glaciares National Park and, most importantly, the El Perito Moreno Glacier. Admire its splendour from different viewpoints as you walk the trails, and take a boat trip to enjoy views from lake level.

Day 9 El Calafate to Mendoza | Fly to Mendoza, the gateway to Argentina's spectacular wine lands. Spend the next three nights on a winery. The area around Mendoza contributes to 70% of Argentina's wine production, and boasts Malbec as its speciality.

Day 10 Mendoza | Enjoy a full day tour of three nearby wineries and eat a delicious gourmet lunch with paired wines.

Day 11 Mendoza | Spend today at leisure. The area around Mendoza is wonderful for visiting many different wineries and bodegas, as well as bike and horse riding, and of course relaxing.

Day 12 Mendoza to Buenos Aires | Fly to Buenos Aires for your final night.

Days 13-14 Fly to the UK | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.

NB: An alternate ending can take you to the Argentine Lake District instead of Mendoza if you're still seeking a nature fix. Speak to a Rainbow specialist to find out more.





National Congress
Building, Buenos Aires

HIGHLIGHTS OF ARGENTINA & URUGUAY

With this itinerary, discover the cosmopolitan city of Buenos Aires, the grandeur of the stunning Perito Moreno Glacier and the spectacular Iguazú Falls in Argentina. Then head into Uruguay, crossing the River Plate to the charming town of Colonia del Sacramento. Meander the streets of its capital city, Montevideo, where the old lives alongside the modern. End with a relaxing few days at the chic beach resort of José Ignacio.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Days 1-2 Fly to Buenos Aires | Depart the UK on your overnight flight to Buenos Aires. Upon arrival in Buenos Aires, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Day 3 Buenos Aires | Explore cosmopolitan Buenos Aires with your knowledgeable private guide. Visit the colourful neighbourhood of La Boca, upmarket Recoleta and trendy Palermo. Head to the Plaza de Mayo, flanked by the pink presidential palace, then in the evening enjoy tango with dinner.

Day 4 Buenos Aires to El Calafate | Fly south to El Calafate in the heart of Patagonia. Immerse yourself in the endless beauty of the steppes. If you're a meat-eater, indulge in the excellent Patagonian lamb – you won't regret it.

Day 5 Perito Moreno Glacier | Take a day trip from El Calafate to this awe-inspiring natural wonder, driving through a long expanse of lenga forest before finding yourself at the 4km long glacier.

Day 6 El Calafate to Iguazú | Fly to Iguazú via Buenos Aires. Experience the heat of the jungle as you arrive ready to view the largest waterfall system in the world over the next two days.

Day 7 Iguazú | With your private guide, cross the border to see the falls from the Brazilian side. Witness the true magnitude of the Iguazú Falls, thundering over the edge of the Paraná Plateau, forming dozens of smaller waterfalls over its 2.7km length. Get an up-close view of the Devil's Throat.

Day 8 Iguazú to Buenos Aires | In the morning, visit the Argentine side of the falls and take one last opportunity to marvel at this natural wonder. In the afternoon, fly back to Buenos Aires for one night.

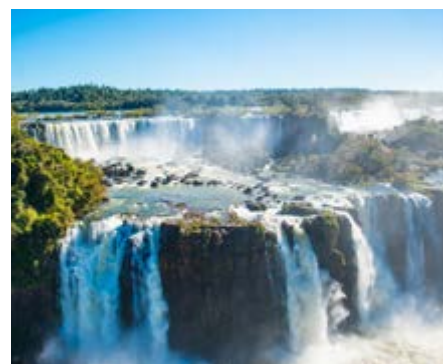
Day 9 Buenos Aires to Colonia del Sacramento | Take the ferry across the River Plate to Colonia del Sacramento, one of Uruguay's most charming towns and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of the historic centre.

Day 10 Colonia to Montevideo | In the morning, head to Montevideo, Uruguay's capital. This afternoon enjoy a tour that will take you round the city, including Ciudad Veja, the old city, whose faded colonial grandeur often reminds visitors of Havana.

Day 11 Montevideo to José Ignacio | Enjoy being driven to José Ignacio, a tiny coastal resort town perfect for rest and relaxation. Spend the next three nights kicking back and enjoying the laid-back beachy atmosphere and excellent food.

Days 12-13 José Ignacio | Pass your days relaxing on the beach, taking full advantage of José Ignacio's many art galleries, restaurants and boutiques; or head out to explore more of Uruguay's picturesque coastline and interior.

Days 14-15 Fly to the UK | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





ANTARCTICA

Zodiac excursion in Antarctica

Even in our current age of rapid mass travel, instantaneous communication and of having all the information we could ever want at our fingertips, Antarctica lurks as an icy behemoth at the edges of our imaginations. No longer is this mysterious white continent out of reach to all but the most intrepid explorer, however. On board a group expedition ship, you can plough through the pack ice during a brief period in the southern hemisphere's summer months and see the continent at the bottom of the world with your own eyes.

Either brave the two-day crossing of the challenging Drake Passage by ship from Ushuaia in Argentina, or fly from Punta Arenas in Chile to the Antarctic Peninsula. Once on your purpose-built expedition ship, you can take daily excursions on smaller boats to set foot on Antarctica itself, finding yourself surrounded by incredible wildlife, from emperor penguins to leopard seals and whales.

“

...Wild, freezing and wonderful, Antarctica is the ultimate destination for intrepid travellers and perhaps the last true wilderness on Earth.

”



THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Magellanic Penguin

Said to be the only place in the world where man and penguin live in harmony, the Falklands are an archipelago made up of hospitable locals, wonderful nature and stunning landscapes.

With over 70 species of animal coming here to breed, you are all but guaranteed splendid wildlife-spotting activities. Head out to sea to search out Minke whales and orca, or traverse the islands in search of Rockhopper, Gentoo, King and Magellanic penguins. Don't forget to cast an eye upwards in search of Antarctic Skuas and Southern Great Petrels. A major highlight are the migratory black-browed Albatross, who come to breed in September every year. You can visit their colony until they leave in April.

Getting around the islands is part of the fun, especially hopping aboard one of the light aircraft that fly from island to island and offer incomparable views from the air. Take advantage of amazing walking trails on the small outer islands and above all relish the sense of space and freedom, where you might end up with an entire island to yourself.

“

...With their wide-open spaces, almost complete lack of pollution or crime, and welcoming islanders – not to mention amazing wildlife – the Falklands won't be islands you forget in a hurry.

”



CHILE

Long and slender, Chile stretches almost 2,600 miles down the south-western Pacific coast of South America. What it lacks in width – the average width of the mainland, from the sea to the Andes, is just 220 miles – it more than makes up for in natural beauty. Whether you're cruising through the fjords, hiking mountain trails, discovering the history of offshore islands or exploring vast salt flats, Chile holidays do not disappoint.

Santiago, most visitors' first stop in Chile, is a modern and lively capital located close to Chile's world-renowned wine regions, and within easy reach of the bohemian port city of Valparaíso.

In the north of the country lies the Atacama Desert. This is the driest place on earth and home to some truly unique travel experiences. From the town of San Pedro de Atacama, visitors can explore vivid red desert landscapes and Altiplano lagoons, roam vast expanses of salt flats, watch explosive geysers erupt and discover the Valley of the Moon.

In stark contrast to the arid north, in the south visitors are drawn to the iconic Torres del Paine, often considered Chile's most spectacular national Park. Here, impressive granite pillars reach for the heavens while immense glaciers calve into vivid blue and turquoise lakes. It's the perfect outdoor adventure experience for keen hikers and horse riders.



“...visitors can explore vivid red desert landscapes and Altiplano lagoons, roam vast expanses of salt flats, watch explosive geysers erupt and discover the Valley of the Moon”





Top Tips

- See bright pink flamingos in the Atacama Desert
- Be awestruck by Torres del Paine National Park
- See the iconic Moai statues on Easter Island
- Enjoy delicious wine tasting in the Chilean Winelands
- Take an Australis Expedition cruise through the fjords

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

Chile can be visited all year round. Patagonia in the south is best visited between October and April, with the peak months being December to February. In the Atacama, days are generally sunny but can cool down considerably in the winter evenings of May to August. Santiago and the Central Valley enjoy a Mediterranean-style climate year-round. Easter Island has a subtropical climate.

GETTING THERE

British Airways operates a direct service from London Heathrow to Santiago. Other popular routes are with LATAM via São Paulo, Air France via Paris or Iberia via Madrid.

GMT

-4 hours. Easter Island GMT -6 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to visit Chile.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Chile.

Valley of the Moon, Atacama Desert



SANTIAGO

Chile's capital is a modern, dynamic city that reflects the impressive economic growth of the country in recent decades. It's a busy metropolis with a calm historic centre boasting several cultural highlights including San Cristóbal Park, The National Museum of Fine Arts and the Plaza de Armas. The fashionable suburbs of Lastarria, Las Condes or Providencia

are home to relaxed European-style bars and restaurants, and the city boasts excellent places to stay including many of the top chains and some fantastic boutique hotels. Enjoying a Mediterranean climate, Santiago is within an hour or so of some of the most productive vineyards in the world, the historic city port of Valparaíso and the resort of Viña del Mar.



Casa Buera Boutique Hotel | Casa Buera is a stylish boutique hotel in Santiago's Lastarria district. Built in 1927, the hotel has 14 rooms and suites, some with balconies.

Relax on the terrace, enjoy the outdoor pool and gym or taste locally produced food in the bar-lounge as well as fine Chilean wines.



Luciano K | Carefully renovated and restored, this Art-Deco-style boutique hotel is charming, with plenty of original features. Accommodation is spread over six floors, with facilities including a sauna, heated plunge pool and a spacious roof terrace offering views over the scenic Parque Forestal, where signature cocktails and tapas are served.



VALPARAÍSO & CHILE'S WINELANDS

Perched on a steep hillside overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the city port of Valparaíso is just a few hours' drive west of Santiago. Valparaíso is an enchanting bohemian city with steep funicular railways climbing and descending hills dotted with colourful houses and narrow streets. The city was founded in the 19th century and has always been one of the most intriguing and distinctive in the country. And then there's the winelands.

Bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Andes to the east, desert to the north and chilly Antarctic influences to the south, it's not surprising that Chile has an exciting diversity of climates – and a correspondingly wide number of wine types. Many of the vineyards are located within two hours to the south of Santiago, but don't miss the Casablanca Valley, on the route west to Valparaíso.



Viña Vik | Ideally located in the Millahue Valley, contemporary Viña Vik offers spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and vineyards. Each of the 22 suites is uniquely designed by artists and features floor-to-ceiling windows

with jaw-dropping views. Facilities include an infinity pool, Wine Spa, vineyard and games room.



La Casona Matetic |

This ten-bedroom property is situated in the Casablanca Valley, around 100km from Santiago. The restaurant specialises in traditional Chilean cuisine and there is a reading/living room where guests

can enjoy the delicious wines from the cellar. The guesthouse is ideally situated for trips to the local wineries.



ATACAMA DESERT

Rising from sea level to over 4,000 metres into the Andes towards Bolivia, the Atacama Desert is the driest place on Earth. This lunar landscape is home to some of nature's greatest spectacles from wind-sculpted canyons, salt lakes and active volcanoes to sandy deserts and spurting geysers. Most visitors to the region make the welcoming town of San Pedro de Atacama their base; a picturesque, small oasis town with tree-

lined plazas, a 17th-century church and a fabulous backdrop of volcanoes, from where it is possible to visit the local villages. Don't miss the El Tatio geysers erupting at sunrise, visit the vast Atacama salt flats where you can see flamingos and other birdlife, spend time stargazing in the Valley of the Moon and explore the high altiplano and its colourful lagoons.



Tierra Atacama | This boutique lodge, set in San Pedro de Atacama, boasts two family suites and 30 rooms constructed from locally-sourced materials. Two inviting pools and crescent-moon-shaped wicker chairs are perfect to

relax in plus there is an indoor pool connected to the multi-treatment Uma spa and a fantastic restaurant.



Alto Atacama | Located at the base of the breathtaking Salt Mountains, just 3km from San Pedro, this hotel is built in the style of a traditional adobe settlement. Its architecture, gardens and interior design recreate an ancient Altiplanic

village. Guests can enjoy everything the Atacama Desert has to offer with knowledgeable bilingual guides.



EASTER ISLAND

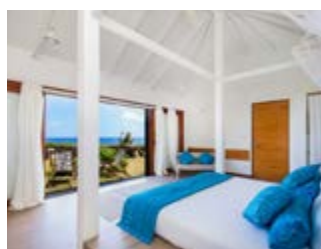
Easter Island is but a tiny dot in the middle of the Pacific, five hours by air from the South American mainland. Rapa Nui, as the island is called locally, is most famous for its monolithic stone statues. There are a thousand or so of these Moai statues scattered about the island, which range in height from 10 to 40ft and weigh more than 50 tons. Discovered by a Dutchman,

Admiral Roggeveen, on Easter Day in 1722, this is one of the most isolated places on Earth. The people and their culture are more closely linked to Polynesia than Chile. Beyond the Moai, the landscape of the island is undulating with very few trees. The Tapati Festival takes place in February where there are traditional sporting contests, dancing and processions.



Explora Rapa Nui | Situated in the south eastern part of Rapa Nui, this property has 30 beautiful rooms that enjoy ocean views and are furnished with pinewood floors, a living area, a hydro-massage bath and comfortable

beds. Relax in the pool and spa area in the Casa de Baños Hare Vai or choose to embark on 15 inclusive excursions.



Altiplanico | Set within lush gardens, this hotel is designed in a traditional style and located close to the town of Hanga Roa. Each of the 16 rooms has its own private terrace offering stunning views of the Pacific Ocean. Other

features include a small swimming pool and an open-air restaurant serving South American inspired dishes.



THE LAKE DISTRICT

The Lake District is one of the most beautiful areas in Chile, filled with volcanoes, pristine lakes, waterfalls and virgin forests. It is generally divided into two areas: the northern and the southern Lake District. The heart of the south is the small German-influenced town of Puerto Varas on the shore of Lake

Llanquihue. The north's main base is Pucón, on the shores of Lake Villarrica, and is home to the indigenous Mapuche people. It is known for the active Villarrica volcano, hot springs, and its araucaria and lenga forests. From Chile's Lake District it is possible to make a full day lake crossing into Argentina.



AWA | On the shores of Lake Llanquihue lies the AWA design hotel, where contemporary architecture combined with local materials offers a unique focus on sustainability and energy efficiency. Floor-to-ceiling windows

throughout bring the outside in, with spectacular views of the lake and Osorno Volcano.



Hotel Vira Vira | Accompanied by a working farm, this hacienda-style hotel offers 22 spacious rooms each with a fireplace and indoor and outdoor tub. Ingredients are sourced from the farm, making dining one of the

real highlights of this property. A range of activities is available, including hiking, riding, rafting and mountain biking.



CHILOÉ ISLAND

Chiloé is Chile's second largest island but has remained relatively unknown except to Chileans. Located just off Chile's southern coast, Chiloé is separated from the mainland by a narrow stretch of water, yet crossing to the island is like stepping back in time. The wild, western side of the island is mostly uninhabited and is home to one of the world's few temperate rainforests. Here Parque Nacional Chiloé is famed for its dense forest, beaches and spectacular coast. The region is home to heaps of marine life, including blue whales, sei whales, several species of dolphin, sea lions and marine otters, as well as Magellanic and Humboldt penguins. The northern and eastern sides are warmer, sheltered by inland mountains, and home to the island's towns – known for their charming UNESCO-listed wooden churches and 'palafitos' stilt houses.



Tierra Chiloé | Situated on Chiloé Island, this hotel has 12 rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows which offer scenic views of the Reloncaví Sound. The décor includes simple wooden furniture, basketry and sheepskin coverings

on chairs and the restaurant specialises in locally caught seafood and offers fantastic Chilean wines. Guests can also use the spa.

The hotel has its own boat and sea kayaks for inland water exploration. A variety of shared excursions is on offer to highlight the island's beautiful landscapes, reveal its history, and unravel the myths and legends of this remote community.



Torres del Paine National Park

CHILEAN PATAGONIA

Chilean Patagonia is true, untouched wilderness and best known for the iconic granite pillars and icy blue lakes of Chile's spectacular Torres del Paine National Park. One of the high points of any South American holiday, Patagonia's Torres del Paine is around five hours by road north of Punta Arenas airport and is home to some of the world's great treks. Settled by

sheep farmers in the late 1890s, the area can be explored on horseback as well as on foot, and there are scenic boat trips on Lago Grey. Punta Arenas is Chile's most southerly city and the main arrival gateway by air for a tour of Torres del Paine. It is also home to the port from where you can take an expedition cruise through the fjords to Cape Horn and on to Ushuaia in Argentina.



Explora Patagonia | This is the only lodge at the centre of Torres del Paine National Park. Forty-nine comfortable rooms all have spectacular panoramic views of the park and each day guests choose from 35 different excursions

to explore the park on foot, by vehicle or on horseback. The bar serves a range of Chilean wine and delicious food.



Tierra Patagonia | Located on the eastern edge of the Torres del Paine National Park, Tierra Patagonia overlooks Lake Sarmiento. The hotel offers 40 rooms, a living room, bar, presentation and dining room. After a day of

excursions, guests can relax in the outdoor Jacuzzi, indoor swimming pool, sauna and Uma Spa.



Australis Cruises | Australis Cruises navigate through the network of waterways and islands that separate the very south of Argentina and Chile. Choose from the *Stella Australis* and the new *Ventus Australis*. Both ships offer

spacious relaxing and dining areas, a panoramic open-air roof deck and comfortable cabins all with large windows.



Patagonia Camp | This unique camp is located just outside Torres del Paine National Park on the shores of Lake Toro. Designed to have minimum impact on the environment, the complex is built on wooden stilts, including 18

Mongolian-style yurts, so that the plants are protected. Enjoy fully inclusive meals, drinks and a selection of excursions.



Atacama Desert

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHILE

Chile boasts perhaps the greatest variety of any Latin American country when it comes to environments, ranging from the world's driest desert to sparkling lakes, groaning glaciers and lush green forests. On this tour, experience the wonder of all of them, from exciting Santiago to the Atacama, the Lake District, and of course the stunning Torres del Paine National Park and 'Los Cuernos', the three granite pillars that thrust 2,000m into the air. They will take your breath away.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

- Day 1 Fly to Santiago** | Depart the UK on an overnight flight to Santiago.
- Day 2 Santiago** | Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure in this city, overlooked by the towering peaks of the Andes.
- Day 3 Santiago** | In the morning, take a tour of the main highlights in this buzzing, cosmopolitan city. Visit the important buildings such as the Government Palace, travel through the bohemian neighbourhood of Barrio Bellavista and relish the stunning viewpoint over the valley from San Cristóbal Hill.
- Day 4 Santiago to Atacama** | After an early breakfast, fly to Calama, the gateway to the Atacama, and on to the small adobe town of San Pedro de Atacama. As the sun sets, visit the Valley of the Moon and Death Valley, famous for their other-worldly rock formations and lunar landscapes.
- Day 5 Atacama** | Head for Atacama's famous Salt Lake and the picturesque village of Toconao with its classic Atacamian bell tower. Drink in the Atacama's incredible landscapes of towering volcanoes, colourful lagoons, wind-sculpted canyons and inky black skies dotted with spectacular constellations.
- Day 6 Atacama** | Brave a chilly early morning to drive high into the altiplano where you'll find the world's highest geyser field, El Tatio. Enjoy a short walk and then soak in the thermal waters.
- Day 7 Atacama to the Chilean Lake District** | Fly to Puerto Montt in the Chilean Lake District.

- One of the most beautiful regions in the country, the Lake District boasts snow-capped volcanoes, pristine lakes, waterfalls and virgin forests.
- Day 8 Chilean Lake District** | Ascend the majestic Osorno Volcano for spectacular panoramic views. Later head to the Petrohué Falls, where you can traverse boardwalks to enjoy beautiful views of the river's turquoise blue waters and the large masses of crystallised lava.
 - Day 9 Chilean Lake District to Torres del Paine** | Depart the Lake District for what could be considered the highlight of Patagonia: the Torres del Paine National Park. Choose from a variety of excursions to explore this world-renowned national park.
 - Days 10-11 Torres del Paine** | With a dramatic landscape of mountain peaks, roaring rivers, sparkling blue lakes and rich emerald forests, visitors never fail to be impressed by Torres del Paine. These days are at leisure to explore the area on foot, on horseback, by vehicle or to take scenic boat trips.
 - Day 12 Torres del Paine to Santiago** | You will be driven today to either Puerto Natales or Punta Arenas (flight schedule dependent) for your flight to Santiago. Spend your final evening in the capital.
 - Days 13-14 Fly to the UK** | Spend the morning at leisure before transferring to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





Bariloche, Lake District

SPLENDOURS OF PATAGONIA

Almost at the bottom of the world lies Patagonia, a region of breathtaking vistas, massive glaciers and snow-capped peaks. Patagonia straddles both Argentina and Chile, and this itinerary gives you the best of both countries. Fly into Buenos Aires and spend two nights in this exciting city, then move on to Patagonia, crossing the border into Chile for several nights' stay before returning to Buenos Aires to round off your holiday.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

- Day 1 Fly to Buenos Aires** | Depart the UK on your overnight flight to Buenos Aires.
- Day 2 Buenos Aires** | Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.
- Day 3 Buenos Aires** | Explore Buenos Aires on a private guided tour. Visit some of the many charming neighbourhoods including the colourful district of La Boca with its quirky caminitos, upmarket Recoleta and trendy Palermo.
- Day 4 Buenos Aires to Bariloche** | Fly to the Argentine Lake District. Settle down in pretty Bariloche, with its gorgeous 'alpine' atmosphere, on the shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi. This is the largest of the 20 lakes on the Argentine side of the Andes.
- Day 5 Bariloche** | Today explore the spectacular Lake District. Drink in panoramic views of Lakes Moreno and Nahuel Huapi and marvel at Lopez and Capilla Mountains. Head further on to Mount Campanario and take a chairlift up to enjoy the stunning vistas.
- Day 6 Bariloche to Puerto Varas, Chile** | Take one of the most spectacular journeys in the world as you travel across the border into the Chilean Lake District by road and boat. Stop en route at the magical Petrohué waterfalls before arriving at the small town of Puerto Varas, overlooking Lake Llanquihue.
- Day 7 Chilean Lake District** | The Lake District boasts snow-capped volcanoes, pristine lakes, waterfalls and virgin forests, and might be the

- most beautiful region in Chile. Ascend majestic Osorno Volcano for spectacular panoramic views.
- Day 8 Chilean Lake District to Torres del Paine** | Fly to Punta Arenas or Puerto Natales (flight schedule dependent) and transfer by road to the area often considered the highlight of Patagonia: Torres del Paine National Park. Choose from a variety of daily excursions as you explore this superb park over the next two days.
- Days 9-10 Torres del Paine** | With a dramatic landscape of mountain peaks, roaring rivers, sparkling blue lakes and rich emerald forests, Torres del Paine never fails to impress. Your first glimpse of 'Los Cuernos' ('The Horns') – three granite pillars soaring more than 2,000m above the Patagonian Steppe – will take your breath away.
- Day 11 Torres del Paine to El Calafate, Argentina** | Cross back into Argentina by road. In the afternoon arrive in El Calafate, in the heart of Patagonia, which is the perfect base from which to explore the UNESCO-listed Los Glaciares National Park.
- Day 12 El Perito Moreno Glacier** | Venture deeper into the park to El Perito Moreno Glacier. A mammoth river of ice 30km long and 5km wide, this glacier cracks and roars as it flows down the valley; a thunderous marvel. Take advantage of both walking trails and a boat ride to truly drink in its splendour.
- Day 13 El Calafate to Buenos Aires** | Fly to Buenos Aires today for your final night. We can

arrange a tango show and traditional steak dinner if you are interested. Please speak to one of our travel specialists to find out more.

Days 14-15 Fly to the UK | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





BRAZIL

Brazil is a vast country, bursting at the seams with enticements for every kind of traveller – from world-famous beaches, dense rainforests and diverse wildlife to dynamic cities and fun-loving locals who throw some of the greatest celebrations in the world.

This country boasts landscapes which range from the Amazon jungle and the world's largest wetland area of the Pantanal to 4,000 miles of golden coastline. Equally beguiling is the country's diverse cuisine, music and religions – the product of Brazil's mixed Amerindian, European and African heritage. For many, Rio de Janeiro is the number one attraction. A vibrant capital fuelled by endless energy and caipirinhas, it's home to the unbeatable setting of sweeping beaches backed by forested, granite peaks. The city itself is fringed by Copacabana and Ipanema beaches, overlooked by the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue atop Corcovado Mountain, and protected by the hump of Sugarloaf Mountain.

Although you can visit the Amazon from several South American countries, Brazil's Amazon is not only a paradise for birdwatchers and nature lovers, but also provides exceptional opportunity to experience and learn about the traditional cultures of the people who have resided in the forest for generations. Another key highlight for visitors is the world-famous Iguazu Falls, which thunder and crash over the border with Argentina.



“
...dense rainforests and
diverse wildlife to dynamic
cities
”





Iguaçu Falls

Top Tips

- Let yourself fall in love with Rio's lively Cariocas
- Enjoy turquoise tropical waters on Brazil's Emerald Coast
- Take in Iguaçu Falls by helicopter or a speed boat ride
- Explore the Amazon rainforest by dugout canoe
- Experience the vibrant Afro-Brazilian culture in Salvador

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

Brazil can be visited all year round. Rio is hotter and wetter between November and March but is pleasant in other months. The Amazon is hot and humid all year round.

GETTING THERE

British Airways and LATAM operate direct services to São Paulo. British Airways also has a direct service to Rio de Janeiro.

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Brazil.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Brazil. However, if you have visited Peru, Bolivia or Venezuela in a recent period prior to entering Brazil, then you must have a yellow fever certificate. Precautions against malaria and yellow fever, if travelling to the Amazon, are suggested, but check with your GP.



RIO DE JANEIRO

Christ the Redeemer, Rio de Janeiro

It's not until you have taken the cog train ride up Corcovado Mountain to the great statue of Christ the Redeemer that you can fully appreciate the beauty of Rio's setting, with undulating mountains and rainforest broken up by stark expanses of bare rock forming one of the most beautiful backdrops in the world. The panorama of beaches, mountains, islands, sea and bays is unforgettable. Ride the cable car to the summit of Sugar Loaf Mountain, stroll along the legendary beaches of Copacabana, Ipanema or Leblon, listen to the soothing tones of some bossa

nova music and enjoy a typical feijoada (bean stew) dish washed down with a caipirinha.

Both by night and by day, Rio is a thrumming and exciting city, and it won't take you long to understand why it is often called *ciudad maravilhosa*, the 'marvellous city'. Abutting Tijuca Rainforest, the largest urban forest in the world, Rio is truly a city of wonders from where it's easy to venture out into wild Atlantic jungle.



Belmond Copacabana Palace | This glamorous Belmond landmark has welcomed the rich and famous since its Art Deco doors opened in 1923. The 239 rooms and suites are luxurious, with many offering spectacular

views of Copacabana beach. The hotel's bar and restaurants offer incredible food and drink.



Miramar Hotel by Windsor | Each of the Miramar's 200 rooms and suites features a host of modern amenities, while the hotel's exceptional beach service provides complimentary deckchairs, towels and fresh fruit. Take

advantage of sumptuous Sá restaurant, or head to the rooftop bar to enjoy the spectacular views.



Porto Bay Rio Internacional | This hotel has 117 modern and sophisticated rooms and ocean-facing suites. The beautiful rooftop pool, complete with bar, has stunning views of Corcovado and Christ the Redeemer.

The delicious restaurant, La Finestra, has great sea views, and Bar Limone serves local cocktails and ice-cold beers.



Emiliano | Just a few steps from Copacabana beach, this hotel boasts 90 rooms and suites that are all individually designed and very spacious. Enjoy the rooftop infinity pool and sample delicious meals and cocktails prepared from fresh, local

ingredients at the hotel's two restaurants and bar.



BÚZIOS

Búzios was once a simple fishing village, but since the 1960s it has become one of Brazil's most elegant resorts, sometimes called 'Brazil's St Tropez'. It is comprised of three settlements on the same peninsula, which boasts more than 20 beautiful beaches for you to relax on.

All three of the settlements that make up Búzios are vibrant, animated, and peppered with boutiques, upmarket restaurants, villas, bars and posh pousadas. Ossos, the oldest, is the most

attractive with a quaint harbour and a yacht club. Manguinhos is the most commercial of the three, and Armação, which lies between the two, is the heart of town and has the most to offer tourists.

Búzios is the ideal destination for great food, time to soak up the sun, and to enjoy a relaxed few days before or after venturing into the wilder parts of Brazil.



Casas Brancas | Elegant
Casas Brancas is nestled in the cooler hills overlooking the bay. The hotel has 32 rooms, some with sea-view private terraces. The hotel's refined, laid-back atmosphere make this an attractive base, not to mention its spa,

restaurants, beach loungers and spotless open spaces.



Pousada Vila d'Este |
This romantic boutique hotel boasts 15 individually designed rooms and suites with garden or sea views. With easy access to the beach, an infinity pool and steam sauna, this is the perfect spot to relax and later strike

out into Búzios to explore its lively bars and restaurants.



THE EMERALD COAST

Brazil's southern coast is characterised by pretty crescent-shaped beaches, verdant rainforest backdrops, charming Portuguese colonial towns and quaint fishing villages.

Just a few hours' drive from Rio, the Emerald Coast offers many delights for travellers. The laid-back island of Ilha Grande is one of the country's most famous beach retreats, and is also an ideal spot for hiking. Further along the coast, Paraty's charming

cobbled streets have not changed for centuries, and here the Portuguese colonial architecture is some of the best preserved in the country.

The southernmost stretches of Brazil's coast around the port of Florianópolis and on the island of Santa Catarina offer some spectacular activities such as surfing and whale-watching between July and November.



Casa Turquesa | Nestled
in historic Paraty, Casa Turquesa occupies a restored 18th-century townhouse. Just nine beautiful rooms decorated in bright tropical hues guarantee an intimate, personalised experience. Wander

the central courtyard and garden, or take a dip in the hotel's plunge pool.



Pousada Pinguaba |
Situated in the centre of the Serra do Mar National Park, this hotel is the ideal place to escape to the beach. The 10 rooms overlook the sea and guests can venture out to the natural springs, to the beach, or

relax by the swimming pool and enjoy drinks at the pool bar.



THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

Covering a large part of the South American continent, the Amazon is the world's largest rainforest and is home to over 300 indigenous tribes. The Amazon River and its tributaries make up the largest water system on the planet, and have created a paradise for birdwatchers and nature lovers. The main Brazilian gateway to this lush forest region is the city of Manaus. From here, you can travel by boat to a rainforest

lodge or board a cruise boat to float gently down the Amazon or Negro Rivers with the opportunity to take daily excursions in smaller boats to explore the dense vegetation. Where the rivers meet, you can see the unusual sight of the two running side by side without the waters merging. Spot colourful toucans, parrots, butterflies and pink dolphins; and after dark, look for caiman and a host of nocturnal animals.



Amazon Eco-Park Jungle Lodge | This is not only a jungle lodge but also a scientific and educational centre with its own monkey rehabilitation centre. Each of the 64 rooms has a veranda, and from the lodge guests can hike

jungle trails, relax on the private beach, undertake various excursions or cool down in the natural pools.



Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge | With just 20 exclusive suites, Anavilhanas offers boutique accommodation combined with first-rate service. The lodge follows low-impact principles and ensures that tourist activities are responsibly

managed and are in harmony with the local community.



THE PANTANAL

Giant anteater

The Pantanal is a vast floodplain, home to the world's largest nature reserve and one of the best places in Brazil to see wildlife including the famous and elusive jaguar. As an ecosystem it is very different to the rainforest, and so makes a wonderful addition to a wildlife trip. The region has more open spaces and far fewer trees, so it is much easier to spot the abundant fauna than in the dense undergrowth of the jungle.

Comfortable lodges such as Caiman or Rio Mutum put you in the middle of life in the Pantanal, where wily jaguars lurk amongst the trees and Giant anteaters roam the grasslands. Hike or horse ride along narrow trails, or perhaps take a boat through pristine rivers and lakes. Whatever you decide to do in the Pantanal, you will be faced with the astonishing biodiversity of this unique region.




Lençóis Maranhenses
National Park

LENÇÓIS MARANHENSES & THE NORTH EAST


One of Brazil's best-kept secrets, the north east is a region of dramatic scenery and unforgettable adventures. Rainbow recommends travelling along the 'Route of Emotions' between vibrant Fortaleza and historic São Luis to take as much in as possible. While here, head to Jericoacoara for unbeatable coastal views, excellent restaurants and a lively atmosphere. It's the dunes of Parque Nacional Lençóis Maranhenses that are the real highlight, though. Here, sweeping white sand dunes

swirl across the landscape, with slender turquoise pools breaking up the paleness. It is a sight unlike anything else on Earth. This 383,000-hectare national park lies just outside the Amazon Basin, and during its regular wet season it receives 300 times more rainfall than the Sahara Desert. May to September is the best time to head for Lençóis Maranhenses, when the weather is warm and the lagoons are still full.



 **Essenza Hotel** | Essenza Hotel is a boutique beach hideaway in Jericoacoara with 30 stylish suites. At Essenza, the focus is on indulgence. Then there's the spa, the swim-up bar in the divine swimming pool, and the enticing bistro. Friendly staff and top-notch service round off the luxe experience.



 **Zorah Beach Hotel** | The Zorah Beach Hotel has a classic beach cabin feel despite expertly breaking design trends. The 16 suites, five bungalows and one villa all boast their own hot tub and four-poster bed. There's a highly regarded restaurant, lounge areas and pool cabanas to ensure ultimate holiday bliss.



IGUAÇU FALLS

Iguaçu Falls are one of South America's most impressive natural wonders, crashing over the cliffs at the borders of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.

Eleanor Roosevelt reportedly exclaimed "Poor Niagara!" upon seeing Iguaçu for the first time. With 275 separate waterfalls, including the roaring Devil's Throat, the thunderous force of the falls is a truly dramatic sight.

Keep an eye out for the rainbows that wink in and out of existence in the spray, and of course for the incredible wildlife that might be spotted in the dense jungle around the falls: coatis, toucans, colourful birds and butterflies.

Enjoy incredible views of the falls as you explore the rainforest, scamper across elevated walkways and even take close-up boat trips to feel the spray in your face.



soft furnishings and wooden décor.

Wish Resort | This large hotel boasts extensive grounds – including a nine-hole golf course – along with two large swimming pools, a gym, three restaurants and a bar. Rooms are dotted around the grounds, all elegantly styled with



beautiful rooms or suites.

Belmond Das Cataratas | This classic Belmond hotel is the only hotel located within Iguaçu National Park and boasts exclusive access to the falls. Guests can go on jungle treks and lounge by the pool before retiring to one of the hotel's



SALVADOR DE BAHIA

Once the capital of Portugal's 'New World' colony, vibrant Salvador de Bahia is known for its Afro-Brazilian culture, tropical coastline, and Portuguese colonial charm. Wander through atmospheric cobbled streets, visit magnificent Baroque churches and fascinating art museums, and learn how to cook Bahian dishes. Music is everywhere, and if you're interested in capoeira this is the place to take lessons – where it all began.

The restored historic centre, Pelourinho, is the city's crown jewel with its superb colonial buildings and hotels. Salvador looks out on to the striking Todos os Santos Bay, and the city is close to some beautiful beaches on the 152-mile stretch of coast that runs to the north, including Praia do Forte. The north eastern state of Bahia is home to some of Brazil's best beaches and enjoys year-round sunshine.



three restaurants offer dishes inspired by local Bahian cuisine as well as top-quality international food.

Tivoli Eco Resort, Praia do Forte | This resort is built simply, in harmony with the local environment. The hotel has 297 attractive rooms, all decorated in natural shades, many with a sea-facing balcony. The hotel's



practices, particularly evident in the wonderful restaurant.

Villa Bahia | This unique pousada overlooks the colourful façades of the historic Pelourinho district. The 17 rooms are full of original character and the hotel operates on a policy of local participation and sustainable



Christ the Redeemer, Rio de Janeiro

CLASSIC BRAZIL

Explore the best of Brazil's cultural and natural highlights with this itinerary. Feel the buzz in iconic Rio de Janeiro with its stunning surroundings and amazing beaches, wonder at the awe-inspiring Iguaçu Falls, and experience the heat and magic of the Amazon Rainforest. Complete your holiday with a stay in the charming, historic city of Salvador and its UNESCO World Heritage centre.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Rio de Janeiro | Depart the UK on your flight to Rio de Janeiro. Upon your arrival in the evening, you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Day 2 Rio de Janeiro | Today enjoy a private tour around two of Rio's most iconic sites. Take the Swiss cogwheel train up Corcovado Mountain, home to the famed Christ the Redeemer, and ride the cable car to the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain. The views over the city are unparalleled.

Day 3 Rio de Janeiro | Take advantage of a day at leisure to either relax on the beautiful Rio beaches, or arrange further local sightseeing. The botanical gardens and Tijuca Rainforest are well worth a visit, and don't miss trying the local 'feijoada' dish!

Day 4 Rio to Iguaçu | Fly to Iguaçu Falls and visit the Brazilian side upon arrival, using the long paved walkway through the lush forest to catch a glimpse of the Argentine side. Marvel at the thunderous roar of the largest waterfall system in the world, and look out for incredible local wildlife.

Day 5 Iguaçu | On a private excursion, explore the Argentine side of the falls. While here, take in the vistas from a variety of viewpoints, including the astonishing Devil's Throat. A boat trip can also be arranged to the base of the falls.

Day 6 Iguaçu to Manaus | Take an early flight to Manaus via São Paulo or Brasília (flight schedule dependent). Overnight in Manaus, the gateway to the Brazilian Amazon.

Days 7-8 The Amazon | Stay in a comfortable rainforest lodge and enjoy excursions such as a sunrise or sunset tours, when the rainforest is particularly active, a visit to a native village, dugout canoe trips and jungle treks with an expert naturalist guide.

Day 9 Amazon to Salvador de Bahia | Fly to Salvador on the coast. Overlooking All Saint's Bay, this city is one of the most exotic in Brazil; a place where Latin and African cultures come together. Hear samba music filling the streets, and enjoy your time in the historic Pelourinho district.

Day 10 Salvador de Bahia | Enjoy a guided tour of this vibrant city and explore the Pelourinho, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Formerly a Portuguese fortified city, this area boasts some of the most important colonial architecture in the Americas.

Day 11 Fly to the UK | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK. Alternatively, we can extend your trip by a few days to Praia do Forte, a beautiful beach village only one hour and a half from Salvador.





PERU

Whilst Machu Picchu is Peru's defining image, this welcoming South American country offers visitors so much more. Natural wonders and rich cultures abound, blending perfectly to create rewarding and unforgettable travel experiences.

Lost to the outside world until it was rediscovered by American Hiram Bingham in 1911, Machu Picchu is now one of South America's most sought-after highlights and recognised as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. This terraced Inca citadel, surrounded by lofty peaks, is a remarkable feat of engineering. It is most easily reached from Cuzco, the former capital of the Inca empire.

Between Cuzco and Machu Picchu, travellers can find adventure in the Sacred Valley. It is home to white water rafting, zip-lining, numerous Inca archaeological sites, isolated Andean communities known for their weaving and colourful markets, and stunning mountain vistas.

According to Andean legend, Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, is the birthplace of the sun. Cruise across the deep blue lake to visit pretty islands and meet traditional indigenous communities. Don't miss whitewashed Arequipa with its backdrop of looming volcanoes, or the enigmatic Colca Canyon where you can spot condors gliding serenely on the thermals.

Travellers searching for jungle adventure can head into the Amazon rainforest, opting to stay in comfortable jungle lodges or set sail along the river in search of diverse wildlife.

“

...Don't miss whitewashed Arequipa with its backdrop of looming volcanoes, or the enigmatic Colca Canyon where you can spot condors gliding serenely on the thermals

”





Machu Picchu

Top Tips

- Climb Huayna Picchu for superb views of Machu Picchu
- Take a trip across Lake Titicaca in a reed boat
- Spot magnificent condors in the Colca Canyon
- Visit a local community in the Sacred Valley
- See giant river otter on a luxurious Amazon cruise

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The best months to visit Peru are from April to October, although temperatures at night can be very cold at higher altitudes. The rainy season is between December and March. Lima's climate is dry, though grey, throughout the year. The Amazon remains hot and humid all year round.

GETTING THERE

British Airways operates a direct service from London Gatwick to Lima. Other popular routes are with Avianca via Bogotá or LATAM via Madrid.

GMT

-5 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Peru.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Peru. Precautions against malaria and yellow fever, if travelling to the Amazon, are suggested, but check with your GP. A yellow fever certificate will be required if you are entering from an infected country.



Lima

LIMA & THE SURROUNDS

Located on the Pacific coast, Lima is a vibrant metropolis, home to exceptional museums, first-class restaurants and amazing architecture. Most visitors stay in upmarket Miraflores or bohemian Barranco.

Lima is famous for food, and is one of only four worldwide cities to boast three of the World's 50 Best Restaurants. Immerse yourself in the city's colonial history at Casa Aliaga and explore pre-Columbian art at the Larco Museum. Don't miss the San

Francisco Monastery, home to eerie underground catacombs, said to contain around 75,000 sets of remains. After exploring the city's many charms, visitors are well-placed for a visit to the Nazca Lines, the famous, gigantic geoglyphs etched into the Nazca Desert for reasons we still don't understand. Rainbow recommends staying in nearby Paracas before either climbing viewing towers or flying over the Lines to take in their sheer size and marvel at the unusual sight.



Belmond Miraflores Park | The Miraflores Park boasts breathtaking views out to sea. This 11-storey, all-suite hotel successfully combines the very best of luxury accommodation with a warm welcome. Guests can enjoy a delicious Peruvian-inspired meal at Tragaluz or the Observatory restaurant.



Hotel B | Hotel B is a stylish boutique hotel in Barranco, the artists' district. The 17 guest rooms are beautifully decorated and have charming views. The restaurant and bar serve excellent Peruvian cuisine, drinks, and 'lonche' (a local traditional meal similar to English afternoon tea) in an informal atmosphere.



CUZCO

Cuzco is not just the gateway to Machu Picchu, it is well worth a visit in its own right. It's a striking Spanish colonial city built on Inca foundations and full of rewards for the curious traveller. Once the capital of the Inca Empire, Cuzco today is a thriving cultural delight, with local markets, museums and nearby Incan ruins to keep you busy for days.

The main square – Plaza de Armas – is the centre point of the city. Flanked by the imposing cathedral and the ornate church of La Compañía de Jesus, this is a thriving spot and one you don't want to miss.

Cuzco is also home to the famous Inti Raymi, a reenactment of the Inca festival for the sun god Inti, that takes place on 24 June every year. During the celebrations, you can enjoy colourful costumes, music, laughter and the sharing of food.

Rainbow Recommends

CUZCO

- Visit the temple of Koricancha, the most important temple in the Incan empire
- Tour the imposing cathedral
- Explore the bohemian neighbourhood of San Blas
- Marvel at the ruins of Sacsayhuaman
- Visit San Pedro market



Belmond Monasterio

This luxurious hotel was once a monastery, and before even that an Inca palace stood on the site.

Combining centuries-old charm with exceptional service, inspired restaurants and boutique rooms

and suites, this is a property that's full of character.



Inkaterra La Casona |

This boutique hotel is in the heart of Cuzco, offering an elegant fusion of colonial and Inca styling. The striking 16th-century manor house has been meticulously restored as a spacious 11-suite luxury hotel, with

exceptional Relais & Châteaux service and the indulgent Yaku therapy room.



El Mercado |

Formerly a marketplace, El Mercado uses the market concept perfectly – the breakfast room is open all day and the buffet-style dishes are cooked on the spot using fresh ingredients.

The 27 rooms and seven suites all have striking interiors, and there's a stylish bar/restaurant.



The Sacred Valley

THE SACRED VALLEY

The Sacred Valley sits at a lower altitude than Cuzco and enjoys a mild climate, protected by its terraced mountains and accessed via a narrow road full of hairpin bends. Boasting picturesque villages and incredible Incan sites, there is a reason why this destination is high on many travellers' hitlists. Formed by the Urubamba River, this attractive valley is fed by several tributary rivers that flow through gorges and narrow channels. The valley contains many fascinating archaeological remains such as the lofty Inca sites at Ollantaytambo, Chinchero and Pisac. These sites, together with vibrant markets, isolated villages and colonial towns, all combine to make this peaceful corner of the Andes something very special. Enjoy treks through the foothills and along the valley, or try horse riding, mountain biking or even river rafting if you're after more active outdoor pursuits.


Rainbow Recommends

SACRED VALLEY

- Visit the Inca sites at Ollantaytambo and Pisac
- Haggle in traditional markets at Pisac and Chinchero
- Tour the astonishing salt terraces at Maras
- Horse ride along the valley
- Take to the Urubamba River in a raft



spa or go for a dip in the refreshing swimming pool.

 **Belmond Rio Sagrado** | Situated on the banks of the Urubamba River surrounded by lush gardens, Belmond Rio Sagrado is a tranquil Andean hideaway. El Heurto restaurant uses fresh local ingredients, and guests can take advantage of the exceptional




ideal spot to relax and re-energise.

 **Sol y Luna Lodge & Spa** | Sol y Luna is one of the Sacred Valley's most established properties, and is still regarded as one of the best. With 43 individual 'casitas' (small houses), an outstanding spa, beautiful natural gardens and delicious cuisine, this is the



been carefully designed to combat altitude sickness.

 **Explora Sacred Valley** | Rooms at Explora Sacred Valley combine simplicity with comfort and offer spectacular views over the Sacred Valley. Enjoy a daily programme of activities, sample excellent drinks at the bar, and savour superb meals that have



Machu Picchu

MACHU PICCHU

Occupied for only 100 years before being abandoned, Machu Picchu faded out of knowledge for all but those who lived locally. Once a great citadel of the Incas, it lay undisturbed for centuries, falling into ruin.

Now, Machu Picchu is the most familiar icon of the Inca civilisation to most of the world. It receives thousands of visitors

a year and was declared one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in a global poll in 2007. Whilst it can be visited as a day trip from Cuzco or the Sacred Valley, we recommend at least an overnight stay so that you have plenty of time to explore and admire this remarkable site. You can reach the citadel by a variety of hikes along the various Inca trails and by train.



Belmond Sanctuary Lodge

Belmond Sanctuary Lodge offers guests exceptionally easy access to Machu Picchu from early morning to late afternoon, when most of the day visitors have left. The Tampu restaurant

and bar serves delicious Peruvian cuisine based on produce grown by the lodge.



Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

Located in Aguas Calientes, this hotel is set in 12 acres of beautiful private tropical gardens. This first-class boutique property boasts 85 spacious cottages. The Unu spa offers a wide

choice of treatments and there are two restaurants serving delicious international and Andean dishes.



NORTHERN PERU

For those interested in history and archaeology, Northern Peru is a treasure trove that was once home to numerous ancient cultures, including the Inca, Chimú and Moche. Visitors will find countless fascinating sites to explore here, some of which have only been rediscovered in the last few decades.

Near the city of Chiclayo, find the Túcume pyramids and the Museum of the Royal Tombs of Sipán. Head to Chachapoyas to visit the ruined citadel at Kuélap, or strike out to charming

Trujillo, the gateway to the Chan Chan ruins and the sacred Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon.

Find glorious beaches and a strong surfing culture at Mancora on the Pacific coast, or visit the Gocta Waterfall. One of the highest waterfalls in the world, this natural wonder is surrounded by cloud forest, home to amazing flora and fauna including the Andean cock-of-the-rock, hummingbirds, orchids and bromeliads.



Gocta Andes Lodge

Guest rooms at Gocta Andes Lodge are spacious and feature uninterrupted views of Gocta Falls. Explore the cloud forest and the scenic Chachapoyas region

before luxuriating on the spacious terraces, swimming or enjoying Andean cuisine from the kitchen.



DCO Suites Lounge & Spa

A contemporary boutique hotel with direct access to the beach and just seven rooms in total, this is a real hideaway with oodles of simple elegance. The spa, restaurant and two bars offer plenty of relaxation, and the

ocean-fresh seafood and morning coffees are a real treat for the palate.



THE PERUVIAN AMAZON

No journey to Peru is really complete without a few days in the Amazon rainforest. The diversity of lush flora and fauna makes a vivid contrast to the sparser Andean highlands, and we think combining the two makes for a truly special trip. For those who yearn to travel along the mighty Amazon itself, Rainbow recommends a leisurely cruise on a luxury vessel from Iquitos in the north through the scenic Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve.

Alternatively, spend a couple of nights in a jungle lodge where there's no end to the amazing experiences to be had. Set out in a dugout canoe to spot sloths and monkeys, or spend an evening exploring the jungle by torchlight.

Discover the abundant wildlife that calls this magical place home as you traverse hanging walkways for a unique perspective from the rainforest canopy.



Aria Amazon

| This luxury Amazon cruise transports guests into a totally natural world where you explore remote places along the river by water and on foot. The award-winning ship *Aria* offers three-, four- or seven-night cruises.

The 16 *Aria* suites are all spacious with generous panoramic windows.



Inkaterra Reserva

Amazonica | This lodge offers some of the most luxurious lodge rooms in the Peruvian Amazon with just 35 private cabanas constructed from natural materials. With a screen porch and hammocks, guests can enjoy the

sounds of the jungle from their room or take one of the included excursions.



AREQUIPA & COLCA CANYON

The attractive city of Arequipa lies in the shadow of El Misti Volcano. Many of the city's buildings are built from the white volcanic rock, and the stunning result has earned Arequipa a nickname: 'the White City'.

Arequipa's historic centre has a number of attractions including an impressive main square and the Santa Catalina Monastery. At an altitude of just under 2,400 metres, Arequipa provides a gradual introduction to Peru's higher altitude attractions such as the Colca

Canyon. About 160km from Arequipa, the Colca Canyon is a colourful valley dotted with picturesque, traditional villages that still use agricultural methods developed by the Incas.

The main attraction, though, is the canyon itself. Twice the depth of the USA's Grand Canyon, it is a truly spectacular sight. At the popular 'Cruz del Condor' viewpoint, you may get lucky in the early morning and see one of the canyon's star residents: an Andean condor, gliding on the thermals.



Belmond Las Casitas

Beautifully-appointed casitas at this hotel are equipped with exceptional amenities including indoor/outdoor showers, fireplaces, underfloor heating and private heated pools.

The Curiña restaurant serves

Andean cuisine prepared with vegetables grown in the hotel's organic bio-garden.



Costa del Sol Arequipa

After a day of exploring, retreat to the hotel's spa and swimming pool, or explore the sprawling landscaped gardens. The 88 en-suite rooms are spacious and sophisticated. Explore Arequipa's cuisine at Los Robles

restaurant, or enjoy a traditional Pisco cocktail at Los Montoneros bar.



LAKE TITICACA

At an altitude of 3,800m and straddling the border between Peru and Bolivia, Lake Titicaca is the highest navigable lake in the world. Contrasted against the snow-capped Andean backdrop, the lake's intensely blue waters are a spectacular sight, and are home to many traditional indigenous communities and the

famous Uros floating reed islands.

Arriving by rail is the best way to admire the scenery here – board either the Titicaca train from Cuzco or arrive on the Belmond Andean Explorer sleeper train to take in the breathtaking views of the Altiplano in style.

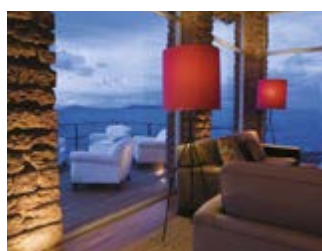


Libertador Lake Titicaca | Located on the private

island of Esteves, the Libertador is one of the leading hotels in the region. All 123 rooms have spectacular views across the lake.

Dine at Los Uros restaurant, which

features local ingredients such as quinoa and lake trout, or unwind at the Taquile bar.



Titilaka | Titilaka is an

all-suite lodge set on an exclusive private peninsula on the shores of Lake Titicaca. This contemporary-style lodge has wrap-around terraces, a heated outdoor swimming pool, cosy fireside dining and just 18

lake-view suites with heated floors and spa bathrooms.



Lake Titicaca

TREASURES OF PERU

This itinerary encompasses the key highlights of Peru and is designed to showcase this incredible country's vibrant culture, long history, and of course its stunning natural beauty. Sample delicious Peruvian cuisine, learn about Peru's ancient cultures and more recent colonial past, and explore its natural wonders such as the Colca Canyon and Lake Titicaca.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Lima | Upon arrival into Lima, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Make sure you try the local food, as Lima is Latin America's culinary capital currently experiencing a gastronomic revolution.

Day 2 Lima to Arequipa | Enjoy a morning city tour, starting with Lima's historic downtown, and ending with the modern district of Miraflores. In the afternoon, fly to Arequipa and enjoy an evening at leisure.

Day 3 Arequipa | Take a guided tour of this stunning city, beginning at the main square, which is flanked by the 'White City's' most important buildings, including the cathedral. Marvel at incredible views of the three volcanoes that overlook the city, and delve into the Santa Catalina convent, a city within the city.

Day 4 Arequipa to Colca Canyon | Head across the altiplano to Colca Canyon, passing some of Peru's most spectacular scenery en route and stopping at incredible local sites. After lunch stop at two ethnic Collagua towns, then continue on to the Colca Valley where you will overnight.

Day 5 Colca Canyon to Lake Titicaca | This morning, enjoy amazing views from the Cruz del Condor lookout point and spot condors. Continue across the altiplano to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca for two nights.

Day 6 Lake Titicaca | Visit Taquile Island, whose culture dates back to pre-Incan times. The locals still live according to the traditions and beliefs of their ancestors, and their colourful outfits and textiles are world famous. Enjoy a traditional lunch

and then set sail for the world-renowned, man-made Uros islands.

Day 7 Lake Titicaca to Cuzco | Pass through astonishing Andean scenery as you journey on the luxurious PeruRail Titicaca train from Puno to Cuzco. Highlights along the route include Urcos, where Incan gold was supposedly hidden from the Spanish conquistadors, and La Raya.

Day 8 Cuzco | Enjoy a half-day tour of Cuzco, taking in the historic, pre-Columbian architecture, ornate Baroque churches and many well-preserved colonial buildings sitting atop Inca foundations. Visit the impressive Inca ruins at Sacsayhuaman on the hillside overlooking the city.

Day 9 Cuzco to the Sacred Valley | En route to the Sacred Valley, stop at Maras and Moray before heading to Ollantaytambo. Today, Ollantaytambo is considered the 'only living Inca city', with some parts inhabited continuously since the 13th century.

Day 10 Sacred Valley to Machu Picchu | Board the train at Ollantaytambo to travel to Aguas Calientes, the 'Gateway to Machu Picchu' and on to the spectacular citadel itself. Learn about the site's fascinating history on a guided tour.

Day 11 Machu Picchu to Cuzco | Take the morning at leisure or use the time to return to Machu Picchu at sunrise and perhaps climb Huyana Picchu for views of the citadel. Return to Cuzco in the afternoon aboard the train.

Day 12 Cuzco | Spend the day at leisure in Cuzco, exploring its markets, shops, museums

and churches. There are also excursions on offer within the surrounding area.

Days 13-14 Fly to the UK | Use the morning in Cuzco to do any last-minute shopping in the markets and artisan shops. In the afternoon, transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.

NB: This itinerary can also be done as a group tour, please speak to a Rainbow specialist for more information. Please speak to a Rainbow Specialist for more information.





A woman in traditional attire in the Sacred Valley

ANDES & AMAZON ADVENTURE



Whilst in the Amazon, enjoy a cruise on the stunning *Aria Amazon*. This innovative vessel was designed by Peruvian architect Jordi Puig and boasts beautiful and spacious dining and lounging areas, as well as 16 luxurious suites with floor-to-ceiling windows and endless views of the Amazon River. Perhaps best of all is the outdoor, river-facing Jacuzzi, where you can soak and watch the jungle drift majestically by.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Cuzco | Overnight flight to Cuzco via Bogotá.

Day 2 Cuzco to Sacred Valley | Upon arrival into Cuzco, you will be met and driven out to the Sacred Valley of the Incas, the perfect location to drink in Peru's astonishing history – and to acclimatise to the altitude!

Day 3 Sacred Valley | Today explore some of the highlights that this incredible valley has to offer. Stop at the Racchi viewpoint and at Moray, visit the nearby Maras salt flats, and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before heading to the incredible archaeological complex at Ollantaytambo, the 'only living Inca City'.

Day 4 Sacred Valley to Machu Picchu | Travel by train to the spectacular Inca citadel of Machu Picchu. Dramatically located between high mountain peaks and where cloud-forest-covered mountains act as a backdrop, the famous site will not fail to take your breath away.

Day 5 Machu Picchu to Cuzco | Enjoy a morning exploring at leisure, perhaps climbing Huayna Picchu for incredible views of Machu Picchu.

Board the train once more to travel to Cuzco, considered the 'Navel of the World' by the Incas.

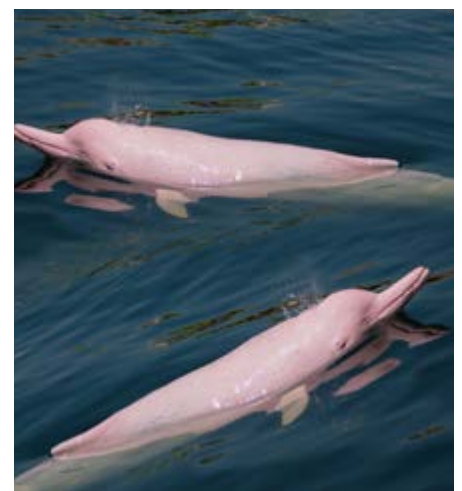
Day 6 Cuzco | On a half-day city tour, immerse yourself in the history of Cuzco, where Spanish colonial architecture collides with ancient Inca traditions. Later head out of the city to the nearby Inca fortress of Sacsayhuaman, where you can marvel at the spectacular view of terracotta roofs overlooked by towering mountain peaks.

Day 7 Cuzco to Iquitos | Fly to Iquitos in the Amazon jungle. Embark upon a 4-night cruise on Aqua Expedition's *Aria Amazon* cruiser. Please note, the *Aria*'s itinerary may change dependent on whether it's high (Nov-Mar) or low (Jun-Oct) water season.

Days 8-10 Peruvian Amazon | Relax into life aboard the *Aria Amazon*, a superbly comfortable vessel where you will enjoy stunning jungle views, luxurious suites and delicious and innovative Amazonian cuisine. Take expeditions to local villages, watch out for wildlife, and stargaze from either the *Aria*'s deck or from one of the skiffs, floating on the ink-black waters.

Day 11 Iquitos to Lima | Transfer to Iquitos and then fly to Lima for your final night.

Days 12-13 Fly to the UK | Enjoy a city tour of Lima, 'the City of the Kings'. Explore the architectural highlights of both the older part of Lima and the modern districts, and linger over stunning views of the Pacific Ocean from the Parque del Amor. In the afternoon, transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





BOLIVIA

Straddling the Andes, landlocked Bolivia is a country that firmly deserves its place on bucket lists. Here you'll find some of the most spectacular wildernesses in South America, from snow-capped mountain ranges down to the lush forests of the Amazon basin, and from sparkling lakes to great volcanoes and bright white salt flats.

The extraordinary Salar de Uyuni salt flat is an incredible sight to behold. Perhaps Bolivia's most iconic natural attraction, its crunchy, glistening expanse stretches well beyond the horizon. However, it is far from the only highlight that this country has to offer. Bolivia is also home to some of the most untouched areas of the Amazon rainforest, providing wildlife-seekers with unrivalled authentic jungle experiences.

The colonial cities of Sucre and the silver-mining centre of Potosí are well-preserved windows into the country's history, and the Sunday market at the town of Tarabuco, not far from Sucre, is widely regarded as one of the most

authentic in all of Latin America. Time your visit for one of the country's many colourful festivals to truly experience some of the incredible traditions and ancient religious beliefs held by the



indigenous peoples.

Bolivia can be visited as a stand-alone country, but it can also be easily combined with Peru, Chile and Argentina.

“

...you'll find some of the most spectacular wildernesses in South America

”





James and Chilean Flamingoes in Cañapa Lagoon

Top Tips

- Browse the famous Witches' Market in La Paz
- Marvel at the world's biggest salt flat at Uyuni
- Explore the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca
- See colonial gems in the white city of Sucre
- Visit the silver-mining town of Potosí

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The best months to visit Bolivia are from April to November, although night-time temperatures can be very cold at higher altitude. The rainy season is between January and March.

GETTING THERE

There are no direct flights from the UK to Bolivia. The most popular routes are with Air Europa via Madrid, American Airlines via its US hubs or British Airways to Lima and then an onward flight to Bolivia.

GMT

-4 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Bolivia. However, if you are travelling via the USA, it will be necessary to obtain an ESTA.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Bolivia. Precautions against malaria and yellow fever, if travelling to the Amazon, are suggested, but check with your GP.



LA PAZ

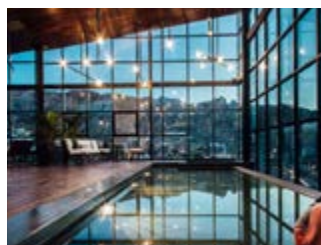
La Paz is the administrative capital of Bolivia and boasts one of the most spectacular settings in the world. The homes of the city's residents cling to the sides of a canyon gouged deep into the Altiplano, with Mount Illimani looming above the city. This is one of the highest cities in the world, sitting at an incredible 3,640m above sea level. Despite its mixture of colonial and modern culture, La Paz

retains the most indigenous flavour of all Latin American cities. There is little as rewarding as plunging into its vibrant streets. The clashing architectural styles, bustling markets, street marches and local vendors leave visitors with something exciting to discover around every corner. Rainbow particularly recommends taking the cable car for a bird's-eye view of the metropolis.



La Casona Boutique Hotel | This hotel is located within a colonial building in the historic heart of La Paz. Rooms are spacious and elegant, and some have private balconies overlooking the downtown area. Buffet breakfast

is served in the restaurant and there are Mediterranean and regional dishes available in the evening.



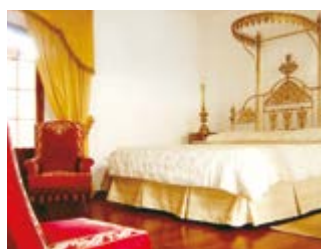
Atix | Featured on the 'Travel + Leisure It List 2017', this luxurious hotel is situated in the exclusive Zona Sur district. Its 53 rooms are modern and sophisticated. Ona restaurant offers incredible Bolivian cuisine, and at +591 bar you can enjoy delicious

cocktails while looking out over the city.



SUCRE & POTOSÍ

In the southern highlands of Bolivia lies the charming colonial city of Sucre. This is Bolivia's official capital and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with many historic buildings dating back to the 15th and 16th centuries. Like Arequipa in Peru, Sucre is also called 'The White City', though in Sucre's case this is due to its beautiful whitewashed walls. Potosí is a former silver mining town, founded after the Spanish conquistadors arrived to aid in the mining of the 'cerro rico' (Rich Hill). At the time, it was believed that enough silver lay within the hill to build a bridge to Spain. While this may not have been quite true, it was certainly enough to make Potosí the wealthiest city in the Americas for a time. While it has lost its former prominence, it is still a fascinating town to visit.



Parador Santa Maria La Real | Parador Santa Maria La Real is a beautifully restored colonial mansion in the heart of Sucre with stunning original features and shady courtyards where you can enjoy a drink or a leisurely breakfast. The 23 rooms and suites are elegantly furnished with period pieces and rich fabrics.

“
...history coats these cities like silver plating,
visible everywhere you look...
”



LAKE TITICACA

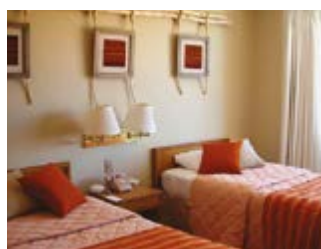
High in the Andes, iconic Lake Titicaca straddles the border between Peru and Bolivia. Its electric blue waters are a stunning sight against the bright sky and snow-capped Andean mountains. Some of the lake's 40 islands are home to Peru and Bolivia's oldest peoples, where traditional ways of life still run strong. Sun Island, the largest of the

lake islands and on the Bolivian side, can be reached by catamaran from Copacabana. It is said to have been the home of the Inca god Inti and the birthplace of Inca culture. Many fascinating sites can still be visited on Sun Island including the Inca Steps, the sacred Puma Rock and the maze at Challapampa.



Posada del Inca Eco Lodge | Located at the top of beautiful Sun Island, this was once a colonial hacienda and is now a charming hotel with 20 rustic rooms that are simple but comfortable. The building retains the traditional

style, with a tiled roof and pretty gardens, and the restaurant serves hearty Andean food.



Inca Utama | Situated in Huatajata on the shores of Lake Titicaca, Inca Utama boasts 57 rooms that are spread through two buildings with white stone walls and terracotta bricks and roofing. La Chozita restaurant overlooks the lake whilst

Sumaj Untavi has folklore shows, gourmet food and a cosy bar.



MADIDI NATIONAL PARK

Madidi National Park is one of the most bio-diverse of all protected regions in the world. Located in north western Bolivia, its boundaries encompass snowy peaks, dry forest, savannah, pampas, and streaming tropical rainforest. Amazingly, 14% of all bird species in the world have been sighted in Madidi.

There is world-leading eco-tourism work happening in the park, particularly community tourism, where initiatives such as lodges or tours are run by local people with all profits going straight back into the community.

Delve into the heart of Madidi and discover the beauty and wonder that is waiting for you. Wake to the sound of birdsong, paddle across a lagoon, or take a hike through the trees and keep your eyes peeled for some of the incredible wildlife that dwells here: monkeys, caiman, turtles, or even pumas or jaguars.



Chalalan Ecolodge | Designed to perfectly blend in with its surroundings, Chalalan is comfortable and secluded, offering 11 rooms and 3 cabins that all come with verandas or balconies and a hammock. The bar is well-stocked

and the restaurant deliciously combines local, national and international cuisine.

“

...witness nature in all its variety and wonder...

”



Salar de Uyuni salt flat

SALAR DE UYUNI

In south western Bolivia, discover the largest salt flat in the world when you journey to the Salar de Uyuni. This other-worldly sight will take your breath away as you travel by 4WD across a blinding white salt crust, broken up only by small islands dotted with giant cacti until it meets azure sky or great expanses of red desert. Visit mineral-rich lakes, including the bright red Laguna Colorada, or the remarkably turquoise Laguna Verde. If you're there at the right time of year, you'll also be able to enjoy the startling pink of

flamingo flocks as they pick their way across the salt. Take in unforgettable views at the striking Isla del Pescado, a vast rocky outcrop clad in giant cacti. Discover the ancient Coquesa Mummies in caves along the slopes of the Tunupa Volcano, and wait for steam to erupt dramatically from nearby geysers.



complete this unique experience.

 **Luna Salada Hotel** | The floors of Luna Salada are strewn with colourful woven rugs and much of the furniture is carved from local salt – as is the entire hotel, in fact. Twenty-three comfortable en-suite rooms and a cosy restaurant



This is an incredible way to explore the salt flat.

 **Airstream Campers** | Airstream Campers are equipped with private bathrooms, electric blankets, and even a private chef who will prepare your evening meal before retiring with your guide, leaving you to enjoy the incredible expanse of the



Salar de Uyuni salt flat

HIGHLIGHTS OF BOLIVIA

Bolivia is a country of amazing variety with its incredible landscapes, a strong indigenous culture and a lingering Spanish colonial presence. This tour encompasses this fascinating country's key highlights, from the world-renowned Uyuni salt flat to high-altitude La Paz and Lake Titicaca, once believed to be the birthplace of the sun itself. Explore cities, historical sites, natural wonders and more in this jam-packed itinerary.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

- Day 1 Fly to Santa Cruz** | Take an overnight flight from the UK to Santa Cruz via Madrid.
- Day 2 Santa Cruz** | Arrive into Santa Cruz where you will be met and transferred to your hotel. In the afternoon, take a private tour of the city's highlights including the Cathedral of Santa Cruz and the centre of regional handicrafts.
- Day 3 Santa Cruz to Sucre** | In the morning fly to Sucre, Bolivia's constitutional capital. Sucre is one of Bolivia's most charming cities, with cobblestone streets, picturesque white-walled buildings and a wealth of colonial architecture.
- Day 4 Sucre** | Today explore Sucre on a private half-day tour. Discover Sucre's beautiful mix of local architecture and colonial influences, and visit many fascinating buildings such as the Indigenous Art Museum and the Recoleta.
- Day 5 Sucre to Potosí to Uyuni** | Strike out for the famous Uyuni salt flat, stopping en route at Potosí. This colonial city was once one of the wealthiest cities in the Americas, and its history is visible everywhere, but mostly in the looming 'cerro rico' (rich hill) from which its famous silver was mined. Spend the next two nights in a salt hotel on the edge of the salt flat.
- Day 6 Salar de Uyuni** | Enjoy discovering the incredible Uyuni salt flat, made of surreal pentagons of white salt extending as far as the eye can see. Visit local points of interest such as the Coquesa Mummies and the cacti-clad island of Incahuasi.

- Day 7 Uyuni to La Paz** | Travel to La Paz by plane. La Paz, clinging to a canyon overlooked by Mount Illumani, is a stunning city boasting a mix of architectural styles, bustling markets and street vendors with something to see on every corner.
- Day 8 La Paz to Lake Titicaca** | Transfer to Lake Titicaca and set off on a hydrofoil cruise around the lake's top sites, including the Sun and Moon Islands with their Inca remains and the Andean Roots Eco-Village in Huatajata. In the evening visit the observatory to learn about the Southern constellations and Aymara cosmos.
- Day 9 Lake Titicaca to La Paz** | Travel overland across the high altiplano back to La Paz. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure to peruse the city's handicraft markets, wander its colonial centre and dine in one of its many incredible restaurants.
- Day 10 La Paz** | Take a half-day tour around the indigenous, modern and colonial areas of the city. Stop off at the famous witches' market, visit the Moon Valley and its lunar landscapes, and finally ride the cable car for a bird's-eye view of this dramatically-located city.
- Days 11-12 Fly to the UK** | Board a domestic flight to Santa Cruz, where you will connect on to your overnight flight back to the UK.





Galapagos
Islands



ECUADOR

Tucked into the west coast of South America between Peru and Colombia, compact Ecuador is one of the smallest countries on the continent. Not held back by its limited size, however, this country is filled to bursting point with colonial heritage, indigenous traditions and amazing flora and fauna.

Though most famous for its off-shore island archipelago, the Galapagos, mainland Ecuador boasts plenty of attractions in its dramatic and beautiful landscapes. It consists of three regions: the tropical and humid coastal and Amazon areas, and the fresh, temperate highlands.

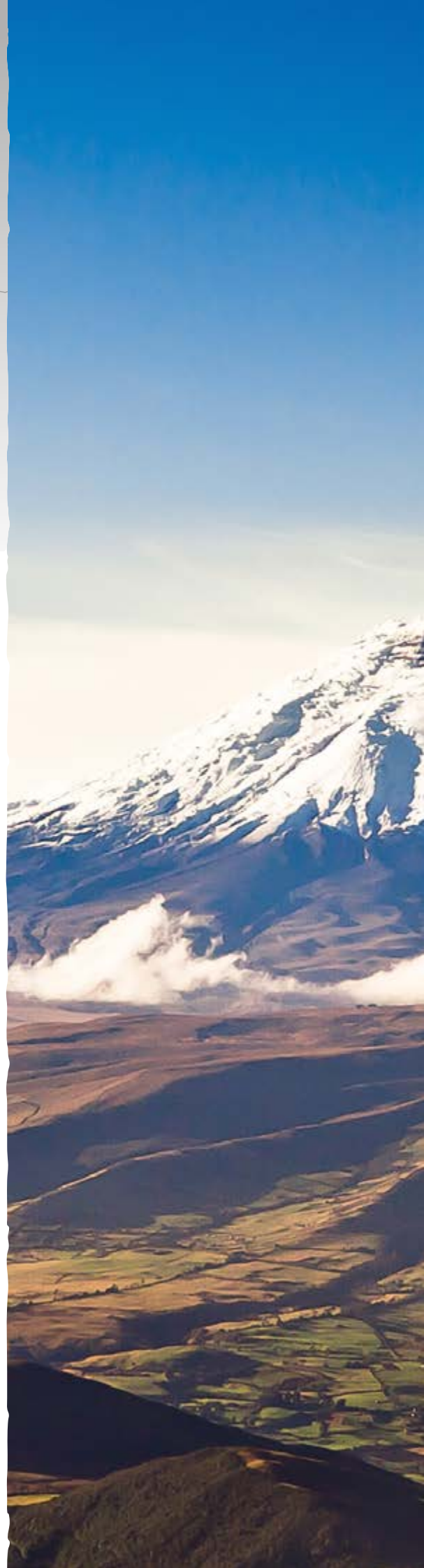
Quito, Ecuador's capital, lies in a valley and is overlooked by Pichincha Volcano. Its historic centre features beautifully restored mansions, ornate churches, cobblestone streets and picturesque plazas. One of the city's best-known attractions, the Middle of the World Equator Monument, can be reached from here.

A few hours north, the small town of Otavalo is home to traditional handicraft markets selling ceramics, baskets, paintings and leatherware produced by local villages in this area of verdant valleys and emerald lakes.

South of the capital, a popular route for visitors is to travel down the Avenue of the Volcanoes to reach Cotopaxi National Park, before riding the Devil's Nose railway along a series of steep switchbacks. Combine the UNESCO-listed colonial town of Cuenca – home of the Panama hat – with explorations of Ingapirca archaeological site and Cajas National Park.



“
...filled to bursting point
with colonial heritage
”





Top Tips

- Explore Quito's UNESCO World Heritage centre
- Haggle in Otavalo's colourful markets
- Stay in a community-run Amazon eco-lodge
- Take the Tren Crucero from Quito to Guayaquil
- Soak up the superb colonial architecture in Cuenca

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

Ecuador can be visited all year round. There are many microclimates within Ecuador and weather variations are usually the result of regional differences. Being so close to the equator, Quito has no major temperature fluctuations. Temperatures at night become very cold at higher altitudes. Guayaquil on the coast, along with the interior of the Amazon, remains hot and humid all year round.

GETTING THERE

There are no direct flights from the UK to Ecuador. The most popular routes are flying with Avianca via Bogotá or LATAM via Madrid.

GMT

-5 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Ecuador. However, if you are travelling via the USA, it will be necessary to obtain an ESTA.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Ecuador. Precautions against malaria and yellow fever, if travelling to the Amazon, are suggested, but check with your GP.

Cotopaxi Volcano

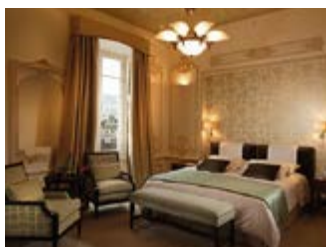


QUITO

Ecuador's lofty capital lies in a narrow valley 2,850m above sea level, in the shadow of Pichincha Volcano. The snow-capped peak dominates the city skyline and provides beautiful views. Sometimes seen merely as a stepping stone to rural Ecuador or the Galapagos, Quito is in fact a worthy destination in its own right. Considerable restoration work has been undertaken in recent years, making Quito's historical colonial centre – a

UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1978 – a joy to explore on foot. Many buildings date from the 17th century and showcase the beautiful Baroque style.

Whether you're flying off to the Galapagos, heading up into the cloud forests around Papallacta, Mindo and Maquipucuna, or delving into the Amazon, we recommend a night or two in Quito to explore this beautiful city and enjoy its sights.



Casa Gangotena | This hotel is set in a pretty restored mansion in the heart of Quito, on the historic plaza San Francisco. Casa Gangotena boasts 31 stylish rooms and suites with plush furnishings. Traditional Ecuadorian

cuisine is served in the hotel's restaurant.



Illa Experience Hotel | Named in *Time* magazine's 'World's Greatest Places 2018', Illa Experience is a boutique hotel that strives to immerse guests in Ecuadorian culture. Tasteful rooms and suites look out on to beautiful city views, and each floor

of the hotel is inspired by a different period in Ecuador's history.



OTAVALO

Otavalo is just a few hours' drive north of Quito, and is rightly famous for its vibrant traditional market, full of life and colour. Browse for traditional textiles and don't forget to pick up a world-famous Panama hat.

Otavalo is the artistic epicentre of Ecuador, where artisans and weavers from the region come together to sell their wares in the shadow of Imbabura Volcano.

Venture out into the surrounding countryside and explore local communities, see artisans at work, and stay in beautifully restored colonial haciendas where you'll get a taste of authentic rural life and will enjoy warm hospitality and exceptional local cuisine.

The area around Otavalo is also where roses, one of Ecuador's biggest exports, are grown. Enjoy a tour of a rose farm and learn about the importance of roses in the local economy.



Hacienda Zuleta | Hacienda Zuleta is a peaceful family-run farm. Each of the 15 bedrooms is unique, reflecting the colonial building's history through antiques and embroideries. The farm produces a wealth of organic

food, and guests can enjoy home-cooked meals.



Hacienda Cusin | At the beautiful Hacienda Cusin, attentive staff and beautiful gardens combine with comfortable rooms and stunning views to produce a truly special hotel. Choose from garden cottages, suites and salons for your stay, all furnished with antiques

and locally crafted Andean products.



THE AVENUE OF THE VOLCANOES

Stretching south from Quito for 325km, the Avenue of the Volcanoes runs between 19 volcanoes on one side and 20 on the other. One of the volcanoes is Cotopaxi, the highest active volcano in the world at 5,987m. The region offers visitors many attractions such as colourful local markets, Inca ruins, and beautiful hacienda accommodation. Pretty Riobamba is worth a

visit, and the vibrant town of Alausí is a must for history lovers – most houses there are over 100 years old. Don't miss the Devil's Nose, a hair-raising section of railway that connects Alausí to Sibambe. The train winds back and forth on itself, navigating tight bends as it drops some 500m over just 12km down an almost perpendicular mountainside.



Tren Crucero | Take the Tren Crucero and stop each night in comfortable accommodation, drinking in the stunning peaks and views along the way. Lovingly restored (and fully electric-diesel) antique steam locomotives pull luxurious passenger cars, limited to just 50 passengers, to ensure a personalised and intimate experience. Make use of the train's bar, observation lounges and open-air terrace to complete this unique experience. The Tren Crucero runs between Quito and Guayaquil, and vice versa.



CUENCA

The striking city of Cuenca was founded in 1557 on the site of an old Inca and Cañari settlement, and the city retains much of its old colonial feel. This regional capital has a historic centre with cobblestone streets, flower-filled plazas and churches dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries.

Many travellers choose to head out to Cajas National Park, located north west of the city, where you can hike or fish among the

breathtaking landscapes. Numerous glacial lakes can be found amongst the stunning scenery at 10,000ft, and Cajas is a great destination for walkers or birders.

Not far from Cuenca lies the Inca site of Ingapirca, some of the most significant Inca ruins in the country. This large site has a deep and fascinating history and is well worth a day trip.



most famous films!

Santa Lucia | Unique Santa Lucia sits in one of Cuenca's most historic buildings. Renovated with all modern conveniences, the hotel's 20 rooms sit around a beautiful central patio, which served as a backdrop for one of Ecuador's



cuisine and the elegant Le Bar is a pleasant venue for cocktails.

Mansión Alcázar Cuenca | This beautiful 19th-century colonial house has just 11 rooms and three suites, each individually and tastefully decorated with antique furniture and artworks. The Casa Alonso restaurant serves typical Ecuadorian



ECUADOR'S AMAZON RAINFOREST & CLOUD FOREST

A few hours by road to the west of Quito, you'll find lush cloud forest reserves where you can hike along pristine trails, bathe under waterfalls and keep your eyes peeled for hundreds of bird species. One of the richest wildlife hot spots on the planet, this forest is home to iconic species such as howler monkeys, sloths, and jaguars.

To the east of Quito and the Andes lie the tropical lowlands of El Oriente, an unspoiled Amazonian rainforest wilderness. In recent times, a number of wildlife lodges have been carefully developed in the Amazon to help visitors seek out the multitude of fauna that exists here. The highly knowledgeable local naturalists can add enormously to your understanding of these beautiful and threatened wildlife zones.

All the lodges that Rainbow use here are either owned by or provide direct benefits to their local indigenous communities, and each of them promises a unique and unforgettable experience.

Rainbow Recommends

ECUADOR'S AMAZON RAINFOREST & CLOUD FOREST

- Head out on a night walk and witness the forest come alive
- Take the time to talk one-on-one with your guides to hear fascinating insights and stories
- Keep a sharp eye out – most wildlife is extremely difficult to spot!
- Swim beneath mysterious waterfalls



La Selva Amazon Eco Lodge

| This award-winning eco-lodge offers guests an authentic experience in the heart of the Amazon. The 19 small but comfortable cabanas are constructed entirely from rainforest materials. Guests can enjoy excursions

as well as the large dining area and open-air bar with panoramic views of the lake.



Mashpi Lodge

| Environmentally-conscious Mashpi Lodge is a magical retreat hidden inside a 1,200-hectare private reserve in the Ecuadorian cloud forest with 22 well-furnished rooms and suites. Meals are served in the lofty restaurant and

showcase the best of local cuisine.



Anakonda Amazon River Cruise

| The *Anakonda Cruise* vessel boasts unbeatable sophistication and style. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer continual river and rainforest views, as do the observation deck and Jacuzzi. Keep an eye out for wildlife before

retiring to a modern, spacious suite with walk-in showers and a Jacuzzi bathtub.



ECUADOR EXPLORER

The Devil's Nose

This itinerary is perfect for travellers eager to get beneath the skin of Ecuador. Offering a gentle introduction to Ecuadorian culture and landscapes, this itinerary will get you up close and personal with colourful markets, colonial architecture and indigenous people, along with stunning Andes peaks, volcanoes, lakes and lush green cloud forest.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Quito | Depart the UK on your overnight flight via Bogotá to the Ecuadorian capital of Quito.

Day 2 Quito | Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel in the heart of the old town. This UNESCO World Heritage area boasts cobbled streets, picturesque plazas flanked with colonial architecture, and ornate churches.

Day 3 Quito | Explore the highlights of colonial Quito on a private tour. The city has one of the best preserved colonial centres in South America. During the tour, you will visit the El Panecillo lookout point for fantastic views of the city and the encircling volcanoes and mountains.

Day 4 Quito to Otavalo | Drive to Otavalo and spend the next two nights at a traditional hacienda. Otavalo and the surrounding region feature soaring mountain landscapes, high Andean peaks, shimmering lakes and traditional villages.

Day 5 Otavalo | Browse the Indian market in Otavalo, famous for its craftwork. Later stop in local handicraft workshops in Agato and Peguche. After lunch, visit the Cotacachi-Cayapas ecological reserve and gaze at the deep blue Cuicocha lagoon. Later, head to the colonial town of Cotacachi, famous for its leatherwork.

Day 6 Otavalo to Cotopaxi | Journey to Cotopaxi National Park. Weather permitting, you will be able to see the snow-capped summits of the Cotopaxi and Antisana volcanoes. Learn about the history of the area before setting off to visit Lake Limpiopungo and explore the surrounding area on foot.

Day 7 Cotopaxi to Riobamba | En route to Riobamba, visit the Indian market towns of either Saquisilí, Pujilí, Zumbahua or Latacunga (market day dependent). Marvel at the mysterious green crater lake at Quilotoa volcano, then move on to the art galleries in the community of Tigua, where you will meet a local artist.

Day 8 Riobamba to Ingapirca to Cuenca | Today is the day for the so-called 'most difficult train route in the world'. The route climbs up steep slopes, rolls down into river valleys and negotiates a truly massive wall of rock called the 'Nariz del Diablo' – the Devil's Nose. In the afternoon, drive south to Ingapirca, Ecuador's most famous Inca ruin, and later journey on to Cuenca.

Day 9 Cuenca | Cuenca is perhaps the prettiest city in Ecuador, its magnificent skyline dominated by beautiful church domes. Walk along the cobblestone streets and people-watch in the town square, then admire the green valleys that surround the historic city.

Day 10 Cuenca to Cajas National Park to Guayaquil | Wonder at the range of landscapes in Cajas National Park, from cloud forest to rocky lunar swathes, and catch sight of a few of the park's more than 200 lakes. If you're lucky you will glimpse the wild llamas that were reintroduced to the park in the late 1990s. The park's other animal inhabitants, such as the spectacled bear, puma, and tigrillo, are more elusive. Depart the park and move on to Guayaquil for your final night.

Days 11-12 Fly to the UK | Spend the morning at leisure. Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Just over 1,000 kilometres off Ecuador's coast lies the Galapagos archipelago, one of the most important wildlife destinations in the world. The islands were famously visited by Sir Charles Darwin, who was inspired by the islands' finches to pen his world-changing book, *The Origin of Species*. Made up of 19 islands, each with their own eco-system, the islands' unparalleled beauty and remarkable wildlife makes them different from anywhere else on Earth.

Isolated from the mainland over millennia and faced with survival amid the stark volcanic landscapes, endemic species of flora and fauna have evolved to become totally unique, perfectly adapted for life in the Galapagos. Plus, due to lack of human contact, many are fearless. Iconic residents include vibrant red and blue-footed boobies, the Galapagos sea lion and the iconic Galapagos giant tortoise.

Visitors to San Cristobal Island are greeted by colonies of sea lions who love to laze on the pristine beaches, while a trip to Floreana Island will bring you face-to-face with flocks of pink flamingos. The Galapagos are also famous for their penguins, spotted around Fernandina Island, and marine iguanas, found all over the Galapagos.



The archipelago can be explored from the comfort of a ship. Alternatively land-based stays with day excursions are also possible.

“
...the islands' unparalleled beauty and remarkable wildlife means they are like nowhere else on Earth
”





Galapagos Sea Lions

Top Tips

- Swim with sea lions and turtles
- Watch the courtship rituals of the waved albatross
- Walk with a giant tortoise on Santa Cruz
- Visit the Charles Darwin Research Centre
- Sip cocktails at sunset on your boat

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The Galapagos Islands can be enjoyed all year round. Temperatures are warmer between January and May but there is a greater chance of rain. From late August to early October there is the risk of choppy seas and occasional sea mists that restrict visibility in the highlands.

GETTING THERE

There are no direct flights from the UK to the Galapagos. All journeys here will go via the Ecuadorian mainland, from either Guayaquil or Quito.

GMT

-5 hours

VISAS

The Galapagos Islands are part of Ecuador and no visas are required.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter the Galapagos Islands.



GALAPAGOS CRUISES

The unspoilt Galapagos Islands boast stunning natural scenery and unique wildlife species seen nowhere else on Earth. One of the best ways to see how these species have evolved on the different islands is to take a cruise. We offer a full range of Galapagos cruises and can tailor-make them to suit your specific needs. The boats we feature on our Galapagos holidays range from those with a capacity of 16 passengers to a maximum of 100, with a variety of standards. A typical day aboard a cruise ship involves several shore excursions. Disembark your ship and board small Zodiac boats to head to land, experiencing several dry and wet landings.



Seaman Journey | The *Seaman Journey* is a first-class superior catamaran. A typical day encompasses two excursions per day with activity options including swimming, snorkelling, kayaking or walking depending on the landing site.

Get up close to the unique Galapagos wildlife such as blue footed boobies, land and marine iguanas, sea lions and penguins. Between excursions and activities, relax on the wonderful sun deck or visit the small library.



Alya | One of the Galapagos' newest luxury catamarans, the *Alya*, accommodates 16 passengers in nine comfortable cabins. Elegantly decorated, the catamaran boasts spacious social areas, a library, a large sundeck, two bars and a jacuzzi.

Itineraries aboard the *Alya* are either seven or three nights and combine hiking, snorkelling, wildlife viewing, kayaking and visiting different beaches, all accompanied by an expert naturalist guide.



Treasure of Galapagos | The *Treasure of Galapagos* is a stable, wide motor catamaran featuring spacious, bright cabins with private balconies and beautiful ocean views. Accommodating up to 16 guests in 9 cabins, the boat has a crew of 11

on board. There is a large sundeck area, ideal for al fresco dining and a jacuzzi to relax in. Guests can also enjoy the air-conditioned lounge, dining room, bar or small library.



Santa Cruz II | *Santa Cruz II* accommodates up to 90 guests in 50 contemporary and chic cabins. There is a well-stocked library on board as well as a gym, two jacuzzis, two lounges and plenty of outdoor space. Dining on the *Santa Cruz II* is a

real treat. Indulge in the creative Ecuadorian and international cuisine focusing heavily on seafood and locally grown organic fruit and vegetables.



Natural Paradise | The *Natural Paradise* is a luxury cruiser which caters for 16 passengers. It boasts spacious indoor areas and contemporary cabins, some of which have private balconies. On the beautiful teak sundeck, you will find

a jacuzzi, spacious relaxation areas dotted with sun loungers and a space for al fresco dining. Explore the Galapagos Islands with the kayaks, snorkelling equipment and wetsuits that are provided on board.



La Pinta | *La Pinta* is a mid-sized boat accommodating up to 48 passengers in 24 well-furnished cabins. Offering a relaxed yet lavish expedition atmosphere, the ship's facilities include an attractive bar and dining room where you can

enjoy tropical juices and sumptuous food. Additionally, *La Pinta* has a library, sundeck, three inflatable landing crafts and a glass-bottomed boat, perfect for marine life viewing.



SIMPLY GALAPAGOS

The Galapagos Islands offer one of the best wildlife holidays in the world. This famous archipelago boasts magical volcanic landscapes, incredibly diverse and unique flora and fauna, and best of all you can design your perfect trip with ease. All the boats we use in the Galapagos offer a variety of trip lengths, from 3 nights to 14 nights, sizes and itineraries – the one listed here is just an example of the many our specialists can prepare for you.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Quito | Take an overnight flight from the UK to the Ecuadorian capital of Quito.

Day 2 Quito | Upon arrival into Quito you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Enjoy the sights of Quito's UNESCO World Heritage old town, a picturesque area full of cobbled streets, charming plazas and colonial architecture.

Day 3 Quito | Take a private tour around Quito's highlights. Visit old plazas and beautiful historical buildings, then tick off the El Panecillo lookout point, with its stunning views of the city. Later drive out to the equator to stand with one foot in either hemisphere. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Day 4 Quito to San Cristóbal Island | Fly via Guayaquil to the Galapagos. Upon arrival into San Cristóbal, visit the Interpretation Centre where you will learn about the islands' geological, natural and human history as well as conservation efforts. Later settle into your cabin aboard your cruise vessel and meet the friendly crew, who will run through your itinerary for the next few days with you.

Day 5 San Cristóbal Island | This morning visit La Galapaguera to view Giant Tortoises in a semi-natural habitat. See young tortoise in breeding pens and learn about their history. In the afternoon explore Cerro Brujo. This protected bay was where Charles Darwin first set foot in 1835 and boasts a multitude of endemic wildlife.

Day 6 Española Island | Spend a day discovering one of the Galapagos' most beautiful islands. Snorkel, swim or kayak in the stunning Gardner Bay and keep an eye out for local birds and the local sea lion colony. Move on to Suarez Point and witness its famous blowhole that spurts water up to 75m high.

Day 7 Floreana Island | Visit one of the largest lagoons in the archipelago at Cormorant Point. This is also one of the best places to spot flamingos and features two contrasting beaches: green sand and 'flour sand'. The bird life here is spectacular. This afternoon, enjoy panoramic vistas from Post Office Bay and Baroness Lookout.

Day 8 Santa Cruz Island to Guayaquil | Just outside the main town on Santa Cruz, Puerto Ayora, is the Charles Darwin Centre. Here you can learn about the protection and conservation of these astonishing islands and see their breeding and rearing centre for young tortoises. After your visit to the centre, transfer to the airport for your flight to the mainland port city of Guayaquil.

Days 9-10 Fly to the UK | Take the morning at leisure before your overnight flight back to the UK in the evening. Rainbow recommends a private city tour or a visit to a nearby banana and cocoa plantation, both of which we can organise.



NB: Alternatively, we can offer land-based stays on the Galapagos with daily excursions or island hopping programmes. Please speak to a Rainbow specialist for more information.



COLOMBIA

Colombia's capital, Bogotá, is nestled high in the Andes and has been dubbed 'the Athens of the South' for its thriving universities and libraries. But it's historic Cartagena, on the Caribbean coast, that is the jewel in Colombia's crown. Many of its colonial mansions have been restored and turned into boutique hotels, sophisticated restaurants and wine bars. On balmy evenings, stroll through the narrow streets or down the seafront alongside the locals to enjoy the city's relaxed, cosmopolitan atmosphere.

From Cartagena, you can reach Providencia Island, 750km from Colombia in the Caribbean Sea. This Colombian island is utterly idyllic, with coral sand beaches, coconut palms and mangrove forests. It's a real hidden gem.

No visit to Colombia would be complete without a visit to the Coffee Region, an area characterised by rolling verdant hills, fertile valleys, coffee plantations and quaint towns. For city buffs, Medellín's exciting history of transformation and regeneration makes it a rewarding destination to explore.

Another of the country's major highlights is Tayrona National Park on the Caribbean coast, where the spectacular forest-clad Sierra Nevada Mountains provide a picture-perfect backdrop to pristine white-sand beaches.



“...With lush green rainforests, an unspoiled Caribbean coastline, enigmatic ruins and a thriving coffee industry, Colombia is the perfect destination for the discerning traveller keen to step off the beaten track.

”





Colombian woman in Cartagena

Top Tips

- Swim in the natural pools at Tayrona National Park
- Stroll through Cartagena's old town with the locals
- Relax in a splendid hacienda in Colombia's coffee triangle
- Fly to Providencia Island for picturesque coral beaches
- Learn about Medellín's social transformation and urban regeneration.

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

Colombia has an equatorial climate and therefore doesn't have dramatic seasonal changes, although rain is likely to occur at any time throughout the year. The best time to visit the country is from December through March when there is the least amount of rain. It tends to be cooler when visiting areas at altitude, such as Bogotá, and especially the coffee highlands.

GETTING THERE

Avianca fly direct from the UK to Bogotá.

GMT

-5 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Colombia.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Colombia.



Villa de Leyva

BOGOTÁ & VILLA DE LEYVA

With the opening of so many new hotels, restaurants and shopping complexes, Bogotá has become an incredibly cosmopolitan city. In contrast, the Spanish colonial district of La Candelaria features pretty, old-fashioned courtyards and fine architecture. In La Candelaria you'll find the renowned Gold Museum, where each corridor displays a different episode of Colombian history.

Above the city is the sanctuary of Monserrate, accessible by cable car, which offers spectacular views. To the north, you'll

find the incredible underground salt cathedral at Zipaquirá, and further afield lies the pretty town of Villa de Leyva.

Villa de Leyva is home to beautiful whitewashed buildings, one of the Americas' largest main plazas, and some of Colombia's best-preserved architecture. Cobble streets lead you to picture-perfect alleyways, and the town is often described as being 'frozen in time', still amazingly similar to how it looked when it was first founded by the Spanish.



🏡 Sofitel Bogotá Victoria Regia

| The 97 rooms and five suites of this hotel blend classic with contemporary. The Sofitel Bogotá has incredible facilities, including an exclusive Mediterranean-style Basilic restaurant that uses local

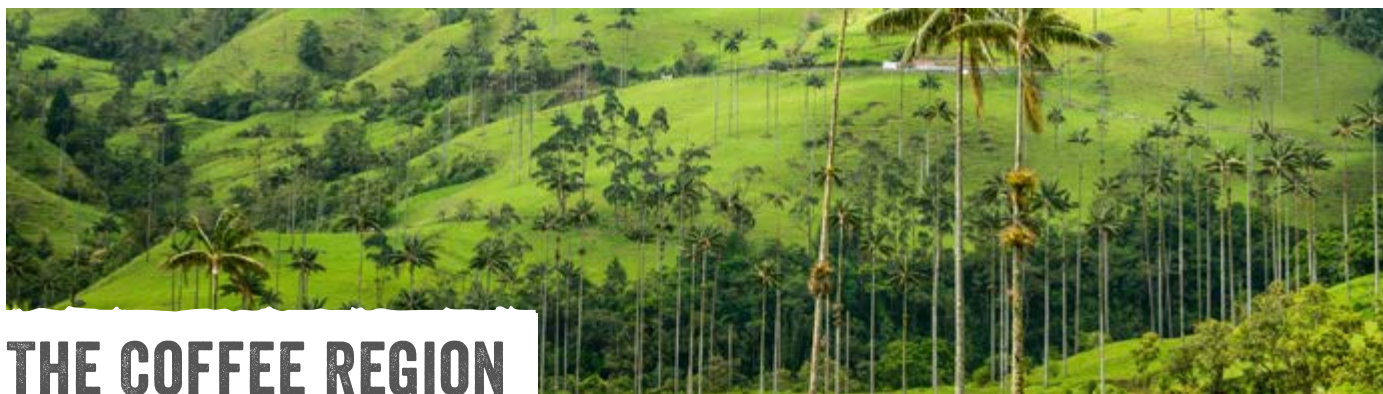
ingredients, the Bibliotheque bar and a delectable wellness centre.



🏡 B.O.G. Hotel | B.O.G.

hotel, with its 55 plush rooms, is surrounded by Bogotá's best restaurants, shops and nightlife. The hotel's La Leo Cochina Mestiza restaurant is a highlight, as is the swish lounge bar and pool terrace

next to the heated rooftop swimming pool, which offers incredible panoramic city views.



THE COFFEE REGION

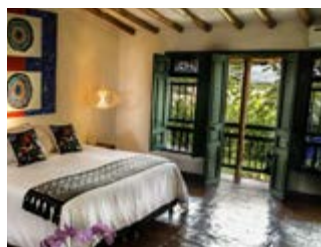
Colombia boasts several main coffee production areas. One of these areas, where the mineral-rich volcanic soil and higher altitudes have combined to create an exceptional coffee-growing region, is known as the 'Coffee Triangle' and lies between Pereira, Armenia and Manizales. There are several delightful haciendas in this region where you can stay, learn about coffee production, and of course enjoy the

sweeping highland views. The landscape is brilliantly green, with picturesque traditional towns dotted around the lush valleys. Whilst in the area don't miss a visit to the Cocora Valley, home to the famous wax palms, the tallest palms in the world. This is a stunning national park full of rolling hills and cloud forests teeming with hummingbirds and orchids.



Casa San Carlos | Casa San Carlos features amazing views over its lush gardens (complete with swimming pool and hot tub) and the surrounding farmland. Primarily constructed out of bamboo, the property has 22 spacious rooms, all

uniquely decorated.



Hacienda Bambusa | Hacienda Bambusa is a classic two-storey hacienda built in guadua (bamboo) with clay tiles. It has seven bedrooms with beautiful views, and some have balconies and hammocks. The hotel's restaurant offers local

cuisine made with produce grown in the hacienda itself.



MEDELLÍN & THE SURROUNDS

Located deep in the central Andean highlands, Medellín is Colombia's second largest city and the country's cultural hub. Nicknamed the 'City of Eternal Spring', Medellín enjoys a temperate climate and stunning views on all sides, courtesy of the mountain peaks that surround it. In Medellín you will see signs of its humble origins during the coffee boom of the 20th century, with crumbling colonial buildings that retain their timeless charm.

Medellín has gone through an incredible social transformation and regeneration and today is a modern and vibrant city with plenty to explore. Within the surrounding province, mountainous Antioquia, you'll find the colourful town of Guatapé, the mysterious Stone of El Peñol, which rises dramatically out of the ground and can be climbed for amazing views, and the picturesque colonial city of Santa Fe de Antioquia.



Patio del Mundo | Patio del Mundo beautifully blends French and Colombian style. With just seven rooms, it provides guests with an intimate experience. Some rooms feature jacuzzis, small patio areas and even private terraces, and the

lush tropical garden is a calm oasis hidden away from the bustling city.



Hotel Park 10 | Hotel Park 10 is perfectly situated in the El Poblado district, close to the commercial and financial centre of Medellín. Offering four-star accommodation, this hotel features all modern amenities in the guest rooms

in addition to two restaurants, a full-service spa and a health club.




Tayrona National Park

CARTAGENA & TAYRONA

Cartagena is Colombia's 'must-see' destination. Founded in 1533, Cartagena soon became one of Spain's richest Caribbean possessions. News of its wealth attracted unwelcome attention, and the city was fortified to try to repel many attacks. The old centre lies within the massive walls and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's a treasure trove of narrow streets, Andalusian-style palaces and colonial houses with ornate balconies.


Tayrona National Park lies north east of Cartagena along the Caribbean coast. It is easy to access and is one of Colombia's most popular reserves. It is home to hundreds of species of birds, plants, and even sponges, and it is the only place in the world where the cotton-top tamarin is still found. Eco-tourism is encouraged, and activities include guided excursions such as hiking or horse riding in the forest, and of course relaxing on the idyllic, unspoilt beaches.



 **Casa San Agustin** | This boutique hotel celebrates its historic roots by carefully preserving old features, including in its beautiful guest rooms, yet a slice of modernity can be found in the L-shaped pool, lined with green plants and white sun

loungers. Its restaurant, ALMA, is one of the leading haunts in Cartagena.



 **The Eco Habs** | The cabins of the Eco Habs are constructed using natural materials in the style of the houses inhabited by the local indigenous tribe, the Tayrona. Perched on forest-clad hills, the Eco Habs have magnificent views over the Caribbean coast and are linked by wooden walkways.



Cartagena

COLOURS OF COLOMBIA

Colombia is a stunning country full of awe-inspiring vistas, picturesque colonial towns, lush green coffee plantations and idyllic Caribbean beaches. With it building in popularity as a travel destination, we're pleased to offer this itinerary that takes you around Colombia's vibrant highlights, from buzzing Bogotá to the verdant Cocora Valley. This itinerary is also offered as a group tour; just get in touch with a Rainbow specialist to find out more.

SMALL GROUP TOUR

Day 1 Fly to Bogotá | Take an overnight flight from the UK to Bogotá.

Day 2 Bogotá to Villa de Leyva | Upon arrival into Bogotá, you will be met and driven roughly three hours north east to Villa de Leyva, one of Colombia's most charming towns. It is said to be frozen in time, with its whitewashed buildings and dramatic backdrop of rolling green hills.

Day 3 Villa de Leyva | Enjoy a day exploring Villa de Leyva, which definitely rewards those travelling on foot. Visit the colonial art museum, the monastery, and other historical buildings before heading to museum 'El Fossil'. Browse Villa de Leyva's many handicraft shops and savour the local cuisine.

Day 4 Villa de Leyva to Bogotá | En route back to Bogotá, stop to explore Zipaquirá Salt Cathedral, a huge and astonishing underground place of worship built entirely out of salt. Afterwards continue on to Bogotá for a two-night stay.

Day 5 Bogotá | Today explore Bogotá's historic centre, La Candelaria, with a guide. Visit many of La Candelaria's amazing historic attractions, including the cathedral, the Botero Museum and the Gold Museum.

Day 6 Bogotá to the Coffee Region | Fly to Pereira, the gateway to the Coffee Region. Colombia is the world's third-largest producer of coffee, and you will be taken to a coffee plantation to learn about the production process

from bean to cup. Enjoy beautiful views, a delicious lunch, and of course a coffee tasting.

Day 7 The Coffee Region | Spend the day in the Cocora Valley, home to the tallest wax palm trees in the world. Visit the quaint towns of Salento and Finlandia, picture-perfect settlements with cobblestone streets, paisa architecture, and lovely coffee shops.

Day 8 The Coffee Region to Medellín | En route to Medellín by road, stop at an orchid farm, which grows more than 6,000 orchids of 832 different species. Tour the grounds and learn about the cultivation of avocados, citrus plants and native trees while looking out for the 165 species of wild bird that can be seen. Continue on to Medellín.

Day 9 Medellín | Take an exciting tour around this city, which is rightly known for its incredibly successful social transformation and regeneration. Visit downtown, with its 23 Botero sculptures, and explore some of the most famous neighbourhoods in the 'City of Eternal Spring'.

Day 10 Medellín to Cartagena | Fly to Cartagena on the Caribbean coast. Discover the beautifully restored historic centre, protected by its walls, and full of colour thanks to the bright paint used when the many colonial buildings were restored. Take in a panoramic view of the city and visit the handicraft markets of the Bovedas.

Day 11 Cartagena | Enjoy a day at leisure. We recommend exploring Cartagena on foot to

soak up the Caribbean atmosphere, enjoying super-fresh seafood and sipping fruit juices and cocktails on rooftop bars. Alternatively, visit the nearby Rosario Islands for sandy beaches and crystal-clear waters.

Days 12-13 Fly to the UK | Spend the morning at leisure. Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK via Bogotá.

NB: Your trip can be extended with a stay in Tayrona National Park. Please speak to a Rainbow specialist for more information.





COSTA RICA

Approximately a quarter of Costa Rica's land is protected by national parks and wildlife reserves. These protected areas encompass volcanoes, rainforests, tropical dry forests, mangroves, wetlands, coral reefs and beaches.

Many of its wonderfully secluded lodges and hotels have impeccable environmental and social credentials, and Costa Rica as a whole is a world leader in sustainable tourism. You can stay in exceptional comfort, enjoying incredible local cuisine and relaxing in infinity pools that brush up against lush rainforest, all the while knowing that you are doing your part for eco-tourism.

Delve into the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve and spot wildlife in the treetop canopies, or take a boat through the small waterways of Tortuguero National Park in search of alligators, iguanas and exotic birds. Tackle white-water rafting, whizz along zip-lines strung high above canyons, and seek out humpback whales and dolphins along the coastlines.

After exploring Costa Rica's myriad natural wonders, you can relax on one of the beautiful golden sand beaches that line its Pacific coast, or soak in the natural hot springs that are dotted over the foothills of Arenal Volcano.



“
...With its picture-perfect beaches, pristine rainforests, steaming hot springs and smouldering volcanoes, Costa Rica is a true natural paradise.
”





Top Tips

- Zip-line through the canopy in the Monteverde Cloud Forest
- Look for three-toed sloths in Manuel Antonio National Park
- Try to spot the Resplendent Quetzal
- Soak in Arenal's hot springs
- Relax on Costa Rica's stunning Pacific beaches

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The best time to visit Costa Rica is between December and May. Central America has a long rainy season, although the characteristic of these months tends to be bright sunny mornings followed by afternoon showers. September and October can be quite rainy. On the coast and at lower altitudes, it is hot and humid throughout the year.

GETTING THERE

British Airways operates a direct service from London Gatwick.

GMT

-6 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Costa Rica.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Costa Rica.



SAN JOSÉ & THE CENTRAL VALLEY

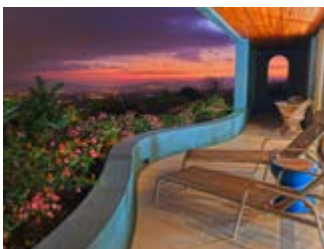
Costa Rica's capital, San José, lies in the Central Valley and enjoys the valley's protection, resulting in a milder and less humid climate than the coastal areas. It's a popular entry point into Costa Rica, and it's a great place to spend a night or two before venturing further into the country's lush forests and national parks.



 **Grano de Oro** | This 100-year-old Victorian mansion has been lovingly restored to create a hotel with 40 rooms and suites full of warmth and comfort. The rooftop garden terrace has loungers and two outdoor

Jacuzzis and the hotel's restaurant, run by a French chef, serves tropical Costa Rican and European dishes.

There are a number of attractions that are easy to reach from San José, including trips to Poás and Irazu Volcanoes, La Paz Waterfall Gardens, coffee plantations and gardens. Rainbow recommends staying out in the Central Valley to get back to nature. Be close to the region's highlights and escape the hustle and bustle of the city.




 **Xandari** | Xandari is a beautiful collection of 24 unique villas located on a 40-acre plantation with views of the Central Valley. Guests can spend their time relaxing in the 125ft sunset pool, swimming in the lap pools, visiting the farm animals or walking through the 4km of private scenic trails and botanical gardens.



TORTUGUERO & THE CARIBBEAN COAST

On Costa Rica's Caribbean coast, you'll find Tortuguero National Park, one of the most important sites in the world for Green sea turtles, which make their way on to the brown sandy beaches between July and October every year to lay their eggs. The park's territories protect not only the nesting beaches but also the surrounding forests, canals and lagoons. These areas are home to alligators, iguanas, howler monkeys, boa constrictors and incredible varieties of bird species. Everything in Tortuguero is done by water, so access depends on boats or aeroplanes. All the lodges include boat trips and many offer carefully regulated night tours to see the turtles (in season). Tortuguero's peaceful atmosphere attracts nature and wildlife lovers year-round, and has managed to develop a superb low-density tourist system.



 **Evergreen Lodge** | Evergreen Lodge's 55 rustic jungle-style bungalows have been built to coexist with the environment and provide a comfortable and spacious base. You can eat in the restaurant, have a drink at the bar in

front of the lagoon, and enjoy the refreshing turtle-shaped swimming pool and tropical gardens.

“
...the ultimate destination for wildlife lovers looking for peace and seclusion...
”



ARENAL & THE NORTH

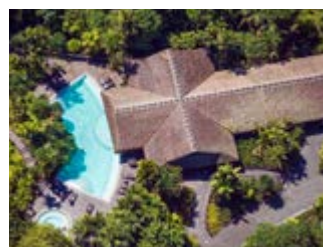
The near-perfect cone of Arenal is one of the most iconic volcanoes in Central America, which is an impressive feat in a region that boasts many prominent peaks. At 5,437 feet, the volcano dominates the lush forests and pastures of the northern La Fortuna area that surrounds it. Dormant for centuries, explosions in 1968 triggered lava flows and the volcano was active for some time afterwards, and has now

grown dormant again.

There are many adventures to enjoy in the area, including hiking on the volcano's mammoth sides and relaxing in the springs naturally heated by the geothermal activity. If you like a bit of adrenaline, there's white-water rafting, canyoning and zip-line tours. If you prefer your activities a bit more sedate, the Sky Tram is worth a ride.



Arenal Nayara Hotel Spa & Gardens | This small, stylish boutique hotel has the most stunning views of Arenal Volcano and provides a highly attentive service. Each of its 50 self-contained casitas (bungalows) has volcano views and is set in a secluded garden with an outdoor shower and Jacuzzi on a private terrace.



Tabacon | Set amongst lush rainforest, Tabacon Grand Spa Thermal Resort is ideal for families and couples alike. Tabacon is an eco-friendly and carbon neutral resort with 102 rooms and suites. Guests can choose from two restaurants and two bars, one of which is a swim-up pool bar.

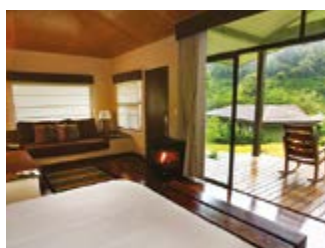


MONTEVERDE CLOUD FOREST

The Monteverde Cloud Forest is an enchanting land of emerald green foliage shrouded in thick, swirling mists. Only a few hours by road from Arenal, the forest is perched some 1,400 metres above sea level on the edge of the Tilaran Mountains. Over 400 bird species have been spotted here, including an incredible 30 separate varieties of hummingbird. There is a huge choice of activities on offer in Monteverde, most of which are suitable for families.

You can hike through the cloud forest, take tours of the canopy suspended on walkways or on a zip line, and explore butterfly and hummingbird gardens.

We highly recommend a tour of the forest at night, when its nocturnal denizens come out. You can also take longer treks and horse rides during the day; both a great way to see more of this misty wonderland.



El Silencio, Bajos del Toro | Dotted around this peaceful hideaway are 16 stylish cottage suites featuring outdoor whirlpool tubs and furnished viewing decks. Enjoy healthy meals at the on-site Los Ventanales restaurant. A variety of local activities

is available, including horse riding, river rafting, and bird watching.



Hotel Fonda Vela | Hotel Fonda Vela is set in 35 acres of grounds surrounded by lush forest, perfect for bird watching and hiking. Rooms are comfortable and spacious, many with large windows and forest views. There are two restaurants, a covered pool with a country-club-style locker room, and two jacuzzis.



GUANACASTE, NICOYA & PACIFIC COAST BEACHES

The provinces of Guanacaste and the Nicoya Peninsula comprise almost the entirety of Costa Rica's idyllic North Pacific coastline. This region's towns range from beachy Tamarindo and the relaxed surf communities of Nosara and Samara, and you'll find all types of accommodation on offer from boutique hotels to remote eco-lodges.

Guanacaste isn't all about its coast, either. Guanacaste is also

home to the largest – and last remaining – tropical dry forest in Central America and you can explore geysers, old haciendas and cattle ranches, and meet the local cowboys – the *sabaneros*. With a fascinating regional history (it was independent from Costa Rica until 1824), and bubbling mud pools, looming volcanoes and therapeutic sulphur hot springs, this truly is a region with something to offer everyone.



Andaz Papagayo | Andaz Papagayo offers a total of 153 guestrooms and suites, all with magnificent views of Culebra Bay and the tropical forest. Guests can enjoy a huge selection of amenities including two secluded beaches, an 18-hole

golf course, three themed restaurants, two pools and an impressive spa.



Lagarta Lodge | Boutique Lagarta Lodge's 26 spacious and elegant suites offer a terrace or balcony with spectacular views towards the jungle or the windswept coast. Tucked away in the lodge gardens you'll find two infinity pools and a jacuzzi, and the hotel

has an excellent spa that offers treatments and yoga.



MANUEL ANTONIO & THE CENTRAL PACIFIC

Costa Rica's Pacific coast is one of the country's most visited areas, and for good reason. It offers something for everyone: gorgeous beaches, water sports, deep sea fishing and adventure tours – all of which you'll be able to enjoy with a verdant rainforest as your spectacular backdrop. The sheer beauty of the Manuel Antonio National Park makes it one of the most popular destinations along this coast. It is easily accessible by road from San José in just a few hours. Its sand beaches rise from the ocean into dense, lush rainforest with well-marked trails and prolific wildlife. The lesser-visited coastline around Uvita and Dominical means wild and beautiful beaches. The area is also well-known for important turtle nesting sites, its whale and dolphin-watching, and the humpback gatherings in Marino Ballena National Park.



Parador Resort and Spa | Parador is a secluded, environmentally-responsible resort perched high on the cliffs above the sweeping central Pacific coastline. Holding the Costa Rican Tourism Board's highest 5-Leaf sustainability

rating and the Ecological Blue Flag, Parador combines old-world charm with warm Costa Rican hospitality.

“
The sheer beauty of the Manuel Antonio National Park makes it one of the most popular destinations along this coast. It is easily accessible by road from San José in just a few hours
”



OSA PENINSULA & CORCOVADO


The remote primary rainforest of the Osa Peninsula, located in the far southern Pacific coastal area, is home to the greatest variety of plants and animals of any protected area in Costa Rica and includes the wonderful pristine jungle of the Corcovado National Park. This region is ideal for the more adventurous traveller, especially those with an interest in wildlife. It is considered one of the most biodiverse places on Earth.

Despite having little road access, some of the country's best eco-lodges are located here. You can reach them by air from San José and then either by 4WD or by boat.

Activities here tend to revolve around wildlife. Hike the forest trails and keep your eyes peeled for sloths, monkeys or even tapirs; or snorkel off small islands and happen upon dolphins, Manta rays and colourful schools of tropical fish.



community values with many of the staff coming from the local area.

 **Lapa Rios** | Eco-friendly
Lapa Rios is situated in a private 1,000-acre tropical rainforest nature reserve only a short hike from the beach. Its 16 thatched bungalows all have a private deck and garden shower. The lodge has strong

“

...As I dozed in my hammock beside deserted Playa Corcovado on the Osa Peninsula, I started to understand the meaning of the local phrase pura vida, which roughly translates as pure life. With the sound of the waves rolling on to the shore and the rustling palm trees swaying in the gentle breeze, I was transported into a state of total bliss. The call of a nearby Howler monkey and the melodic bird song added to the idyllic sound-scape, as I relived the experience from the day before, when 30 or so Spotted Pacific dolphins greeted our arrival at Caño Island with such grace and exuberance. This was pura vida indeed.

”



and jungle trails to explore.

 **Playa Cativo Eco Lodge** |

Playa Cativo Eco Lodge is a boutique beach-front lodge with just seven rooms accessible only by boat, surrounded by the Piedras Blancas National Park. The ocean-facing pool and bar are wonderful, and there are extensive tropical gardens



Manuel Antonio National Park

COSTA RICA HIGHLIGHTS

Costa Rica is a fantastic destination surrounded by its Pacific and Caribbean coasts. With its towering volcanoes, abundant wildlife, rainforest and cloud forest, there is so much to reward the curious traveller. This itinerary takes you around the country's incredible highlights, all with something unique to offer. If you're a nature lover, Costa Rica might just be your paradise. Please enquire for details if you would like to explore Costa Rica on a group tour.

Day 1 Fly to San Jose | Upon arrival into San Jose you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Day 2 San Jose and the Central Valley | Head out on a private tour into the Central Valley. At Doka Coffee Plantation, learn about coffee production and of course do some sampling! Head to Poás Volcano National Park for a close-up volcano experience before stopping at the powerful La Paz Waterfall Gardens. Immerse yourself in the sounds of nature as you walk along winding forest trails.

Day 3 San Jose to Tortuguero | Travel to Tortuguero National Park on the Caribbean coast. Enjoy the incredible wildlife-spotting opportunities offered by this vast park, including turtles laying eggs on the beach or baby turtles hatching if you're there at the right time of year.

Day 4 Tortuguero | Spend a full day exploring the park's waterways by boat with a local guide. Sunrise is the best time to witness the cacophony of jungle life, with birds, monkeys, sloths and even alligators and tapirs on the list of possible sightings.

Day 5 Tortuguero to Arenal | Transfer to the Arenal region for two nights, famed for its conical volcano. Check into your hotel and then take the chance to relax in nearby hot springs.

Day 6 Arenal | Delve into Caño Negro, considered one of the most important wetlands in Central America. Board a boat down the Rio Frio for amazing wildlife viewing opportunities. Keep your eyes peeled for caiman, sloths, birds, monkeys and even turtles.

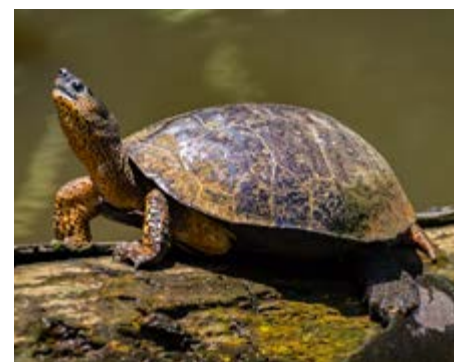
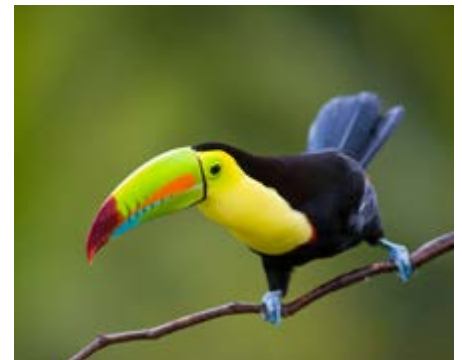
Day 7 Arenal to Monteverde | Travel both by boat and road to the Monteverde Cloud Forest. Cross Lake Arenal, the largest lake in Costa Rica that was man-made in 1974 to provide hydroelectricity. On arrival at Monteverde, spend the evening watching the jungle come alive as darkness encroaches.

Day 8 Monteverde | Visit the Selvatura Walkways, suspended in the canopy, and marvel at your birds-eye view of the forest. Watch for some of the incredible bird's that call this region home, including the world-famous Resplendent Quetzal.

Day 9 Monteverde to Manuel Antonio | Descend from the cool cloud forest to the steamy Pacific. Spend three days near Manuel Antonio National Park, exploring by day or simply relaxing on the beach or by the pool.

Days 10-11 Manuel Antonio National Park | Enjoy two days at leisure to explore this area's stunning beaches and incredible national park. One of Costa Rica's most impressive protected areas, the 683 hectares of mangrove swamps and beaches are home to a rich variety of fauna and flora and offer plenty of activities such as deep sea fishing, mountain biking and canopy tours.

Days 12-13 Fly to the UK | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





Antigua, Guatemala

CENTRAL AMERICAN JOURNEY

For travellers wishing to take in as much of Central America as possible, this is the perfect itinerary. Take in the highlights of Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Guatemala all in the same trip. Drink in stunning landscapes featuring towering volcanoes, shimmering blue lakes, waterways rich in wildlife and mysterious cloud forest. The human element can't be overlooked either – you'll also explore the histories and cultures of these amazing countries while on this trip.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 UK to Panama City | Arrive in Panama City where you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Day 2 Panama City | After breakfast, head to the Old Quarter and explore its beautiful and eclectic fusion of colonial, neoclassic and French architecture.

Day 3 Panama City | Take a half-day tour to transit the canal by boat, ending in Gamboa. Enjoy a panoramic view of the city and experience the workings of the canal first-hand.

Day 4 Panama City to San Jose to Monteverde Board a morning flight to San Jose in Costa Rica, where you will be met and driven to Monteverde Cloud Forest. In the evening perhaps explore the cloud forest under the cover of darkness.

Day 5 Monteverde | Witness the jungle from above as you traverse the Selvatura Walkway, a network of bridges suspended in the canopy. This misty area is home to more than 400 species of bird, including the famous Resplendent Quetzal.

Day 6 Monteverde to Arenal | Cross Lake Arenal by boat and wonder at views of Arenal Volcano. This man-made lake is the largest and most important lake in Costa Rica, created to provide hydroelectric energy.

Day 7 Arenal | Hike around one of Central America's most famous volcanoes, Arenal. Learn how eruptions have shaped the destiny of the land and the people who live here, keeping an eye out for fascinating flora and fauna along the way. Later relax in the wonderful hot springs.

Day 8 Arenal to El Castillo | Cross the border into Nicaragua and journey to El Castillo on the San Juan River. This colourful village features brightly-painted wooden homes on stilts, overlooked by an impressive 17th-century Spanish fortress.

Day 9 El Castillo to Granada | Visit the Indio Maiz Reserve, dedicated to biological diversity, then depart to Granada. This charming city boasts picture-postcard views and cobbled streets at every turn.

Day 10 Granada | Explore colonial Granada and enjoy a boat ride around the many islets of Lake Nicaragua. This beautiful landscape was formed by the impressive Mombacho Volcano.

Day 11 Managua to Guatemala City to Antigua | Transfer to Managua to fly to Guatemala City, where you will be met and driven to colonial Antigua. This pretty former capital is one of the finest cities in Central America, sat in the shadow of three volcanoes and surrounded by coffee plantations.

Day 12 Antigua | Stroll through charming cobbled streets as you tour Antigua's highlights such as the Arco de Santa Catalina. Later visit the fabulous Azotea coffee farm and the Maya Traditions Museum to delve into the culture and history of the area.

Day 13 Antigua to Lake Atitlan | Head to Lake Atitlan, whose azure beauty is enhanced by the towering backdrop of volcanoes and the Mayan villages dotted around its shores.

Day 14 Lake Atitlan | Take a scenic ride across the lake to the village of San Juan la Laguna, where you will see traditional textile craft in action. Continue on to the village of Santiago for lunch and a tour which will teach you about the spiritualism and beliefs of the local T'zutujil Maya.

Day 15 Chichicastenango to Antigua | Head to the renowned market at Chichicastenango where you can explore the colourful food market and excellent craft market. Later transfer back to Antigua for the night.

Days 16-17 Fly to the UK | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





MEXICO

Most visitors to Mexico arrive in the capital, Mexico City, one of the largest metropolises in the world. There's so much to do here. The outstanding Anthropology Museum is ideal preparation for Mexico's archaeological sites and the pre-Aztec city of Teotihuacán is an easy day trip from the city.

To the north of Mexico City, a spectacular train ride takes you through the dramatic Copper Canyon. To the south east, charming Oaxaca is a great stopover point, with Zapotec ruins nearby and the incredible annual Day of the Dead celebrations.

Trips to San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuata and former silver-mining towns showcase the Spanish colonial architecture found in Mexico's heartlands. In the state of Chiapas, picturesque San Cristóbal de las Casas is one of the biggest draws, although it's worth visiting for its diverse natural landscapes alone.

The Yucatán Peninsula is often overlooked by those heading to Cancun, but this area has so much to offer. Colonial Mérida is an ideal base from which to explore the Uxmal ruins; we also recommend visiting biospheres such as Celestún and Sian Ka'an, swimming with the whale sharks of Holbox Island and heading to a cenote, one of the Yucatán's astonishing freshwater sinkholes.

“
...Mexico has it all. Ruins of ancient civilisations, a fascinating colonial history, wonderful beaches, steamy jungles, superb cuisine, excellent hospitality – and, of course, mariachi bands and tequila!
”





Ceramic skulls for the Day of the Dead celebrations

Top Tips

- Get to know Mexico City and its Anthropology Museum
- Jump aboard the iconic Copper Canyon train
- Visit some of the lesser-known Mayan sites
- Visit Baja California and the 'Mexican Galapagos'
- Try all of Mexico's famous dishes and snacks

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

Mexico is a large country and most areas can be visited year round. It has, in the main, a warm climate. Overall, the period from December to May is the best time to visit. Between July and the end of October, the Yucatán Peninsula can be affected by tropical storms, or occasionally hurricanes.

GETTING THERE

British Airways and Aeromexico operate a direct service from London Heathrow to Mexico City. British Airways and Virgin also have direct services to Cancun.

GMT

-6/-7 hours

Mexico City and the Yucatán Peninsula GMT-6.
The Copper Canyon and Baja California GMT-7.

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Mexico.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Mexico.

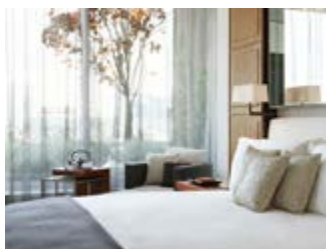


MEXICO CITY

Mexico City is one of the oldest urban centres in the western hemisphere. Once a massive Aztec city named Tenochtitlan, it was large enough in its heyday to rival contemporary Paris or Venice. Conquered, largely destroyed and rebuilt by the Spanish in the 16th century, Mexico City today is once again one of the largest metropolises in the world, with its Aztec and colonial past still living within its present. Nowhere is its history more evident than at the central plaza,

the Zócalo. Surrounded by some of the finest buildings of the colonial era, here lie the remnants of one of the Aztecs' principal monuments, the Templo Mayor.

It's not all about the history, though. Mexico City is vibrant and dynamic, with a buzzing coffee scene and plenty of galleries to keep art-lovers happy. Don't miss a visit to Xochimilco's floating gardens, where you can glide along the canals in a colourful 'trajinera' (gondola).



Las Alcobas | The 35 large rooms in modern Las Alcobas are spacious and luxurious. Dine at the Barroco restaurant and Dulce Patria where Mexican food is served by renowned chef Marta Ortiz. There is also a spa where guests can relax and

be pampered after a busy day in the city.



Four Seasons Mexico City | Four Seasons Mexico City boasts 200 very comfortable rooms and 40 exceptional suites. Guests can dine at the hotel's Reforma 500 restaurant, which serves contemporary Latin cuisine, or splash

out on the famous Signature Sunday Brunch with unlimited champagne.



COPPER CANYON

The best way to see the Copper Canyon is to ride the Copper Canyon Railway, also called the 'Chepe' train, into the north west desert region. The views offered from this comfortable train are beyond comparison as you travel past the 20 canyons that make up the Copper Canyon region.

The Copper Canyon is located right in the heart of Mexican wilderness. It's home to the Tarahumara people, who continue to live simple lives reminiscent of a bygone era.

You can take the train ride in one day for the view alone, or you could spend up to a week in the region. Using the railway as your route, you can stop overnight to explore and discover different local areas such as Creel, Posada Barrancas, Cerocahui and El Fuerte. Visit Tarahumara villages, stunning canyon lookout points and old missions and take short treks along the canyon ridges.



OAXACA

Located south east of Mexico City, Oaxaca is an easy plane ride from the capital. One of Mexico's most popular cities, it boasts a delightful combination of colonial, indigenous and ancient influences. Fine Spanish buildings and churches stand proud among vibrant markets and numerous fiestas. Despite its mixed heritage, though, Oaxaca remains essentially Indian at heart. The townsfolk speak their own language and their market is one of the most colourful in Mexico.

Oaxaca is located in a valley surrounded by the Sierra Madre del Sur, which was once the centre of Zapotec and Mixtec civilisations. The early Zapotecs developed a significant civilisation at nearby Monte Alban centuries before the birth of Christ. A trip to Monte Alban is a fascinating journey into the past, as is a visit to the nearby Mixtec site of Mitla. Oaxaca is also one of the best places in the country to experience the annual Day of the Dead festivities.



Quinta Real | This 91-room hotel is housed in a former convent which dates back to 1576, and great efforts have been made to reflect the building's rich history. A series of secret gardens and fountains provide areas of peace and quiet away from

the hubbub of the city.



Casa Oaxaca | Casa Oaxaca is a delightful seven-room property set in a traditional building. Rooms feature modern pieces of art, local handicrafts and limestone-coated walls. This charming hotel has a well-known restaurant where you

can enjoy a variety of dishes made with fresh local produce.



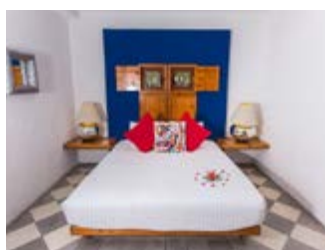
BAJA CALIFORNIA

Baja California is a long sliver of land on Mexico's Pacific coastline in the far north west of the country and boasts a magical mix of spectacular scenery, hidden beaches and coves and world-class accommodation.

During the Arctic winter, hundreds of Grey whales head south to the warm waters off Baja California to breed and raise their young, making this an incredible spot for whale-watching.

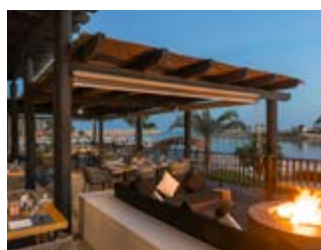
Separated from the mainland by the Sea of Cortez, the southern Baja capital, La Paz, is a fantastic place for oceanic activities such as kayaking, wind- and kite-surfing, and the chance to swim with friendly whale sharks.

From La Paz boats go to the Espiritu Santos Islands, dubbed 'The Galapagos of North America' by Jacques Costeau. They are well worth a visit.



Casa Natalia | This boutique hotel boasts 18 gorgeous rooms, including two special 'artists' rooms' hand decorated by local artists Tanya Talamante and Alfredo Sosa. The hotel's restaurant, Mi Cocina, is a real gem featuring ever-fresh food

inspired by Baja's most popular dishes, all with a European twist.



Hotel El Ganzo | Hotel El Ganzo is a sleek, trendy modern hotel offering amazing ocean views and a relaxed retreat from the hustle and bustle of Los Cabos. The rooms are simple without scrimping on luxury. Make sure you try the food which is all

carefully prepared on a sustainable, farm-to-table basis.



SAN CRISTÓBAL & PALENQUE

A number of important Mayan sites and colonial towns lie nestled in Mexico's Heartlands and are easy to visit en-route from Mexico City to the Yucatán Peninsula. San Cristóbal de las Casas is nestled in the heart of the highlands. A colourful colonial city, it is surrounded by indigenous Chiapaneca villages that each boast their own traditions and markets. Reach San Cristóbal in a two-hour drive from Tuxtla

Gutierrez via the spectacular Sumidero Canyon. As you climb, the tropical heat and vegetation gradually give way to the cooler mountain air and pine forests that surround San Cristóbal. Palenque, shrouded in jungle, is one of the most breathtaking of Mexico's Mayan sites, perched on a ledge overlooking the swampy plains below. Listen out for the call of the Howley monkeys between the ruins.



Guayaba Inn | Guayaba Inn is a quaint boutique hotel in San Cristóbal de las Casas. This intimate hideaway is brimming with antiques, and with art created by none other than the owner herself. A relaxing lobby area and inviting restaurant seal

the deal in this supremely comfortable property.



Quinta Cha Nab Nal | Just 3km from the archaeological site of Palenque, this resort has seven suites and resembles a Mayan palace complex. Pre-Hispanic design and modern sophistication create an aura of peace and isolation. Indulge in

typical Mayan cuisine at the hotel's intimate, romantic restaurant.



RIVIERA MAYA & HOLBOX

The Caribbean coastline of the Yucatán Peninsula has been dubbed the 'Riviera Maya' for its idyllic white sandy beaches and turquoise waters. It stretches from Cancun in the north to the archaeological site of Tulum in the south, and features tropical beaches, snorkelling and diving havens, archaeological sites and lush jungle. It's the perfect place to enjoy some rest and relaxation or beachy activities.

The laid-back island of Holbox lies just north of the peninsula in the Gulf of Mexico. Long and slender, surrounded by crystal-clear Caribbean seas and criss-crossed with sandy streets, Holbox is the ultimate destination for relaxation. Holbox is home to more than 150 species of birds within its Yum Balam reserve, and in the summer months, whale sharks are known to congregate in the nearby waters.



Hotel Esencia | A small luxury boutique hotel, Esencia has only 29 spacious rooms set within a series of beautiful villas and houses. The décor is tasteful and minimalist, with pristine white floors and airy patios. Lounge on the beach

underneath your linen-shaded parasol at this pretty, tranquil retreat. At meal times, savour international cuisine with a Mayan twist.



Casa Sandra | Perfect for couples, Casa Sandra has 20 superbly appointed suites with private balconies. Enjoy wonderful personal service and a relaxing atmosphere, and unwind completely. The gourmet restaurant, said to be the best on the

island, specialises in seafood dishes.



YUCATÁN PENINSULA

The Yucatán Peninsula boasts a large number of Mayan sites that have weathered the intervening centuries. While Europe was still in the Dark Ages, the Mayans had mapped the heavens, evolved the only true writing system native to the Americas and mastered Mathematics. They invented the calendars we still use today, and constructed staggeringly enormous monuments and cities across a huge, unforgiving jungle landscape. No trip to Mexico would be complete without visiting the major

Mayan sites of Chichen Itzá and Uxmal. The state capital of Mérida is a great place from which to strike out to these sites, and itself offers sights for those interested in the Maya, for example, the Cathedral of San Ildefonso, which was built with the stones of long-lost Mayan temples. Don't miss the famous cenotes, jungle sinkholes ideal for snorkelling or swimming. The Mayans believed that the cenotes linked them to the underworld.



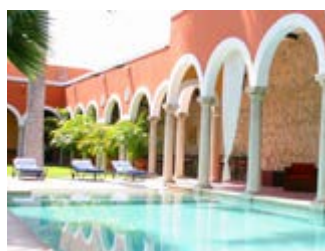
mythical 'great cities' referred to in later Mesoamerican literature. The great pyramid of El Castillo dominates the archaeological site.

Chichen Itzá | The length of Chichen Itzá's history has resulted in a fascinating mix of architectural styles from across the Mayan civilisation still visible today. It was one of the largest Mayan cities, and is likely to have been one of the



connect both buildings within Uxmal and the city itself to other ancient sites in the region, and even sites as far afield as Tikal in Guatemala.

Uxmal | Uxmal is considered one of the most important Mayan sites. Its architecture is extraordinarily representative of the region's dominant Mayan architectural style, and its buildings are famed for their size and decoration. Ancient roads



no restaurant at the hotel, there is a huge choice within walking distance.

Hacienda Mérida | Eight individually decorated rooms blend traditional furnishings with modern amenities in Hacienda Mérida. There is an onsite bar and breakfast is served in the courtyard under the arches, poolside. Although there is



Yucatecan and international cuisine using home-grown ingredients.

The Lodge at Chichen | Boasting its own private entrance to the entrance to the ruined temples of Chichen Itzá, The Lodge's clay and marble bungalows are inspired by traditional Maya houses. The restaurant serves Mexican, regional

MAGICAL MEXICO

Palenque

This journey takes you across Mexico, getting you close to its ancient traditions, rich history, astonishing natural beauty and delicious food. Start in vibrant Mexico City and traverse this incredible country's breadth, ending in the Yucatán Peninsula with its enigmatic Mayan ruins and charming colonial capital, Mérida. This is the perfect introduction to a truly magical country.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Mexico City | Upon arrival into Mexico City you will be met and transferred to your hotel for three nights.

Day 2 Mexico City | Take a private tour to soak up the culture and history of Mexico's capital. Visit some of the city's most important buildings and see glimpses of the great Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, that once stood here.

Day 3 Teotihuacan | Take a day trip to one of Mexico's most impressive archaeological sites, just 50km northeast of Mexico City. At Teotihuacan, held sacred by the Aztecs, explore the fascinating ruins including the famous Quetzalpapalotl Palace Complex and the immense Pyramid of the Sun.

Day 4 Mexico City to Oaxaca | Fly to Oaxaca, once the centre of the Mixtec and Zapotec civilisations. With influences from both its ancient history and its Spanish conquerors, Oaxaca is a delight to explore on foot, full of tranquil streets and leafy plazas and offering some truly incredible food.

Day 5 Oaxaca | Visit the Monte Alban World Heritage Site and admire the stunning views over Oaxaca. Once one of the most prominent Zapotec cities, an entire mountaintop was levelled out to create the ceremonial site at Monte Alban and it is still considered an incredible feat of engineering today.

Day 6 Oaxaca to Sumidero Canyon and San Cristóbal | Arriving into Tuxtla Gutierrez from Oaxaca, head to the magnificent Sumidero Canyon whose sheer rock walls reach more than 1,000m high. Move on to the charming town of San Cristóbal de las Casas in its highland valley.

Day 7 San Cristóbal de las Casas | Explore the picturesque cobbled streets and markets of San Cristóbal with a private tour. Later enjoy a drive into the highlands to visit three Tzotzil Indian villages, where local people still maintain the traditions of their ancient Maya ancestors.

Day 8 San Cristóbal to Palenque | En route to Palenque, stop at the beautiful waterfalls of Agua Azul and take a refreshing dip in the aquamarine waters. Continue on to Palenque for two nights.

Day 9 Palenque | Take a guided tour of the archaeological site of Palenque and its 500 buildings spread through the jungle. Its temples are a superb example of Mayan architecture. The Temple of Inscriptions is the tallest, rising above its fellows.

Day 10 Palenque to Mérida | Fly to Mérida and relax into the laid-back tempo maintained here despite being a bustling city. Mérida is particularly famous for showcasing local Yucatecan cuisine, so make sure you try regional dishes such as sopa de lima and cochinita pibil.

Day 11 Mérida | Head out of the city to Uxmal, an impressive archaeological site considered to be one of the best examples of Mayan Puuc architecture in the region. Later continue on to Kabah, where the Palace of the Masks features nearly 300 masks depicting Chaac, the Mayan rain god.

Day 12 Mérida to Chichen Itzá | This morning, take a tour of Mérida, a modern city full of museums and art galleries that still bursts with colonial history. In the afternoon, transfer to your hotel near the ancient site of Chichen Itzá.

Days 13-14 Chichen Itzá & fly to the UK |

Today discover Chichen Itzá, one of the 'New seven Wonders of the World'. This ancient Mayan city has been restored and today is a dazzling site featuring towering pyramids, wells once used for human sacrifice, and the Sacred Cenote. In the afternoon, transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





Palace of the Masks, Kabah

THE MAYAN WORLD

Follow in the footsteps of the ancient Maya as you journey through the jungles and charming colonial towns of Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. This astonishing civilisation left its mark across Latin America, and this itinerary will get you up close and personal with some of the most incredible of these crumbling remnants, with plenty to satisfy the most curious of travellers.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Days 1-2 Guatemala City to Antigua | Fly overnight from the UK to Guatemala City. On arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Antigua. This colonial town, full of cobblestone streets, is a real gem. On a walking tour drink in the pastel-hued façades, handicraft markets and laid-back atmosphere.

Day 3 Antigua to Copán | In the morning, cross the Honduran border and settle into your hotel, ready to explore the fascinating Mayan site of Copán, once a powerful city that ruled over a vast kingdom.

Day 4 Copán | This site is a marvellous collection of complexes that truly showcases the Mayans' astonishing architectural prowess. On a guided tour, explore the myriad plazas and roads and find the fascinating sculptures and hieroglyphs this civilisation left behind.

Day 5 Copán to Livingstone | Return to Guatemala and transfer via the Rio Dulce to Livingstone, a sun-soaked town on the Caribbean coast. En route, stop at the amazing ruins of Quiriguá. Home to the indigenous Garifuna people, Livingstone is a unique town with Carib and African cultural influences.

Day 6 Copán to Tikal | In the morning, enjoy a cruise along the Rio Dulce. Later plunge deeper into the jungle as you head towards Tikal, where you'll spend two nights in the Guatemalan Rainforest. Stop at Ak'Tenemit, an organisation helping indigenous communities to develop and prosper.

Day 7 Tikal | Tikal will, quite simply, take your breath away. This extraordinary site is perhaps the greatest of all the Mayan ruins with its vast

complex of temples, walkways, and plazas hidden away within the steamy jungle and surrounded by wildlife.

Day 8 Tikal to Palenque | Travel by road and boat as you cross the border into the Mexican state of Chiapas. Visit the mysterious sites of Bonampak and Yaxchilán before continuing on to Palenque for two nights.

Day 9 Palenque | Delve into Palenque, one of Mexico's finest Mayan sites. Keep an eye (and ear!) out for howler monkeys as you explore, along with colourful birds and butterflies, all of which flourish among the 500 buildings that make up this extraordinary complex.

Day 10 Palenque to Mérida | From Palenque you'll journey to Villahermosa, catching a flight to Mérida in the Yucatán Peninsula. Though a bustling city, Mérida retains its colonial charm and laid-back tempo with leafy plazas and pastel houses. Make sure you try the delicious Yucatecan cuisine while you're here.

Day 11 Mérida | Take a day trip from Mérida to Uxmal, an important Mayan ruin and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. During your tour enjoy the palaces, temples, and above all, the symbolic motifs and sculptures for which the site is most famous. Continue on to Kabah, with its amazing Palace of the Masks.

Day 12 Mérida to Chichen Itzá | In the morning explore historic Mérida, built more than 450 years ago on the site of an ancient Mayan city called T'ho. See beautiful art and architecture, and delve into the Yucatan Peninsula's sometimes bloody history. Later transfer to your hotel near the famous Mayan site of Chichen Itzá.

Days 13-14 Chichen Itzá & fly to the UK |

Set out early for a tour of this remarkable site. Named one of the New seven Wonders of the World, Chichen Itzá deserves its fame, with its breathtaking pyramid of El Castillo and its crumbling majesty. After lunch, travel to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.

NB: If you would like to extend your trip with some time on the beach, please let us know.





GUATEMALA

Guatemala is an incredible destination for lovers of culture and adventure alike. For stunning sights, look no further than Lake Atitlán in the central highlands, where rural villages feature locals wearing hand-woven traditional outfits and three volcanic peaks tower over the landscape.

Guatemala is full of history, boasting perhaps the most striking of all Mayan sites in Central America at Tikal. Here rainforest brushes up against ancient stone, toucans flit between crumbling walls and howler monkeys prowl amongst the ruins.

Don't miss the former capital, Antigua, an immensely attractive and relaxing city that serves as Guatemala's cultural and artistic centre. Guatemala's colonial heritage is still obvious here in particular, with many of its painstakingly restored Spanish buildings now converted into stylish hotels.

Also worth a visit is Chichicastenango, where Guatemala's largest and most colourful market is held. While here, see the intriguing Santo Tomás, a unique church with its own style of worship blended from pre-Columbian and Catholic practices.

If you want to really get off the beaten track, take a boat down the Rio Dulce towards the Caribbean coast at Livingston. You might even spot a manatee!

“
...Littered with Mayan ruins
and full of spectacular
scenery, Guatemala is one
of Latin America's most
striking countries.
”





Church in Santa Maria de Jesus

Top Tips

- Meet friendly locals in beautiful traditional attire at Lake Atitlán
- Delve into the streets of Antigua and see the beautiful, restored colonial buildings
- Visit the Mayan site at Tikal
- Take a boat to the Caribbean coast at Livingston and try to spot manatees
- Barter at the vibrant Chichicastenango market

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The best time to go to Guatemala is between December and May. Although the region is generally hot and humid all year round, Guatemala's highlands can get very cold between October and March.

GETTING THERE

There are no direct flights from Guatemala to the UK. Iberia flies from Madrid to Guatemala City; alternatively a number of US airlines fly to Guatemala via their hubs in the USA.

GMT

-6 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Guatemala, although if you fly via the USA an ESTA is needed.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Guatemala.



ANTIGUA

Set in the shadow of three volcanoes and oozing colonial appeal, Antigua is a delightful city and well worth a visit during your time in Guatemala. This former capital was founded in 1543 and today is vibrant and beautiful, surrounded by coffee plantations and haciendas.

Many old colonial properties in Antigua have been restored and converted into comfortable boutique posadas, the perfect

places from which to venture out and explore Antigua's weekly market. Markets are a vital part of everyday life in Guatemala, and local people walk from miles around to attend the weekly one in Antigua to buy food, textiles, clothing, livestock and many other goods.

Full of colour, history and charm, Antigua is a worthy addition to any Guatemala holiday.



El Convento | This all-suite boutique hotel blends traditional, colonial and modern styles, all rooms set around a central courtyard with its 100-year-old Tempisque tree. The restaurant offers delicious Guatemalan recipes

cooked slowly in the traditional style – a true highlight.



Posada del Angel | Fine attention to detail and attentive service make Posada del Angel a real treat. With just five rooms and two suites, this intimate hotel is a romantic hideaway packed with Guatemalan character. Enjoy the

tranquil garden, pool and cosy library after breakfast on the roof terrace.



LAKE ATITLÁN & CHICHICASTENANGO

The image of Lake Atitlán, with its three volcanoes dominating the skyline, is for many one of the most evocative reminders of a Guatemalan holiday. It is truly one of the most beautiful lakes in the world.

Surrounding the lake you'll find a number of fiercely traditional villages, where many women continue to wear historical dress. Journeying from village to village, you'll spot minor variations in these outfits, turning every stop into a riot of colour and culture.

Close to the lake is the town of Chichicastenango, which hosts the largest and best-known market in Guatemala. This enormous market draws tourists and villagers to buy and sell brightly woven textiles, ceramics and masks.

Just as fascinating is the local food market where fresh meat and produce are bought and sold by local people – it is worth the early start to wander the stalls and sample the local treats!



Casa Palopo | Casa Palopo is a delightful property with seven rooms and a two-bedroom villa terraced into the hillside, boasting fabulous panoramic views over Lake Atitlán. The house has strikingly decorated interiors with smart

contemporary furnishings and Mayan art.



Hotel Atitlán | Situated on the northern shores of Lake Atitlán, this hotel has 60 rooms, all featuring private balconies and locally-sourced or inspired decorations. There is a pool, a series of contrasting gardens, and a

brightly-decorated restaurant with views of the lake and far-off volcanoes.



FLORES & TIKAL

The town of Flores appears to float on Lake Petén Itzá, so densely does it cover the island on which it's built. Flores is the capital of El Petén region, which is considered the heartland of the Mayan cities. Tikal is its most famous, but Yaxha is also worth a visit, and for the more adventurous there's the recently-discovered El Mirador, accessible only via helicopter or a five-day hike.

Shrouded in lush tropical jungle, Tikal is one of the most

extraordinary and impressive of all Mayan sites. Tikal was first occupied as a small village sometime before 300BC, but by around 700AD had become an important city with monumental palaces, plazas and pyramids.

Tikal is such a huge site that parts of it today are still hidden within the rainforest. Don't worry though; there's still so much to explore. We recommend taking a day trip to give you plenty of time to marvel at its wonders.



La Lancha, Lake Petén Itzá

La Lancha, part of the Francis Ford Coppola collection, is a luxurious jungle resort overlooking peaceful Lake Petén Itzá. Each of the ten secluded casitas combines Balinese and Guatemalan décor and

furnishings. The lodge has a split-level pool and an open-air restaurant under the main lodge's thatch roof with spectacular views.



Las Lagunas

Las Lagunas is an exclusive, eco-friendly boutique hotel nestled in one of northern Guatemala's pristine nature reserves. The hotel is decorated with locally-sourced materials and dark wood finishes

that reflect its natural surroundings, and yet the facilities are perfectly modern.



RIO DULCE & LIVINGSTON

The beautiful Rio Dulce runs from Guatemala's largest lake, Lake Izabel, to the Caribbean coast. A boat trip along its length offers landscapes of limestone canyons, Spanish forts, dense rainforest and mysterious mangrove swamps. It makes a fantastic side-trip when travelling between the Mayan ruins of Copán in Honduras or the Mayan stelae of Quiriguá en-route to the Tikal area.

Livingstone sits at the mouth of the Rio Dulce. This small, laid-back fishing enclave is accessible only via water or air, giving it the air of a tropical island rather than a traditional Guatemalan town. The local Garifuna people are descendants of shipwrecked African slaves who integrated with the indigenous Caribs in the 17th-century, and have their own language, culture and cuisine all preserved by Livingstone's inaccessibility.



HIGHLIGHTS OF GUATEMALA

Packed with bewitching Mayan ruins, dazzling landscapes, a rich cultural heritage and faded colonial grandeur, Guatemala has so much to offer. Explore its highlights with this itinerary, which takes you from charming and colourful Antigua to shimmering Lake Atitlán, surrounded by towering volcanoes and traditional indigenous settlements. Finally, venture into the jungle that hides imposing Tikal, one of the most incredible Mayan sites in all of Latin America.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Guatemala City | Depart the UK on your flight to Guatemala City. Upon arrival you will be met and driven to your hotel in Antigua. The former capital of Guatemala is one of the finest cities in Latin America, oozing charm with a laid-back feel.

Day 2 Antigua | Today enjoy a walking tour of Antigua's cobbled streets and admire the views of the three volcanoes that surround it – Agua, Fuego and Acatenango. Explore Antigua's top sights including La Merced church and the famous Arco de Santa Catalina.

Day 3 Antigua to Lake Atitlán | In the morning, visit local woodcarvers in the village of Jocotenango and then continue on to the Azotea coffee farm to learn about responsible agriculture in the region, and then to the Maya Traditions Museum. In the afternoon, transfer by road to Lake Atitlán.

Day 4 Lake Atitlán | Take a scenic boat ride across Lake Atitlán, truly one of the most beautiful lakes in the world. Arrive in the village of San Juan la Laguna and explore local crafts. Continue on to the village of Santiago for lunch and a tour, where you will visit the Maya god Maximón.

Day 5 Lake Atitlán to Antigua | Travel by road to the famous market at Chichicastenango, where you can explore the colourful food market and excellent local craft market. Don't miss the Catholic church of Santo Tomás with its 18 steps representing the 18 months of the Mayan calendar. Later head back to Antigua.

Day 6 Antigua to Quiriguá to Livingston | Travel to Livingston on the Caribbean coast. En route stop at the ruins of Quiriguá, famous for its carved stelae and sculpted calendars. Carry on by boat to reach Livingston, a unique town that is home to the fascinating Garifuna people.

Day 7 Livingston to Rio Dulce to Tikal | Cruise along the Rio Dulce, keeping an eye out for Bird Island and later for elusive manatees as you drift past the entrance to Biotopo Chocón Machacas. Pass local river villages, stop at the Ak'Tenamit educational project, and later continue to your jungle lodge in Tikal.

Day 8 Tikal National Park | Today visit Tikal National Park, an astonishing UNESCO World Heritage Site where the tops of huge Mayan temple pyramids rise above the lush forest canopy. If you're feeling adventurous, you can climb the pyramids and enjoy beautiful views across the jungle.

Day 9 Tikal to Guatemala City | In the morning you can visit the nearby site of Yaxha to watch sunrise over the ruins, or enjoy an early morning birdwatching tour. In the afternoon, fly from the nearby town of Flores to Guatemala City for your last night.

Days 10-11 Fly to the UK | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.



CLASSIC GUATEMALA & BELIZE



Collared Aracari, Cayo District

On this itinerary, plunge into the highlands and jungle of Guatemala before striking out for Belize's mysterious Cayo District and its beautiful Caribbean coastline. Experience Guatemala's charming colonial towns, sparkling Lake Atitlán and the famous Mayan ruins at Tikal, then cross the border and delve into the Cayo District. Follow up your adventures with sun and surf on white sand beaches, where the jungle heat combines with sea breezes and a laid-back lifestyle to result in ultimate relaxation.

Day 1 Fly to Guatemala City | Fly via the USA to Guatemala City and transfer to Antigua for two nights. The former capital of Guatemala oozes colonial charm, surrounded by coffee plantations in the shadow of three volcanoes.

Day 2 Antigua | On a half-day walking tour, take in Antigua's cobbled streets, colonial churches and attractive squares. Antigua's history stretches back to its founding in 1543, and you will see signs of its past everywhere you look.

Day 3 Antigua to Lake Atitlán | Visit woodcarvers in Jocotenango and then witness the work of the charity As Green As It Gets, who support small local coffee farmers and promote responsible agriculture, when you visit Azotea Coffee Farm. Stop off at the Maya Traditions Museum and then transfer to Lake Atitlán by road.

Day 4 Lake Atitlán | Revel in the stunning scenery as you cross the lake by boat to the village of San Juan la Laguna to witness hand-weaving and to visit the nail painters. Continue on to the village of Santiago, where you will have lunch and learn about the spiritualism of the local T'zutujil Maya.

Day 5 Lake Atitlán to Chichicastenango to Tikal | Head to the famous market at Chichicastenango with its colourful food stalls and local handicrafts and browse the exciting wares on offer. In the late afternoon, transfer to Guatemala City for a scheduled flight to Flores, the gateway to Tikal.

Day 6 Tikal | Experience the majesty of Tikal on a full-day guided tour. Look out for wildlife as you explore the jungle-shrouded ruins – deer, foxes, coatis, toucans and monkeys all call this area home. If you're feeling adventurous, scale one or more temples for spectacular views.

Day 7 Tikal to the Cayo District | Cross the border into Belize by road and plunge into this vast highland stretch of rainforests, ranches, and some of Belize's most remote and rugged terrain.

Day 8 Cayo District | Wonder at the scenery as you travel through the Cayo District. Stop off at the mysterious Barton Creek cave system after passing through a traditional Mennonite community. At the cave system, gently paddle your canoe along the scenic creek and into the dark cave, once a ceremonial centre and burial site for the ancient Maya.

Day 9 Cayo District | Take advantage of a free day to explore and go on some of the excursions offered by your lodge, such as river tubing, hiking to nearby waterfalls or swimming in the Macal River. There are nearby ruins at Xunantunich and Caracol that can also be explored.

Day 10 Cayo District to Ambergris Caye | After a brief flight, arrive in Ambergris Caye, the largest of Belize's islands that lies parallel to the magnificent Belize Barrier Reef. Amazingly, this island was created by the Maya when they dug a channel between it and Mexico.

Days 11-12 Ambergris Caye | Enjoy the laid-back atmosphere, white sand and turquoise

waters of the island over these two days. Take diving and snorkelling excursions if you'd like to, and make sure to keep your eyes peeled for the amazing and colourful marine life found in the waters.

Days 13-14 Fly to the UK | Take the short flight back to Belize City before connecting to your overnight flight back to the UK via the USA.





GUYANA

The experiences that await adventurous travellers in Guyana hold few equals. This country boasts incredible, pristine rainforests, open savannahs and spectacular waterfalls, not to mention vast populations of exotic wildlife and bird species.

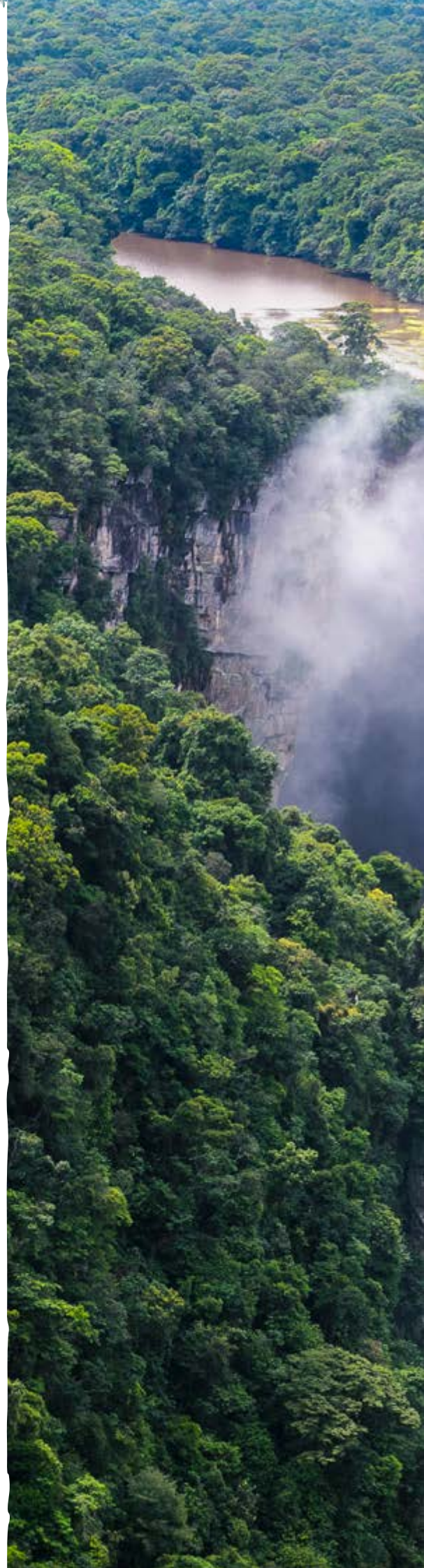
Delve into Guyana's lush forest and try to spot the 'neo-tropical Big Five' in their natural habitats: jaguar, giant river otter (called 'waterdogs' by the locals!), giant anteater, black caiman and harpy eagle. Guyana is also home to diverse wonders such as the Kaieteur Falls (five times higher than the Niagara Falls), inspirational rainforest conservationists Iwokrama, and Diane McTurk's Giant otter orphanage.



Guyana is not just about the wildlife, though. It also offers an incredible opportunity to travel amongst and learn from the indigenous communities in the rainforest. Immerse yourself in local villages by staying at one of the simple community-run guesthouses. Many properties here are basic – some even without electricity – but there is no better way to really connect with a culture than to experience their lives as they live them.

More than anything, Guyana's tourism infrastructure is an impressive example of community tourism at work and is growing stronger by the year.

“
Possessing some of the most dramatic rainforest and jaw-dropping scenery in the tropics, English-speaking Guyana is one of the last true wildernesses on the planet
”





Kaiaeteur Falls

Top Tips

- See the endangered Giant otter at Karanambu
- Wonder at the thunderous Kaiaeteur Falls
- Visit the Amerindian rainforest communities
- Learn about the rainforest at Iwokrama
- Try to spot the elusive jaguar and the Harpy eagle

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The climate in Guyana is typically hot, with average daily temperatures of 27°C. The north has two wet seasons in May to June and December to February. The south and the Rupununi have only one wet season in May to August.

GETTING THERE

There are no direct flights from the UK to Guyana. The most popular routes are flying with British Airways to Barbados or Port of Spain and onwards to Georgetown with either Liat or Caribbean airlines.

GMT

-4 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Guyana.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Guyana.



Jaguar in Iwokrama Rainforest

GUYANA NATURE TOUR

This two-week small group tour showcases Guyana’s breathtaking natural wonders along with its cultural and wildlife highlights. See the Kaieteur and Orinduik Falls, visit the Iwokrama Conservation Centre and stay at Karanambu, home to giant river otters. While you’re on this trip, you’ll have the chance to interact with, and learn from, the indigenous communities that live in Guyana’s forests – a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for adventurous souls.

SMALL GROUP TOUR

- Day 1 Fly to Georgetown** | Fly into Georgetown where you will be met and transferred to your hotel.
- Day 2 Kaieteur Falls** | Fly to the Kaieteur Falls, passing over the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers. Land on the local airstrip and visit the awe-inspiring falls, nearly five times higher than the Niagara Falls.
- Day 3 Kaieteur Falls to Iwokrama** | Take a scheduled flight over the rainforest and then travel by 4x4 to your lodge in the Iwokrama Rainforest. Spend the afternoon exploring jungle trails inside one of the last remaining untouched tropical forests.
- Day 4 Iwokrama** | Take an early morning boat down the Essequibo River for some bird-watching. After breakfast, climb to the peak of Turtle Mountain for incredible canopy views and the chance of wildlife spotting. In the afternoon, head to see the Amerindian petroglyphs at Kurupukari Falls.
- Day 5 Iwokrama** | After a morning wildlife walk, head out in a 4x4 to a new rainforest lodge and try to spot jaguar, tapir, agouti, and many more exciting rainforest animals along with exciting rainforest birds as you travel the roads.
- Day 6 Iwokrama** | Strike out for the incredible canopy walkway (up to 30m high) at dawn for birdwatching and monkey-spotting. Spend the day around the lodge searching for animals, birds and even checking out the local tree species for those interested in botany.

- Day 7 Surama** | Follow a forest trail in search of the Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, and later travel to the Amerindian village of Surama where you will spend the night, tucked deep in the rainforest and surrounded by hills. Find yourself welcomed by the local people and later, enjoy an evening wildlife walk.
- Day 8 Surama** | Head out to climb Surama Mountain before dawn for beautiful views over the village and savannah. Later climb down and enjoy lunch in the village before heading out for a three-mile walk to spot Giant river otters.
- Day 9 Annai** | Take a 4x4 along a road that winds through the savannah and foothills of the Pakaraima Mountains, home to many exciting bird species and dotted with termite mounds.
- Day 10 Karanambu** | Travel in a leisurely manner by road and boat to Karanambu Ranch and try to spot Jabiru Stork, toucans, and maybe Giant river otters. Once you are settled into the ranch, head out to watch the Victoria Regis waterlily bloom in the dusk.
- Day 11 Karanambu** | Enjoy a day at leisure to take advantage of the excellent bird and wildlife spotting opportunities around the ranch, including the Spotted Puffbird and Striped Woodcreeper.
- Day 12 Caiman House** | Take an early morning trip into the savannah in search of giant anteaters. Later, head out on to the Rupununi River in search of otters and birds, then travel by boat to Caiman House to witness the development projects

- there. You will meet the craftspeople and builders, and if you’d like you can aid in a field study on the Black caiman.
- Day 13 Georgetown** | After breakfast, take the short flight to Georgetown and enjoy a city tour of this former Dutch fortress settlement. Visit the national museum, the botanical gardens and the zoo. In the evening, enjoy a meal made by a local culinary master who loves to get guests involved with the cooking!
- Days 14-15 Fly to the UK** | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





Cock-of-the-rock

BIRDWATCHING IN GUYANA

Guyana is the perfect destination for eager birders, both experienced neotropical birders and those keen to broaden their knowledge in a pristine wilderness environment. This tour takes in four key destinations, all with excellent birdwatching opportunities, from the 35m-high Iwokrama Canopy Walkway, to teeming Atta Rainforest, to the Amerindian community of Surama and lastly the varied habitats in Karanambu.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Georgetown | Upon arrival into Georgetown, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Georgetown is Guyana's capital city, teeming with local heritage and culture. Dine at The Bottle Restaurant, known locally as the best in the country.

Day 2 Georgetown to Iwokrama | Take a light aircraft and then a 4x4 to Iwokrama. This rainforest covers one million acres, and today you will delve into it. Follow the Screaming Piha Trail, home to Bronzy Jacamar, Chestnut & Waved Woodpicker, Violaceous Trogons, and many more.

Day 3 Iwokrama Rainforest | Get an early start on the Essequibo River and enjoy the dawn birdsong. After breakfast, set out by boat to the foot of Turtle Mountain, keeping an eye out for Harpy Eagles along the way. Explore the local trails around the turtle Ponds and climb to 900ft to take in panoramic rainforest views and hopefully many bird sightings. As night falls, set out in search of night birds and perhaps even caiman or puma.

Day 4 Iwokrama to Atta Rainforest | Enjoy morning birding along trails close to the lodge, seeking out the Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner and Olivaceous Woodcreeper among many others. Later take a 4x4 through the heart of Iwokrama Forest, with more excellent birding opportunities, and then continue on to the Iwokrama Canopy Walkway where you may spot Caica Parrots, Screaming Piha and more.

Day 5 Atta Rainforest | Spend the day birdwatching from the mid and upper canopy on the walkway, or head out along the jungle trails. Spend time too in the clearing around your lodge, one of the best places to see one of Guyana's 'must-see' birds: the Crimson Fruitcrow.

Day 6 Atta Rainforest to Surama | Before breakfast, you can take the chance for some more early-morning birding. Later depart for the Cock-of-the-rock trail to hopefully have your first view of one of these amazing birds. Press on to the Amerindian community of Surama and the diverse range of species in this area. The highlight of any stay here is a sighting of the Rufous-winged Ground-cuckoo, although it can be tough to find. Night birding is also on offer today.

Day 7 Surama | An early morning start will set you up for a day of birding around Surama. Look out for Lilac-tailed Parrotlet, Ashy-headed greenlets, and Finsch's Euphonia among many others. Lucky visitors will encounter Great and Paradise Jacamars, Helmeted Pygmy-Tyrants, and more.

Day 8 Surama to Karanambu | Enjoy a final morning of birding before transferring across an amazing variety of ecosystems, from light forest to savannah to the Rupununi River. Upon arrival at Karanambu, head out for more birding in woodland patches, gallery forest or grasslands near the lodge.

Day 9 Karanambu | Begin birdwatching at sunrise and enjoy a full day, heading out either by boat or Land Rover to various forest locations. You may see Wood Stork and Pied Lapwing along the river, or perhaps Double Striped Thick-knees in the grasslands.

Day 10 Karanambu to Georgetown | In the early morning, go out around the lodge for more birding or head out into the savannah to try to spot the Giant Anteater. Later, fly back to Georgetown and visit the Botanical Gardens where you will see Pearl Kite, Red-bellied Macaw, and so many more.

Days 11-12 Fly to the UK | Transfer to the airport for the overnight flight back to the UK.





BELIZE

Belize is a mecca for adventure seekers, nature lovers, and those simply keen to relax in lush tropical rainforest surroundings. Belize is rightly prized for its ancient Mayan ruins, vibrant rainforest, and its colourful barrier reef – the second largest in the world.

Northern Belize is famed for its dense jungle. In fact, it's one of the best places for wildlife spotting. Hundreds of bird species flit through the trees, and lucky travellers might even catch a glimpse of the elusive jaguar. While you're there, Rainbow recommends stopping off at the incredible jungle-clad Mayan site of Lamanai.

Head south and you'll hit the Toledo District with its strong Garifuna culture. Home to traditional villages, pristine rainforest and vast nature reserves, this is an unmissable stop.

Belize's beaches and cayes offer a little slice of Caribbean heaven away from their busier island cousins. Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker, reached by either water taxi or light aircraft, boast white sands and turquoise waters.

On the south coast of the mainland, around Placencia, a range of eclectic hotels in small beach towns are ideal for a few days of snorkelling and relaxing under the tropical sun.



“
...Proving that size doesn't matter, Central America's second-smallest nation punches well above its weight in history and culture.
”





Top Tips

- Visit ruins left by one of the world's most fascinating cultures: the Maya
- Relax on idyllic Caribbean beaches away from the crowds found at more popular Caribbean destinations
- Visit traditional villages and meet the locals in the Toledo District
- Delve into the jungle and perhaps spot the tracks of the elusive jaguar
- Snorkel in turquoise waters over a vibrant coral reef

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The best time of year to visit Belize is between December and May. Other months can see prolonged periods of rain, and Belize may be affected by tropical storms and hurricanes between July and October.

GETTING THERE

There are no direct flights from the UK to Belize. The most popular route is flying via Miami with British Airways, United Airlines and/or American Airways.

GMT

-6 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Belize, although if you fly via the USA an ESTA is needed.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Belize.

Jaguar, North Belize



CAYO DISTRICT

A dreamy destination for any nature lover or adventurer, the Cayo District – also known as the ‘Highlands of Belize’ – is blanketed in lush rainforest that plays host to more than 500 species of bird. We strongly recommend setting a morning aside to rise with the sun and head out for a dawn birdwatching experience, where you will witness a new world coming alive as the light grows under the canopy.

Explore the lush jungle and pine forests, wonder at deep cave systems and enigmatic Mayan ruins, and linger by tumultuous waterfalls and secretive emerald pools. Undertake activities like zip-lining, horse riding through the forest or perhaps tubing down the river. Hear the ferocious cries of howler monkeys echoing through the trees, and keep your eyes peeled for signs of the elusive jaguar.



Chaa Creek Lodge | This award-winning eco-lodge is set on the banks of the Macal River in 365 acres of private nature reserve. Peccaries, monkeys and over 300 species of bird can be spotted in the grounds. There are 23 comfortable,

palm-thatched cottage rooms with decks, along with a hilltop spa, large eco-friendly pool and jungle bar.



Gaia Riverlodge | Perched above Five Sisters Waterfalls in Belize’s Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve, Gaia Riverlodge runs entirely off its own hydropower. This eco-lodge provides exceptional service and is the deserved owner of a Green Globe Award for its sustainable model.

Choose from the cabanas or take a room in the main lodge



ORANGE WALK

Responsible for much of Belize’s food and sugar production, the Orange Walk district is home to agricultural farmland as well as dense jungle, ancient Mayan ruins and well-protected wildlife conservation areas. It is a cultural melting pot, with Creole, Maya and Mennonite communities all living alongside one another and offering the curious traveller a fascinating insight into these societies.

Mayan sites such as Altun Ha and the famous ruins at Lamanai and the thick rainforest around them have been the focus of intense preservation efforts over the last few years, and some endangered wildlife has even begun to thrive. Pumas, ocelots, margays and jaguarundi are all on the prowl, and chances of a jaguar spotting in the wild are better here than almost anywhere else – although you still have to be very lucky!



Lamanai Outpost Lodge | Lamanai Lodge is the place to visit if you are looking for a truly special jungle experience. Situated on the banks of a 28-mile lagoon amid the remnants of a Maya city, Lamanai Lodge is a beautiful

and isolated 18-cabana property. Visitors to the lodge can enjoy a range of activities such as jungle dawn excursions, sunrise canoe trips, visits to the nearby Lamanai ruins, a sunset cocktail cruise, night walks, howler monkey treks and bird watching outings.



TOLEDO DISTRICT

You may have heard the Toledo District, one of Belize's top ecotourism destinations, described as the 'last frontier'. It comprises a half-dozen rivers, rainforests, parks, and reserves, and even more modern Maya villages.

The capital, Punta Gorda, is a relaxed seaside Caribbean community with just a dozen streets. Explore thriving indigenous towns and learn about traditional music and textiles, or step back in time and visit any of the numerous archaeological sites in the region such as Lubaantun, the purported home of the famous 'crystal skull'. Tour one of the many cacao farms, learn how to make chocolate from scratch, or even plan a trip during Toledo's Chocolate Festival of Belize in May.

Staying in the Toledo District means access to unspoilt jungle, secluded Mayan sites and an insight into local culture as well as a jumping off point for fantastic snorkelling, diving and fishing.



Copal Tree Lodge | This tranquil hotel boasts 16 comfortable suites with screened verandas. The hilltop main lodge is the communal heart of the resort, with a wraparound balcony, dining and lounge areas, rum and coffee bars, an inviting swimming pool and observation decks offering stunning views.



Hickatee Cottages | This tranquil, six-room hideaway offers the best of both worlds. Set in the jungle, you can enjoy bed and breakfast and a mile of nature trails in the hotel grounds, yet you are only a couple of miles from 'downtown' Punta Gorda.



PLACENCIA & SOUTH COAST

Placencia is a former Creole fishing village located on the tip of a long, sandy peninsula and boasts some of the best mainland beaches in Belize. This relaxed spot is the perfect base for diving or for heading inland on day trips.

Hopkins village is also a popular destination for sun-seekers, with a friendly and laid-back atmosphere. Whilst Hopkins has grown in popularity, the area is said to have retained its coastal charm and resisted over-commercialisation.

The coastline that stretches southwards from Belize City in the Stann Creek District offers a real insight into the fascinating Garifuna culture. As you head through this region, you'll pass by lush palm groves, citrus trees, small towns and villages and miles of tranquil coastline.

Both Hopkins and Placencia are a good base from which to take a trip to the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, the world's first jaguar sanctuary.



Turtle Inn | This 25-room seafront hideaway combines natural wonders with stylish luxury in both its rooms, two restaurants and spa. Thatched cottages are decorated with handcrafted Balinese furnishings and, just steps from your private deck,

the white-sand beach dissolves into the sparkling Caribbean Sea.

“
...friendly and laid-back, this is the ultimate destination for sun-seekers...”

”



Blue Hole

BELIZE'S CAYES

Well-known as a top diving and snorkelling destination, Belize's palm-fringed beaches, boutique resorts and turquoise waters can compete with the best of the Caribbean. The cays and islands off the mainland coast of Belize are delightful places to stay before or after exploring the country's colonial treasures, Mayan ruins and rainforest trails. With its pretty white sandy beaches and easy access to the second


largest coral reef in the world, just a mile offshore, Ambergris Caye is a lovely place to unwind. Many divers will head for the reef off the coast of Belize and the famous Blue Hole. For those wishing to remain on the mainland, Rainbow recommends heading to Placencia or Hopkins; these relaxed Caribbean villages boast a range of beachside properties with access to stunning beaches and sparkling waters.



 **Victoria House** | Victoria House is known for its exclusivity and exceptional service, offering a choice of 42 ocean-view casitas and private villas. The restaurant, like the hotel, is relaxed and informal, serving superb local seafood. There

is a large swimming pool and a nearby white sand beach perfect for sun-bathing.



 **Portofino** | This serene resort on Ambergris Caye boasts eight ocean-view cabanas, along with beachfront rooms and a variety of suites. The hotel has a restaurant that serves European food, a bar, and offers a beach drinks service.

During the day, you can enjoy diving, deep sea fishing and snorkelling.



Placencia

BELIZE MAYAN DISCOVERY & BEACH

This comprehensive itinerary delves deep into the heart of Belize's historic and natural wonders. Combining mysterious Mayan sites, rivers, jungle and the turquoise Caribbean waters off the coast, this is the ideal introduction to this small but fascinating country. Start in the remote Orange Walk District and stop off at Lamanai, one of the Belize's major Mayan cities. Take boat trips to spot incredible native wildlife and let yourself get lost in this beautiful destination.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Miami | Fly into Miami (or another US hub) and enjoy a night in this buzzing city.

Day 2 Miami to Belize City to Lamanai | In the morning make the short flight to Belize City, where you will be met and transferred north to the Orange Walk District. This steamy jungle area sees few visitors and you can spend your days being intrepid explorers before retreating back to a comfortable lodge, surrounded by jungle.

Day 3 Lamanai | With your lodge so close to the archaeological site at Lamanai, you can access these incredible ruins well before many other visitors arrive. As you wander amongst the temples and trees, listen out for howler monkeys and watch for crocodiles in the nearby lagoon.

Day 4 Lamanai | Choose from a variety of excursions including dawn or night-time jungle walks, canoe expeditions, lessons in traditional Mayan medicine and a variety of river boat trips – including a sunset cocktail cruise! All excursions are accompanied by a naturalist guide who can point out wildlife.

Day 5 Lamanai to the Cayo District | Travel by boat and by road to the Cayo District, where you will spend three nights at an eco-lodge, surrounded by flora and fauna.

Day 6 Cayo District | Spend today at your leisure, exploring one of the world's most pristine ecosystems. Relax by the pool or take advantage of the excursions Rainbow can organise including outings to waterfalls, caves, or more Mayan sites.

Day 7 Cayo District | Enjoy another day at leisure. We highly recommend a visit to Caracol, the largest Mayan site in Belize. Its towering pyramid rises over 140ft from the jungle floor. On the way back from the site, take a cooling dip in nearby freshwater pools.

Day 8 Cayo District to Punta Gorda | Take a short flight to Punta Gorda in the Toledo District, often referred to as Belize's 'Forgotten District'. Discover unspoilt natural beauty, a melting pot of cultures and astonishing diversity of life from the jungle to the nearby reefs and local Mayan villages.

Day 9 Toledo District | Pass the next two days at leisure to relax or strike out on any of the activities offered at your accommodation. Explore the river by kayak or canoe, meander through tropical gardens or take a guided hike through the rainforest.

Day 10 Toledo District | On the second day in the district, pick from many activities such as horse riding, exploring nearby Mayan ruins, visiting a cacao farm or venturing along the local spice trail.

Day 11 Punta Gorda to Placencia | Take a short flight to the Placencia Peninsula and transfer to a peaceful beachfront hotel for some rest and relaxation.

Days 12-13 Placencia | Over these two days, either explore the region or simply stretch out on the beach to enjoy the warm Caribbean Sea. Perhaps go snorkelling, or take a tour of the Cockscomb Jaguar Reserve.

Days 14-15 Fly to the UK | Take a short flight back to Belize City and connect on to your overnight flight back to the UK.





NICARAGUA

With its lush rainforests, colonial towns, volcanic islands and coffee farms, Nicaragua rewards the curious traveller over and over again. It is the largest country in Central America and contains an incredible mix of cultures and heritages, including indigenous tribes on the Mosquito Coast who still speak their own languages alongside Spanish. This diverse history has resulted in an incredible range of folklore, cuisine, music and literature.

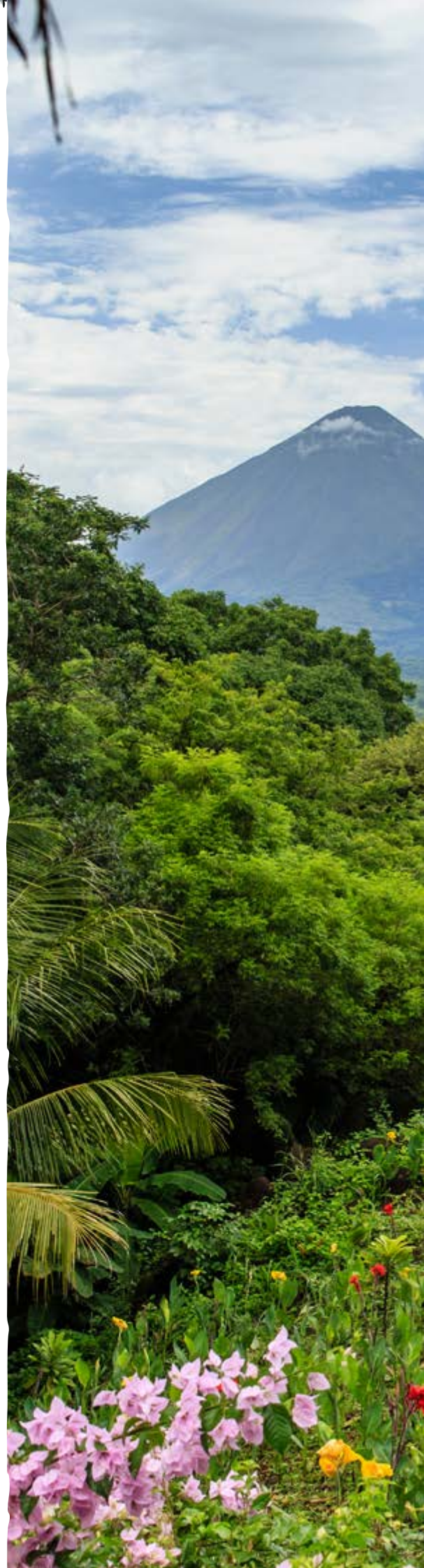
The highlights of a trip to 'the land of lakes and volcanoes' include a stay on the volcanic island of Ometepe, a beach escape at San Juan del Sur and the chance to explore the beautiful cobbled streets of Granada and León.

It's worth delving a little deeper, though. In Nicaragua you can tackle testing hikes to the summit of both dormant and active volcanoes, gain unique insights into the thriving coffee industry, and while away the hours relaxing on the beach on the Caribbean Corn Islands. Time spent on the Corn Islands will remind you of a simpler life, the way

holidays used to be on their cousins to the north east before the crowds descended and the luxury resorts appeared.



“
...Sandwiched between beautiful Pacific and Caribbean coastlines, Nicaragua boasts unparalleled beauty, strong cultural heritage and an immense variety of sights and experiences.
”





Top Tips

- Have a coffee and people watch in colonial Granada
- Hike to the summit of the Maderas Volcano on Ometepe
- Surf, fish or just soak up the rays in San Juan del Sur
- Relax into a simpler way of life on the Caribbean Corn Islands
- Journey to León and visit the largest cathedral in Central America

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The best time to visit Nicaragua is between December and May. Central America has a long rainy season, although the characteristic of these months tends to be bright sunny mornings, followed by afternoon showers. September and October can be quite rainy. On the coast and at lower altitudes it is hot and humid throughout the year.

GETTING THERE

There are no direct flights to Nicaragua from the UK. The best way to get to Managua (the capital city) is with a US airline, such as American Airlines, who fly on a daily basis via their hubs.

GMT

-6 hours

VISAS

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Nicaragua.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Nicaragua.

Concepción Volcano, Ometepe Island



PANAMA

Panama's role as a regional crossroads has shaped its history. Acting both as a corridor between South and Central America, and more recently as a link between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, this narrow S-shaped isthmus of land boasts incredible rainforests and cloud forests, towering peaks, idyllic beaches, bounteous wildlife, and a fascinating cultural heritage.

No one travelling to Panama should miss visiting the famous Panama Canal. At 80km long and completed in 1914, this astonishing feat of engineering now sees some 14,000 vessels a year traverse its length.

Panama City itself is home to an almost Miami-style waterfront as well as the beautiful Casco Viejo (the old town), now a UNESCO World Heritage Site being gradually restored to its former grandeur.



Don't miss the verdant coffee plantations or the cloud forest around Boquete and in Barú Volcano National Park, where you can follow winding trails in search of the famous Resplendant Quetzal.

Panama's coastline is worth adding to your itinerary too. With tropical islands, coral reefs and deserted beaches, it's a paradise just waiting to be discovered.

The San Blas Islands are home to native Kuna Indians, and their crystal-clear waters and palm-fringed shores are a siren call for those wishing to relax and soak up the sun.

“

...Panama is more than just its famous canal. Its diverse landscape is made up of volcanic highlands, coastal plains and orchid-filled rainforests.

”





Red-eyed Tree Frog

Top Tips

- Wonder at the engineering of the Panama Canal
- Visit indigenous communities on the San Blas Islands
- Hike the Quetzal Trail through the cloud forest in the Barú Volcano National Park
- Keep an eye out for exotic bird species in Soberanía National Park
- Swim or snorkel in the crystal clear waters of Bocas del Toro

TRAVEL Information

WHEN TO GO

The best time to visit Panama is between November and April, which is considered the dry season. During the wet seasons, visitors may experience rainfall for a couple of hours each day.

GETTING THERE

Iberia flies to Panama City from the UK via Madrid and KLM flies via Amsterdam. Alternatively fly via the USA. You can also fly via Bogotá with Avianca.

GMT

-5 hours

VISAS

British Citizens do not require a visa to enter Panama.

HEALTH

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Panama.

Responsible TRAVELLER

Rainbow Tours is committed to responsible travel. From our very conception, we've had the communities and wildlife that we visit at the heart of everything we do. When Roger Diski established Rainbow Tours in 1997 he forged long-lasting working relationships with local communities, allowing us to craft journeys that benefit the country we're visiting without compromising on the experience.

When tourism is carefully managed it can make a huge positive impact. We, the travel company, and you, the traveller, can decide how and where we travel – choosing journeys that leave the natural beauty of the destinations we visit unchanged; journeys where you get to experience and understand other people and their cultures. We're constantly growing our responsible tourism programme. Many of our chosen partner properties across Latin America have introduced robust environmental and social programmes and we continue to work with development schemes and charities.

In September 2016 we chose to support Condor Wings, a project which works with Huatata Preschool and Primary School in Peru. Around 40 minutes from Cuzco, the school educates 49 children from the surrounding regions. Because of a very poor diet, 85% of the children suffer

from anaemia, so Rainbow Tours has chosen to fund an increase in regular food supplies. Contributions have also paid for a vegetable garden, enabling the children to add fresh produce to their diet and learn about growing their own food. Recently, a member of our team travelled to Peru with 40kg of children's clothing donated by members of Rainbow Tours and its sister companies.

In Parismina, a remote town on the Caribbean coastline of Costa Rica, the Save the Turtles of Parismina Association is a non-profit organisation run by the community. Locals conserve the nesting beach habitats of green, leatherback, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles, and protect their eggs from poachers by volunteering with conservation projects, guarding nesting turtles, counting egg clutch sizes, recording turtle tagging numbers and relocating eggs. The project encourages sustainable development by providing an alternative source of income to poaching, but work is seasonal to match the turtles' breeding patterns. Between June and September, when there is no hatching or nesting, Parismina plans to introduce opportunities including recycling, clean-up projects and tourism education, to provide stable year-round income. We're proud to have been supporting this development.



WE DONATE
Responsible Travel

Rainbow Tours donate £15 for every booking to Costa Rica to the Save the Turtles of Parismina Association and £15 for every booking to Peru to Condor Wings.





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