


RAINBOW TOURS

LATIN AMERICA





It's probably no surprise that we love travel. For us though it has to be a certain type of travel – journeys that leave the natural beauty of the destinations we visit unchanged, and where you really get to experience and understand other people and their cultures.

Experience the world in colour



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Your choice in Latin America

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 very seriously by doing all we can to make sure that every holiday we plan lives up to the highest expectations.

Local knowledge

It's always best to go with someone who really knows the place, whether you want to live like a local in Buenos Aires, sample characterful reds on the Maipo Wine Route or feel the hairs on the back of your neck tingle when you catch your first glimpse of Machu Picchu.

Our first-hand knowledge from Mexico and the small Central American countries all the way through South America to Antarctica comes from years of travel across this incredible continent ourselves, so we are perfectly placed to address every last detail of your trip.

Highlights and hidden corners

We can confidently take you to world-renowned highlights like Rio de Janeiro, the Galapagos Islands and Patagonia but also to the less visited corners such as Brazil's Pantanal and Colombia's Tayrona National Park. Some of the world's most breathtaking journeys are in Latin America; the vintage 'Tren Crucero' train ride across Ecuador, that takes in the Devil's Nose, and crossing the giant salt lake in Bolivia in an airstream camper van, are just two that come to mind.

Good infrastructure

Latin America appeals to anyone with a sense of adventure but first time visitors are often surprised that travel itself is relatively easy throughout the region. There are many well-maintained road networks with good buses or private transfers, regular flights within and between countries and a good train service.

Tailor-made

We specialise in tailor-made holidays that can include anything from a B&B beside the ocean to a 5-star mountain lodge or

a Phillippe Stark hotel. Latin America is ideal for 'slow travel', honeymoons, action-packed breaks as well as adventurous family holidays, where eco-conscious Costa Rica or Mexico's mix of beaches and Mayan ruins are great options.

Pricing Guide

There are a number of factors which will influence the price of accommodation. Location may be a factor, particularly for city based hotels, and although the property might be of a lower standard you may pay a premium for it being city centre rather than in the suburbs.

Throughout the brochure we have assigned bronze, gold, silver and platinum to each property to offer an indication of the standard of the property. Please note that a silver property in Brazil may not be of equal standard or price to a silver property in Peru.

Bronze Standard property, affordable option

Silver Higher priced than standard, may offer additional facilities and better location

Gold A more expensive option, this would generally mean a higher standard of product however price is not always an indication of luxury, this could mean that the property is unique in style or is in a more remote location such as deep in the Amazon Rainforest

Platinum The most expensive choice, often highlighting high standards of service or could be the ultimate unique experience such as an exclusive beach retreat in Brazil

Special Offers

There are a host of special offers issued on a regular basis that can represent huge savings – call us to discuss your ideal budget and travel wish list.



Add some of the world's most iconic sights to its balmy tropical beaches and fascinating antiquities, and it's easy to see why Latin America is at the top of many people's travel list.



Responsible Travel

Responsible travel is a relatively straightforward concept, but one that can make a real difference to people at a local level.

At its most basic, responsible travel is about trying to create as much benefit as possible for the countries we visit, whilst doing our best to limit the environmental impact of our travels.

One of the simplest methods of helping local people is to ensure that wherever possible the money we spend remains in the host country. An important way of achieving this is to stay in hotels that are locally owned, employ local workers, pay them appropriate wages and buy as much produce as possible from local businesses. Tourism can be a powerful tool for both social and economic development.

Rainbow Tours' responsible tourism programme is growing all the time as many of the larger hotels and lodges as well as the smaller properties throughout Latin America have now introduced robust environmental and social programmes. Some countries, such as Costa Rica, already have an abundance of high-quality accommodation operating under strict environmental guidelines. Elsewhere, the lodges we use in the Brazilian, Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon, and Guyana, have a close relationship with the indigenous communities, helping to support traditional lifestyles and preserve large areas of the rainforest. Hotels in big cities such as La Paz and Lima can also contribute by running social food programmes.

Becoming an activity provider is another great way for local communities to earn an income from tourism. For example, in Peru's Sacred Valley the half-day visits we offer to an indigenous mountain community is a relaxed and fun way to meet local people, where lunch is shared and the kids are always keen to play a game of football. The community is paid for their hospitality. In Guatemala an entire itinerary can be based on

an aspect of responsible tourism each day, including tours to visit independent coffee cooperatives and local textile producers.

Organisations such as the LATA Foundation (latafoundation.org) do sterling work in the region through their support of small local projects that range from clean water schemes in Nicaragua and teacher training programmes in Peru, to helping street children in Bolivia and providing dental care in Argentina. We encourage our customers to give us any unused currency on their return which LATA or our local agents can then use to support the projects at grass root level.

Rainbow Tours' overriding aim is to provide the very best holidays for our customers and at the same time try to turn the rhetoric of responsible tourism into reality, through the relationships we build with our partners in our destinations and the way we do business.

Ideas on how to put money directly into the local community

- Buy locally made craftwork to take home, helping to provide vital income and keep traditions alive
- Don't over haggle, pay what you think is fair – a few extra dollars may make all the difference, especially where tourism is seasonal
- Try to eat out locally. Whilst this is not always possible every little counts so have a drink in a local bar or book a local excursion where you can
- Tipping is a complex issue, but as a general rule tip little and often to help support many incomes. Our travel consultants will provide advice on tipping guides and drivers



Through a collaboration between the local Amerindian communities in Guyana and our partners Wilderness Explorers, a tour has been successfully set up that gives visitors a unique insight into life in the rainforest and also helps to support traditional ways of life.



Working with local NGO, Awamaki, the LATA Foundation is supporting a number of cooperative projects to provide impoverished rural women with new skills. Awamaki have recently set up a teacher training and language school in the Sacred Valley.

Brazil's dazzling jewels...

Travel writer Nick Boulos visited two of Brazil's 'must sees', Iguazu Falls and Rio de Janeiro, and was captivated in different ways by their exceptional beauty and magnificence.



Iguazu Falls & Rio de Janeiro

The roar was thunderous yet the view strangely serene.

Before me, spread out across the rugged gorges and cascading into the murky river like reels of ivory silk were the jungle-clad waterfalls of Iguazu. All 275 of them. Sandwiched between Brazil and Argentina, it is surely the most spectacular international border on earth.

Of all of them, however, it's the Devil's Throat that packs the biggest punch. Standing at the very edge and peering deep into the foaming horseshoe-shaped chasm, the bottom completely obscured by spray that swirls high in the air, is an experience few will forget.

Things get even more thrilling on a high-octane cruise ride along the river. The speedboat powers along, the captain laughing and

almost squealing with delight as we approach some of the falls so closely that we all get a heavy soaking.

The exceptional natural beauty of Iguazu make it one of Brazil's most popular destinations and rightly so. It is possible, however, to escape the crowds. Guests at the Hotel Das Cataratas – a plush colonial property with a charming pink facade and the only one located within the national park – have exclusive out of hours access and the unique and eerie opportunity to see the deserted falls illuminated by moonlight.

An hour's flight away is Rio de Janeiro, the jewel in Brazil's dazzling crown. It's a city that really does have it all, a place where mountains, forests and crescent beaches of custard yellow sand sit alongside an urban sprawl of high-rises and

favelas (shantytowns of densely packed matchbox houses that tumble down the steep hillsides).

Keeping watch over all of it – arms outstretched atop Corcovado Mountain – is Christ the Redeemer, the famous statue built in the early 1930s.

Days are spent cycling along Copacabana, wandering the arty neighbourhood of Santa Teresa, sipping sunset caipirinha cocktails on Ipanema and dancing the night away at samba street parties in Lapa.

But no visit would be complete without a cable car trip to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain. With all of Rio spread out below, I take a moment to savour the scene. If there's a more beautiful city in all the world, I think to myself, then I am yet to find it.

Argentina



With its dramatic landscapes, cosmopolitan cities and lively culture, Argentina is a traveller's delight. From the glaciers of Patagonia and elegant boulevards of Buenos Aires to soaring Andean mountains, the dusty heat of the pampas and jungles in the north, it is a country of immense beauty.

The tango is synonymous with Argentina and no visitor to Buenos Aires should leave the city without attending a show. A favourite venue is Esquina Carlos Gardel, named after one of the most famous figures in the history of tango. Following a three course dinner at this historic theatre, sit back and admire Buenos Aires' finest tango performers dancing their sensuous and sophisticated moves, accompanied by an orchestra of violins, piano, double bass and bandoneons.

Recommended things to do:

- Explore cosmopolitan Buenos Aires
- Experience the wildlife of the Iberá Wetlands
- Gaze over the mighty Iguazu Falls
- Be impressed by the awe-inspiring Perito Moreno Glacier
- Visit Argentina's world-famous wineries

Argentina

Argentina is a vast country, stretching almost 3,500 kilometres from its northern border with Bolivia to the southern tip of South America. Most commonly associated with sensuous tango dancing, passionate football and impressive steaks, Argentina offers visitors so much more.

Most trips to Argentina rightly include several days in the capital, Buenos Aires, where the influence of European settlers can be seen in much of the architecture and elegant boulevards. With its gourmet restaurants and old-world cafés, designer shops and outdoor markets, and the buzzing nightlife, BA is a thoroughly enjoyable metropolis.

The contrast in Argentina's diverse landscapes is immense. In the northwest Mendoza's good climate and rich soils combine to produce exceptional vineyards where visitors can sample some of Argentina's very best wines. Further north towards Salta the landscape changes to rocky desert and here the amazing Hill of the Seven Colours and the cactus-filled Humahuaca Gorge are found. In the northeast the lush and thundering Iguazu Falls straddle the Argentine/Brazilian border and are a 'must see' on any trip.

The Valdes Peninsula to the south of Buenos Aires is the place to spot prolific marine life with penguin colonies, elephant seals and Southern Right whales topping the list. The landscape



here is flat, but as you head inland towards the Andes you reach the breathtakingly beautiful Lake District, where the mountains form a natural border between Argentina and Chile. There are over 20 beautiful lakes on the Argentine side alone.

Located at the southern tip of South America, the iconic region of Patagonia straddles both Argentina and Chile. Usually reached by a three hour flight from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia, this is an

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

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 Iguazu 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 to Buenos Aires. The most popular indirect routes are flying with Iberia or Air Europa via Madrid, Air France via Paris and TAM via Sao Paulo.

GMT: -3 hours

Visas

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Argentina.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Argentina.

area of colossal mountain ranges crowned in snow and pristine glaciers descending into turquoise lakes. The towering frozen plains of the Perito Moreno glacier and the icy Lago Argentina are key attractions in the famous Parque Nacional Los Glaciares (Glaciers National Park) and are world-class natural wonders.

Buenos Aires

Argentina's capital city is commonly known as the Paris of South America, with its classic architecture, plazas, fountains and wide boulevards.

It is also a fantastic city from which to get a real feel for Argentine culture and lifestyles, with cafés and steakhouses serving mouthwatering prime cuts of beef, interesting markets, museums and galleries.

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



Things to do in Buenos Aires:

- See a tango show at a traditional theatre
- Explore the old port neighbourhood of La Boca
- Eat steak at one of the many parrillas
- Go for tea at the famous Café Tortoni
- Take a day trip to Colonia in Uruguay

Argentina



Alvear Palace

Platinum
B/B

One of the most famous hotels in Latin America, the Alvear Palace with its majestic Louis XVI classical style is renowned for tradition, elegance and hospitality. Located in the heart of upmarket Recoleta and surrounded by the finest city shops, the hotel has 197 rooms and suites. Dining here is exquisite with fine French cuisine at La Bourgogne, prepared by the hotel's Relais & Châteaux chef. Visit L'Orangerie for afternoon tea with delicious cakes, warm scones and the hotel's unique 'Alvear Blend' tea.



Alvear Art Buenos Aires

Gold
B/B

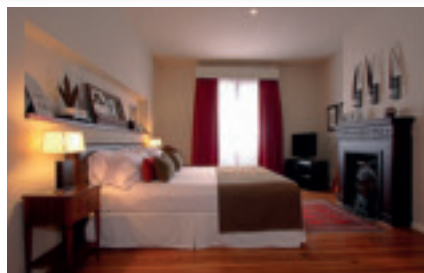
Alvear Art Hotel is a classical, elegant hotel which celebrates the city's creative cutting edge spirit. Housed within a modern building with all the latest technology and facilities, the staff at Alvear Art Hotel will provide you with a welcoming service. The 139 rooms are simple and refined, bringing together natural wood, smooth marble and fine fabrics with a soothing colour palette which creates a relaxing haven. Contraluz restaurant offers a stylish and modern atmosphere accompanied with a seasonal menu and fantastic wine selection.



Buenos Aires Grand

Silver
B/B

The Buenos Aires Grand is situated in the heart of the fashionable Recoleta neighbourhood close to boutiques, restaurants, parks and museums. This modern and stylish hotel has 90 rooms decorated in shades of taupe, grey and purple and accented with spa-quality bathrooms. Dine at the Jenny restaurant for delicious meals in a sophisticated atmosphere or Club 31 for informal meals, cocktails and snacks. After a busy day exploring the city, relax at the Floralis rooftop spa for a host of treatments, steam room and sauna.



Legado Mitico

Silver
B/B

A stay in the Legado Mitico gives visitors a unique insight into the country's history. Part of the fun of staying here is choosing one of the 11 individually decorated rooms, inspired by the lives of famous Argentines such as Che Guevara, Eva Perón and Benito Quinquela Martín. The impressive library is stocked with Argentine literature. Well-located in the bohemian, cobblestone Palermo Soho district, this hotel oozes old world style yet has plenty of the city's most stylish bars and restaurants on the doorstep.



Mine Hotel

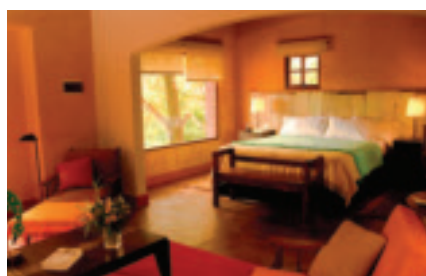
Silver
B/B

Located in the heart of the bohemian Palermo Soho neighbourhood, the Mine Hotel is a 20-room boutique hotel close to art galleries, shops and cafés. The hotel has a chic and modern décor, using vivid colours and patterns to great effect, and the individually designed rooms are light and airy. Breakfast changes daily and features smoothie shots, exotic fruit salad and pastries, or choose your style of egg. There is a small courtyard pool with large daybeds surrounded by a pleasant garden.

Iguazu Falls

Situated in North East Argentina, the Iguazu 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, Iguazu has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986 and is a 'must see' when visiting Argentina or Brazil.



Posada Puerto Bemberg

Silver
Full-board & excursions

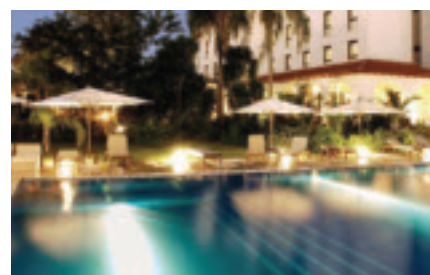
Just a 40 minute drive to the Iguazu Falls, Posada Puerto Bemberg is secluded in miles of pristine and tranquil rainforest. Each of the 14 rooms is uniquely decorated and we love the traditional rustic styling, original artefacts and fantastic views of the surrounding jungle. Local cuisine is served in the dining room or alfresco with delicious wines from their excellent Argentine cellar. Rainforest treks and boat trips on the Parana River to nearby waterfalls are just some of the activities on offer.



Sheraton Iguazu

Gold
B/B

The Sheraton has a prime location in the heart of Argentina's Iguazu National Park and is the only hotel on the Argentine side that is right next to the Iguazu Falls, with superb views of the Devil's Throat (the largest of the falls). The hotel is modern with outdoor pool, spa, whirlpool, tennis court and incomparable access to the pathways that lead to the falls. There are 176 rooms spread over three floors with views of either the falls or the rainforest.



Panoramic Hotel

Silver
B/B

Perched on a hilltop overlooking the Parana River, the Panoramic Hotel is close to the Three Frontiers Landmark and affords superb views of the Iguazu and Parana rivers. The original building dates back to the 1940's and was redesigned by the renowned Argentine architect Alejandro Bustillo who combined the colonial architecture with modern décor. Rooms are spacious with many offering a private balcony overlooking the river. Relax by the outdoor swimming pool with its fantastic views and outdoor Roman Bath or enjoy a spa treatment.

Iberá Wetlands

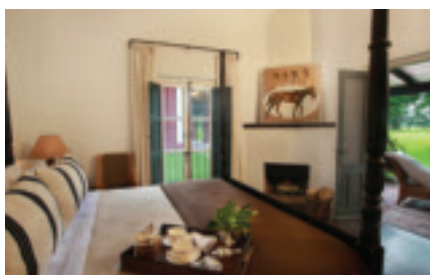
& Gaucho Life

"The riding in Argentina is out of this world. If you love the outdoor life, the fishing, hiking and white-water rafting are terrific."

Estancias are the backbone of Argentine culture and history. Throughout the country you can find ranches rearing top-quality beef using traditional methods.

It's great fun to stay on an estancia where horse riding is a major activity and guests ride out on the ranch with the gauchos. Those who don't ride will find that there are plenty of other outdoor activities to keep them busy such as fishing and hiking.

Estancias like La Bamba are just a short drive from Buenos Aires and further afield, to the south of Iguazu, we recommend the ranches in the Iberá Wetlands, where there is an abundance of wildlife, including anacondas, capybaras, cayman, marsh deer, Howler monkeys and giant storks.



Estancia La Bamba de Areco

Gold

Full-board & excursions

Located about an hour and a half from Buenos Aires, this estancia lies in the heart of the pampas and is one of the country's oldest ranches, dating back to 1830. The 11 elegant rooms are all named after famous polo horses and overlook the park, shaded patios or the polo fields. Rooms feature dark hardwood floors and are furnished with antique colonial furniture. There is a large pool and excursions can be on horseback or by mountain bike. Hot stone massages are offered.



Estancia Rincón de Socorro

Silver

Full-board & excursions

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. There are just three small bungalows plus six rooms in the main house, which also has a screened veranda, sitting room and a large dining room where guests enjoy superb wines and free-range meats. Enjoy Argentine barbecues lazing by the pool and explore the Iberá Wetlands by canoe or on horseback, and spot a vast range of animals and birdlife.



Estancia Huechahue

Silver

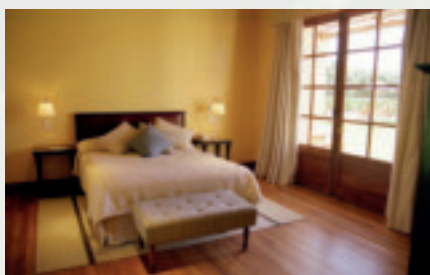
Full-board & excursions

Enjoy traditional outdoor life in northern Patagonia by spending a few days at Huechahue, a working estancia just 30 minutes from San Martín de los Andes and within easy access of Bariloche. Accommodation comprises eight rooms all individually decorated and very comfortable. Riders of all levels, from beginners through to the more experienced are catered for with a wide selection of horses. Other activities include fishing, rafting, walking, swimming or working with the gauchos, all in the surrounds of the beautiful Andean foothills.

Wine Country

Mendoza, Salta & Cafayate

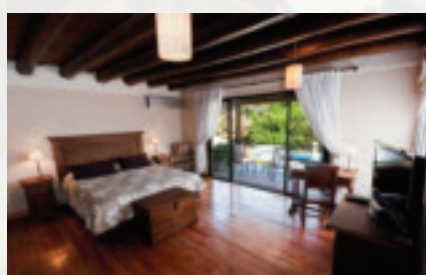
Argentina is South America's number one wine producer. With altitudes ranging from 450m to 1,100m and a variety of microclimates, it's no surprise that Mendoza is the wine capital of Argentina. You can practise your wine-tasting skills at any one of the well-known wineries in the region, or spend a day or two exploring the city of Mendoza with its tree-lined avenues and pretty squares. From Mendoza, you can travel overland through the Andes on a wonderfully scenic drive to Santiago in Chile.



Club Tapiz, Mendoza

Silver
B/B

A short distance from Mendoza, charming Club Tapiz was built in 1890 and is set in ten hectares of vineyards. The elegant main house, comprising just seven rooms, has been restored, preserving the Renaissance-style villa. A few metres from the house there is an old winery which produces artisan wines including the famous Malbec. You can also borrow a bicycle to explore nearby bodegas, relax by the pool or in the small spa, take in the Andean views and enjoy local cuisine in the restaurant.



Lares de Chacras

Silver
B/B

Situated roughly 15 kilometres from Mendoza city, in the village of Chacras de Coria, this hotel has a great position. The décor mixes desert wood with Andean stone to create a natural yet contemporary look. A range of different sized rooms are offered with a total hotel capacity of 25. The Lares Restaurant serves hearty local food, complemented by great wine from the Mendoza area chosen from the Lares wine cellar. The hotel has a pool and offers wine tasting at one of the nearby bodegas.



Cavas Wine Lodge

Platinum
Full-board

Delightfully situated in the foothills of the snow-capped Andes and at the heart of 35 acres of fertile, green vineyards, this lodge is 30 minutes south of Mendoza. There are just 14 spacious rooms, all with views of the Andes, each with its own plunge pool and private terrace. This is the ultimate lodge for privacy and seclusion. It has an outstanding wine cellar showcasing 250 different wines from the Mendoza region, where you can enjoy a tasting session with the sommelier or a private dinner.



Argentine Malbec vines were originally exported as cuttings from South West France in the 1850s. Argentina now has the largest Malbec acreage in the world and arguably produces the best Malbec wines.

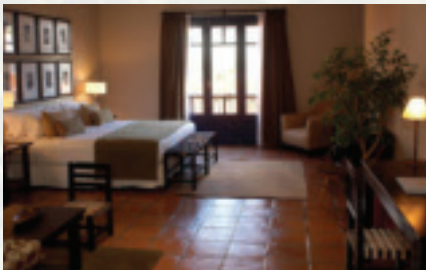
Argentina



For wine lovers looking for something a little different, try a combination of the remarkable Salta and Cafayate Wineries.

Founded in 1582, Salta is one of Argentina's most attractive cities, retaining much of its

colonial charm, and is a great base from which to explore the northwest. Indigenous villages are much more common in this remote part of Argentina. From here you can visit the wineries at Cafayate or take a four wheel drive expedition to the spectacular Humahuaca Gorge that leads high up into the Andes towards the Atacama Desert.



Legado Mitico Salta

Silver
B/B

The Legado Mitico has a central location, right in the historic quarter near to Salta's main square. Each of the 11 rooms is individually decorated, reflecting Salta's heritage, and faces either the street or internal patio. There are a number of comfortable places where guests can relax after a day in Salta, including a library, fireplace area and patio where it's possible to sit in the sunshine during the day. This is a stylish base for those wishing to explore Salta's museums and city centre.



La Merced del Alto

Silver
B/B

Close to the town of Cachi, Le Merced del Alto is an ideal stop en route between Cafayate and Salta. Located at the top of the valley, the hotel has sweeping views over the scenic landscapes. The hotel has 14 large bedrooms including a suite decorated with local art, a pool, living room and spa with outdoor Jacuzzi and massage rooms. Guests can dine at the á la carte restaurant which serves Andean gourmet food and enjoy after-dinner drinks at the bar.



Viñas de Cafayate

Silver
B/B

Viñas de Cafayate is located just outside Cafayate and set in beautiful vineyards, about a two and a half hour drive from Salta. The hotel has 10 standard and 2 deluxe rooms each with access to a private, covered balcony with spectacular views. Other facilities include a lounge with fireplace, pool with views of the vineyards, a terrace where guests can relax and enjoy a glass of wine from the extensive cellar, and a gourmet restaurant that uses fresh produce from the organic garden.

Patagonia

Patagonia encompasses a huge area of southern Argentina and Chile and its very name conjures up images of remote, uncharted territory.

On the eastern seaboard the Valdes Peninsula is an important breeding ground for the Southern Right whale and Magellanic penguins. 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.

Patagonia stretches to the very southern tip of the continent to Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn. Here Ushuaia is the hub for exploring the region and the jumping off point for boats to Antarctica.

Argentina's Lake District

Patagonia

The Lake District of northern Patagonia is renowned for its beautiful scenic lakes set against the backdrop of the Andes and bordering Chile.

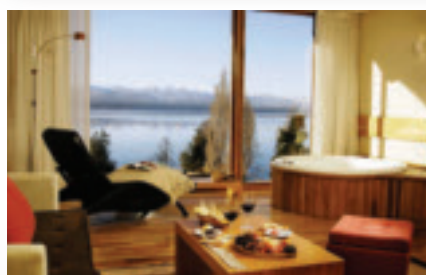
There are some twenty lakes on the Argentine side of the Andes, the largest being Lake Nahuel Huapi on the shores of which sits the pretty town of Bariloche. It has an almost alpine feel with Swiss chalet style wooden buildings and architecture. Both the town and the surrounding lakeshore region make an ideal base for hiking, rafting, kayaking, climbing, fishing and cycling, with skiing available in the winter months near Cerro Catedral.



Llao Llao

Platinum
B/B

Llao Llao is a superb mountain resort and member of the Leading Hotels of the World. Located in a spectacular setting within the Nahuel Huapi National Park in the centre of the Lake District, it has the feel of a grand mountain lodge. The 205 rooms are spread over two wings with more modern rooms on the Lago Moreno side. A vast choice of outdoor activities are offered including an 18-hole golf course, kayaking, mountain biking and abseiling. In the winter season skiing is offered at Cerro Catedral. There is an indoor heated pool, health club and fitness centre as well as a kids club.



Design Suites

Silver
B/B

Perched on a hillside about a 20 minute walk from Bariloche town centre, The Design Suites overlook the Nahuel Huapi Lake. Built in a modern style, incorporating natural materials such as stone, wood and leather, the hotel has 78 rooms and suites. The most desirable rooms are on the higher floors with superb views of the lake. Guests can relax in the lounge area or try some typical Argentine wines in the bar. There are indoor and outdoor heated pools, contemporary art gallery, restaurant and spa.



El Casco Art Hotel

Gold
B/B

El Casco Art Hotel is set right in the heart of the Argentine Lake District with views over the Nahuel Huapi Lake. The hotel owns over 500 Argentinean paintings and sculptures and some of this collection is displayed in its 33 rooms and suites. The best rooms also have breathtaking lake vistas. The restaurant serves food made with local produce which the sommelier can match to perfection with guests' choice of wine. There's a swimming pool and sauna and Bariloche town is nearby.

Southern Patagonia

Glaciers, lakes & granite peaks

In southern Patagonia the small towns of El Calafate and El Chalten are the gateways to Los Glaciares National Park.

El Calafate is the base from which to visit the Perito Moreno glacier at the far western end of Lago Argentino, one of the continent's most impressive sights, as well as the Upsala Glacier.

Several hours north from El Calafate is the town of El Chalten, which attracts visitors interested in trekking through the spectacular scenery and the famous peaks of Fitzroy National Park.

It's possible to cross over the border from El Calafate into Chile's famous Torres del Paine National Park.



Casa los Sauces

Gold
B/B

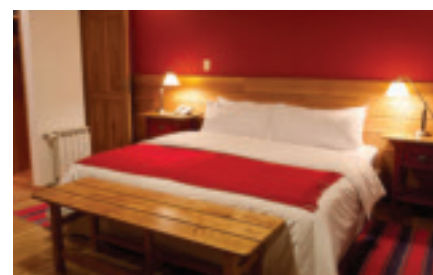
The luxurious Casa los Sauces is a small Patagonian-style lodge near El Calafate that has just 18 spacious elegant suites, each featuring contemporary artwork that creates a real sense of individual style. The staff here are attentive and attuned to people's individual requirements. It has an excellent restaurant, La Cormarca, and on some evenings you can enjoy a real Argentine *asado* with the local gauchos. Enjoy spectacular scenery whilst sampling fabled Argentine beef, grilled to perfection over glowing embers.



Xelena Suites

Silver
B/B

Xelena Suites is excellently located on the shores of Lago Argentino and within walking distance of El Calafate town. A contemporary option, the hotel features 71 rooms, many having beautiful views across the lake towards the towering Andean peaks. The Mora restaurant serves dishes inspired by the region and offers a fantastic selection of local Argentine wines. Enjoy the spectacular views of the Patagonian steppe from the indoor-outdoor heated pool and relax in Spa Xelena with a soothing massage.



Destino Sur El Chalten

Bronze
B/B

Destino Sur is ideally located close to the main street of El Chalten, a small town developed as a base for trekking in the Los Glaciares National Park. With an alpine style, the 40 rooms are simple, comfortable and cosy. After a spectacular day trekking in the mountains dine at the hotel's restaurant and soothe your weary legs at the small spa. Destino Sur can arrange a number of treks which start from the town or you may choose a more adventurous option such as glacier trekking.

Valdes Peninsula & Ushuaia

Patagonia

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.



Estancia El Faro Punta Delgada

Bronze
Half-board

This estancia occupies a very special location, next to a working lighthouse on the Valdes Peninsula. The hotel is a former post office and Navy casino but now consists of 27 comfortable guestrooms, a restaurant and the Lighthouse pub. In the intimate and cosy restaurant enjoy traditional home-made Argentine food, in particular Patagonia lamb. With a location surrounded by great country landscapes, wild deserted beaches and many animals, this is a fantastic area to disconnect and immerse oneself in nature.



Tierra del Fuego – Ushuaia

Deep in southern Patagonia, between Cape Horn and the Magellan Strait, the land breaks up into an archipelago, the largest island of which is Tierra del Fuego.

Ushuaia, the provincial capital, is the southernmost city in the world, and is the base for exploring the wild rugged landscapes and for boat trips through the Beagle Channel and to Cape Horn. It is also the departure point for Antarctic expeditions (see page 24) and is the gateway to the Tierra del Fuego National Park.



Los Cauquenes Hotel

Gold
B/B

A charming, mountain style property located a short distance from Ushuaia town this hotel features direct beach access. Offering 54 spacious bedrooms including 5 suites they feature either a mountain or Beagle Channel view. At the Reinamora restaurant, you can enjoy traditional Patagonian food such as king crab and enjoy fantastic Argentine wines with dinner or at the bar. Relax at the swimming pool, sauna, hydro-massage pool or indulge in a soothing massage in the End of the World Spa.

Uruguay's cities, colonial towns

Uruguay's beaches, nightlife and charming historic towns make an exciting extension to an Argentine holiday.

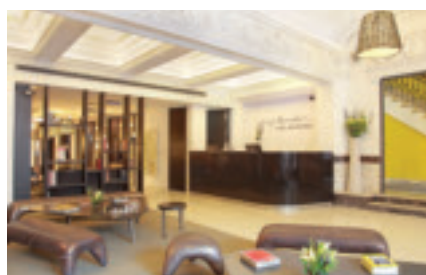
Overshadowed by Argentina and Brazil, its vastly larger neighbours, little Uruguay is incredibly lovely but relatively unknown outside South America. Visitors can cross the River Plate by hydrofoil in a few hours (1 hr to Colonia and 3 hrs to Montevideo) or fly from Buenos Aires to Montevideo or Punta del Este.

Montevideo

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. Across town there are modern high rises and ultra fashionable shopping complexes such as Carrasco, an upmarket neighbourhood with a small city beach and good hotels, located about 14km from the old town. Some 15 minutes from the city suburbs, there are vineyards producing up and coming Uruguay wines, and well worth a visit.

Colonia del Sacramento

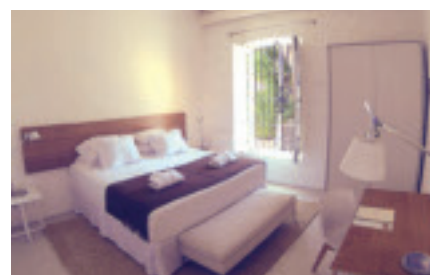
Ancient Colonia, with its cobblestone streets and many Portuguese colonial buildings, was once a rival to the Spanish dominated Montevideo. Today Uruguay's oldest town has retained its immense charm and its compact city centre is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Set on a point with views over the River Plate, this is a 'must-see' on any trip to Uruguay.



Esplendor Montevideo

Silver
B/B

Admire the spectacular views of Montevideo from the rooftop terrace of the luxurious Esplendor Hotel. With a boutique style, the 84 stylish rooms are decorated in an old world charm with high ceilings and hardwood floors. Enjoy the indoor pool and indulgent hotel spa which offers a host of treatments. The hotel is housed within a 20th century building featuring a truly distinctive façade and ideally located for the city's landmarks such as Avenida 18 de Julio and the Presidential Palace.



Charco Colonia

Silver
B/B

Make yourself comfortable at the Charco Hotel ideally situated within the UNESCO World Heritage site of Colonia de Sacramento and within walking distance of many attractions. Each of the seven guestrooms is individually decorated and filled with brightness, whiteness, space and silence with many featuring a private furnished balcony with unique views. Spend an evening in the hotel's restaurant, dining alfresco as the sun sets against the garden view, enjoying the delicious healthy dishes made from carefully selected fresh ingredients, with magnificent views of the river.

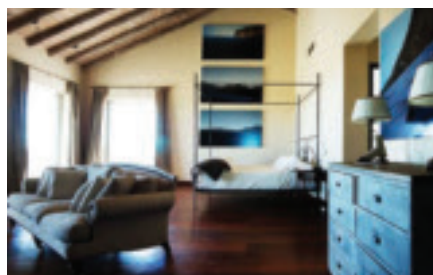
& glamorous beaches

Uruguay



Punta del Este & Jose Ignacio

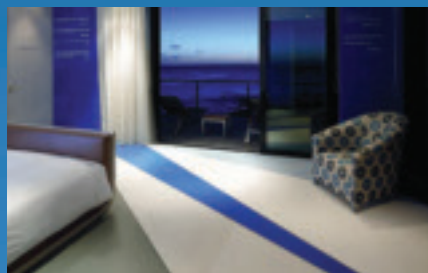
The ritzy resort of Punta del Este is the place to soak up some glamour. There are miles of beautiful beaches, luxury hotels and restaurants, and thriving nightlife. For a more laid-back beach, head to José Ignacio just 30 minutes along the coast from Punta del Este, where there are gourmet restaurants, arty boutiques and celebs in their droves. Don't miss the town's iconic 1877 lighthouse that sits on a rocky promontory at the town's windswept edge.



Estancia Vik

Platinum
B/B

This is the perfect choice for those looking for a high-end ranch stay in a unique and spectacular location. Set on beautiful land overlooking the ocean, this exclusive estancia offers only 12 suites each uniquely decorated with beautiful artwork. Stunning common areas have a large focus on Uruguayan artwork and the living room features two large fireplaces. 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.



Playa Vik

Platinum
B/B

Designed by Uruguayan architect Carlos Ott, ultra contemporary Playa Vik overlooks the quieter Mansa Beach in Jose Ignacio. The 12 spacious suites are housed in six modern *casitas* with original Uruguayan art on the walls and grassy 'living' roof tops. The superb 40-foot long wine cellar is a highlight as is the large outdoor terrace with fire pit, complete with cosy blankets and sweeping views out to the Southern Atlantic. The 75ft granite pool is cantilevered above the beach, providing wonderful views towards Punta del Este.



Posada del Faro

Silver
B/B

Located near the lighthouse in bohemian Jose Ignacio, all-white Posada del Faro is a Mediterranean-style boutique hotel with 15 attractive rooms, some with fireplaces and all but three with private deck or balcony. The hotel is just 50 metres from its own beach area on Playa Mansa. The outdoor pool has an honesty bar and multi-level pool deck. Guests can walk into town or explore further afield along the pristine coastline on one of the hotel's bicycles. The restaurant serves fresh local produce with fish regularly on the menu.



Buenos Aires & Patagonia

Buenos Aires – El Calafate – Bariloche – Buenos Aires

This 12-day private tour takes you right to the heart of Buenos Aires culture and also showcases the wonderful natural beauty of Patagonia.

Combine the energetic city of Buenos Aires with the rugged beauty of Patagonia. In Buenos Aires you will visit the districts of La Boca, Recoleta and Palermo as well as enjoying a tango show. Afterwards head south to Patagonia and witness the glaciers, lakes and mountains of the region.

DAYS 1-2

Overnight flight from London Heathrow to Buenos Aires. On arrival, transfer to the Legado Mitico in the leafy neighbourhood of Palermo Soho

DAYS 3-4

Morning city tour of Buenos Aires to acquaint yourself with this vibrant city. In the evening enjoy a tango show at Esquina Carlos Gardel accompanied by a typical Argentine dinner. Spend the next day exploring the city independently



DAY 5

Fly south to Patagonia and the town of El Calafate, the perfect base from which to explore the glaciers. Stay at Casa los Sauces, a Patagonian style lodge just outside the town

DAY 6

Full day guided group tour to the famous Perito Moreno Glacier, a huge river of ice 30 km long and one of the highlights of the Los Glaciares National Park

DAY 7

Enjoy some free time in El Calafate or take an optional cruise to Upsala glacier and traditional Estancia Cristina

DAY 8

Fly to Bariloche and stay at the El Casco Art Hotel. Here you explore the pretty town of Bariloche where you can fish, cycle, go rafting and in the Argentine winter, enjoy a day of skiing

DAYS 9-10

Half day tour of the area including the Mount Campanario chairlift from which there are spectacular views of the lakes. Free time

DAY 11

Fly to Buenos Aires for a final night in the Legado Mitico

DAY 12

Enjoy free time in the morning and catch the overnight flight from Buenos Aires to London.



Argentina & Uruguay

Buenos Aires – El Calafate – Iguazu – Montevideo
Jose Ignacio

Argentina

Explore the scenic wonders of Argentina and Uruguay on this spectacular 15-day private tour.

There are so many highlights in this itinerary from the cosmopolitan city of Buenos Aires to the beautiful Perito Moreno glacier and spectacular Iguazu Falls. Continue into relatively unvisited Uruguay and the capital city of Montevideo where modern intertwines with the old before ending at a remote, windswept beach at Jose Ignacio.

DAYS 1-2

Overnight flight from London Gatwick to Buenos Aires via Madrid and on arrival transfer to the Sofitel hotel in the heart of the city

DAY 3

Morning city tour of Buenos Aires which includes the colourful district of La Boca, the Plaza de Mayo, as well as La Recoleta and Palermo. Enjoy an evening of tango with dinner at Esquina Carlos Gardel

DAY 4

Free day to explore Buenos Aires further or take time to relax in one of the many cafés, restaurants and bars that fill this vibrant city

DAY 5

Fly to El Calafate and stay at the Casa los Sauces, located a short distance from El Calafate in the heart of Southern Patagonia

DAY 6

Full day private tour to the spectacular Perito Moreno glacier in Los Glaciares National Park and observe up close from the series of walkways

DAY 7

Free day to explore the town or take an optional excursion

DAY 8

Fly from El Calafate to Iguazu via Buenos Aires and stay at the Sheraton Iguazu located within the national park, close to the majestic falls

DAY 9

Full day tour exploring the Brazilian side of the falls. Spend the rest of the day visiting the Argentine side directly from your hotel

DAY 10

Fly from Iguazu to Montevideo in Uruguay via Buenos Aires and relax at the luxurious Sofitel hotel

DAY 11

Explore the city of Montevideo on a half day tour showcasing the highlights including the old city, Ciudad Vieja



DAY 12

Transfer by land to the coastal resort of Jose Ignacio and the charming Playa Vik. Located by the beach this is the ideal spot to relax

DAYS 13-14

Free days to lounge by the beach and explore the windswept coast

DAY 15

Transfer by land to Montevideo for your overnight flight to London via Madrid.



Antarctica

Wilderness expeditions

Six hundred miles south of Tierra del Fuego, the spectacularly beautiful 'White Continent' is one of the most remote and fascinating natural reserves in the world.

Antarctica is no longer the domain of intrepid explorers. Nowadays it's possible to visit this pristine wilderness as part of a small group on an expedition vessel that lets you experience Antarctica in relative comfort and luxury.

For a short period in the southern hemisphere's summer months there is a seasonal break up of the vast pack ice, which gives the specialist ships a passage through to the Antarctic Peninsula. Thousands of penguin, petrel and albatross come here to breed, and

seal colonies adorn the many ice floes.

Cruises operate between November and late February from Ushuaia in Argentina. Visitors from the UK fly via Buenos Aires and take an internal flight direct to Ushuaia. Polar Latitudes operate cruises to Antarctica on board the Sea Explorer, an all-suite yacht accommodating a maximum of 114 passengers, in a range of comfortable cabins.

The journey across the Drake Passage can be rough and takes

two days in each direction. Between informative lectures on the region's wildlife, history and geology, there is time to spot albatross, prion and petrel, as well as dolphin and the occasional whale.

The classic itinerary reaches the Antarctic Peninsula in the evening of day three and the next five days are spent exploring by small Zodiac boats that can travel along the smaller channels, visit penguin rookeries and land in the scenic bays. Longer trips are possible with more time spent exploring the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula or incorporating the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.



"Antarctica isn't for the faint-hearted. It may be the most stunningly beautiful place on earth, but getting there is a big adventure".
Wendy Driver, Travel Journalist



Chile

If natural beauty was a currency, Chile would be a superpower! A country of extraordinary scenery, it stretches from the salt lakes and red sand of the Atacama Desert in the north, to the glaciers and dramatic granite pillars of the Torres del Paine National Park in the Patagonian south.

Chile is long and thin, stretching almost 4,300 kilometres down the south-western Pacific coast of South America. It also includes remote and mysterious Easter Island. The average width of the mainland, from the sea to the Andes, is just 180 kilometres. Whether you are cruising through the fjords, skiing during the northern hemisphere's summer, hiking in Torres del Paine or exploring the salt flats and geysers of the Atacama, a holiday in Chile is a thrilling experience.

The capital, Santiago, is a very modern city, and one of the most enjoyable in South America. It is close to Chile's world-renowned vineyards and, for those seeking an adrenaline rush, some of the country's best ski slopes. Enchanting Valparaíso is also not to be missed.

Things to do in Chile:

- 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 Central Valley
- Take an Australis Expedition cruise through the fjords

Chile



Easter Island



Atacama



Jan ✓✓	Feb ✓✓	Mar ✓✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓✓
Jul ✓✓	Aug ✓✓	Sep ✓✓	Oct ✓✓	Nov ✓✓	Dec ✓✓

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, though even in these months, the weather can be unpredictable and windy. 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

There are no direct flights from the UK to Chile. The most popular routes are flying with Iberia or LAN via Madrid, Air France via Paris and TAM via Sao Paulo.

GMT: -4 hours

EASTER ISLAND GMT -6 hours

Visas

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Chile.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Chile.

In the north of Chile lies the unique Atacama Desert. Not only is it the driest place on Earth, but also one of the most unforgettable. From the town of San Pedro de Atacama, you can visit vivid red desert landscapes, Altiplanic lagoons and the Valley of the Moon.

In stark contrast to the arid desert, lying to the south of the country is Torres del Paine, Chile's most spectacular and well-known national park. It is famed for its impressive granite pillars, but its awe-inspiring glaciers, vividly coloured lakes and rugged plains will also take your breath away. It's perfect for hikers and horse riders alike.

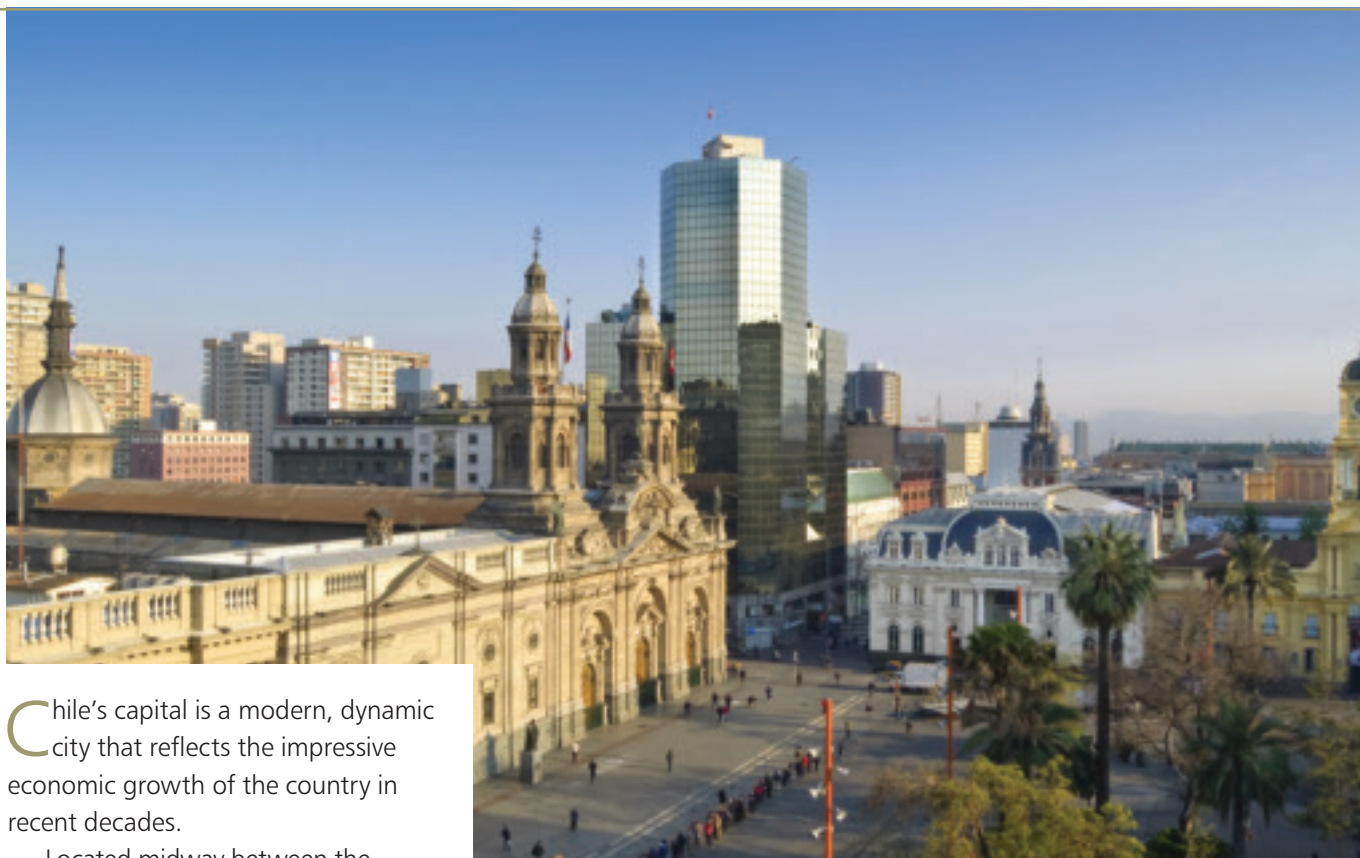
Chile has fabulous accommodation even in the remotest areas. After you've had your fill of its beautiful panoramas by day, in the evenings it's time to feast on Patagonian lamb or Pacific seafood washed down with fine Chilean wines.

"Chilean wines are internationally recognised, great value for money and going from strength to strength, and if you only visit one winery while you're there, make it the Matetic in San Antonio, out on the Maipo wine route, which is very easily accessible from Santiago."

Sarah Ahmed, The Wine Detective
www.winedetective.co.uk



Santiago

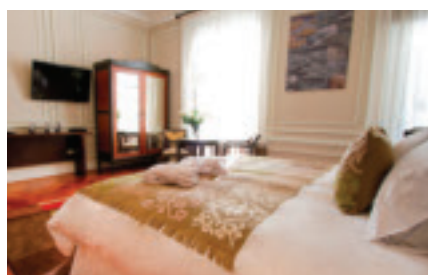


Chile's capital is a modern, dynamic city that reflects the impressive economic growth of the country in recent decades.

Located midway between the Pacific and the Andes, Santiago is the country's main entry point. It's a busy metropolis but the historic centre is calmer with a number of cultural highlights including San Cristobal Park, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes and the Plaza de Armas with Santiago's Cathedral.

The fashionable suburbs of Las Condes or Providencia are home to relaxed European-style bars and restaurants, and the city boasts a number of fine places to stay including many of the top chains and some fantastic boutique hotels.

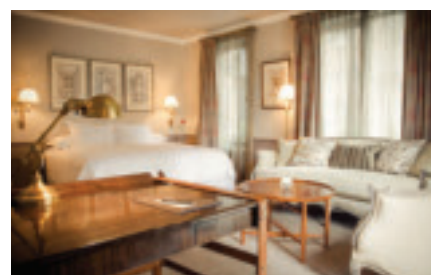
Enjoying a Mediterranean climate, Santiago is within an hour or so of some of the most productive vineyards in the world, the historic city port of Valparaiso and beach resort of Viña del Mar.



Lastarria

Gold
B/B

Surrounded by museums, galleries, antique shops and theatres, Lastarria is a stylish boutique hotel in Santiago's bohemian district. Originally built in 1927, the hotel has four room types with a total of 14 rooms and suites, some with balconies. Named on Condé Nast Traveller's 2012 Hot List this friendly hotel has an upstairs terraced area, outdoor pool and gym. In the bar-lounge, light meals using local produce are served, as well as a good selection of fine Chilean wines, teas and coffee.



The Singular Santiago

Gold
B/B

Located in the cultural Lastarria district in Santiago, The Singular Santiago is the latest hotly-anticipated luxury development from the team behind The Singular Patagonia. Combining neo-classical French architecture and the styles of the early 20th century, The Singular aims to offer a timeless atmosphere and blend with the architectural heritage of the district, which is home to a heady combination of art, literature, music, film, and gastronomy. The hotel features 62 rooms, including four sumptuous suites, a restaurant, 'Sky Lounge' with bar and swimming pool during the day.

Valparaiso

& Chile's Vineyards

Chile

Perched on a steep hillside overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the city port of Valparaiso is just a few hours' drive west of Santiago.

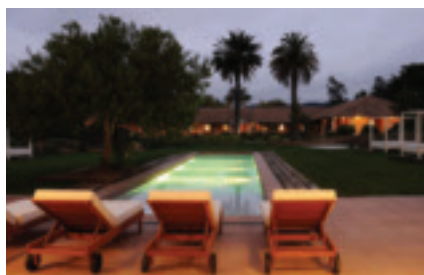
Valparaiso is an enchanting bohemian city with steep funicular railways climbing and descending hills dotted with colourful houses and narrow streets. The city was founded in the 19th century and has always been one of the most intriguing and distinctive in the country. Although you can visit for the day from Santiago, it's well worth spending some time here.



Palacio Astoreca

Gold
B/B

Originally a Victorian mansion dating back to 1923, Palacio Astoreca has been lovingly restored over a three year period and is now a sophisticated and elegant boutique hotel. The 23 rooms have views towards the bay or hillside. Located in the historic quarter of Valparaiso, and well positioned for the town's main tourist attractions, Palacio Astoreca has already been awarded Best New Hotel 2013 by Condé Nast. The hotel has a stylish piano bar, lounge and terrace, and the Alegre restaurant serves fusion food with the best Chilean wines.



Matetic Winery Guesthouse

Silver
Half-board

Also known as La Casona, this seven-bedroom property is situated in the Matetic Vineyards, around 100km from Santiago. Set in spectacular surroundings, the hotel was a colonial construction dating back over 100 years and was renovated in 2004 by a well-known architect, Lawrence Odfjell. 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.

In recent years, there can be few dining tables in this country that have not seen a bottle or two of Chilean wine. Bound by the Pacific Ocean to the west, the snow-capped Andes to the east, desert to the north and chilly Antarctic influences to the south, it's not surprising that long, thin Chile has an exciting diversity of climates – and a correspondingly wide number of wine styles.

Many of the vineyards are in Chile's Maipo Valley, close to Santiago and can be visited for the day. With the number of vineyards increasing five-fold in recent years, a number have opened their doors to visitors, with some offering accommodation.

Atacama Desert

The driest place on Earth

Rising from sea level to over 4,000 metres into the Andes towards Bolivia, the Atacama Desert is the driest place on Earth, and home to one of the strangest and most beautiful landscapes found in Latin America.

San Pedro de Atacama is a fertile oasis town with a fabulous backdrop of volcanoes, from where it is possible to visit the local villages with their typical adobe built structures. Don't miss the El Tatio geysers, the Atacama salt flats, where you can see flamingos and other birdlife, the Valley of the Moon and the high Altiplano.



Awasi Atacama

Gold
Full-board & excursions

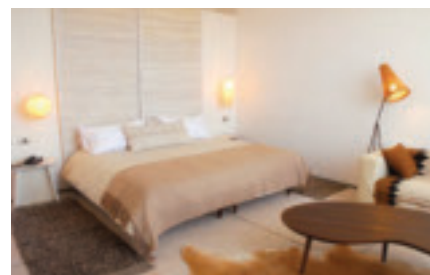
A luxury award-winning boutique hotel, right in the heart of the pretty adobe town of San Pedro de Atacama, Awasi has eight thatched cottages each with a private sun terrace and outdoor shower. The smallest hotel in the region, it's the perfect hideaway with a private service that allows guests to discover the region at their own pace. After a long day exploring, the home cooked food served at the hotel's restaurant is delicious washed down with a glass of Chilean Carmenere.



Alto Atacama

Gold
Full-board & excursions

A village hotel near the ancient ruins of Pukara de Quito, Alto Atacama is just 3km from San Pedro. The village has a unique location at the base of the breathtaking Salt Mountains in the beautiful, fertile Katarpe Valley. Built in the style of a traditional adobe settlement, its architecture, gardens and interior design recreate an ancient Altiplanic village. Providing an all-inclusive service guests enjoy everything the Atacama Desert has to offer with highly trained, knowledgeable bilingual guides.



Tierra Atacama

Gold
Full-board & excursions

Tierra Atacama is a boutique lodge in San Pedro de Atacama with two family suites and 30 rooms, all of which are spacious and extremely comfortable. Rooms are furnished in a minimalist style but with materials sourced from the local area. The public areas of the hotel include a lounge, bar, restaurant, pool and a multi-treatment spa. With so much to see surrounding San Pedro, the hotel organises many excursions to explore the local villages and natural landscapes by vehicle, mountain-bike or horseback.

Easter Island

The remotest place on Earth

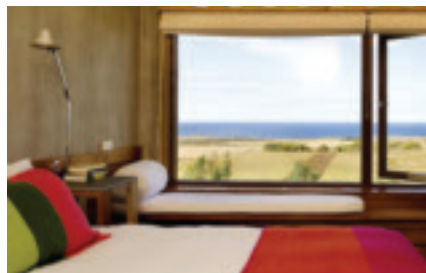
Chile



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

Gold
Full-board & excursions

Situated in the South Eastern part of Rapa Nui, Explora is 8km from the town of Hanga Roa. The property has 30 beautiful rooms that fan out from the central area and face the ocean. They are furnished with pinewood floors, a living area, hydro-massage bath and comfortable beds. There is also a pool and spa area in the Casa de Baños Hare Vai that offers a range of massages. Guests can take part in any of the 15 excursions that are included and led by knowledgeable guides.



Altiplanico

Silver
B/B

Set within lush gardens overlooking the Pacific Ocean the Altiplanico Easter Island is designed in a traditional style and located close to the town of Hanga Roa. Each of the 16 rooms is set in an independent unit with its own private terrace overlooking the sea allowing you to appreciate the view and isolation of this special island. The hotel's decoration is simple yet stylish, featuring a small swimming pool and open air restaurant which serves food inspired by Peru, Chile and the unique Rapa Nui heritage.

Lake District

& Chiloe Island

The Lake District is one of the most beautiful areas in Chile, filled with volcanoes, pristine lakes, waterfalls and virgin forests.

To the south of the Central Valley in the Andean foothills, the spectacularly beautiful Lake District is Chile's prime holiday region. The prettiest spot to stay and one of the best bases for exploring the area is the small town of Puerto Varas, overlooking Lake Llanquihue and in the shadow of the Osorno and Calbuco volcanoes. This is a great area to hire a car for a few days and explore nearby national parks, Chiloe Island and its wooden churches (with a regular ferry service from the mainland), or the numerous surrounding lakes. From Puerto Varas, it's possible to make the full-day lakes crossing to Bariloche in Argentina.



Hotel Patagonico

Gold
B/B

Located in a tranquil part of Puerto Varas town, Hotel Patagonico has magnificent views of Lake Llanquihue and the Osorno Volcano. Opened in 2009, this contemporary hotel offers 91 luxurious rooms which feature hand-dyed textiles and local natural materials. There is an indoor heated pool, Spa Kalul and a restaurant offering Chilean specialties with a diverse array of seafood, all complemented by local wines. There is a lounge with a cosy fireplace where guests can enjoy a local aperitif.



Cumbres Puerto Varas Hotel

Silver
B/B

Cumbres Puerto Varas Hotel is nestled among lakes and volcanoes and offers top quality service and promises a stay surrounded by nature and comfort. Its panoramic view of Lake Llanquihue is certainly spectacular and the hotel's perfect natural setting, combined with the quality of its service, ensures a stay that will rival the splendour of its surroundings. All 92 rooms and suites have views of Lake Llanquihue and Osorno Volcano and there is an excellent restaurant, two bars and a spa.



Tierra Chiloé

Gold
Full-board & excursions

Tierra Chiloé is a warm and inviting hotel situated within the beautiful landscape of Chiloé Island. Built on a hill, all 12 stylish and contemporary rooms have floor to ceiling picture windows with gorgeous scenic views of the Reloncaví Sound. The décor and furnishings incorporate traditional materials, with simple wooden furniture, basketry and sheepskin coverings on chairs. The restaurant specialises in locally caught seafood from the Pacific, and fantastic Chilean wines. Guests can also use the excellent spa.

The Patagonian Fjords

Puerto Natales, Straits of Magellan,
Beagle Channel & Cape Horn

Chile



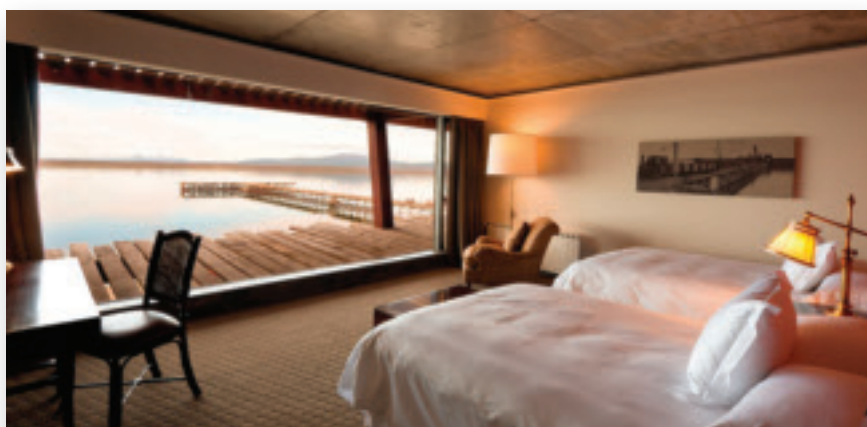
Australis Cruises

In the far south, the port town of Punta Arenas is the gateway to the southern fjords and spectacular Torres del Paine National Park. Whilst Torres del Paine is the jewel in Chile's southern crown, there is much to see in the Magallanes region and the best way to explore is by boat.

Australis Cruises

An Australis cruise is the ideal way to explore the wild and beautiful Patagonian fjords. Cruises operate from September to April between Punta Arenas in Chile and Ushuaia in Argentina, for either three or four nights. You sail through the Straits of Magellan, the Beagle Channel and around Cape Horn on a journey past fjords, glaciers and islands.

A highlight, weather permitting, is landing at Cape Horn and walking to the monument at the southernmost tip of the continent. Zodiacs (motorised inflatable boats) take you to uninhabited islands that provide sanctuary for penguins, elephant seals and an amazing array of birdlife. Look for colonies of sea lions and whales.



The Singular – Puerto Natales


Platinum

Full-board & excursions

Designed by a famous Chilean interior designer and local architect Pedro Kovacic, The Singular opened in 2011. Built on the site of a cold storage industrial plant dating back 100 years, this is an alternative to staying in Torres del Paine. Two to three hours by road from Punta Arenas, the hotel has 54 luxury rooms and three suites with six metre wide glass panels and superb views of the fjord in Last Hope Sound. The spa is world-class and the chef is award-winning. Guests have exclusive access to reserves for trekking, biking and kayaking. The Singular has its own private boat for trips through the fjords.

Chilean Patagonia

This 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 America 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.

Torres del Paine National Park

Chile

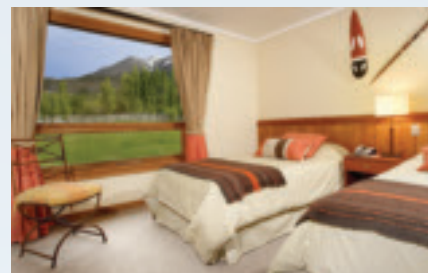


Explora en Patagonia

Gold

Full-board & excursions

Explora en Patagonia is the only lodge at the centre of Torres del Paine National Park, home to diverse and pristine ecosystems and the perfect base for some great outdoor adventures. Forty-nine comfortable rooms all have spectacular panoramic views of the park. Each day guests choose from 35 different excursions that explore the park by foot, vehicle or horseback and after a day in the great outdoors, the bar serves a range of Chilean wine. There is also fine cuisine prepared from locally sourced ingredients.



Hotel las Torres

Silver

Full-board & excursions

This comfortable rustic wooden lodge is located within the Torres del Paine National Park, adjacent to the pathway that takes hikers on the strenuous full-day walk to the base of the granite towers. There are 84 comfortable rooms including two suites, a bar, restaurant, spa, wood-burning fire in the lounge and a daily choice of excursions. All meals are included as well as a variety of spa treatments. Return transfers from Punta Arenas or across the border to El Calafate are also part of the package.



Tierra Patagonia

Gold

Full-board & excursions

Located on the eastern edge of the Torres del Paine National Park, Tierra Patagonia overlooks Lake Sarmiento. The hotel opened in 2012 and offers 40 well-appointed rooms, a living room, bar, presentation and dining room. After a day of excursions such as trekking, mountain hikes and horseback riding, guests can relax in the outdoor Jacuzzi, indoor swimming pool, sauna and Uma Spa. The hotel guides take guests to the less visited areas of the national park for a complete wilderness experience.



Patagonia Camp

Silver

Full-board & excursions

Patagonia Camp is a unique option located just outside Torres del Paine National Park on the shores of Lake Toro, with spectacular views of the Paine Massif. Designed to have minimum impact on the environment, the entire complex is built on wooden stilts, including the 18 Mongolian-style yurts, so that the plants that have grown in the area for hundreds of years are protected. Your stay at Patagonia Camp includes all meals, drinks and a selection of excursions designed to enhance your Patagonia experience.

Chile Express Small Group Tour

Santiago – Atacama – Lake District – Patagonia

A great value 13-day small group tour, which takes in the natural wonders of both the north and south of Chile.

This itinerary offers you the opportunity to explore Chile in all its natural glory. From the Atacama desert to the peaks of Torres del Paine National Park, you have the chance to experience true wilderness. As a group trip this is also an incredible opportunity to visit Chile at great value.

DAY 1

Overnight flight from London via Madrid to Santiago

DAY 2

Morning arrival in Santiago where you will be met and transferred to the hotel. Afternoon tour of Santiago and San Cristobal Hill for a panoramic view of the city and the Andean mountains beyond

DAY 3

Fly to Calama and travel to the pretty village of San Pedro de Atacama. Visit the Valle de la Luna (Moon Valley) and Valle de la Muerte (Death Valley)

DAY 4

Today see the magnificence of Chile's largest salt flat and see Andean flamingos and other birdlife at Chaxa Lagoon. You will also visit the high altiplano and the lagoons of Meñique and Miscanti

DAY 5

Early start to travel to El Tatio Geysers, a geothermal field best viewed at dawn when you can watch the natural wonders of the steam columns rising as dawn breaks over the volcanoes. There is free time in the afternoon in the town of San Pedro where you can explore the local markets

DAY 6

After breakfast transfer to the airport of Calama for your flight to Puerto Montt via Santiago. Arrive in the Lake District in the afternoon and transfer to Puerto Varas

DAY 7

Visit the towns of Puerto Varas and Puerto Montt with wonderful views of Lake Llanquihue and the Osorno Volcano. Also visit Upper and Lower Frutillar and the port of Petrohue on the shores of All Saints' Lake

DAY 8

Today you'll head southwards to Chiloe Island. Visit the village of Quemchi and the area of Aucar. See the famous architecture and ancient churches

DAY 9

Morning departure for your flight to Punta Arenas and from here, continue by comfortable regular bus service to Puerto Natales and your hotel overlooking Last Hope Sound

DAY 10

Enjoy a full day tour with lunch, sailing from Puerto Natales through Last Hope Sound towards Balmaceda Glacier, home to vast numbers of cormorants and sea lions

DAY 11

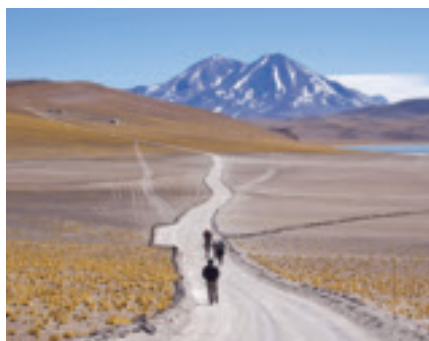
Explore the dramatic Torres del Paine National Park on a full day excursion including lunch. Driving through the park you may see native flora and fauna such as guanacos

DAY 12

Travel from Puerto Natales by scheduled coach service to Punta Arenas arriving in time for your flight to Santiago and your final night in Chile

DAY 13

Transfer to the airport for your flight home to the UK.



Chile North to South

Santiago – Atacama – Patagonia – Buenos Aires

Chile

This 14-day private itinerary explores Chile's natural wonders, spanning the entire country, and includes a cruise through the Chilean fjords

After two days exploring the city of Santiago, fly to the extreme north and experience the driest place on Earth, the Atacama Desert. Then head south to the glaciers and fjords of Cape Horn and the Beagle Channel aboard the Australis Expedition cruise. This trip ends with time to unwind in Buenos Aires before heading home.

DAY 1

Overnight flight from London via Madrid to Santiago

DAY 2

On arrival transfer to the Lastarria boutique hotel, well located in the bohemian neighbourhood of Lastarria

DAY 3

Enjoy a half-day Santiago city tour including the San Francisco Cathedral, La Moneda and the main square

DAY 4

Fly to the north and transfer to the small town of San Pedro de Atacama and the Alto Atacama which will be your base for the next three nights

DAYS 5-6

Explore the wild red landscapes of the Atacama Desert, active geysers and Andean villages by four-wheel drive with your knowledgeable guide, who will help you plan your daily excursions

DAY 7

Fly from Calama in the north to Punta Arenas in the south via Santiago and overnight in the city of Punta Arenas

DAY 8

Have a relaxing morning before checking in for your 4-night Australis Expedition cruise. This takes you through the Straits of Magellan, the Beagle Channel and around Cape Horn to Ushuaia in Argentina

DAYS 9-10

On board the Australis there will be opportunities to travel by Zodiacs to explore uninhabited islands

DAY 11

Arrive at Cape Horn to disembark in the national park, weather permitting as winds can occasionally prevent landings at this desolate southerly spot

DAY 12

Disembark the Australis cruise ship in Ushuaia and fly to Buenos Aires where you stay at the Mine Hotel in the cosmopolitan neighbourhood of Palermo Soho

DAY 13

Enjoy your day in the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires, including a half-day city tour and a traditional tango show

DAY 14

Transfer to the airport for return flight to the UK.



Brazil

Brazil is a vast country bursting at the seams with enticements for every traveller – from world-famous beaches, dense rainforest and diverse wildlife, to dynamic cities and a fun-loving culture that will have you smiling the moment you step off the plane.

Brazil's landscapes range from the golden beaches that stretch along 7,000 kilometres of coastline to the Amazon jungle and the Pantanal, one of the world's largest wetland areas. But equally beguiling is the country's incredibly diverse cuisine, music and religions – the product of Brazil's mixed Amerindian, European and African heritage.

Choosing where to start is a challenge, but for many Rio de Janeiro is the number one attraction. An extraordinary place, full of energy, it has an incomparable setting of sweeping beaches back-dropped by granite, forested peaks. The colossal statue of Christ the Redeemer atop Corcovado Mountain watches over the city. Far below lie Copacabana and Ipanema, among the most famous beaches in the world, and several hours from Rio are smaller resorts such as Ilha Grande and Paraty to the south and Buzios to the east.



Things to do in Brazil:

- Let yourself fall in love with Rio's Latin vibe
- Take a speed boat ride at the Iguazu Falls
- Explore the Amazon on a boat cruise
- Spot wildlife in the Pantanal on horseback
- Explore exciting Salvador and its nearby beaches

Brazil



Although you can visit the Amazon from several South American countries, its most famous home is in Brazil. The Amazon offers a unique experience for those wishing to explore the hidden world within the rainforest canopy. Brazil's Amazon is not only a paradise for bird-watchers and nature lovers, but also provides great opportunities to experience and learn about the cultures of the people who have traditionally lived in the rainforest.

Another of Brazil's many highlights is the world-famous

Iguazu Falls (also spelt Iguacu) an astonishing natural wonder that can be enjoyed from three different countries.

Whether you want activity and adventure or relaxation on the beach, Brazil really does have something for everyone.

Jan ✓✓	Feb ✓✓	Mar ✓✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓✓
Jul ✓✓	Aug ✓✓	Sep ✓✓	Oct ✓✓	Nov ✓✓	Dec ✓✓

When to go

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

Getting there

British Airways and TAM operate direct services to Sao Paulo. British Airways also has a direct service to Rio de Janeiro. The most popular indirect routes are flying Air France via Paris, KLM via Amsterdam and TAP via Lisbon.

Time Difference

There are various time zones, but Rio and Iguazu Falls are GMT-2 or -3 hours according to the time of year.

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.

No trip to Brazil is complete without sampling their very own cocktail, the Caipirinha. Hailing from Paraty, the

Caipirinha is made with one lime, two ounces of Cachaca, sugar and crushed ice. Sip one of these whilst lazing by the pool, and you will understand why it was invented.



Rio & the beaches

It's not until you have taken the train ride up Corcovado mountain, on top of which is the statue of Christ the Redeemer, that you fully appreciate the beauty of Rio's setting.

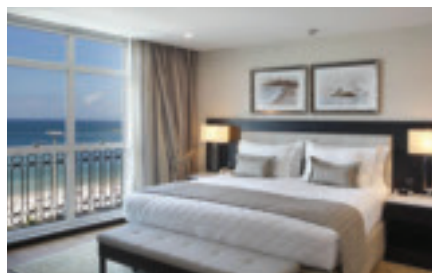
The panorama of beaches, mountains and islands, sea and bays is unforgettable. Take the cable car to the summit of Sugar Loaf Mountain, stroll along the legendary beaches of Copacabana, Ipanema or Leblon, listen to the soothing tones of some Bossa Nova and enjoy a typical *feijoada* (bean stew) dish washed down with a *caipirinha*.



The most famous carnival in the world takes place every year just before Ash Wednesday. The Brazilians celebrate with drums, singing and dancing in the streets in an explosion of colour, music and lavish and outrageous costumes.



Brazil



Windsor Miramar

Gold
B/B

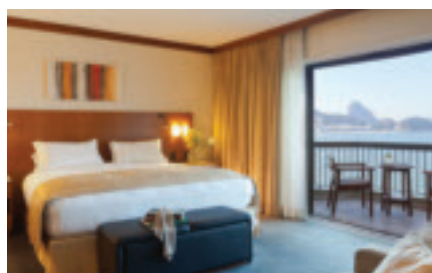
Windsor Miramar overlooks the iconic Copacabana Beach with spectacular panoramic views. Each of the 201 rooms is decorated with neutral colours with striking prints of Rio de Janeiro creating a luxurious and comfortable base. Relax on the sun loungers by the infinity swimming pool, an oasis stretching out to sea on the hotel's terrace or take advantage of the complimentary beach service. After a day of sightseeing, dine on the contemporary Brazilian cuisine in Restaurant Sa or sip sundowners on the rooftop terrace, enjoying



Copacabana Palace

Platinum
B/B

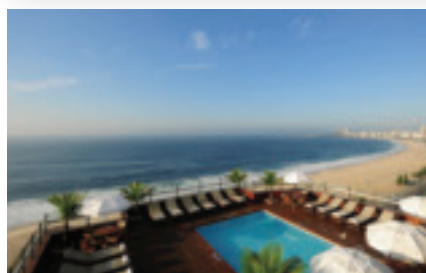
Superbly positioned overlooking the ocean, this glamorous Belmond landmark has welcomed the rich and famous since its Art Deco doors opened in 1923. Evoking the glamour of a bygone era the rooms and suites are luxurious and classically styled with many offering the spectacular view of the famous Copacabana beach. The magnificent pool and super-cool Bar do Copa are where Brazil's style-setters gather to soak up the sun. The restaurants are destinations in themselves for great local dishes or fine dining.



Sofitel Rio De Janeiro

Gold
B/B

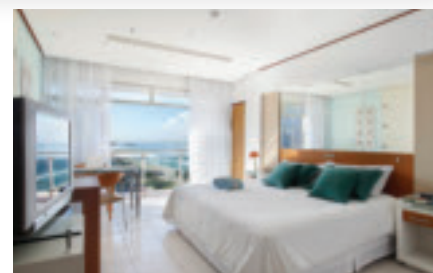
This luxury hotel is located in one of the world's most beautiful settings under the gaze of Sugarloaf Mountain, with fabulous Ipanema on one side and stunning Copacabana on the other. There are balconies for all of its 388 rooms and all offer the signature Sofitel 'My Beds'. The four restaurants and bars offer guests a very pleasant place to relax, and serve sophisticated French cuisine with the latest in fusion dishes from around the world, whilst the bar has a spectacular view over the beach.



Porto Bay Rio Internacional

Silver
B/B

Spectacularly situated overlooking Copacabana beach, the Porto Bay Rio Internacional 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. This is the place to relax after a day of city sightseeing and shopping, both of which are conveniently close to the hotel. The restaurant, La Finestra, has great sea views and a delicious menu, or for lighter fare visit Bar Limone which serves local cocktails and beers.



Praia Ipanema

Silver
B/B

This modern hotel is located in a stylish area of Ipanema and overlooks the beach of the same name. Praia Ipanema offers 101 contemporary and comfortably styled rooms with balconies overlooking the ocean. Guests can relax during the day at the 16th floor rooftop pool or enjoy the hotel's full beach service including towels, chairs and umbrellas. Aside from the hotel's own Bossa Nova bar and restaurant, close by there is a good selection of restaurants, bars and boutiques as well as the famous Sunday market.

Búzios & the Emerald Coast

Paraty, Ilha Grande & Florianopolis

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

Perfect for a beach break in any Brazil itinerary, the resorts on Brazil's southern coast are just a few hours' drive from Rio. To the north east, Búzios is a favourite retreat from bustling city life and is still a small, elegant resort with over twenty beaches on its peninsula.

To the south west of Rio, the car-free island of Ilha Grande is one of the country's most famous beach retreats, and also an ideal spot for hiking. Further along this coast Paraty's charming cobbled streets have not changed for centuries and the Portuguese colonial architecture is some of the best preserved in the country.

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



Pousada Picinguaba
Paraty

Silver
B/B

Situated 30 minutes from Paraty in the centre of the Serra do Mar National Park, this hotel is the ideal place to escape and enjoy Brazil's beach life. The ten rooms open out onto the sea with an expansive view of the sand beach. In the daytime, guests can venture out to the natural springs, to the beach or relax by the swimming pool in the tropical gardens and enjoy drinks at the pool bar. This hidden treasure is perfect for those looking for a quiet escape.



Asalem
Ilha Grande

Silver
B/B

Asalem is a secluded, rustic family-owned property situated in Ilha Grande, overlooking the spectacular bay of Abraão and a short taxi-boat ride from the town. With only four standard suites and one new suite by the water, Asalem is ideally suited to those seeking true privacy and tranquillity. The comfortable suites have great views and the new suite has floor-to-ceiling windows and a hammock. Guests can expect a tasty breakfast, fresh fruit picked from the hotel's trees and fresh fish at dinner.



Pousada Vila d'Este
Búzios

Silver
B/B

Pousada Vila d'Este is a romantic boutique hotel overlooking the pretty beach of Joao Fernandes in Búzios, and within easy reach of its lively bars and restaurants. It has 15 individually designed rooms and suites with garden or sea views, and the master suite has its own deck with private Jacuzzi. There's an infinity pool and a heated pool links to a main Jacuzzi and steam sauna. This is the perfect place for soaking up the rays and has easy access to the beach for good snorkelling.

Recommended things to do:

- Hike from Abraão to Lopes Mendes beach on Ilha Grande
- Go shopping at Rua das Pedras in Búzios
- Spot birds, orchids, waterfalls and monkeys in the Mata Atlantica
- Take a day trip from Paraty to the village of Trindade
- Whale watch at Santa Catarina between Jul and Nov

Brazil



Casas Brancas Búzios

Gold
B/B

Elegant Casas Brancas is nestled in the cooler hills overlooking Búzios' spectacular bay. The hotel has 32 rooms, some with private terrace overlooking the sea. The hotel's refined, laid-back atmosphere, ocean view spa, restaurants, beach loungers and spotless open spaces make this an attractive base. With the main street of Búzios and its many bars, restaurants and boutiques just a short walk away, Casas Brancas is the ideal place from which to enjoy all that the town has to offer.



Pousada Abracadabra Búzios

Silver
B/B

Chic Pousada Abracadabra overlooks Armação Bay, just a few minutes away from the lively centre of Búzios. The hotel has 16 large rooms and suites spread through a number of buildings, some with spacious balconies. The Mistico restaurant has both indoor and outdoor dining and serves Mediterranean style dishes and fresh fish. It has panoramic views of the bay, as does the infinity pool and sun terrace. The hotel has free wifi and delivers a great service complemented by its stylish décor.



Ponta dos Ganchos Exclusive Resort Florianopolis

Platinum
B/B

Located close to Florianopolis, in a small fishing village on a privately-owned peninsula, the area around Ponta dos Ganchos represents the old-fashioned Brazil of colonial times. Known as one of Brazil's most exclusive beach resorts, the 25 sophisticated and charming bungalows are set within the verdant forest and all have sea views. Guests can relax by the heated pool, enjoy spa treatments or explore one of the nature trails. There is an oceanfront tennis court, games room and nearby is the best scuba diving site in southern Brazil.

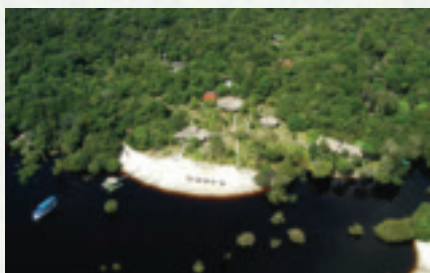
The Amazon Rainforest

Recommended things to do:

- Listen to the noises all around you on a night trek
- Enjoy fishing for piranha
- Jump in a canoe and see the rainforest from the river
- Put your feet up in one of the jungle lodges
- Experience the Amazon at dawn

The Amazon region is the most diverse natural habitat on Earth with literally thousands of tree, plant and bird species.

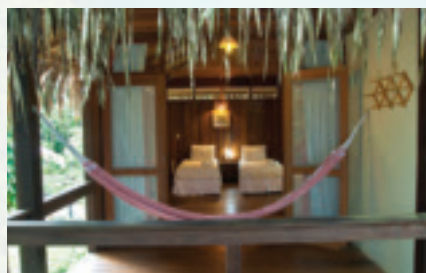
Covering a large part of the South American continent, the Amazon is the world's largest rainforest and home to over 300 indigenous tribes. The main Brazilian gateway to this lush forest region is the city of Manaus. From here you can travel by boat to a rainforest lodge or board a cruise boat to float gently down the Amazon or Negro rivers. Where the two rivers meet, you can see the unusual sight of the two running side by side without the waters mixing. Spot colourful toucans, parrots, butterflies and pink dolphin; and after dark look for caiman and a host of nocturnal animals.



Amazon Eco-Park Jungle Lodge

Bronze
Full-board & excursions

Located on the Taruma River, the Amazon Eco-Park is not only a jungle lodge but a scientific and educational centre. There is a full range of excursions such as sunrise and night tours, visits to a local village, piranha fishing trips and a boat ride to the 'Meeting of the Waters'. It also has 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 small private beach or cool down in the natural pools.



Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge

Silver
Full-board & excursions

With just 20 exclusive suites, Anavilhanas offers boutique accommodation combined with first-rate service. A small, pleasant lodge on the margins of the Negro River in the heart of the Amazon, guests can find both adventure and peaceful tranquillity. The lodge follows low-impact principles and ensures tourist activities are responsibly managed and in harmony with the local community. The lodge has a privileged view of the surrounding landscape and river. The Science Woods, rich with Amazonian plant and wildlife are a highlight.



Cristalino Jungle Lodge

Silver
Full-board & excursions

Cristalino Lodge is the perfect choice for nature lovers. Found deep in the southern part of the Amazonian rainforest in an area rich with mammals, birds, butterflies and orchids, the location is hard to beat. Travel by boat along the river to the lodge, carefully designed to harmoniously blend into the surrounding jungle. Designed with the aim of providing luxury comfort, the lodge's 16 guest rooms and bungalows provide you with a relaxing haven using natural materials and local handicraft to create a rustic charm.

The Pantanal

Ask us about special eco programmes for jaguar spotting in the Pantanal.

Brazil



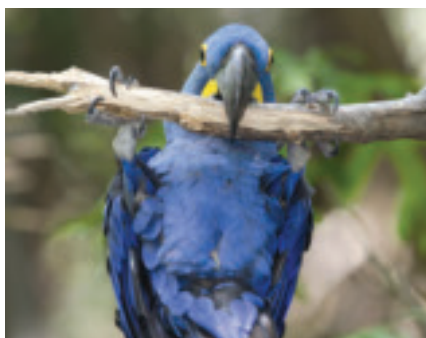
Less heralded than the Amazon, Brazil's Pantanal is the world's largest wetland area and a premier wildlife viewing location.

The open spaces in the Pantanal are less dense than in the Amazon and an incredible number of species have been recorded here including up to 1,000 types of birds, over 80 mammals and several hundred species of fish. Caiman and capybara can be found in vast numbers and on a typical visit you should see Giant river otters, iguanas, anacondas, piranhas and deer. The best time to visit the region is in the dry season from April to November.

The Pantanal is also home to a number of endangered species such as the Hyacinth macaw, the largest in the macaw family, and we can arrange special programmes for tracking jaguar. We work with lodges that actively aim to preserve the wetlands environment.



Giant river otter



Hyacinth macaw



Capybaras



Pousada do Rio Mutum

Bronze
Full-board & excursions

Pousada do Rio Mutum is located in one of northern Pantanal's most beautiful regions. Guests will have the chance to spot wildlife even before arriving at the lodge, as there is an abundance of flora and fauna on the three-hour road journey. The lodge has 22 cottage-like apartments and each has a private porch with a hammock. Local regional food is served at the restaurant and all excursions are included, either by boat or jeep. This is an ecological paradise surrounded by nature.



Pousada Araras Eco Lodge

Bronze
Full-board & excursions

With its enviably preserved surroundings, this eco-lodge offers first class bird-watching, trekking in pristine forest, canoeing, horse riding, truck photo-safaris and night tours, all with the assistance of expert naturalist guides. The lodge has 19 comfortable rooms, all built in the region's rustic style, and a pool with an adjoining covered restaurant area for dining. A homely atmosphere and excellent regional food add to the lodge's charm. Guests can simply relax during the heat of the day and enjoy the sounds of nature.

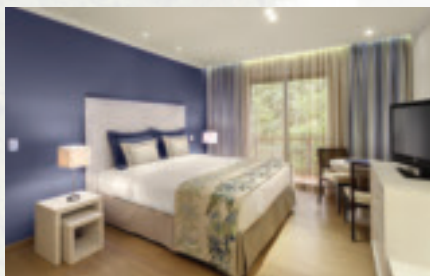


Caiman

Iguazu Falls

The Iguazu Falls are one of South America's most impressive natural wonders, bordering Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.

Eleanor Roosevelt reportedly exclaimed on seeing Iguazu for the first time "poor Niagara"! With 275 separate waterfalls including the roaring Devil's Throat, we certainly agree it is very impressive indeed. In fact, no matter how many times you visit Iguazu, it never fails to impress.



Mabu Thermas Resort

Silver
B/B

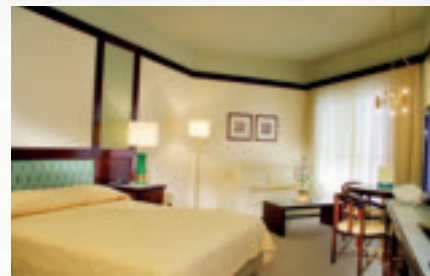
Mabu Thermas Resort is well located for easy access to the majestic Iguazu Falls. Rooms are tastefully furnished with views to the gardens or thermal pools. After a day of sightseeing relax in the crystal clear thermal waters or take advantage of the spa with treatments that use this natural resource. Excellent dining is available at the hotel's restaurant where they offer a range of cuisine along with regular live music in the lounge bar. On-site activities include a fitness centre, large games room and tennis courts.



Das Cataratas

Platinum
B/B

A Portuguese-colonial residence, this classic Belmond hotel is redolent of lazy days lounging on a veranda, and is the only hotel located within Brazil's Iguazu National Park, enjoying an unrivalled location near the falls. Guests enjoy exclusive access in the evening and at dawn, when the park is closed to visitors. A natural paradise, guests can go on jungle treks to view amazing wildlife including colourful toucans and giant butterflies. There is also a beautifully designed swimming pool.



Bourbon Cataratas

Silver
B/B

Located on the borders of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, this five-star resort, set in lush, tropical surrounds, offers modern accommodation just 14 miles from Iguazu Falls, or around a 20 minute drive from the entrance to the national park on the Brazilian side. There are 311 tastefully decorated rooms and suites, and facilities include several restaurants, an Amazonia spa and two swimming pools. The town of Foz do Iguazu, with its numerous restaurants and shops, is just two miles from the hotel.

Salvador

& the north east beaches

Brazil

Once the capital of Portugal's 'New World' colony, vibrant Salvador brings together a thrilling mix of Brazilian and Caribbean cultures. Wander through Salvador's atmospheric cobbled streets, visit magnificent baroque churches and fascinating art museums, and learn how to cook superb Bahian dishes. Music is everywhere and this is the place to take capoeira lessons, where it all began.

The restored historic centre, Pelourinho, is the city's crown jewel and there are many superb colonial buildings and hotels. The Franciscan church here has the most stunning baroque interior of any church in Brazil. Salvador looks out onto 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.



Tivoli Eco Resort Praia do Forte

Gold
Half-board

An hour north of Salvador airport on the coconut-palm fringed beaches of Praia do Forte, the Tivoli Eco Resort is built with simple architecture in harmony with the local environment. The hotel has 297 attractive rooms all decorated in natural shades and many have a sea facing balcony. The hotel's three restaurants offer dishes inspired by local Bahian cuisine as well as top-quality international food. There is also a diverse range of activities including a spa and a tour to a local sea turtle preservation project.



Casa do Amarelindo Salvador

Silver
B/B

This is a charming hotel set in a fully restored 19th century building in Pelourinho, a peaceful haven in the heart of the most colourful of Salvador's districts. The property, owned by the live-in hosts, has ten rooms that combine comfort and luxury, decorated in Bahian style. There is a pool, Pelo Bistro restaurant and bar as well as a panoramic roof terrace with breathtaking views over Todos os Santos Bay. This is a great base from which to explore this vibrant city.



La Villa Bahia Salvador

Gold
B/B

La Villa Bahia is a unique *pousada* in the heart of Salvador's historical centre of Pelourinho, set in two magnificent colonial mansions where guests can get a real sense of Bahian culture. Overlooking the colourful façades of the district, the 17 rooms have been renovated to preserve their original character. There are two courtyards, a refreshing plunge pool and terrace with panoramic views. The hosts have implemented a genuine policy of local participation and sustainable practices such as using locally sourced food in the restaurant.

Classic Brazil

Rio de Janeiro – Iguazu Falls – Amazon – Salvador

A 12-day private tour that showcases the best of Brazil's cultural and natural highlights.

This itinerary introduces you to Brazil's many attractions – the fabulous city of Rio with her famous beaches and landmarks, the magnificent waterfalls at Iguazu, the lush rainforest in the Amazon and finally, the vibrant city of Salvador.



DAY 1

Overnight flight from London Heathrow to Rio de Janeiro

DAY 2

Arrive in the morning and transfer to the Porto Bay Rio Internacional overlooking Copacabana Beach. Free time in the afternoon

DAY 3

Full-day jeep tour visiting Christ the Redeemer on top of Corcovado Mountain and taking in Sugar Loaf Mountain in the afternoon. The views looking over Rio and its beaches and bays are stunning



DAY 4

Spend the day as you choose – relax on the beaches, or arrange further sightseeing locally

DAY 5

Transfer to the airport for the short flight to Iguazu Falls and transfer to the Bourbon Cataratas

DAY 6

Full day excursion to explore the Argentine side of the falls including the viewpoint for the impressive Devil's Throat

DAY 7

Transfer to the airport for the flight via Sao Paulo to Manaus, the gateway to the Brazilian Amazon. Stay for three nights at the Amazon Eco-Park, around one hour from the city



DAYS 8-9

Two full days to enjoy the excursions provided by the lodge and explore this unique ecosystem

DAY 10

Depart from your Amazon Lodge for the airport and connect to your flight to Salvador on the coast. Spend two nights at Casa do Amarelindo located in the historic Pelourinho district of the city

DAY 11

Free time to explore this vibrant city which is full of African and European culture

DAY 12

Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK via Sao Paulo. Alternatively we can extend your trip by a few days for beach relaxation



Classic Argentina & Brazil

Buenos Aires – Iguazu Falls – Rio de Janeiro – Buzios

Brazil

This 13-day tour takes you on a journey which showcases the key highlights of Argentina and Brazil.

This classic itinerary takes you to Latin America's two most exciting and vibrant cities, Buenos Aires and Rio, as well as the magnificent Iguazu Falls and time at the coastal resort of Buzios to the east. Accommodation throughout is in luxurious hotels.

DAY 1

Overnight flight to Buenos Aires via Sao Paulo

DAY 2

Arrival transfer to the Alvear Palace hotel located in the leafy, upmarket area of Recoleta

DAY 3

Morning sightseeing tour of the city including La Boca, the Plaza de Mayo as well as Recoleta Cemetery to visit the burial place of the famous Eva Peron. There is free time in the afternoon

DAY 4

Free day to explore the different areas of this wonderful city. In the evening, enjoy dinner and a spectacular tango show

DAY 5

Fly from Buenos Aires to Iguazu and tour the Argentinean side of the falls before crossing the border into Brazil, and transferring to luxurious Das Cataratas



DAY 6

Free day to explore the Brazilian side of the falls from the various walkways

DAY 7

Fly to Rio de Janeiro and transfer to the Copacabana Palace located overlooking the famous Copacabana Beach

DAY 8

Full-day private tour of Corcovado Mountain and the statue of Christ the Redeemer, followed by the iconic Sugar Loaf Mountain

DAY 9

Free day to see more of the sights or relax on one of the city's beautiful beaches

DAY 10

Transfer by land to the coastal town of Buzios and relax at the charming Casa Brancas

DAYS 11-12

Free days to relax by the pool, visit one of the many beaches and enjoy the laid back Brazilian vibe

DAY 13

Land transfer to Rio airport for your return, overnight flight, to the UK.



Peru



Whilst Machu Picchu is its defining image, Peru offers so much more. Natural wonders and rich cultures blend perfectly to make the country one of Latin America's most rewarding.

Peru is home to one of the continent's most sought-after highlights, iconic Machu Picchu. This Inca citadel is an awe-inspiring sight, and on many travellers' lifetime 'must-see' lists. In 2011, the centenary of its discovery by Hiram Bingham, the Peruvian government decided to reduce the number of entrance tickets

to the citadel by half, so it's vital to book early.

Cuzco offers more than its reputation as the starting point for trips to Machu Picchu. A beautiful Spanish colonial city built upon Inca foundations, it is at its most vibrant in late June during the annual Incan Inti Raymi festival. Between Cuzco and Machu Picchu lies the

Recommended things to do:

- 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
- Enjoy an Andean spa treatment in the Sacred Valley
- See Giant river otter on a luxurious Amazon cruise

Peru



Jan ✓	Feb X	Mar ✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓✓
Jul ✓✓	Aug ✓✓	Sep ✓✓	Oct ✓✓	Nov ✓✓	Dec ✓

When to go

The best months to visit Peru are from April to November, 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 year-round.

Getting there

There are no direct flights from the UK to Peru. The most popular routes are flying with Iberia, LAN or Air Europa via Madrid, Avianca via Bogota, Air France via Paris, KLM via Amsterdam, TAM via Sao Paulo or American Airlines via Miami.

GMT: -5 hours

Visas

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

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.

Urubamba or Sacred Valley, with many colourful markets and Inca ruins.

Lake Titicaca is the highest navigable lake in the world, and also the gateway to cross into Bolivia. Close by is the Colca Canyon. Deeper than the Grand Canyon, it is worth visiting not only for its extraordinary beauty, but also because it offers a unique opportunity to spend time watching the beautiful condor.

Peru is one of the three most accessible countries from which to visit the Amazon rainforest. You can stay in jungle lodges reached from Puerto Maldonado, or set off from Iquitos on board a comfortable cruise boat that navigates the world's most famous river.

The less-visited Peruvian north is the site of some spectacular pre-Columbian ruins such as the impressive adobe city of Chan Chan near Trujillo and the largely unexplored ruins of the Chachapoyas region.

There are charming colonial cities too like Cajamarca which has hot springs and Inca baths.

One of the greatest changes to tourism in Peru in recent years has been the growth of luxurious accommodation, not only in the cities but even in the remotest areas.



Lake Titicaca's floating islands are made from Tortora reeds and are home to traditional communities. They can be visited from both the Peruvian and the Bolivian sides of the lake.

Lima & Surrounds

Peru's capital city is not merely the entry point to the country, it's a city that is well worth visiting in its own right.

Lima's historic centre, archaeological sites, museums and art galleries can easily fill a day's sightseeing and the city has a burgeoning reputation for innovative restaurants serving local cuisine with a twist.

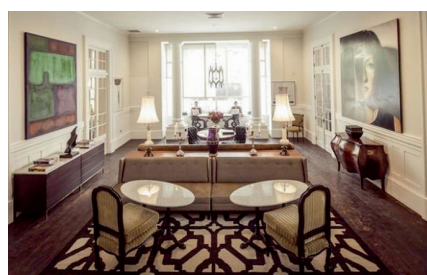
The city is also the departure point for some of Peru's less accessible highlights such as the Nazca Lines and Ballestas Islands.

The Nazca Lines

The Nazca Lines are a series of hundreds of ancient geoglyphs etched into the Nazca Desert and can be visited on a day excursion from Lima. The designs have provoked much discussion about their purpose and meaning, with no firm conclusions as yet. They depict humans, animals, birds and fish. The best way to appreciate them is from the air by light aircraft.

The Ballestas Islands

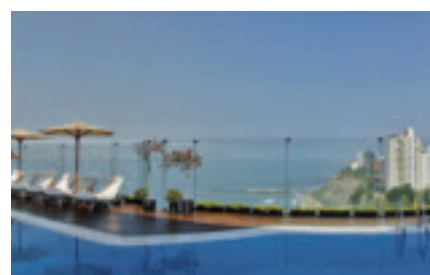
These islands are a cluster of rocks situated off the coast at Paracas and are renowned for their wildlife, sometimes referred to as the Peruvian Galapagos. Boat trips operate in the mornings and take visitors on a tour of the islands to spot some of the 160 species of marine birds that reside there, including Humboldt penguins, cormorants and Peruvian boobies.



Hotel B

Gold
B/B

Hotel B is a stylish boutique hotel located in Barranco, the artists' district of Lima. Originally constructed in 1914 in Belle Époque style and carefully restored with the oversight of an Italian master woodworker, the hotel is a work of art in itself. There are 17 beautifully decorated guest rooms that overlook historic Calle San Martín or the charming inner patio. The restaurant and bar serve excellent Peruvian cuisine in an informal atmosphere, drinks and 'lonche' a Peruvian tradition similar to English afternoon tea.



Miraflores Park by Belmond

Platinum
B/B

The Miraflores Park has a fantastic location in the fashionable and residential area of Miraflores. Renowned for its beautiful garden location beside the Pacific Ocean, it has breathtaking views out to sea. This 11-storey, all-suite hotel successfully combines the very best of luxury accommodation and exceptional dining with a warm welcome. Guests can enjoy a delicious Peruvian inspired meal at Mesa 18 by Toshiro or the Observatory Restaurant. Evening drinks are available at the English inspired Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde bar.

Seven Peruvian dishes worth flying for



Travel writer Jean Paul Zapata lists his seven favourite childhood recipes from Peru. Born in Los Angeles and now a resident of London via New York, Jean Paul grew up sampling and cooking authentic Latin American cuisine next to his Colombian and Peruvian parents.

Peruvian food has taken the world by storm, with traditional and fusion restaurants popping up from London to Buenos Aires.

Mixing the freshest seafood from the Pacific Ocean, Asian influences from 19th century Chinese labour immigrants, and indigenous spices that were first used during the Inca Empire, Peruvian food is both a tradition and a revolution.

Peruvian cuisine is a reflection of the country's three main geographical climates: the coast, the Andes and the jungles. Using the ingredients native to their homes, Peruvians have managed to create a cuisine that proudly combines heritage and great-tasting food.

Lima, the country's capital, is a testament to new culinary influences, where regional dishes that have been made the same way for centuries are now subject to experimentation, and welcomed with raving reviews.

Here's a list of seven Peruvian dishes that are not to be missed.

1. Ceviche One of the most traditional seafood dishes is ceviche, raw fish that is "cooked" in lemon juice. Served with tangy red onion and sweet potato, ceviche is like a plate of sushi with a kick (sans the rice). Ceviche is also one of the best dishes to experiment with, where you can mix various types of seafood like squid and calamari, or play with spices like chilli peppers.

2. Cuy When in Peru, eat as Peruvians eat, and Peruvians have mastered a guinea pig recipe that will surprise most foreigners with how good it is. The sweet, flavourful meat is typically grilled on a spit for a smoky, savoury taste.

3. Lomo saltado A meat dish heavily influenced by Chinese cuisine, the lomo saltado is a stir-fry hybrid where beef (lomo), tomatoes, onions, cilantro and French fries are tossed in a wok and served over rice.

4. Papa a la huancaína The best part of this dish, born in the town of Huancayo, is the creamy, spicy cheese sauce made with yellow aji peppers indigenous to the region. Poured over boiled potatoes and eggs, the combination texture and taste can be added to anything: veggies, rice or chicken.

5. Pisco sour No meal is complete without a drink, and in Peru, that drink is a pisco sour. Shake three parts pisco (a grape brandy that is also the national drink), one part simple syrup, one part lime juice, egg white and angostura bitters for a frothy cocktail that is perfect for finishing, or starting, any meal.

6. Chicha morada This refreshing drink made from purple maize (corn) is steeped with sugar, cinnamon and cloves for a refreshing range of flavour profile.

7. Lucuma A mango-looking fruit, lucuma has a sweet, syrup-like flavour that is used in milkshakes and ice creams.



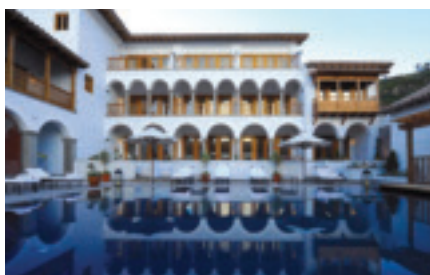
Cuzco

Recommended things to do:

- Visit the Plaza de Armas in Cuzco
- Go horse riding in the Sacred Valley
- Take a tour of Pisac market
- Explore Cuzco's colonial centre
- Explore the ruins at Sacsayhuaman



Cuzco is not just the gateway to Machu Picchu, it's a striking Spanish colonial city built on Inca foundations and well worth exploring. This former capital of the Inca Empire is a cultural delight, with local markets, museums and nearby Inca ruins to discover. It's also home to the famous Inti Raymi festival of the sun that takes place on 24 June every year – book well in advance for the festival period.



Palacio Nazarenas by Belmond

Platinum
B/B

Palacio Nazarenas opened its doors to the public in June 2012 and is located on Nazarenas Square and adjacent to the Monasterio Hotel. Built on the site of a former palace and convent, this is an all-suite hotel with 55 rooms positioned around six interlocking courtyards with wooden balconies. The hotel combines Inca tradition with modern services and facilities including a personal butler, an Andean Bistro and Hypnoze Spa. There is also a wonderful outdoor heated pool with a poolside bar.



Casa Andina Private Collection

Silver
B/B

This 18th century manor house near Cuzco's Plaza de Armas is full of colonial character, offering the friendliness of a boutique option with the comforts of a much larger establishment. The hotel has three interior patios; the principal patio features a gurgling stone fountain and is one of Cuzco's most emblematic courtyards. The cosy lounge has a massive stone fireplace and guests dine by candlelight in the restaurant which is decorated with historic paintings. Several rooms feature colonial frescoes, uncovered during renovation.



El Mercado Tunqui

Silver
B/B

The new Mountain Lodges of Peru boutique hotel, El Mercado Tunqui, is just a few blocks from Cuzco's main square, Plaza de Armas. Built on the premises of a former market the hotel opened in June 2013 to great acclaim. Using the marketplace concept, the breakfast room is open all day and the buffet style dishes are cooked on the spot using fresh ingredients, just like a street vendor. The 27 rooms and seven suites all have striking interiors and there's a charming outside patio and stylish bar/restaurant.

Sacred Valley

Peru

The Sacred Valley is at a lower altitude than Cuzco, with a mild climate, picture postcard villages and fine Inca sites.

Formed by the Urubamba River this picturesque valley is fed by many rivers that descend through adjoining valleys and gorges. The valley contains many archaeological remains such as the Inca site at Ollantaytambo as well as market villages like Pisac. It's the place to go walking, horse riding, mountain biking or river rafting if you enjoy more active outdoor pursuits.



Hotel Rio Sagrado

Platinum
B/B

Situated amongst verdant fields and towering mountains on the banks of the Urubamba River, this attractive Belmond hotel is built with natural materials to resemble an authentic Andean village. Situated at a lower altitude than Cuzco, Hotel Rio Sagrado provides the perfect environment to acclimatise when first arriving in the region. The El Huerto restaurant uses fresh local ingredients and guests can enjoy a Sacred Valley massage in the renovated Mayu Wilka Spa or take a dip in the refreshing swimming pool.



Sol y Luna Lodge & Spa

Silver
B/B

Sol y Luna is one of the Sacred Valley's most established properties, and despite the arrival of new hotels, it is still regarded as one of the best. With 43 individual casitas or small houses, some with displays of Peruvian art and tapestries, an outstanding spa, beautiful natural gardens and delicious cuisine this is the ideal spot to relax and re-energise. The hotel can arrange many of the activities available throughout the valley, uses locally grown produce and employs people from the local community.



Casa Andina Private Collection

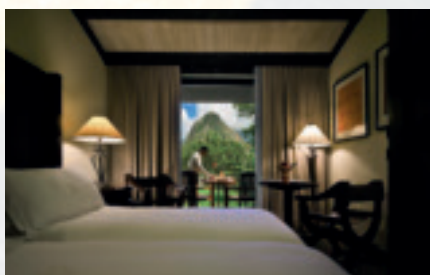
Silver
B/B

Typical of hotels in this delightful part of Peru, this 85 room property is set amidst eight acres of landscaped flower-filled gardens. The hotel, which offers beautiful views of the undulating valley, is located close to the town of Ollantaytambo and has a large restaurant, a spa and an observatory. A number of activities and tours within the Sacred Valley can be arranged by the hotel, including white-water rafting on the Urubamba River, hikes and horseback riding.

Machu Picchu

South America's most famous archaeological site, Machu Picchu, was lost to the outside world until 1911, when it was rediscovered by American archaeologist, Hiram Bingham.

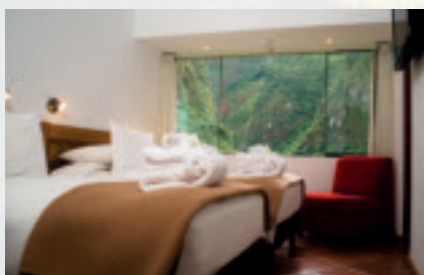
Machu Picchu has been voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Whilst it can be visited as a day trip from Cuzco or the Sacred Valley, we recommend at least an overnight stay so that you have plenty of time to explore and admire this remarkable site.



Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge

Platinum
Half-board

Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge is the only hotel located adjacent to this ancient Inca citadel. It offers guests exceptionally easy access to Machu Picchu from early morning to late afternoon, when most of the day visitors and buses have left. At the stylish Tampu restaurant and bar, guests can sit out on the terrace and savour Peruvian cuisine based on produce grown on the lodge's own plot. This delightful Belmond hideaway is the perfect place to relax and unwind in the shadow of The Lost City.



El MaPi Hotel by Inkaterra

Silver
Half-board

El MaPi Hotel is an excellent hotel choice with a welcoming atmosphere in the heart of Aguas Calientes, the village below Machu Picchu. With contemporary, modern furnishings, the hotel has 48 comfortable rooms, some with scenic views and a relaxed and informal feel. This is reflected in the hotel's café that serves tasty, nutritious breakfasts and remains open throughout the day serving a range of healthy dishes. The hotel also has a well stocked bar where you can enjoy a local pisco sour.



Sumaq Machu Picchu

Gold
Half-board

Sumaq occupies a great location in Aguas Calientes, the departure point for trips to the ancient Inca citadel of Machu Picchu. This gem of a hotel offers 60 spacious rooms and suites, many with balconies overlooking the Urubamba Valley and in the Sumaq Suites a cosy fireplace. During your stay, dine at the hotel's restaurant serving a modern style of Peruvian cuisine and visit the café bar for traditional cocktails. A selection of excursions including hikes can be arranged or learn to cook Peruvian style.

Machu Picchu really does live up to its star billing. Visit as early in the morning as you can to minimise the crowds and make the challenging climb up Huayna Picchu for magical views!



Getting to Machu Picchu

Machu Picchu can be reached by train or on foot. For those who like to arrive in relaxed style, there are train services from Cuzco and the Sacred Valley to Aguas Calientes, the nearest town to Machu Picchu. From here regular buses transport visitors to the citadel.

The majority of the trains start from Poroy, near Cuzco, and go via Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley reaching Aguas Calientes about two

hours later. Peru Rail's Vistadome carriages have panoramic windows and the comfortable Expedition trains follow the same route. Peru Rail also operate the Hiram Bingham, an elegant member of the Belmond train family from Poroy. This offers a leisurely morning start with brunch served en route, returning in the evening with pre-dinner drinks accompanied by live entertainment and a four-course gastronomic menu.

Trekking

For those who prefer more active pursuits and who have the time, there are a number of exhilarating guided treks along traditional trails. The Classic Inca Route trek takes four days and you stay under canvas. Or choose the more luxurious six-day trek along the Salkantay trail, and stay in welcoming purpose-built Mountain Lodges of Peru accommodation.

Find yourself in Peru with Inkaterra

Founded in 1975, Inkaterra has developed an outstanding collection of hotels that give visitors unrivalled access to Peru's world class cultural and natural assets. With an impressive reputation for environmental conservation and support for traditional Peruvian cultures, Inkaterra has sustainability at its core. Its high-end hotels in Cuzco, the spiritual heart of the Inca Empire, in Aguas Calientes just below Machu Picchu and at Tambopata in the Peruvian Amazon, can be combined to form a superb 8 day/7 night itinerary.



Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo

Gold
Half-board

Located in Aguas Calientes, just steps from the train station and in the valley immediately below Machu Picchu, this hotel is set in 12 acres of private tropical gardens, which showcase many different types of orchid. A popular choice, this first-class boutique property, with 85 spacious cottages, has a fabulous range of accommodation. The Unu spa offers a wide choice of treatments using natural essences, and there are two restaurants including the lovely Café Inkaterra serving international and Andean dishes.



Inkaterra La Casona

Gold
B/B

Inkaterra La Casona is a boutique property located 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 modern amenities and the indulgent Yaku therapy room. Colonial furnishings blend with contemporary comforts and impeccable service offering a truly opulent stay. This Relais & Chateaux hotel, the first in Peru, is a quiet oasis positioned on the serene Plaza Las Nazarenas.



Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica

Silver
3-night package, full-board

Situated on the bank of the Madre de Dios River in a 40 square mile private reserve, adjacent to Tambopata National Park, this lodge is accessed from Puerto Maldonado by motorised canoe. It offers some of the most luxurious lodge rooms in the Peruvian Amazon with just 35 private cabanas constructed from natural materials. With a screened porch and hammocks, guests can enjoy the sounds of the jungle from their room or take one of the included excursions; a highlight is the Inkaterra Canopy Walkway.

Peruvian Amazon

Peru

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 Andean highlands. The most pristine area for wildlife is the Manu Biosphere Reserve, but access is difficult and warrants a longer stay at one of the remote rainforest lodges. If you are short on time, rainforest lodges near Puerto Maldonado are a good choice. They are easily reached from Cuzco and Lima. If, however, you yearn to travel along the mighty Amazon itself, take a leisurely cruise in style from Iquitos in the north through the Pacaya Samiria Reserve on a luxury vessel.



M/V Aqua & M/V Aria

Platinum
Full-board & excursions

This luxury Amazon cruise transports guests into a totally natural world, where they explore remote places along the river by water and on foot, with the opportunity to spot unusual wildlife and meet local communities. The award-winning M/V Aqua and sister ship Aria offer three-, four- or seven-night cruises. The 12 Aqua suites and 16 Aria suites are all spacious with generous panoramic windows. After a day's excursion with expert guides, guests can relax in the lounge or on the outdoor observation deck.



Rainforest Expeditions

Bronze
Full-board & excursions

Rainforest Expeditions operates three award-winning Amazon lodges: Posada Amazonas, Refugio Amazonas, and Tambopata Research Centre. Each lodge provides access to unique eco-tourism experiences, including hikes, wildlife observation and river activities. Rooms in each of the lodges have three walls with beds protected by mosquito netting allowing complete immersion into the sounds of the Amazon. By working closely with the Ese'jeja native community, the lodges generate sustainable local development whilst caring for the environment.



Hacienda Concepcion by Inkaterra

Bronze
Full-board & excursions

The newest addition to South America's Inkaterra group, family-friendly Hacienda Concepcion is about 20 minutes by boat from Puerto Maldonado, near the Madre de Dios River. Once the site of a medical missionary's home and later a primary school, Hacienda Concepcion consists of a main lodge with eight comfortable twin rooms and seven individual cabanas on stilts. The dining room serves a nutritious breakfast, lunch and dinner complemented by a pisco sour happy hour in the early evening at the bar.

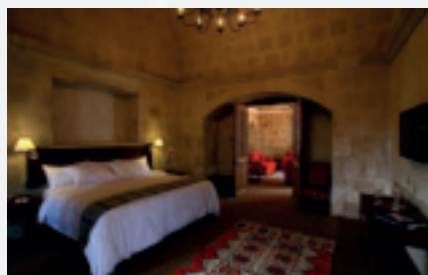
Southern Peru

Arequipa and Colca Canyon

The attractive city of Arequipa lies in the shadow of three imposing, often snow-capped volcanoes. It is from the white volcanic rock that many of its buildings are made, hence the nickname the 'White City'.

Arequipa's historic centre has a number of attractions including an impressive main square and the Santa Catalina Monastery, one of Peru's most important religious monuments. At an altitude of just under 2,400 metres, Arequipa provides a gradual introduction to 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 use agricultural methods from Inca times. However, the main attraction is the canyon, which is twice the depth of the Grand Canyon in the USA. At the popular 'Cruz del Condor' viewpoint in the early mornings or evenings, you can sometimes see the canyon's true star attraction – the Andean condor.



Casa Andina Private Collection

Silver
B/B

Restored to its original grandeur, this colonial mansion is one of the finest hotels in Arequipa's historic centre, and is as much a living museum as it is hotel. Inhabiting the 1794 former Mint House, a national historic monument, it was meticulously restored and remodelled in 2008 after a century of neglect, and features vaulted ceilings, colonial courtyards and an elegant restaurant. Five large suites have Republican-era flavour in the traditional building and 36 new rooms occupy a modern adjunct structure situated off an interior patio.



Colca Lodge

Silver
B/B

Built completely of stone, mud bricks and thatch roofs, Colca Lodge is located in the heart of the valley, next to the Colca River, in the midst of ancestral farming terraces. With a particular architectural style inspired by ancient Inca buildings, the lodge has combined an attractive rustic style with total comfort without damaging the surrounding environment. All 45 rustic rooms have heating, hot water from a solar panel and an outdoor terrace with breathtaking views. The hotel also features its own thermal hot springs.

Lake Titicaca

Peru



At an altitude of 3,800 metres 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. The best way to arrive here is on the Andean Explorer train service from Cuzco which runs several times a week to Puno and is exquisitely decorated in the manner of the great Pullman trains of the 1920s. The journey takes you high up into the Altiplano on a leisurely trip through the Andean landscape, where you will spot vicuna and alpaca.



Casa Andina Private Collection Isla Suasi

Silver
Full-board

This solar-powered eco-lodge is set on the remote and beautiful Isla Suasi, Lake Titicaca's only private island. Featuring panoramic lake views from every room, surrounded by gardens and designed with native materials, the lodge is committed to eco practices. Isla Suasi is a magical place to disconnect from the world. Guests can spot rare vicuna (a relative of the llama), hike to Itapilluni Hill to view the colourful sunsets, canoe around the island, enjoy quiet nature walks or visit the massage room and steam saunas.



Casa Andina Private Collection Puno

Silver
B/B

Perched at the water's edge, 3,800m above sea level, Casa Andina Private Collection Puno has extraordinary views over Lake Titicaca. Most of the 46 rooms have unparalleled lake vistas and the gourmet restaurant has a glass wall that frames the lake view as well as a cosy, warming fireplace. A large sunny terrace lets guests take in the seemingly endless vistas whilst the hotel's own private pier is an ideal starting point for trips to the Uros floating islands or to Isla Suasi.



Titilaka Lake Titicaca

Platinum
Full-board & excursions

Titilaka is an all suite lodge set on an exclusive private peninsula on the shores of Lake Titicaca, surrounded by breathtaking landscapes. 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. During your stay all meals and a selection of fascinating excursions are included. Choose from a diverse range of tours by boat, on foot or on horseback before returning to your luxurious lodge to unwind.

Treasures of Peru

Lima – Arequipa – Colca Canyon – Lake Titicaca
Cuzco – Machu Picchu – Sacred Valley

This classic 13-day private itinerary showcases Peru's best loved natural wonders and colonial gems, including Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca.

Watch for condors soaring over the Colca Canyon, and visit the Indian communities on Lake Titicaca before travelling to the Inca heartland of Cuzco and the wondrous site of Machu Picchu. If you'd like to stay on in Peru a little longer, you can extend your trip to the Amazon, or if you want to see more of South America, Iguazu Falls and Rio de Janeiro, are excellent extensions.



DAY 1

Daytime flight via Madrid to Lima. On arrival transfer to the Casa Andina Private Collection located in the upmarket Miraflores area of the city

DAY 2

Half day city tour of Lima visiting the historic centre and the fascinating Larco Herrera Museum with its extensive pottery collection

DAY 3

Take the morning flight to Arequipa and overnight at the Casa Andina Private Collection, situated on the site of the former Mint Building. There is free time in the afternoon to explore this small and charming city

DAY 4

Half day city tour including the Santa Catalina Convent and the Juanita Mummy, the body of a 14 year old Inca girl which was only discovered in 1995

DAY 5

Leave Arequipa by road for the Colca Valley. This journey takes several hours and reaches an altitude of over 4,800m before descending into the valley. Overnight at the Colca Lodge. Free afternoon to visit the town of Chivay or relax in the thermal baths

DAY 6

Morning tour to Condor's Cross at one end of the valley where not only can you gaze at the immense canyon but maybe see the Andean condor. In the afternoon travel by coach to Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Stay at the Casa Andina Private Collection Hotel overlooking Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world

DAY 7

Enjoy a full day excursion by boat on the lake and visit the Uros floating reed islands and one of the Indian communities on Taquile Island

DAY 8

Travel by coach for the full-day journey across the Altiplano to Cuzco. En route stop at La Raya, the highest point on the journey, the Inca complex at Raqchi and at Andahuaylillas where the church is known as the 'Sistine Chapel of the Americas'. Alternatively we can arrange your trip to travel on the Andean Explorer train (supplement applies)

DAY 9

Take a short guided tour of the city of Cuzco to discover some of its history and architecture, including the magnificent Inca stonework and structures at Sacsayhuaman

DAY 10

For many, today will be the highlight of a holiday to Peru. The day that you finally reach the magnificent Inca citadel of Machu Picchu. Travel by train to the town of Aguas Calientes, the base for this historic site

DAY 11

You have a free morning to return early to Machu Picchu independently if you wish or relax at the hotel and enjoy some spa treatments. In the afternoon, travel by train to the Sacred Valley and stay at the Sol y Luna Hotel

DAY 12

Free day to relax and enjoy the hotel spa or visit a local market. The more active can go trekking either on foot or horseback

DAY 13

Fly from Cuzco to Lima. Continue by air via Madrid to London.

Peru & Bolivia Highlights

Lima – Sacred Valley – Machu Picchu – Cuzco
Lake Titicaca – La Paz – Salar de Uyuni – Potosi – Sucre

Peru

See the magnificent Inca ruins at Machu Picchu before enjoying the highlights of Bolivia on this 16-day, high altitude itinerary. By way of contrast this trip stays on the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca.

Get to the heart of what makes Peru and Bolivia so special. From the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu to the salt flats of Uyuni, this trip takes you on a spectacular journey through the Andes. See magnificent landscapes and the colourful communities and cultures that thrive in the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes.

DAY 1

Take the daytime flight to Lima, via Madrid and transfer to the Casa Andina Private collection in the upmarket Miraflores district

DAY 2

Sightseeing tour of Lima including many of the city's colonial and cultural gems and the fascinating Larco Herrera museum

DAY 3

Take the short flight to Cuzco and transfer to the Sol y Luna hotel in the Sacred Valley. Free afternoon

DAY 4

Free day in the Sacred Valley to participate in any number of the activities or tours the hotel offers, which are booked locally

DAY 5

Transfer to the train station for the scenic Vistadome service to Aguas Calientes and on to Machu Picchu with an afternoon guided tour of this impressive Inca Citadel.

DAY 6

Free morning to revisit Machu Picchu before taking the train to Ollanta or Poroy for the transfer to Cuzco. Stay at the Casa Andina Private Collection in the heart of the city

DAY 7

Half day sightseeing tour of Cuzco including the impressive Sacsayhuaman fortress which overlooks the city

DAY 8

Take a breathtaking train journey through the Andes, aboard the Andean Explorer to Puno, and the shores of Lake Titicaca. Stay at the lakeside Casa Andina Private Collection

DAY 9

Today you will cross into Bolivia visiting the Moon Island before continuing to Sun Island for an overnight stay at the Posada del Inca Eco Lodge

DAY 10

Travel by hydrofoil to the lakeside and travel by road to La Paz, a city nestled high in the Andes and surrounded by snow-covered peaks

DAY 11

Take the flight from La Paz to Uyuni and explore the amazing salt flats. You will also spend the night at the Luna Salada hotel which is made entirely of salt

DAY 12

Transfer from Uyuni to the colonial town of Potosi. Afternoon visit to the mines

DAY 13

Travel by land to Sucre, some say Bolivia's most beautiful town, and stay in its best boutique hotel, Hotel de su Merced

DAY 14

Half-day city tour of Sucre which includes a visit to the Liberty House where Simon Bolivar signed the Independence of Bolivia



DAY 15


Fly from Sucre to La Paz and enjoy a tour of this magical city including Moon Valley

DAY 16

Spend the morning sightseeing. In the afternoon, fly from La Paz to Lima, then continue on your overnight flight to London, via Madrid.




Bolivia



For good reason, it is difficult to find an advert for Latin America without an image of Bolivia's extraordinary Uyuni salt flats. They are certainly a sight to behold, but far from the only highlight of this fantastic country. Bolivia is home to some of the most untouched and least visited areas of the Amazon rainforest, while the colonial cities of Sucre and the silver-mining centre of Potosi are well-preserved windows into the country's history. The colourful Sunday market at the town of Tarabuco, not far from Sucre, is regarded as one of the most authentic in South America.

With its rugged terrain, many colourful festivals and indigenous people holding strong religious beliefs, this land-locked country creates a lasting impression. Bolivia can be visited as a country in its own right, but it can also be combined with Peru and Chile as well as Argentina and Brazil.



Straddling the Andes, Bolivia is a country waiting to be explored. 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 and great volcanoes to bright white salt flats.

Things to do in Bolivia:

- Browse the indigenous markets of La Paz
- Experience the world's biggest salt flats at Uyuni
- Explore the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca
- See colonial gems in the white city of Sucre
- Venture into the Bolivian Amazon

Bolivia



Jan ✓	Feb ✓	Mar ✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓✓
Jul ✓	Aug ✓	Sep ✓	Oct ✓✓	Nov ✓✓	Dec ✓

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 whilst the Amazon remains hot and humid at all times.

Getting there

There are no direct flights from the UK to Bolivia. The most popular routes are flying with British Airways/American Airlines via Miami, LAN via Madrid and Lima or Air Europa via Madrid. You can also connect via Sao Paulo or Buenos Aires.

GMT: -4 hours

Visas

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

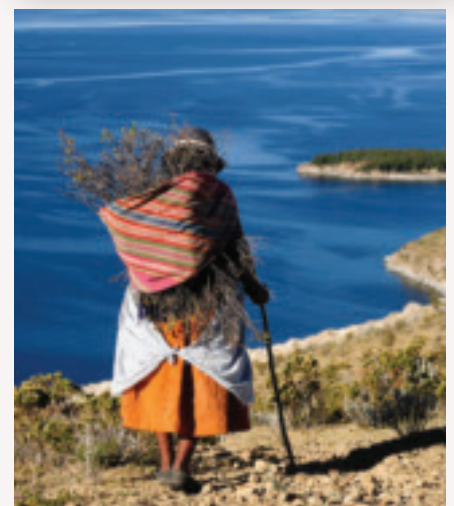
Travel journalist **Graeme Green**, lived and worked in South America for 13 months, and during this time explored the islands in Lake Titicaca.

"Lake Titicaca has a special feel to it. That might be the pure high altitude air, or it could be the indigenous cultures that make their home on the 40 islands. According to legend, the Incan empire was born here and the lake continues to be of great significance to Andean cultures, including Incas, Uros and Aymaras. Staying on the islands and experiencing life with the people here is one of the highlights of visiting Titicaca.

A bus takes me from Puno (in Peru) across the dusty border and into Bolivia to catch a catamaran out to the sacred Isla del Sol. Grace, our Bolivian guide,

shows us around a labyrinthine set of ruins on a hilltop, built by ancient Aymara and later re-used by Incas. The story goes that the sun saw the people on the land as savage people, so he sent his two children to civilize them. That's how the Inca empire began.

There's an important rock on the hillside on which the 'children of the sun' are said to have appeared after emerging from the water. Grace points out a puma's face in the rock; the word Titicaca combines old indigenous words for 'wild cat' or 'puma' and 'grey rock'."



Bolivia's Cities

La Paz & Sucre

La Paz is the administrative capital of Bolivia, and despite its mixture of colonial and modern, it retains the most indigenous flavour of all Latin American cities.

Situated high up in the Andes in a steep-sided bowl with buildings perched on the side of the hills, you will still see Indian women in traditional dress in the markets and find colourful textiles and alpaca woollens at a bargain price.

To the southeast, the charming colonial city of Sucre (the official capital city of Bolivia and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site) is known as 'La Ciudad Blanca' because of its whitewashed buildings. Its centre has many buildings dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries such as the Casa de la Libertad, the cathedral and one of the earliest South American universities founded in 1624.



La Casona Boutique Hotel

Bronze

B/B

This hotel is located within a colonial building in the historic city of La Paz and features the same architectural and construction styling (stone patios, terraces, the belfry and viewpoints) as that of the San Francisco Convent. Rooms are spacious and elegant featuring parquet floors and gabled roofs 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.



Hostal de su Merced Sucre

Bronze

B/B

A well-known boutique hotel, Hostal de su Merced is situated in the heart of the Sucre's city centre with beautiful views over the ancient 'white city'. Occupying a magnificent converted mansion constructed in the 18th century, the hotel now offers 16 beautifully decorated rooms complemented with attentive service and traditional cuisine. The hotel features antique pieces such as wooden doors, lace curtains and brass beds. From the flower adorned rooftop terrace guests have spectacular views of the cathedral and the mountains behind the city.



Lake Titicaca

Bolivia



High in the Andes, iconic Lake Titicaca straddles the border between Peru and Bolivia.

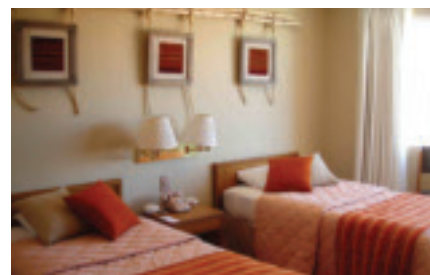
Lake Titicaca's electric blue waters are a spectacular sight against the bright sky and snow-capped Andean mountains. Some of the lake's 40 islands are home to Peru and Bolivia's oldest peoples, where traditional ways of life still survive. Isla del Sol, the largest of the lake islands and on the Bolivian 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 the Inca culture.



Posada del Inca Eco Lodge

Bronze
B/B

Located at the top of beautiful Isla del Sol, Lake Titicaca, this charming hotel was once a colonial hacienda, but now offers 20 rustic, simple but comfortable rooms in a traditional building, complete with tiled roof and pretty gardens. Hearty Andean food is served in the restaurant, and there is a warm fireplace in the lounge and breathtaking views of the lake and snow-capped Andean backdrop. This is an ideal base from which to explore the island including the Inca Steps, sacred Puma Rock and maze at Challapampa.



Inca Utama

Bronze
B/B

Situated in Huatajata on the shores of Lake Titicaca, Inca Utama is both a hotel and cultural experience. The 57 rooms are spread through two buildings with white stone walls and terracotta bricks and roofing. This hotel has a particular emphasis on Andean cultures and guests can visit the Andean Eco Village and Altiplano Museum and Observatory next to the hotel. La Chozá Nautica restaurant overlooks the lake and has spectacular panoramic views whilst Sumaj Untavi has folklore shows, gourmet food and a cosy bar.

Spectacular Southern Bolivia

Uyuni Salt Flats

The salt flats south of Uyuni are part of the Altiplano that reaches from Bolivia across into northern Chile, and are the largest in the world.

These breathtaking and unusual landscapes high up in the Andes are truly spectacular. Sunglasses and sun cream are essential as you journey by four-wheel drive across a blinding white salt crust, bordered by azure blue skies and small islands dotted with giant cacti, to great expanses of red desert, where mineral rich and vividly coloured lakes support flocks of rare James' flamingos.

Airstream campers offer a unique way to experience this remote, sparsely populated region, with a

two-night tour including one night at the Luna Salada Hotel. These shiny new Airstream Campers cater for up to two guests, are fully equipped and include a personal chauffeur/guide.

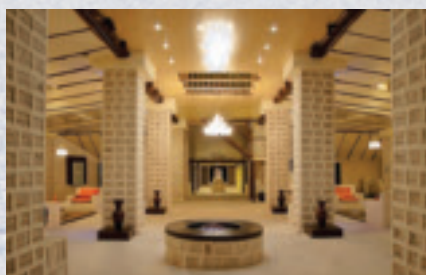
The best months to visit this region are from April to November, but be warned, temperatures at night on the high Altiplano can drop sharply in the winter months of June to August. If you are travelling from La Paz to Uyuni, you can now fly to Uyuni instead of a three-hour drive followed by a five-hour train journey.



Luna Salada Hotel

Bronze
B/B

Luna Salada Hotel (literally meaning 'salt moon') has to be one of the most extraordinary hotels in the world, as it is almost entirely constructed of rock salt. Overlooking the spectacular Salar de Uyuni, the floors are strewn with colourful woven rugs over rock salt gravel and much of the furniture is carved from salt, which is also mined nearby. Twenty-three comfortable en suite rooms and a cosy restaurant complete this unique experience. This is a tranquil base from which to explore the salt flats by four-wheel drive.



Palacio del Sal

Bronze
B/B

This concept hotel occupies a remote location in Colchani about 25km from Uyuni, on the eastern shore of the Salar de Uyuni. It took two years to construct and has been regularly included in lists of the most unusual hotels because, like Luna Salada, it has been built almost entirely with salt. Everything from the chairs, tables, beds and sculptures are made of salt. The Palacio del Sal has 16 comfortable, well-heated en suite rooms constructed in an igloo style using salt blocks, and there is a dining room, bar and games room.

Salar de Uyuni

The Salar de Uyuni, the famous Salt Flats of Bolivia, is a totally surreal place.

“The landscape is nothing like anything I have ever seen before, or anywhere I have ever visited – and as a travel writer that is something that rarely happens. Travelling across the Salt Flats in a shiny airstream camper van is a fantastic way to explore, with much more flexibility than being based in a hotel. Inside, the van is pared down and simple, but comfortable and perfect for two. There is plenty of space inside, with great electric blankets and a really cosy atmosphere, although the bathroom isn’t exactly huge. When you pull back the shades in the morning at first it is a bit discombobulating to see the bright blue sky and dazzling white that are so reminiscent of an Alpine palette, but then you remember you are on a giant lake of dried salt. Because of the altitude, it is much colder, particularly at night, than



people might expect, so a top tip would be to take plenty of warm clothes – it’s a good idea to stock up on locally-made woollies such as alpaca socks before leaving Uyuni. I was very glad I had remembered to pack a pair!”

Lydia Bell, Freelance Journalist



Ecuador

Whilst most famous for its off shore island archipelago, the Galapagos, mainland Ecuador packs a lot of attractions into its dramatically beautiful landscapes. It consists of three regions: the coast, the Andes and the Amazon. The climate is tropically humid in the coastal region and the Amazon, but fresh and temperate in the highlands year-round, where there is little seasonal variation due to the proximity of the equator.

Quito, Ecuador's capital, has a sensitively restored historic area, and is a great base from which to take excursions. Many nearby villages produce a wealth of craftworks such as paintings, leather ware, ceramics, baskets, woodcarvings and even bread-dough carvings. Markets throughout

Tucked in on the west coast of South America between Peru and Colombia, Ecuador is one of the smallest countries on the continent. However, it is filled to bursting point with fascinating places to discover.

Things to do in Ecuador:

- Explore Quito's 'UNESCO World Heritage' centre
- Buy presents to take home at Otavalo Market
- Stay in a community run Amazon eco-lodge
- Take the Tren Crucero from Guayaquil to Quito
- Soak up superb colonial architecture in Cuenca

Ecuador



Hummingbird, Cloud Forest

the country – the most famous of which is at Otavalo – display the workmanship of Ecuadorian artisans.

Not far from Quito is the Equatorial Monument, which contains a museum that covers many aspects of Ecuadorian history and present day life, and you are also within easy reach of cloud forests, lakes, mountains and volcanoes. South of Quito, you can enjoy magnificent scenery along the Avenue of the Volcanoes leading towards Riobamba and the beautiful colonial city of Cuenca, where Panama hats come from. Close to this area, you can also visit Inca ruins at Ingapirca, Ecuador's most important archaeological site.

A stay at a jungle lodge deep in the Ecuadorian Amazon is a must for wildlife and bird-watching enthusiasts. Moreover, in our opinion, Ecuador is the best country in which to visit the Amazon and gain an understanding of the indigenous communities living in the rainforest.



The Galapagos Islands are likely to be the highlight of any trip to the region but mainland Ecuador's rainforest, mountains, wildlife, and even Inca heritage will not disappoint.

Tren Crucero

This train has become the way to travel slowly between the coastal city of Guayaquil and the capital of Quito, passing through seven of Ecuador's nine climatic zones. The four-day journey is punctuated by varied off-train excursions to cultural and natural sites, with overnight accommodation in comfortable and sometimes historic hotels and haciendas. The air-conditioned train provides plenty of comfortable seating at tables and on sofas overlooking picture windows, with a bar serving drinks and light refreshments during the day. At the end of the train is an open veranda from which to admire the spectacular mountain landscapes – and the world-famous Devil's Nose switchback.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

When to go

Ecuador can be visited all year round. 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 Iberia or LAN via Madrid, KLM via Amsterdam, Avianca via Bogota or American Airlines via Miami.

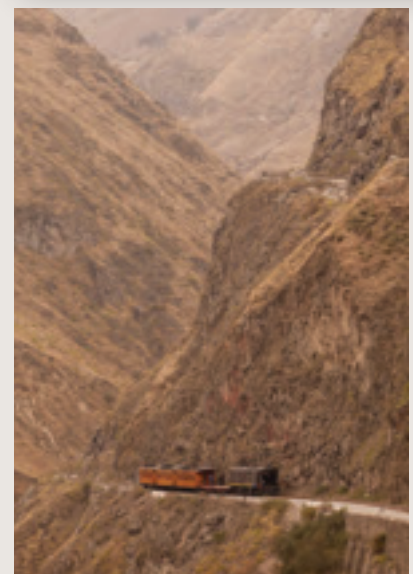
GMT: -5 Hours

Visas

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Ecuador, though if you fly via the US, an ESTA will be required.

Health

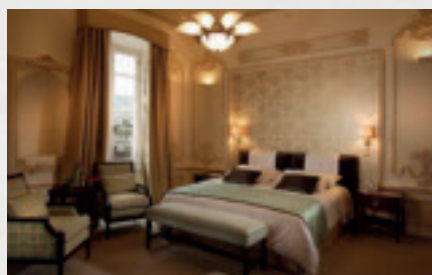
There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Ecuador. Precautions against malaria and yellow fever, if travelling to the Amazon, are suggested, but check with your GP.



Quito & Otavalo

Ecuador's capital city has an impressive location at 2,850 metres above sea level, overlooked by Mount Pichincha.

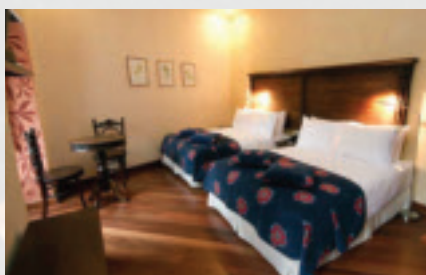
In recent years considerable restoration work has been undertaken in Quito's historic colonial centre, which has made this part of town a joy to explore on foot. Many buildings date from the 17th century and highlight the baroque era. Beyond Quito lies a wealth of attractions such as the Equatorial Monument and the spectacular natural beauty of the Avenue of the Volcanoes. Just a short journey from the capital, Otavalo is famous for its traditional and colourful market, which is still important within the local economy and very much a part of traditional life.



Casa Gangotena

Platinum
B/B

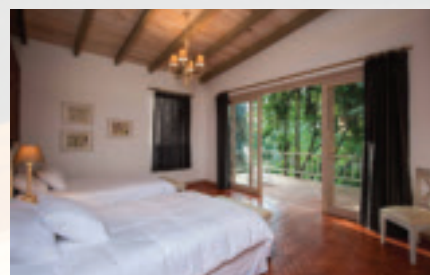
Casa Gangotena is a classy boutique hotel situated in a pretty restored mansion overlooking the Plaza San Francisco in the heart of Quito, within walking distance of many of the city's attractions. The results of a three year restoration process can truly be seen in this elegant hotel. Spread over three floors, Casa Gangotena has 31 stylish rooms and suites with high ceilings and plush furnishings. In the afternoon guests can enjoy Quiteño tea-time and traditional Ecuadorian cuisine is served in the hotel's restaurant.



La Casona de la Ronda

Silver
B/B

La Casona de la Ronda is situated on a celebrated narrow, winding street dating back to 1480 and earning its name in 1580 from the traditional nightly rounds that took place in the city. Once a hub for writers, poets and artists this is now the place to eat, drink and shop. La Casona's 22 bedrooms are located around a central courtyard and are well-furnished with king or double beds, wooden floors and hand carved furniture. The hotel has a peaceful reading room and good restaurant.



Hacienda Piman – Otavalo

Silver
Half-board

Nestled in the undulating mountains of the northern Ecuadorean Andes, near Otavalo, the historic Hacienda Piman is a very comfortable base for exploring the area. The hacienda blends modern styling with traditional thick stone walls, exposed brick and carefully chosen antiques. Seventeen rooms are spread across the manor house and garden cottages. Home cooked meals of traditional soup, and pork or trout based dishes are delicious. Also visit the nearby market town of Ibarra and ruins of Caranquí where Inca ruler Atahualpa was born.

The Avenue of the Volcanoes & Cuenca

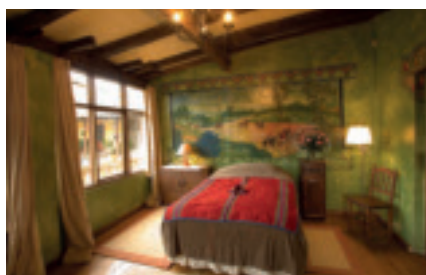
Ecuador

Nineteenth century German scientist and explorer, Alexander von Humboldt, christened this spectacular area *Avenue of the Volcanoes*.

The stunning Avenue of the Volcanoes stretches south from Quito for 325 kilometres between a line of 19 volcanoes in the Cordillera Occidental and 20 volcanoes in the parallel Cordillera Central. At 5,987 metres, Cotopaxi is the world's highest active volcano. This and the majestic peaks of Tungurahua and the 6,310 metre high Chimborazo can sometimes be spotted above the clouds as you approach Quito by air. The region offers visitors many

attractions such as colourful local markets, Inca ruins, characterful hacienda accommodation, hiking and horse riding.

About nine hours south of Quito and four hours east of Guayaquil, the striking city of Cuenca was founded in 1557 on the site of an old Inca settlement. Home of the Panama hat, the city retains much of its old colonial atmosphere. One of the most attractive cities in Ecuador, and regional capital, Cuenca's historic centre has cobblestone streets, flower-filled plazas and churches dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. Las Cajas National Park is located 19 miles to the northwest of the city where visitors can hike or fish in breathtaking landscapes.



Hacienda San Agustín de Callo

Gold
B/B

Built on the site of an Inca palace, this hacienda combines Inca stonework with Spanish colonial architecture. Located near Cotopaxi National Park and with spectacular views of the volcano, the hotel has 11 spacious rooms. A variety of guided activities are offered such as trekking, biking, horse riding and fishing, making it ideal for a longer stay in this lush highland region. Guests can visit local indigenous markets in the nearby villages and enjoy the hacienda's relaxed atmosphere and its fabulous Andean cooking.



Mansión Alcázar Cuenca

Gold
B/B

Restored to its original splendour, this beautiful 19th century colonial house is located in the heart of historic Cuenca. It has just 11 rooms and three suites, each individually and tastefully decorated with antique furniture and artworks. Many rooms overlook the hotel's lush gardens. The Casa Alonso restaurant serves typical Ecuadorian cuisine and the elegant Le Bar is a pleasant venue for cocktails. Mansión Alcázar has rightly maintained its reputation over many years as the best colonial style hotel in the city.

Ecuador's Amazon Rainforest & Cloud Forest

A few hours by road to the west of Quito there are lush cloud forest reserves where visitors can hike along pristine trails, bathe in waterfalls and look for hundreds of bird species. One of the richest hot spots on the planet, this is home to iconic species such as Howler monkeys, sloths and jaguar, but with land clearing at an all time high, these forests are under severe threat.

To the east of Quito and the Andes lie the tropical lowlands of El Oriente, an unspoiled wilderness of Amazonian rainforest. In recent times a number of wildlife lodges have been carefully developed in the Amazon to give visitors the opportunity of witnessing the multitude of birdlife and wildlife that exist here. The highly knowledgeable local naturalists add enormously to your understanding of these pristine wildlife zones.

All the lodges we use here are either owned by or directly benefit their local indigenous communities, and each of them provides a truly unique and quite unforgettable experience.

Top Wildlife Tips

- Go on a night walk as this is when the forest comes alive. You feel completely surrounded by so many creatures that you can only hear. In the daytime it can be hard to spot wildlife through the dense vegetation, but at night you can catch the reflection of their eyes in the light cast by your torch.
- Take the time to talk with your guide as you will be rewarded with some fascinating insights and stories.
- Go with an open mind as the magic of the Amazon and Ecuador's cloud forests will hit you when you least expect it!





Napo Wildlife Centre

Silver

Full-board & excursions

The award-winning Napo Wildlife Centre is owned by the local community of the Anangu Kichua. Napo is an eco-tourism project that includes the conservation of approximately 53,500 acres of the most pristine Amazon rainforest within the Yasuni National Park, an important UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The centre has 12 spacious suites with private porches overlooking the lake. A number of excursions and activities are included such as a visit to the centre's parrot and macaw clay lick. On a clear day you can see the Andes Mountains from the lodge's 50-foot viewing tower.

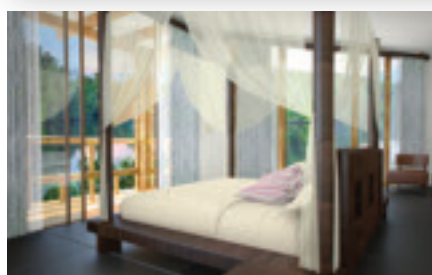


Sacha Lodge

Silver

Full-board & excursions

Set within a private ecological reserve and with 26 thatched rooms, this lodge has a fantastic 275-metre long canopy walkway, nearly 30 metres high in the treetops, providing an unbelievable opportunity for bird and wildlife spotting in the rainforest. After a 30-minute flight from Quito to Coca, the wildlife adventure begins during the two-hour boat transfer along the Napo River, where many shore birds such as kingfishers and herons can be seen. A butterfly farm, one of the largest in Ecuador, showcases almost 40 species.



La Selva Lodge

Silver

Full-board & excursions

A short walk from the Napo River, La Selva Lodge is about 60 miles from the Coca gateway. This award-winning eco-lodge offers guests an authentic experience in the heart of the Amazon. There are 19 small but comfortable cabanas or private bungalows, constructed entirely from rainforest materials. Guests can hike on the forest trails, climb up the 135 ft observation tower, visit the butterfly farm and enjoy canoe rides and night excursions. There is a large dining area and open-air bar with panoramic views of the lake.



Mashpi Lodge

Platinum

Full-board & excursions

Environmentally-conscious Mashpi Lodge is an impressive and magical retreat hidden inside a 1,200-hectare private reserve, in the Ecuadorian Cloud Forest. Built on raised ground with a 360° forest view, there are 22 well-furnished rooms and suites. Meals are served in a towering restaurant and showcase the best of local cuisine. The lodge has a canopy gondola that is used to transport guests on a 2km experience above and through the tree canopy. Guests can go bird-watching, take night walks and swim in refreshing waterfalls.

The Galapagos Islands

Lying some 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador on the equator, the Galapagos Islands offer visitors a very special experience. With its unique ecosystem, the archipelago has some of the world's most spectacular wildlife on both land and water.

Charles Darwin formulated his theory of evolution in the Galapagos and the islands are truly a wildlife enthusiast's paradise. You can expect close encounters with many species, including Land and Marine iguanas, Waved albatross, Blue-footed boobies, flamingos, Giant tortoises, Hammerhead sharks, Manta rays and sea lion. If you want to see a particular species, then do ask for advice on when to go and which island to visit.

An expedition to these islands is an incredible journey of discovery, whether you snorkel with whale sharks (the gentle giants of the ocean), watch Red-footed boobies feed their fluffy chicks on the northern island of Genovesa or size up to Santa Cruz's giant tortoises.



Things to do in the Galapagos:

- 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

The Galapagos Islands



Jan ✓✓	Feb ✓✓	Mar ✓✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓✓
Jul ✓✓	Aug ✓✓	Sep ✓✓	Oct ✓✓	Nov ✓✓	Dec ✓✓

When to go

The Galapagos Islands can be visited all year round. The temperatures are warmer between January and May, when there is also a greater chance of rain. In the latter half of the year, the weather is cooler. From the end of August for a month or so, the seas can be choppy; also at this time of year a sea mist can restrict visibility.

Getting there

Daily flights operate from Quito and Guayaquil on the Ecuadorean mainland to both Baltra and San Cristobal islands. Your flights are arranged in accordance with your cruise schedule.

GMT: -6 hours

Visas

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

Health

There are no compulsory health requirements for visiting the Galapagos Islands.

The best way to see how species have evolved on different islands is to take a cruise. There are different boat sizes and cruise lengths to suit your needs. For example, some companies operate family-oriented cruises. In order to enhance your experience, the Galapagos National Park authorities limit the number of visitors to each island to just 100 per day, in groups no larger than 20.

A Galapagos cruise will appeal to wildlife lovers, snorkellers and those interested in photography. If you want to visit the islands without spending too much time on a boat, some hotels in the archipelago, such as the Finch Bay, operate day excursions to nearby islands. If you'd prefer to explore on foot, a number of walking tours operate on Isabela Island.

Journalist Nick Boulos describes the thrill of exploring the Galapagos.

"This volcanic archipelago formed some five million years ago from underwater eruptions, has become world famous, enthralling travellers for centuries.

Discovered entirely accidentally by a bishop from Panama who drifted off course en route to Peru, the islands soon sparked interest from those with a passion for nature. Among them, Charles Darwin. He visited in 1835 on a trip that inspired his book, *On the Origin of Species*, which went on to secure his place in history.

Cut off from the rest of the world, many of the species here are found nowhere else on earth making these arid isles one of the world's great wildlife destinations. The best way to experience it all is by boat, sailing around the 13 main islands, each of which is unique and often home to weird and wonderful endemic species.

Life on board is a constant thrill. Days are jam-packed, filled with snorkelling with sea lions and turtles; exciting Zodiac rides in the shade of towering volcanic cliffs and long walks through cacti-dotted bird colonies.

Unlike other wildlife experiences, tourism here is tightly regulated with boats carefully rotating between the islands ensuring each site is not overloaded with people. Other rules apply too; like keeping a five-metre gap between you and any wildlife, though the animals don't always observe this one!

Sailing around the Galapagos is an unbridled joy but don't miss the opportunity to also spend some time on land."



Galapagos

Land or Cruise

A cruise is the most popular way to explore the Galapagos but there are also land-based options on the bigger islands such as Santa Cruz.

For those who want to cruise around these famous islands, the Galapagos boats we feature range from those with a capacity of 20 passengers to the maximum of 100. The mid-sized to larger boats (carrying between 40 and 100 passengers) will generally have more public facilities such as lounges and Jacuzzis than the smaller ones. The larger the boat, the longer it may take for embarking and disembarking for shore excursions and the smaller boats have the advantage of landing at islands such as Genovesa Island where you can see Red-footed boobies. They can also sail closer to shore and visit isolated bays.

Care for the environment is of primary concern and all sailing schedules are carefully co-ordinated. Each boat can only visit the same site once every two weeks. On a typical day the first excursion might start after an early breakfast and is likely to last for several hours. Passengers then return to the boat before it moves on to the next island or visitor site. In the afternoon there's another landing and again, several hours spent ashore.

Depending on the island, activities include snorkelling, hiking, bird watching, kayaking and glass-bottomed boat tours. In the evening, dinner is usually preceded by a talk by the boat's naturalist reviewing the day, and also previewing the next day.



Darwin's Finch



Frigate bird



Galapagos Islands

Lodges & Cruise Boats

The Galapagos Islands

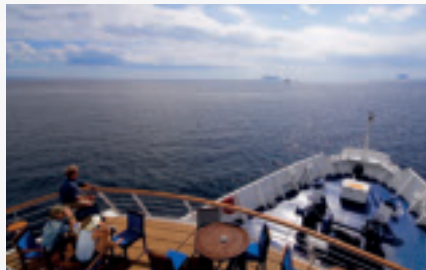


Eric, Letty and Flamingo

Silver

Full-board & excursions

This flotilla of sister ships each has the capacity for 20 passengers in ten large cabins over three levels. They sail in convoy, with shore excursions timed and arranged in small groups, led by a naturalist guide in groups of up to ten, one of the best guide-to-guest ratios in the Galapagos. The boat owners, Ecoventura, have been at the forefront of conservation projects, being the first carbon neutral operator. Facilities include a dining room, well-stocked bar and conference area for briefings. Snorkelling equipment, wetsuits and kayaks are included.



La Pinta

Gold

Full-board & excursions

La Pinta commenced sailing in the Galapagos in late 2008 and soon established herself as one of the islands' top vessels. Sixty-three metres long, this mid-sized boat accommodates up to 48 passengers in 24 well-furnished cabins with panoramic windows, located on two of the three public decks. Offering a relaxed yet lavish expedition experience, the yacht's facilities include an attractive bar and dining room, library, sundeck, three inflatable landing craft and a glass-bottomed boat. Expert daily lectures and briefings supplement the outdoor adventures.



Ocean Spray

Silver

Full-board & excursions

Ocean Spray is a luxury Mega-Catamaran and one of the newest boats that cruises around the Galapagos Islands. The vessel features just eight spacious cabins with balcony, and caters for a maximum of 16 passengers, ensuring an attentive service and highly personal experience. Other features include a spacious and elegant dining room, huge sundeck and covered seating area as well as a Jacuzzi. An expert naturalist guide provides a wealth of information throughout the cruise. Ocean Spray itineraries range from a short 3-night trip to a full in-depth 14-night experience.

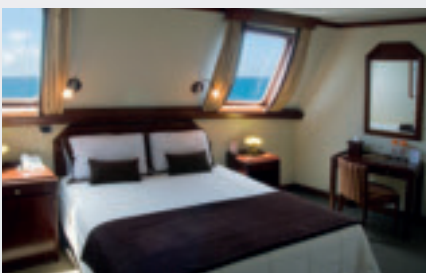


Finch Bay Eco Hotel

Gold

B/B or full-board & excursions

For those who would like to experience the Galapagos but don't have particularly good sea-legs, Finch Bay is a great choice. Named after the famous Darwin's finches, the hotel is close to Puerto Ayora, the main port town on Santa Cruz Island and the location of the Charles Darwin Research Station. There are 21 comfortable rooms and six ocean view suites, plus a pool and outdoor Jacuzzi. Many options for multisport activities are available for those guests not wishing to take a yacht excursion to the nearby islands.

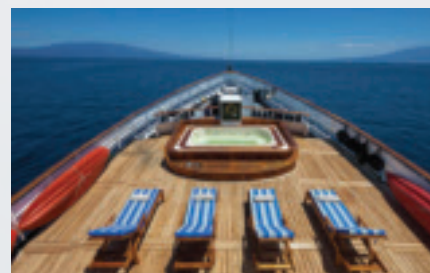


MV Eclipse

Gold

Full-board & excursions

The Eclipse is a first-class ship with the feel of a small yacht, comfortably accommodating 48 passengers and offering a choice of air-conditioned cabins with portholes, and superior and deluxe stateroom cabins with picture windows. Two dedicated single cabins allow solo travellers to pay a much smaller supplement than on similar boats. Daily activities include island excursions, snorkelling, kayaking and panga rides. The Eclipse has been awarded the Smart Voyager green seal of approval by the Rainforest Alliance.



Evolution

Gold

Full-board & excursions

MV Evolution is a luxury mid-sized expedition yacht that caters for up to 32 guests offering spacious cabins and attentive service. The boat is large enough to provide guests with plenty of outdoor deck space, but small enough to get close to the islands, reducing the time of transfer between the yacht and land. There's a Jacuzzi with lounge chairs on the extensive outside areas, and meals are served in either the dining room or on the open deck. Knowledgeable naturalists give daily lectures and slide shows in the bar area.

Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

Quito – Riobamba – Cuenca – Guayaquil – Galapagos Islands



A 15-day trip that explores the colonial highlights of mainland Ecuador and takes you on a cruise around the world-renowned Galapagos Islands.

This wonderful trip of a lifetime brings together Ecuador's colonial treasures of Quito and Cuenca, as well as experiencing an unforgettable cruise around the Galapagos Islands. On this trip you are driven between locations and can stop along the way as you choose. An Amazon extension can be added to the start of this itinerary.

DAY 1

Fly to Quito on the daytime flight, arriving in the evening. Transfer to La Casona de la Ronda, located in the historic centre

DAY 2

Morning tour of historic Quito and visit to the Equatorial Monument – experience life on both sides of the equator at one time

DAY 3

Travel along one of the most beautiful routes in South America, the Avenue of the Volcanoes, past spectacular backdrops, including Cotopaxi. Overnight in Riobamba

DAY 4

Ride the Devil's Nose Train as it chugs along one of the world's great railways, and afterwards continue on to Cuenca where you stay at the boutique hotel Santa Lucia

DAY 5

Half-day sightseeing tour of colonial Cuenca and its thriving indigenous cultures

DAY 6

Transfer from Cuenca to Guayaquil via Las Cajas National Park and overnight at the Oro Verde

DAY 7

Fly to the Galapagos Islands to embark on your cruise on either Eric, Letty or Flamingo

DAYS 8-13

Spend your days on one of life's great journeys, a cruise around the Galapagos Islands. Take daily excursions ashore to encounter wildlife with your expert naturalist guides

DAY 14

Disembark and return by air to Guayaquil for an overnight stay at the Oro Verde

DAY 15

Free morning in Guayaquil where you can explore the Malecon area overlooking the Pacific before taking the overnight flight home via Madrid.



Galapagos & Peru in Style

Guayaquil – Galapagos Islands – Cuzco – Sacred Valley
Machu Picchu

The Galapagos Islands

A 15-day trip that explores the magical Galapagos Islands on an in depth 7 night cruise.

Experience a huge diversity of wildlife both on land and underwater. Continue south to Peru and on to the Andean highlands which are full of history and indigenous culture. The highlight for many will be the opportunity to visit the iconic Machu Picchu rediscovered in 1911 by Hiram Bingham.

DAY 1

Take a daytime flight to Guayaquil via Madrid. Transfer to the Hilton Colon for an overnight stay

DAY 2

Take the short flight from the mainland to Galapagos where you will board the Evolution for your 7 night cruise

DAYS 3-8

Immerse yourself in the unique landscapes and wildlife of the Galapagos archipelago onboard your luxury boat. Learn about the history and wildlife from your knowledgeable naturalist and in the evening enjoy the wonderful cuisine and dine alfresco

DAY 9

Disembark and return by air to Guayaquil for an overnight stay at the Hilton Colon

DAY 10

Fly to Cuzco in the Andean highlands via Lima. On arrival transfer to the Rio Sagrado in Sacred Valley which is an ideal spot to acclimatise

DAY 11

Free day in the Sacred Valley to explore the area. Take in the fortress at Ollantaytambo or visit the local market at Pisac

DAY 12

Transfer to Ollanta station for the Vistadome train to Aguas Calientes. Visit the citadel of Machu Picchu with your knowledgeable local guide. Overnight at the luxurious Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo hotel in the village

DAY 13

Free morning to return to Machu Picchu to explore on your own. There is also the opportunity to climb Huanya Picchu. Afternoon train journey followed by road transfer to Cuzco. Stay at Inkaterra La Casona, a beautiful boutique hotel

DAY 14

Half day city tour of the historic highlights of the city including the Temple of the Sun and cathedral. You also have the opportunity to visit Sacsayhuaman Fortress which overlooks the city

DAY 15

Free morning before taking the overnight flight home via Madrid.



Colombia

After years of being overlooked as a tourist destination, Colombia is enjoying something of a revival. It's a vibrant and exciting place to go on holiday, with wonderful coastlines, Spanish colonial cities, pre-Columbian ruins, spectacular national parks and coffee farms. Colombia's people have a zest for life, and the rhythms of salsa and merengue are never far away.

Colombia's capital Bogota, nestled high in the Andes, is the third largest city in South America. With its many universities and libraries the city has been dubbed the 'Athens of South America' and there is plenty for visitors to do here.

Historic Cartagena, on the Caribbean coast, is the jewel in Colombia's crown. In its old quarter many colonial mansions have been carefully restored and turned into attractive boutique hotels, sophisticated restaurants and wine bars. The city has a relaxed, cosmopolitan atmosphere, and in the balmy evenings Colombians and visitors alike stroll along the narrow streets, or take a ride in a horse-drawn carriage along the seafront.

Things to do in Colombia:

- 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 San Andres Island for picture postcard coral beaches
- Learn to dance in Cali, the capital of salsa

Colombia



Jan ✓✓	Feb ✓✓	Mar ✓✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓✓
Jul ✓✓	Aug ✓✓	Sep ✓✓	Oct ✓✓	Nov ✓✓	Dec ✓✓

When to go

Colombia can be visited all year round and has a hot and humid climate in all areas, unless you are visiting areas at altitude, such as Bogotá. Rain is likely to occur at any time throughout the year, but is more pronounced towards the end of the year.

Getting there

Avianca fly direct from the UK to Bogotá. Indirect flights include Iberia or Avianca via Madrid, Air France via Paris, Lufthansa via Frankfurt or American Airlines via Miami.

GMT: -5 Hours

Visas

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Colombia. An ESTA is required for travel via the US.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Colombia, however precautions against malaria if travelling to wildlife regions are suggested, but check with your GP.

Politically part of Colombia and located about 750km away in the Caribbean Sea, San Andrés Island is picture perfect with coral sand beaches, coconut palms and mangrove forests. Reached by air from Cartagena, this hidden gem is beginning to catch attention.

Also off the beaten track the pre-Columbian ruins at the San Agustín UNESCO World Heritage Site can be reached on horse

back, and nearby in the highlands there are opportunities to stay on a working coffee farm. After decades of producing world-famous coffee beans, visitors can both learn about coffee production and relax in magnificent coffee houses and haciendas that now double up as beautiful hotels.

Another of the country's major highlights is Tayrona National Park, near Santa Marta on the Caribbean

coast, where the spectacular forest-clad Sierra Nevada Mountains provide the backdrop to pristine white-sand beaches.

Sue and Pete Morley travelled to Colombia with Rainbow Tours, and visited the country's classic highlights on a two week trip.

"We loved our trip to Colombia. It's one of those places that really stays with you.

We thought Cartagena was going to be a highlight and it was. It's such a pretty city and just magical to walk around, with a delightful courtyard or colonial facade at every turn.

But other places along the way were a very pleasant surprise, like the coffee region. We hadn't realised that the highlands were so scenic. Likewise

Bogotá was easy to navigate and was a dramatic mix of old churches and towering skyscrapers.

We ended our trip at Tayrona National Park staying in the Eco-habs. This was heaven even though we had the cabin that was the highest one up the hillside. There were 159 steps (I counted!) but the views out to the ocean and over the rainforest more than made up for the effort."



Cartagena

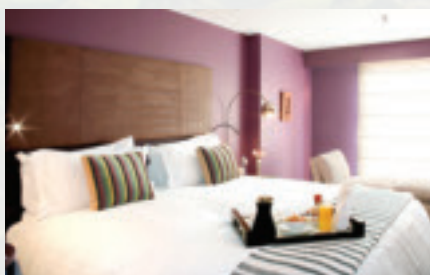
Bogota & the Coffee Region



With the opening of many new hotels, restaurants and shopping complexes, Bogotá is completely cosmopolitan these days. In contrast, the Spanish colonial district of La Candelaria has pretty courtyards and fine architecture. The renowned Gold Museum is here, each corridor displaying a different episode from Colombian history. Nearby, the Botero Museum exhibits works by Colombia's most famous artist. Above the city is the sanctuary of Monserrate, accessible by cable car, which offers spectacular views. To the north of the city, the underground salt cathedral at

Zipaquira is another highlight. Further afield is the pretty old town of Villa de Leyva.

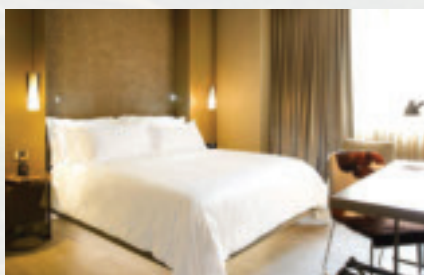
Colombian coffee is known around the world and the country is the world's third largest producer. There are several main coffee production areas and one of these is to the west of Bogotá, near Pereira, where the mineral-rich volcanic soil and higher altitudes are the perfect combination for the cultivation of coffee beans. There are several delightful haciendas in this region, where you can learn about coffee production and enjoy the sweeping highland views.



Sofitel Bogota Victoria Regia

Gold
B/B

Named after an Amazonian water lily, this elegant hotel was designed by the prestigious Colombian architect Miguel Soto. The 102 rooms, including five suites, blend classic and contemporary styles. The Sofitel Bogota is one of the most popular addresses in the northern La Cabrera area and is located close to some of the city's best art galleries, restaurants and designer shops. It has good facilities including an exclusive Mediterranean-style Basilic restaurant that uses local ingredients, the Bibliotheque bar and a wellness centre.



B.O.G Hotel

Gold
B/B

B.O.G hotel opened in early 2012 and is right in the heart of the bustling northern district of the city, surrounded by the capital's best restaurants, shops and nightlife. Designed by Portuguese architect and interior designer, Nini Andrade Silva, it has 55 rooms, all featuring plush décor and a gold and emerald colour scheme. La Leo Cocina Mestiza restaurant is a highlight as is the swish lounge bar and pool terrace next to the rooftop heated swimming pool, where the panoramic city views are superb.

Things to do in Bogota & the Coffee Region:

- Explore the hidden corners of La Candelaria
- Visit the underground Zipaquira Salt Cathedral
- Learn about Colombia's history in the Gold Museum
- Take the cable car to the sanctuary of Monserrate
- Visit the pretty town of Villa de Leyva

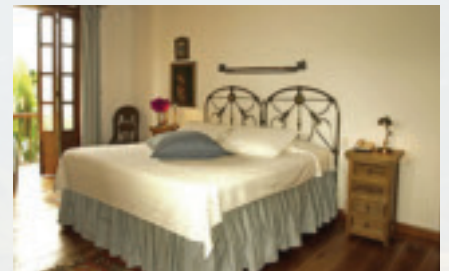
Colombia



Casa de Huéspedes Sazagua

Silver
B/B

Situated just one kilometre outside Pereira in the Coffee Region, this boutique hotel was once an old coffee plantation house. It has nine luxurious rooms, decorated with period pieces and furnishings such as Spanish tiles and colonial floors. There is an outdoor swimming pool in the lush gardens, adorned with a beautiful collection of palms and tropical plants that attract a wide variety of local birds. The restaurant serves local and international cuisine and there is a secluded spa built from large river rocks.



Hacienda San José

Silver
B/B

Located in the lush, undulating hills near Pereira, Hacienda San José dates back to 1888 and is one of the best-preserved houses in the area. Decorated in a colonial style typical of the region, it has seven suites and three standard rooms, all with a private bathroom. The hacienda has a Jacuzzi and offers massages with anti-stress treatments. International and Colombian dishes are served in the restaurant and there is a small pool, local hiking trails and more than 100 bird species that frequent the extensive topical gardens.

Caribbean Coastline

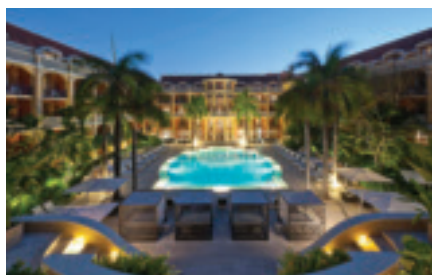
Cartagena & Tayrona National Park

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 the unwelcome attention of pirates who attacked the city over many years. The city was fortified to try to repel these attacks and today it is possible to walk on the city wall. The historic old centre, a designated World Heritage Site, is a treasure-trove of narrow streets, Andalusian-style palaces and colonial-style houses with ornate balconies.



Cabo San Juan, Tayrona National Park

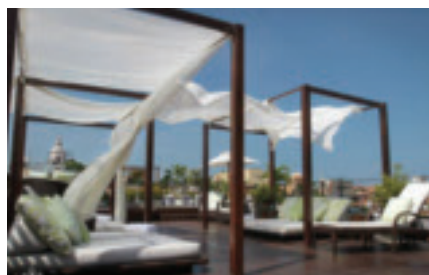
North east of Cartagena, along the Caribbean coast near Santa Marta, Tayrona National Park is easy to access and is one of Colombia's most popular reserves. Here visitors can take a guided trek through the dense jungle, snorkel at La Piscina beach in the natural pool or relax on one of the unspoilt beaches. There is also the opportunity to take a horseback ride through the forest.



Sofitel Santa Clara

Gold
B/B

Set in a beautifully converted 17th century monastery, the Sofitel Santa Clara is a luxurious property with 122 rooms and suites. With views of either the interior gardens or the city and ocean, rooms have a colonial feel. El Claustro is open for all meals and the Restaurante 1621 is the perfect setting for an evening of gourmet cuisine. Enjoy after dinner drinks at El Coro where you can listen to live music on most evenings. Facilities include an outdoor swimming pool, solarium and spa.



Ananda Hotel Boutique

Gold
B/B

The Ananda is ideally situated in the centre of Cartagena's historic district and lives up to its name, which means 'a state of bliss' in Sanskrit. Surrounded by historical buildings including the Cathedral, Santo Domingo's Square and the Inquisition Palace, the hotel is a renovated colonial house with 23 luxury suites, each with high ceilings and balconies. The hotel has a Jacuzzi, swimming pool, gym and day beds on the terrace, as well as a Mediterranean restaurant with a terrace overlooking the old city.



The Eco Habs

Silver
B/B

The Eco Habs are the best place to stay in Tayrona National Park. The cabins are constructed using natural materials in the style of the houses inhabited by the local indigenous tribe, the Tayrona. Perched on the forest-clad hills, the Eco Habs have magnificent views over the Caribbean coast and are linked by wooden walkways. All cabins have balconies and hammocks, as well as private bathrooms. Request a lower down cabin unless you are relatively fit and feel the extra steps up are worth the even better view.

Colombia Highlights

Bogota – Villa de Leyva – Coffee Region
Cartagena – Tayrona National Park

Colombia

This 13-day itinerary is an excellent introduction to some of Colombia's colonial towns, cultural gems and natural beauty.

Starting in Colombia's capital, Bogota, you can explore the old and new districts, and then head to the highlands of the coffee region, home to some of the world's best-loved coffee beans. Take a flight to Colombia's Caribbean coast and explore the country's colonial highlight, Cartagena, before visiting the tropical beaches of Tayrona National Park.

DAY 1

Fly direct from London to Bogota, and transfer to the new B.O.G hotel. This is a modern and vibrant city still awash with Colombian cultural delights

DAY 2

Spend the day sightseeing, visiting the famous Gold Museum and the sanctuary at Monserrate, accessible by cable car, with incredible views back over the city

DAY 3

Drive via the underground salt cathedral at Zipaquirá to the pretty town of Villa de Leyva, staying at the Posada de San Antonio. Explore the town's cobbled streets and Plaza Mayor which is one of the largest in the Americas

DAY 4

Return to Bogota and take the short flight to Pereira and the Casa de Huespedes Sazagua in Colombia's coffee triangle

DAY 5

Half day visit to a local coffee plantation at Hacienda Venecia and experience first hand how the coffee industry works. There is free time in the afternoon

DAY 6

Free time to relax or take an optional excursion to Los Nevados National Park. Explore the towering mountains (which are snow-capped at 4,850m and above), dormant volcanoes and hot springs

DAY 7

Fly via Bogota to Cartagena, Colombia's jewel in the crown. Enjoy the amazing sights and sounds within Cartagena's old town walls and stay at the Ananda hotel in the historic centre

DAY 8

Half day city tour to explore the beautiful sites including the San Felipe fortress on San Lazaro Hill. Rest of day at leisure to wander the charming, colourful streets of the old town

DAY 9

Free time in Cartagena. We recommend an optional tour to the Rosario Islands where you can scuba dive, snorkel or just relax on the fine sandy beaches



DAY 10

Transfer by land to Tayrona National Park and the Eco Habs nestled within the tropical forest backdrop. Enjoy the crystal clear waters and white beaches

DAYS 11-12

Free time in Tayrona National Park to relax or explore the park by foot or horseback

DAY 13

Fly to Bogota and continue by overnight flight to London.



Venezuela

Venezuela offers an enormous amount for holidaymakers looking for somewhere different and little visited – from spectacular waterfalls and mountains to abundant wildlife and white-sand Caribbean beaches.

Things to do in Venezuela:

- Explore the Lost World of Canaima National Park
- Stand under the Angel Falls, the highest in the world
- Explore the vast 'Los Llanos' on horseback
- Relax on the white sand beaches of Los Roques
- Stroll through the cobbled streets of Merida

Venezuela



Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

When to go

Venezuela can be visited all year round and has a hot and humid climate in all areas, unless you are visiting areas at altitude. Rain is likely to occur at any time throughout the year, but is more pronounced towards the end of the year.

Getting there

There are no direct flights from the UK to Venezuela. The most popular routes are flying with Iberia or Air Europa via Madrid, Air France via Paris, Lufthansa via Frankfurt or American Airlines via Miami.

GMT: -4.5

Visas

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Venezuela. An ESTA is required for travel via the US.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Venezuela. Precautions against malaria, if travelling to wildlife regions, are suggested, but check with your GP.

In Venezuela's Gran Sabana you can climb tepuys (table-top mountains) and then look in wonder at the world's highest waterfall, Angel Falls, in Canaima National Park. To the north, you can travel by dugout canoe on the mighty Orinoco River with its fertile delta and lush flora. Over to the west, you can stroll through the cobbled streets of Merida and then cross breathtaking Andean scenery towards Barinas. Here you explore the vast open plains, or Los Llanos, by four-wheel drive or on horseback, seeking out the abundant wildlife that includes raptors, stork, Howler monkeys, capybara and Arrau river turtle. When you have had enough adventure, relax on one of the many palm-fringed beaches along its Caribbean coast. Our favourite spot is the archipelago of Los Roques, which has simple posadas and offers visitors excellent snorkelling and scuba diving.



Los Roques

Venezuela's beaches

Created in 1972 to protect this beautiful marine ecosystem, Los Roques Archipelago is Venezuela's most well known beach destination. Its coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds support a multitude of marine life. The country does however offer an impressive array of options for all types of beach holidays including Choroni, Cumana and the Mochima National Park on the mainland coast. For a more lively scene, with cafés, bars and restaurants, Margarita Island, known as the 'Pearl of the Caribbean,' is situated 38 km northeast of the mainland of Venezuela and is a well developed resort.

Canaima National Park & the Caribbean Coast

Canaima National Park

Canaima is one of the oldest geological formations in the world and home to many endemic plants. Its remote landscapes and 'table-top' tepuy mountains inspired Arthur Conan Doyle's novel, *The Lost World*, and the national park is home to the world's highest waterfall, Angel Falls, which cascades for almost a kilometre before meeting the rainforest floor. Weather permitting, you can fly over the falls in a light aircraft or travel to the base of the falls by motorised canoe. Canaima is reached by a short flight from Caracas. There is comfortable accommodation beside the Canaima Lagoon, from where there are daily excursions and treks.



Waku Lodge

Silver

Full-board

Located on the banks of the Canaima Lagoon facing Salto Hacha, palm-thatched Waku Lodge is about ten minutes from the local airstrip and is the most comfortable lodge in the area. It has 15 simple rooms with air-conditioning, ceiling fans, a balcony and hammock. Set in tropical gardens with views of the lagoon, the lodge offers a variety of guided excursions into this remote and beautiful corner of Venezuela, including trips to Angel Falls, El Sapo Falls and to visit local indigenous villages.

Caribbean Beaches

After a rainforest trek in Canaima National Park or a boat trip along the vast Orinoco Delta, the ideal place to relax is on one of Venezuela's lovely white-sand beaches, lapped by the crystal-clear waters of the Caribbean. Los Roques Archipelago, reached by a short flight from Caracas, with its miles of pristine beaches and located within a large marine national park, is a particular favourite. There is also Morrocoy's beautiful coastline studded with lagoons and home to pink flamingos. Choroni is a charming colonial village on the edge of the Henri Pittier National Park, near to the lovely palm fringed beach of Playa Grande.



Posada Caracol

Silver

Full-board

Posada Caracol has an idyllic position right on the beach within the Los Roques National Park, on Gran Roque Island. The guest house has a relaxed, 'bare foot' feel with only four rooms, all with private facilities. Activities include snorkelling and exploring the islands by boat. Massages are offered as well as candle-lit dinners on the veranda. Dining at Posada Caracol is varied and you can expect an American, Continental or Creole breakfast, salads and sandwiches at lunch and fresh fish at dinner.



Venezuela Highlights

The Lost World

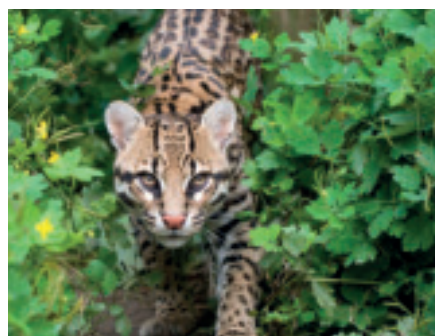
Caracas – Canaima National Park – Angel Falls
Orinoco Delta – Los Roques

Venezuela



This 11-day itinerary takes you to the 'lost world' of Canaima National Park and Angel Falls, the Orinoco Delta and the stunning Caribbean islands of Los Roques.

Canaima National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, truly is a different world. Roughly 65% of the park is covered by tepuys, or table-top mountains, formations which constitute a unique biogeological entity. The sheer cliffs and waterfalls, including Angel Falls, the world's highest at 979 metres, form a spectacular landscape. Follow this with the waterways of the fan-shaped Orinoco Delta and learn about the area from the indigenous Indians, who call these amazing wetlands home. Finish your holiday by relaxing on the beautiful white sands and clear blue waters of the Los Roques Archipelago.



DAY 1

Daytime flight to Venezuela's capital, Caracas, via Madrid. Overnight at the Marriott Playa Grande located on the coast and a short distance from the airport

DAY 2

Early morning flight into the 'lost world' of Canaima National Park, home to the Angel Falls. Stay at Waku Lodge overlooking Canaima Lagoon

DAY 3

Take a motorised canoe up the Carrao River for your overnight stay at the base of Angel Falls. Trek through virgin rainforest for a spectacular view of the falls

DAY 4

Return to Canaima Lagoon and enjoy a half-day tour to EL Sapo Waterfall. Optional scenic flight to Angel Falls taking in the amazing lost world landscape

DAY 5

From Canaima make your way by flight, road and boat to the Orinoco Delta, a maze of waterways carrying water from the mighty Orinoco River all the way to the Atlantic. Stay at Orinoco Delta Lodge in the heart of the delta



DAY 6

Explore the Orinoco Delta and experience the lives of the local Warao Indians

DAY 7

From the lodge transfer by boat and road to the airport for the short flight to Caracas and overnight at the Marriott Playa Grande, as before

DAYS 8-10

Early morning flight to Los Roques archipelago for a 3 night stay on Gran Roque at Posada Caracol. Spend the next few days relaxing on the stunning white beaches of the only inhabited island where most of the streets are made of sand and houses are decorated in bright, joyful colours

DAY 11

Return to Caracas and continue your onward journey back to the UK.

Guyana



Possessing some of the most dramatic rainforest and mountain scenery in the tropics, English-speaking Guyana is one of the last true wildernesses on the planet.

Things to do in Guyana:

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

Guyana

Jan ✓✓	Feb ✓✓	Mar ✓✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓✓
Jul ✓✓	Aug ✓✓	Sep ✓✓	Oct ✓✓	Nov ✓✓	Dec ✓✓

When to go

With its hot and humid climate, Guyana can be visited all year round. Rain can occur at any time throughout the year, but it is more pronounced towards the latter months.

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 or Caribbean Airlines via Port of Spain.

GMT: -4 hours

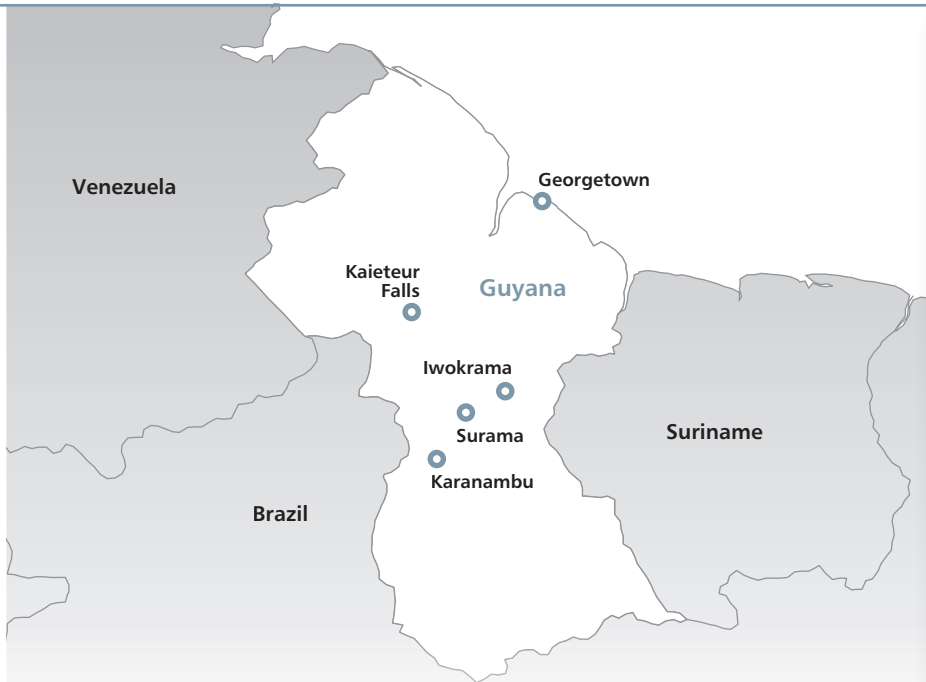
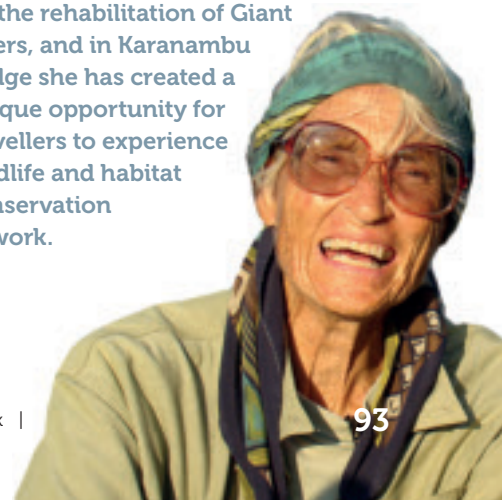
Visas

British citizens do not need a visa to enter Guyana, though if you fly via US an ESTA will be required.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Guyana. Precautions against malaria, if travelling to wildlife regions, are suggested, but check with your GP.

In the early 1980s, Diane McTurk made the bold decision to open Karanambu, her family's cattle ranch, to the few tourists that ventured into the savannah and wetlands of Guyana's interior. It was also around this time that she started to care for injured and orphaned wildlife – and in particular for the Giant otter, or waterdogs as they are called in Guyana. Diane has since become a world expert on the rehabilitation of Giant otters, and in Karanambu Lodge she has created a unique opportunity for travellers to experience wildlife and habitat conservation at work.



Travelling in Guyana may not be as comfortable as elsewhere in the Americas, however, the experiences that await the adventurous traveller hold few equals. Visitors do need to be reasonably fit and prepared for the occasional discomfort. Guyana has incredible, pristine rainforests, open savannahs and spectacular waterfalls, not to mention vast populations of exotic wildlife and bird species. Guyana's tourism infrastructure is improving all the time and there has been an increase in lodges that are simple but clean, often with strong eco-credentials.

Here it is possible to see the 'neo-tropical Big Five' – jaguar, Giant river otter, Giant anteater, Black caiman and Harpy eagle. Guyana is also home to such

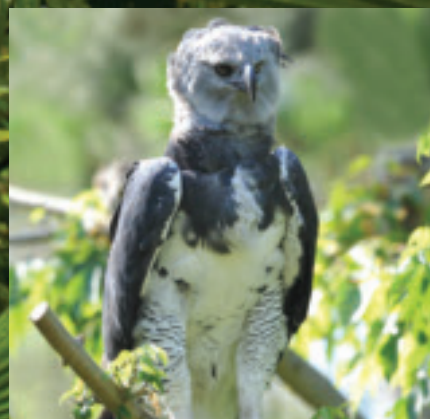
diverse highlights as the Kaieteur Falls (four times higher than Niagara Falls and twice as high as the Victoria Falls), inspirational Iwokrama that is working to find ways to conserve the rainforest, and Diane McTurk's orphanage for Giant otters located in the Southern Interior.

While Guyana has a growing reputation as a wildlife paradise, it also offers an incredible opportunity to travel amongst, and learn from, the indigenous communities who live in the rainforest. The country's tourism infrastructure is an impressive example of community tourism at work. Many of the Amerindian tribes have embraced tourism and offer visitors accommodation and the opportunity to participate in activities with the community.

Georgetown, Rainforest & Savannah

Look for endangered species like the Harpy eagle and the Giant river otter, and take a light aircraft flight to the impressive Kaieteur Falls.

Most trips to Guyana begin and end in the coastal capital of Georgetown and from here there are light aircraft excursions to the Kaieteur Falls on the Potaro River, which is one of the most powerful waterfalls in the world. Most travellers then head inland to explore Guyana's rainforests and savannahs. Both the Iwokrama International Centre, a not-for-profit organisation which undertakes research into the conservation and development of the rainforest, and Karanambu Lodge, are real highlights.



Harpy Eagle



Cara Lodge

Bronze
B/B

Well-situated in the centre of Georgetown, Cara Lodge is a wonderful old property dating back to the 19th century with plenty of charm and style. Rooms and suites at Cara Lodge are in keeping with the traditional style of the property and feature old wooden floors reminiscent of Guyana's colonial era, whilst benefiting from the addition of modern amenities such as air-conditioning. The hotel's Bottle Restaurant is one of the finest in the city and serves a variety of cuisine with a distinct local flavour.



Iwokrama River Lodge & Research Centre

Bronze
B/B

Eco-tourism helps fund Iwokrama's research and guests can stay in one of the eight comfortable cabins with thatched or shingle roof and private facilities. The 30m high canopy walkway is a wonderful way to immerse oneself in the forest and spot everything from the elusive jaguar and Red howler monkey to Harpy eagle and Black caiman (at night). Dawn or dusk is the time to see birds like the Scarlet macaw and Guiana toucanette. Trek along the river trails or to the summit of Turtle Mountain.



Karanambu Lodge

Bronze
B/B

Karanambu Lodge lies within the north savannah grassland and is home to Diane McTurk and her Giant River Otter Orphanage. Covering 100 square miles this former cattle ranch is now a small tourist project with six clay brick and thatched cabins accommodating up to 12 people. Each cabin has a veranda with hammock. During the day activities include searching for wild otters and Giant anteaters, bird-watching, looking for the giant Victoria amazonica lily and learning about the huge variety of flora and fauna.

Guyana Nature Experience

Georgetown – Iwokrama – Surama – Rupununi – Karanambu
Yapukari – Georgetown

Guyana

This two-week small group tour takes in all Guyana's most scenic natural, cultural and wildlife highlights.

Our small group tour includes an excursion to the Kaieteur Falls, one of Guyana's most breathtaking natural wonders. Reached by light aircraft, this magnificent waterfall plunges over a cliff and is four times as tall as Niagara Falls. Next the unique Iwokrama project welcomes guests who can learn about the centre's work in rainforest sustainability. Karanambu is another highlight, and home to Diane McTurk's truly inspirational Giant river otter sanctuary. At Yapukari there is an opportunity to meet indigenous Amerindians and learn about their lives and customs.

Small group tours are a sociable and fun way to travel and we can also organise bespoke tours for groups of friends or family. Guyana's difficult infrastructure makes travelling in a small group outstanding value. This tour departs ten times a year, although the same trip can be done as a private tour departing on any day, but with a supplement.

DAY 1

Fly from London via the Caribbean to Georgetown for 2 nights at Cara Lodge, one of the oldest and grandest structures in town

DAY 2

Excursion by light aircraft to the majestic Kaieteur Falls, with incredible views over the Guyana Shield, the name for Guyana's vast rainforest

DAYS 3-12

For the next 10 days, immerse yourself in Guyana's rainforests and savannahs. Visit local communities, enjoy boat rides, spot birdlife and wildlife, take hikes and climb canopy walkways.

Your itinerary takes you to Iwokrama, Surama and Karanambu. Learn about Giant river otters and the Black caiman, a relative of the crocodile. You will travel mainly by four-wheel drive vehicles and light aircraft

DAY 13

Venture into the savannah in search of the Giant anteater. Later, travel to the Amerindian village of Yapukari and Caiman House where research is carried out on the Black caiman. See these reptiles caught, measured, weighed, sexed and tagged with a chip. Other activities in the area include bird-watching, river trips and visits to the local village to meet the children and local craftspeople

DAY 14

Return to Georgetown for an overnight stay at Cara Lodge


DAY 15

Fly via the Caribbean back to the UK, arriving the next day.





Mexico & Central America



Our Latin America team say that there is something for everyone in Mexico and Central America, and it's hard to disagree!

Where else on the planet can you spend the morning climbing an active volcano, the afternoon wandering around a beautiful old colonial town, and by teatime be sipping cocktails on a gorgeous beach? Add to the mix incredible wildlife, magical ruins, and the country's fascinating and often revolutionary histories, and this compact part of the world punches well above its size in terms of travel highlights. Here are the team's top recommendations for where to go.

Families

"Costa Rica is the ideal holiday destination for families as there is so much to do here and it's an easy country to get around, so you can pack such a lot into a ten-night trip. Kids will love the hanging bridges over rainforest canopies, bathing in volcano-heated springs and the chocolate making tour. And then there's still plenty of time for mucking around on the beach. Thanks to its small size and good-quality hotels, Costa Rica is less challenging for travellers than some

other Central American countries. With younger children, I'd suggest Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula where there are great, family-friendly beach hotels around Cancun, and from here you can make easy day excursions to iconic Mayan sites such as Chichen Itza."

Beach lovers & dive enthusiasts

"Want a beach hotel with impressive facilities? Then head for the Yucatan in Mexico or Costa Rica's Pacific coast. For top diving, make a beeline for the fish-teeming reefs off Belize's Ambergris Caye and dive the famous Blue Hole. Feeling intrepid? Consider Nicaragua's remote and undeveloped Corn Islands or the Bay Islands in Honduras."

Culture vultures

"Aside from Mexico, Guatemala is a huge draw for ancient culture. Explore the extraordinary Mayan ruins of Tikal deep in the jungle, plus some of the most colourful, indigenous markets

in Latin America – such as at Chicicastenango. Amongst the cobbled streets you will find a host of locals going about their daily lives, such as Mayan weavers from the central highlands keen to sell their beautifully crafted wares."

For somewhere different

"Panama is still off the radar for mainstream holidaymakers, though its popularity is certainly on the rise. And rightly so, given its attractions: cruises on the engineering wonder that is the Panama Canal, wildlife-rich highlands and dense rainforests, beach escapes to unspoiled places such as the San Blas Islands, governed by tribes of Kuna Indians, and a cosmopolitan capital with something of the look and style of Miami."

And finally...

"If you really want to climb a volcano, explore a colonial town and have a cocktail on the beach all on the same day, then go to Nicaragua!"

Mexico

Mexico has it all... the ruins of ancient civilisations, a fascinating colonial history, wonderful Pacific and Caribbean beaches, dramatic canyons, steamy jungles, superb cuisine, excellent hospitality – and of course mariachi bands and tequila.

Most visitors to Mexico arrive in the capital, Mexico City, one of the largest metropolises in the world, and somewhere worth spending a few days. Its outstanding Anthropology Museum is reason alone to visit, and ideal preparation for Mexico's archaeological sites. One of the most memorable, the colossal pre-Aztec city of Teotihuacán with its Pyramids of the Sun and Moon, is an easy day trip from the city.

Central Mexico is also the home to the silver mining cities such as arty San Miguel de Allende and hilly Guanajuato, which have superbly maintained colonial centres.

Further north is the Copper Canyon – a series of awesomely deep and wild canyons that are best experienced on the famous Copper Canyon Railway. Or make for Baja California and the Sea of Cortez, where between January and March, whale watching is probably the best in all the Americas.

Things to do in Mexico:

- Get to know Mexico City and its Anthropology Museum
- Jump aboard the iconic Copper Canyon train
- Get the most out of Chichen Itza with a private guide
- Visit Baja California and the 'Mexican Galapagos'
- Try all of Mexico's famous dishes and snacks

Mexico



Jan ✓	Feb ✓	Mar ✓	Apr ✓	May ✓	Jun ✓
Jul ✓	Aug ✓	Sep X	Oct X	Nov ✓	Dec ✓

When to go

Mexico is a large country and most areas can be visited year round. It has, within 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 Yucatan Peninsula can be affected by tropical storms, or occasionally hurricanes.

Getting there

British Airways & Aeromexico operate a direct service from London Heathrow to Mexico City. British Airways and Virgin also have direct services to Cancun. Other indirect routes are flying with Iberia via Madrid, KLM via Amsterdam or American Airlines or United Airlines via their US hubs.

GMT: -6/-7 hours

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

Visas

British citizens do not require a visa to enter Mexico, though if you fly via the US, an ESTA will be required.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Mexico.

South east of Mexico City, the charming town of Oaxaca is a popular stop over with its fine colonial buildings, colourful markets and Zapotec ruins nearby.

No trip to Mexico would be complete without visiting the Yucatan's major Mayan sites of Chichen Itza and Uxmal, which offer fascinating insights into this ancient Mesoamerican civilisation. You can stay close to the sites, or visit them from the nearby city of Merida, or on day trips from the Riviera Maya.

Running from Cancun in the north to the picturesque site of Tulum in the south, this coast is lined with a succession of stunning white-sand beaches. A huge range of accommodation options are offered here to suit all budgets and tastes from exclusive resorts to rustic beachside lodges.

Ride the Copper Canyon Railway

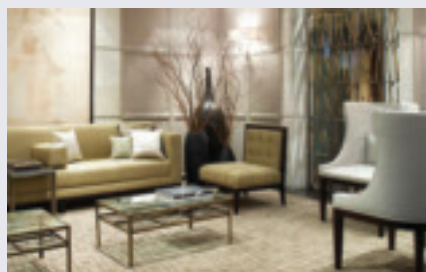
Our Latin America team, recommends a trip on board the 'Chepe'.

"The Copper Canyon is located in Northwest Mexico and has some of the country's most spectacular scenery. It is actually a series of 20 canyons, right in the middle of Mexico's wilderness. The best way to see the canyon is to ride the Copper Canyon Railway, known as the Chepe, which runs from Los Mochis to Chihuahua City. This impressive piece of engineering stretches for 600 kilometres passing over 39 bridges and through nearly 80 tunnels. A minimum stop of one night en route is recommended, staying at the Mirador Barrancas which is perched near the highest point on the rim of the Copper Canyon. The hotel has 65 luxurious rooms with balconies and stunning views."



Mexico City & Oaxaca

Mexico City may be one of the largest cities in the world, but it is a fascinating start to any Mexican holiday. Visit the Zocalo (main square) where you'll find the National Palace housing Diego Riviera's colourful murals, or see the remains of the original Aztec floating city of Tenochtitlan. Stroll around Chapultepec Park and visit the excellent Anthropology Museum. Around 30 minutes to the north east of Mexico City, the impressive pre-Aztec ruins of Teotihuacan are situated, famous for its Pyramids of the Sun and Moon.

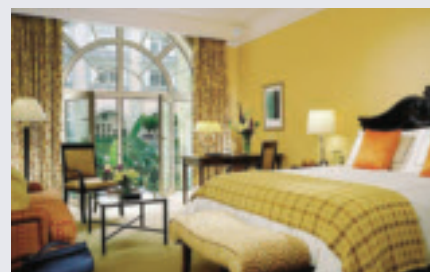


Las Alcobas

Gold

B/B

Las Alcobas is a modern hotel designed by Yabu Pushelberg and is situated in the trendy Polanco district of Mexico City close to restaurants, shops and nightlife. The 35 large rooms have luxurious amenities such as bathrooms with a rain shower, whirlpool and steam jets. At Las Alcobas, dine at the Barroco restaurant and Dulce Patria where Mexican food is served by the chef Marta Ortiz. There is also a Spa where guests can relax and be pampered after a day in the busy city.



Four Seasons Mexico City

Gold

B/B

Located near the exclusive Polanco area and Chapultepec Park, Four Seasons Mexico City has 240 very comfortable rooms, including 40 suites. All are spacious and well maintained, with views over the attractive central courtyard or tree lined city avenues. Family-friendly rooms are available and there is a heated swimming pool and a health club with two treatment rooms. 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.

Oaxaca

To the south east of Mexico City and easy to reach by plane, Oaxaca is one of Mexico's most popular cities. It's a delightful mix of colonial, indigenous and ancient influences, with many fine Spanish buildings and churches. This is also the place to go for the annual Day of the Dead celebrations in November.



Casa Oaxaca

Gold

B/B

Situated in the centre of Oaxaca only steps from the Santo Domingo church, Casa Oaxaca is a delightful 7 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. The airy patio features a fountain and many pomegranate and sapote trees. During the heat of the day, relax by the swimming pool, the terrace or library.

Baja California

The 'Galapagos of North America'

Mexico



Los Cabos



Grey whales visit between January and March



San José del Cabo



Whale shark

Baja California, a long sliver of land on Mexico's Pacific coastline in the far northwest, is a magical mix of spectacular scenery, hidden beaches and coves, superb snorkelling and diving, and some world-class accommodation.

During the Arctic winters hundreds of Grey whales swim south to its Pacific waters, to breed and look after their young, making this one of the best areas in North America for whale watching.

Separated from the mainland by the Sea of Cortez, the southern Baja capital, La Paz, is a centre of ocean activities, with kayaking, many swimmable beaches, wind and kite surfing, and the chance to swim with friendly whale sharks. From here boats go to the Espiritu Santos Islands, dubbed 'The Galapagos of North America' by Jacques Cousteau, where there are Brown boobies and playful sea lions. Between Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo on the southern tip there are some of the best hotels and golf courses in the Americas.

Mexico's Heartlands

San Cristobal & Palenque



Palenque

A number of important Mayan sites and colonial towns, in Mexico's Heartlands, can be visited en route between Mexico City in the west and the Yucatan Peninsula in the east. San Cristobal de las Casas is a colourful colonial city surrounded by indigenous villages, each with their own traditions and markets. From here Palenque can be reached by road although it's a full day's drive. At its prime between 600-800 AD, Palenque is one of Mexico's most breathtaking Mayan sites. The Palace and the Temple of the Inscriptions are particularly well preserved. Travelling from Palenque to Merida, coastal Campeche is the ideal place to overnight, and visitors will find that colonial architecture is also plentiful here.



Parador San Juan de Dios

Silver
B/B

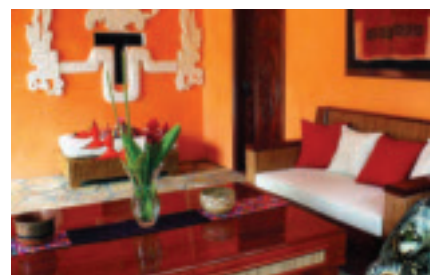
Parador San Juan de Dios is a charming colonial retreat, located a short walk from the centre of San Cristobal de las Casas. Dating back to the 16th century the hacienda style building features areas constructed from old adobe bricks and thousands of stones. Enjoy a quiet moment in the delightful garden area, a haven of tranquillity. The 12 boutique style rooms offer typically Mexican features with fireplaces, antiques and original artwork. There are two restaurants which specialise in haute cuisine and Carolus Bar offering typical tapas.



Chan-Kah Palenque

Silver
B/B

Rustic in style, Chan-Kah is conveniently situated close to the Palenque UNESCO ruins. Awarded four ecological stars, the hotel is surrounded by the rainforest and offers guests a choice of 73 comfortable junior suites and six casitas suites. There are two restaurants, a three-level swimming pool with natural cascades, games area and a bridge with access to the rainforest. As well as trips to explore the Palenque ruins, visitors can easily reach the Agua Azul Waterfalls, Yaxogilan ruins and the Tonina ruins from here.



Quinta Cha Nab Nal

Silver
B/B

Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the jungle at the luxury resort of Quinta Cha Nab Nal. Just three kilometres from the archaeological site of Palenque the resort has just 7 suites and resembles a Mayan Palace complex from the Classic period. Pre-Hispanic design combined with modern sophistication offers an aura of peace and isolation. Indulge in typically Mayan cuisine at the hotel's intimate, romantic restaurant or relax by the wonderful swimming pools based on the typical waterfalls found at Palenque.

Yucatan Peninsula

Merida, Chichen Itza & Uxmal

Mexico

No trip to Mexico would be complete without visiting the major Mayan sites of Chichen Itza and Uxmal, which offer a fantastic glimpse into this ancient Mesoamerican civilisation. 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 were masters of mathematics, inventing the calendars we use today. Without metal tools, beasts of burden or even the wheel, they were able to construct vast cities across a huge jungle landscape. Chichen Itza and Uxmal can be visited from the colonial town and state capital of Merida, or in a few hours from the popular Riviera Maya coastal hotels, or stay overnight in the hotels near the sites.



The Lodge at Uxmal

Silver
B/B

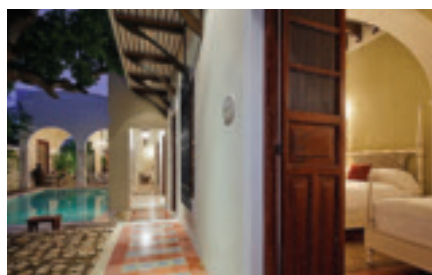
The Lodge at Uxmal is conveniently situated for the entrance to Uxmal ruins and is surrounded by trees giving it a secluded and peaceful atmosphere. Dispersed in 5 thatch-roofed villas made of local materials, the 40 rooms and suites are spacious and comfortable. There is Mexican and International fresh food to be enjoyed at the restaurant and you can also listen to live local music groups at dinner. After a day visiting the sites, go for a swim in the pool or visit the spa for relaxation.



Hacienda Chichen

Silver
B/B

Conveniently located next to the Chichen Itza pyramids in Yucatan, Hacienda Chichen is a family-run hotel that places a strong emphasis on its eco credentials and its commitment to preserving traditional Mayan culture. It has a private green jungle reserve and eco-spa, creating lush surroundings that are a haven for a wide range of tropical birds. Twelve cottages, with 28 guest rooms, are all decorated with bright furnishings and there is a pool. The hotel restaurant serves freshly prepared Mayan fusion dishes.



Casa Lecanda

Gold
B/B

Located in the historic centre of Merida, Casa Lecanda is a small luxury boutique hotel. Retaining the original Meridian style the hotel is built in a completely restored traditional Yucatecan home with attention to detail, architecture and garden landscaping. The seven distinctly styled rooms are all individually decorated with custom crafted furniture and original clay floors. As a converted house the rooms all have a slightly different layout. Casa Lecanda provides a uniquely local experience with the service of a contemporary luxury hotel.



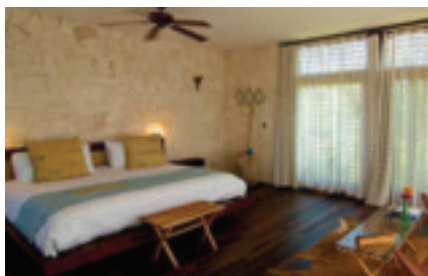
Chichen Itza

Riviera Maya

Yucatan Peninsula



The Caribbean coastline of the Yucatan Peninsula is popularly known as the Riviera Maya due to its wonderful white sandy beaches and turquoise seas stretching from Cancun in the north to the archaeological site of Tulum in the south. Whilst the area has some large all-inclusive chain resorts, there are also a number of smaller boutique-style hotels, ranging from the exclusive to simple cabana-style cottages.



Be Tulum

Gold
B/B

Be Tulum has been carefully created using native materials and designed by the owner/architect to blend with the environment of the ocean and tropical forest. Total peace and relaxation awaits guests at this chic hideaway with just twenty exclusive suites featuring Brazilian wood floors, a marble bathroom and outdoor showers. Breakfast is served on the ocean front deck by the white sand beach, a beach club and poolside lounge and restaurant are ideal for socialising and spa treatments are available. Be Tulum; a peaceful and stylish retreat.



Le Rêve Hotel & Spa

Gold
B/B

Le Rêve is a chic beachfront boutique hotel located in the Riviera Maya, just outside Playa del Carmen. With a reputation for friendly, helpful staff, this romantic retreat is one of the best. Each of the 25 rooms and suites has original hand-made Mexican detailing, air-conditioning and a private terrace or balcony overlooking the lush gardens or the ocean. Both the spectacular infinity pool and white sand beach, complete with beach bar service, are the perfect place to spend the day, or opt for a massage treatment in the spa.



Zoetry Paraiso de la Bonita

Gold
All inclusive

With a private beach, Zoetry Paraiso de la Bonita, a luxury boutique all inclusive hotel is often named as one of Mexico's most exceptional. There are 90 beachfront suites, some with private terrace, outdoor shower or plunge pool. Bathrooms are elegantly designed in marble and glass with luxurious amenities. There are three restaurants offering a superb selection of gourmet dining and private dining can be arranged. Expert chefs use locally grown ingredients to create spectacular and organic dishes to complement the vast choice of wines.

Mexico in Style

Mexico City – Merida – Riviera Maya

Mexico



Experience the best of Mexico's iconic sights combined with luxurious hotels.

Enjoy exploring vibrant Mexico City with its museums and nearby archaeological sites. Then head south east to the Yucatan Peninsula to discover the colonial beauty of Merida and the fascinating architecture of Mayan ruins before unwinding on the beautiful Riviera Maya.

DAY 1

Fly direct to Mexico City and transfer to the luxurious Four Seasons Hotel in a great central location for all the sights of the city

DAY 2

Early morning departure to the Teotihuacan Pyramids, located north east of the city. Learn how Teotihuacan quickly became the largest and most populous urban centre in the New World and how little is known about the ethnic groups who built the city. Spend the afternoon exploring the city including the impressive Zocalo in the urban heart

DAY 3

Free day to explore this vast city, from the famous Anthropology Museum to the beautiful parks and the numerous historic buildings

DAY 4

Transfer to the airport for the short flight to Merida on the Yucatan Peninsula. Stay three nights at the colonial style Hacienda Temozon a short distance from the city

DAY 5

Full day private tour to Uxmal & Kabah along the Puuc route. Uxmal is situated on rich green fertile land providing a perfect setting for some of the most magnificent ancient pyramids, buildings and temples of the ancient Mayan world. The nearby Kabah is the second largest ruin of the Puuc region

DAY 6

Free day to relax at the hacienda or enjoy many of the available activities

DAY 7

Transfer by road to explore one of the new Seven Wonders of the World, Chichen Itza. With your local guide enjoy a tour of this extensive site and learn about the history. Continue by land to the Riviera Maya and your luxurious retreat, Maroma Resort & Spa, located on white sand beaches

DAYS 8-10

Free time to relax and soak up the tropical sun. Perhaps take a scuba diving trip or snorkel the barrier reef or cenote. You may also wish to visit the nearby ruins of Tulum, perched on the end of a cliff with a spectacular backdrop of beach and Caribbean Sea

DAYS 11

Transfer to Cancun for your return, direct flight to the UK.



Guatemala, Belize & Honduras

In these enticing Central American countries, you can explore ancient ruins and colourful markets, admire sparkling lakes and impressive volcanoes, sightsee in pretty colonial towns and go diving off idyllic Caribbean islands.

With a rich Mayan and colonial heritage and spectacular scenery, Guatemala is one of the most striking countries in Latin America. Overlooked by three volcanic peaks, Lake Atitlan in the central highlands has to be one of the most beautiful lakes anywhere in the world. The villages surrounding it seem lost in time, with locals wearing hand-woven, vividly coloured costumes.

Any tour of the country should also include Antigua, an immensely attractive and relaxing city that serves as Guatemala's cultural and artistic centre. Many of its painstakingly restored Spanish colonial buildings have been converted into stylish hotels.

Also worth a visit is Chichicastenango, which holds the country's largest and most colourful markets, and has the intriguing Iglesia de Santo Tomas, a unique church with its own style of worship blended from pre-Columbian and Catholic practices.

Things to do in Guatemala, Belize & Honduras:

- Visit Antigua, the beautiful former Guatemalan capital
- Explore the ruins of the great Mayan city of Tikal
- Wander round the famous market at Chichicastenango
- Take a side-trip to the Copan ruins in Honduras
- Dive the Blue Hole and Belize's superb Barrier Reef

Guatemala, Belize & Honduras



Jan ✓✓	Feb ✓✓	Mar ✓✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓
Jul ✓	Aug ✓	Sep ✓	Oct ✓	Nov ✓	Dec ✓✓

When to go

The best time of year to visit these countries is between December and May. Other months can see prolonged periods of rain. Honduras and Belize can be affected by tropical storms and hurricanes between July and October. Although the region is generally hot and humid all year round, Guatemala's highlands can get very cold in winter, between October and March.

Getting there

There are no direct flights from the UK to this region. The most popular routes are flying with Iberia via Madrid, American Airlines or United Airlines via their US hubs.

GMT: -6 hours

Visas

British citizens do not require visas to enter these countries, though if you fly via the US, an ESTA is required.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter these countries.

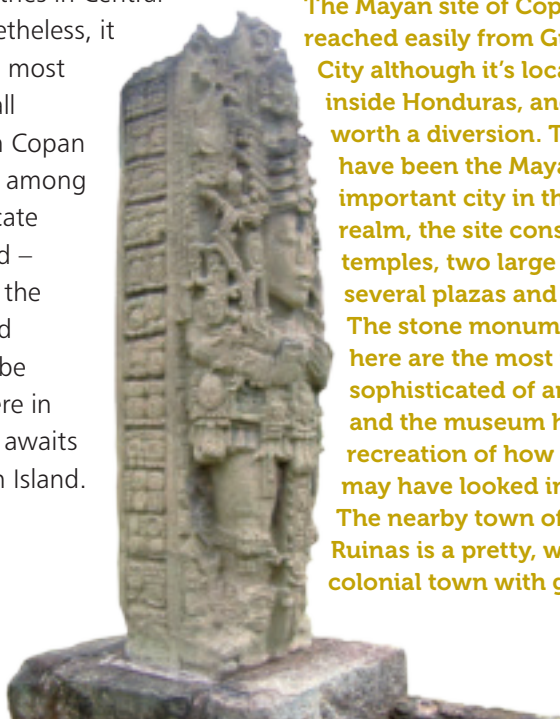
Another highlight is Tikal – surrounded by undisturbed rainforest and home to Howler monkeys and toucans, it has probably the best setting of all the Mayan ruins. If you want to get off the beaten track, float down the Rio Dulce towards the Caribbean coast at Livingston, where you may be lucky enough to spot the elusive manatee.

Belize is the only official English-speaking country in Central America. It is known principally as a top diving and snorkelling destination – the Belize Barrier Reef is the second longest in the world after Australia's Great Barrier Reef. But that's not all Belize has to offer. The offshore cayes and mainland coast have first-class, white-sand beaches. Protected forests in the interior shelter rare wildlife – you

may be lucky enough to spot a jaguar around Orange Walk. You could visit cacao plantations along the southern coast, or venture deep into the jungle to once vast Caracol, the country's largest known Mayan site.

Honduras is one of the least explored countries in Central America. Nonetheless, it has one of the most rewarding of all Mayan ruins in Copan – its stelae are among the most intricate ever discovered – while some of the best diving and snorkelling to be found anywhere in the Caribbean awaits you off Roatan Island.

The Mayan site of Copan can be reached easily from Guatemala City although it's located just inside Honduras, and it is well worth a diversion. Thought to have been the Mayan's most important city in their southern realm, the site consists of stone temples, two large pyramids, several plazas and a ball court. The stone monuments (stelae) here are the most intricate and sophisticated of any Mayan site and the museum has a fantastic recreation of how a pyramid may have looked in its heyday. The nearby town of Copan Ruinas is a pretty, well-preserved colonial town with good hotels.



Antigua, Guatemala

Antigua, a former capital of Guatemala, dates from 1543 and is one of the finest cities in Central America.

Located in Guatemala's central highlands, colonial Antigua is surrounded by coffee plantations and haciendas, and ringed by three volcanoes. In 1773 following a number of earthquakes, the authorities decided to relocate the capital to the site where Guatemala City now stands. Not everyone abandoned the city however, and today Antigua is one of the most visited tourist sites in Guatemala. It boasts a number of fine properties that have been converted into comfortable boutique posadas.



Posada del Angel

Silver
B/B

Posada del Angel is a romantic hideaway with all the splendour of a Mediterranean villa, complete with captivating architecture and beautiful landscaping. Located in a quiet street in the centre of Antigua, fine attention to detail and excellent service make for a memorable stay. There are just five rooms and two suites all packed with Guatemalan character and complete with wood burning stove. The hotel has a tranquil garden, pool and cosy library, and breakfast is served on the roof terrace with wonderful views across Antigua.



El Meson de Maria

Silver
B/B

A charming small hotel situated in the centre of Antigua, El Meson de Maria is close to the Calle del Arco (main street) and the main plaza. Ideally located for exploring the city, this restored 16th century mansion has four different room types, all decorated and furnished in colonial style and using local textiles. There are a number of patios and terraces, some with views that look out over Antigua town and the volcanoes. Horse riding, biking through the city and mountain hikes can be booked through the hotel.



El Convento

Gold
B/B

Located on one of Antigua's historic cobbled streets opposite the 18th century Capuchin Convent, El Convento is an all-suite boutique hotel. The hotel blends traditional, colonial and modern styling, with its rooms flanking a central courtyard in the middle of which is a hundred year old Tempisque tree. Guests can dine at the Siitz restaurant where the chef prepares delicious, Guatemalan dishes such as *Jocón*, *Pepian* and *Kaq'ik*. These recipes are cooked slowly in traditional style and are a highlight of a stay here.



Lake Atitlan & Chichicastenango

Guatemala,
Belize & Honduras



Picturesque Lake Atitlan and the famous market at 'Chichi' are two of Guatemala's top attractions.

A two-hour drive to the northwest of Antigua, through the picturesque highlands, takes you to Lake Atitlan, truly one of the most beautiful lakes in the world. Villages are dotted along the shoreline of the lake and everywhere you can see the evidence of Mayan culture and dress that has continued for centuries. A further hour by road takes you to the bustling and colourful market of Chichicastenango. This famous market takes place on Thursdays and Sundays, with produce and textiles brought by local farmers and artisans from miles around.



Casa Palopo

Gold
B/B

Casa Palopo is a delightful property with seven rooms and a two-bedroom villa terraced into the hillside, with fabulous panoramic views over Lake Atitlan. The house has strikingly decorated interiors with smart contemporary furnishings and Mayan art. The villa, located higher up the hill than the main building, has its own pool, making this the ultimate private retreat for those seeking seclusion. It's hard to find a more romantic place than the hotel's Restaurant 6.8 Palopo where you dine by candlelight overlooking the lake.



Hotel Atitlan

Silver
B/B

Situated on the northern shores of Lake Atitlan, this hotel was built in 1970 by a husband and wife duo, and was last expanded in 1992. It has 60 rooms, all with private balconies, and decorated with traditional tiles and handmade fabrics woven by Mayan people living in the nearby Guatemalan villages. There is a good sized pool, a series of contrasting gardens with over 500 plant species and a restaurant that is brightly decorated in a Guatemalan style, with views of the lake and far off volcanoes.

Tikal & the Peten Jungle



Shrouded in dense tropical jungle, Tikal in the north of Guatemala is probably one of the most extraordinary and impressive of all the Mayan sites.

Tikal was first occupied as a small village sometime before 300BC but by around 700AD had become an important city with great palaces, plazas and pyramids. Nowadays, visitors have to walk through densely forested trails before the vegetation

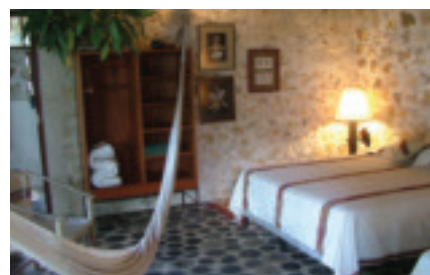
clears and they find themselves at the main plaza, surrounded on four sides by huge pyramid temples. There are also a number of other temple sites near to Tikal including Yaxha, which is thirty minutes to the south.



La Lancha, Lake Peten Itza

Gold
B/B

La Lancha is a luxurious jungle resort overlooking peaceful Lake Peten Itza and close to the Maya site of Tikal. Each of the ten secluded casitas has furniture and artwork from Bali and fabrics and carvings from Guatemala. The lodge has a split-level pool, ideal to escape from the jungle heat. The open-air restaurant is situated under the main lodge's thatch roof, with spectacular views of the forest canopy and nearby lake, the second largest in Guatemala.



Ni'tun Eco Lodge

Silver
B/B

On the shores of Lake Peten Itza, Ni'tun Eco Lodge has just four cabins constructed in traditional style from wood and stone, with palm leaf thatch. It's a perfect setting in which to relax, take eco-expeditions and visit spectacular Tikal. Days here are spent trekking in the jungle and spotting birds and animals, whilst learning about the rainforest. Totally committed to ecology and conservation, the lodge takes all the right steps to ensure the lake waters remain pristine, the forest clean and the environment peaceful.

Belize's Jungle & San Ignacio

Guatemala,
Belize & Honduras

Caracol is the most extensive and impressive Mayan site in Belize.

The Caracol ruins cover 30 square miles of thick, high canopy jungle and include five plazas, an astronomic observatory and over 35,000 buildings that have been identified. The loftiest among them, the massive pyramid Caana, is capped by three temples and rises

over 140 feet above the jungle floor. This site can only be reached from hotels that are located in Mountain Pine Ridge or San Ignacio. In addition to Caracol, Belize has a number of other worthwhile ruins including Xunantunich and Lamanai.



Mayan Ruin, Xunantunich



Chaa Creek Lodge

Gold
B/B

Award-winning eco-lodge, Chaa Creek Lodge, is on the banks of the Macal River and set in 365 acres of private nature reserve, where peccaries (a member of the pig family), monkeys and over 300 species of birds can be spotted. Guests are literally surrounded by one of the most pristine ecosystems in the world. There are 23 comfortable palm-thatched cottage rooms with decks. Activities include horse riding, canoeing, mountain biking and hiking, and there is a hill top spa, large eco-friendly pool and jungle bar.



Blancaneaux Lodge

Gold
B/B

This lodge provides luxurious accommodation in the wild and remote north-western area of the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest, near to Privassion Creek. Surrounded by rivers, waterfalls and the rainforest, visitors can explore on horseback, visit the nearby Mayan ruins and relax in a hammock. This well-established family-run lodge has 20 palm-thatched wooden villas and cabañas, all with special touches such as hand made organic soaps, bathrobes and iPod dock. Montagna Ristorante serves fine Italian food using ingredients grown in the hotel garden.

Belize Island cruising

Explore the beautiful Belizean cays on a private catamaran and relax into the unhurried rhythms of a Caribbean lifestyle.

The Caribbean coast of Belize is dotted with small palm-fringed islands and there is no better way to explore than by boat. Catamarans can be chartered for up to eight people (four cabins) and you can just sit back as the experienced crew navigate around the cays, drop anchor whilst you take a refreshing dip and are served delicious meals.

Sail north towards the popular areas of Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker where you can snorkel directly from the catamaran. At Hol Chan Marine Reserve you swim amongst shoals of tropical fish and turtles, and at Shark Ray Alley you are likely to spot stingrays and nurse sharks.

Southbound from Belize City the islands are quieter, more remote, and perfect for snorkelling. You'll find laid-back resorts and beach bars serving local treats such as coconut water or an ice-cold Belikan beer.

Divers can arrange a route that visits the Belize Barrier Reef in conjunction with local dive operators.



Beaches & diving on Belize's Caribbean Coast

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 cayes 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 coral reef off the coast of Belize and the famous Blue Hole. Snorkelling, swimming and sailing are also popular activities in this area.

The Bay Islands, off Honduras's Caribbean coast, is another fantastic place for diving and snorkelling.



Victoria House

Gold
B/B

Victoria House is an attractive plantation-style building known for its exclusivity and service, offering a choice of casitas and private villas, set in either tropical gardens or just a step away from the white sand beach. Most of the 42 rooms have verandas overlooking the Caribbean waters. The atmosphere is one of barefoot elegance, and its restaurant is relaxed and informal serving superb local seafood. Victoria House has a large swimming pool and is a great place to bask in the warm sun, fish, dive and snorkel.



Matachica

Silver
B/B

A lovely secluded beach resort north of San Pedro, Matachica is set on a white sandy beach surrounded by beautiful tropical gardens and facing the Belize Barrier Reef. There are 24 villas – 21 single casitas, two 2-bedroom villas and one 3-bedroom residence. Each is distinctively furnished with Central American textiles and fine linen. The Jade Spa offers a wide range of treatments and massages, all using organic local ingredients. Matachica has an award-winning restaurant, Mambo, and truly offers the best cuisine in Belize.



Turtle Inn

Gold
B/B

This 25-room seafront hideaway, owned by Francis Ford Coppola, combines natural wonders with stylish luxury. Thatched cottages are decorated with handcrafted Balinese furnishings and just steps beyond your private deck the white-sand beach dissolves into the sparkling Caribbean Sea. With two restaurants and a spa, Turtle Inn is a perfect refuge. Its unique location provides a wealth of activities, from some of the best diving in the world and hikes to hidden lagoons, to canoe trips up Monkey River and exploring the nearby Belizean town.

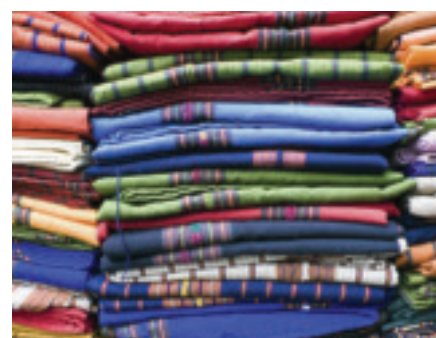
Guatemala & Belize

Antigua – Lake Atitlan – Tikal – Ambergris Caye

On this 13-day tour, you'll discover the highlands and jungle of Guatemala and the turquoise waters of Belize's Caribbean coastline.



See the full kaleidoscope of Guatemala's highlights – colonial towns, colourful markets, sparkling Lake Atitlan and the incredible Mayan ruins of Tikal. Combine the heat of the jungle with the breeze of the Caribbean in Belize, which has a simply stunning coastline. Whether you want to dive, snorkel or just lie on the beach and relax after your adventure, these two countries make a perfect combination.



DAY 1

Fly via the USA to Guatemala City and transfer to Antigua. Spend a total of 3 nights in the heart of this beautiful city at Posada del Angel

DAY 2

Half day walking tour in Antigua to take in its cobbled streets, colonial churches and attractive squares

DAY 3

Free day in Antigua to explore on your own. Visit the colourful markets or enjoy some Guatemalan coffee in a café overlooking the main square

DAY 4

Transfer by land through the highlands to Panajachel on the shore of Lake Atitlan and stay at the charming Hotel Atitlan

DAY 5

Free day to explore the lake area or take an optional full day boat tour of Lake Atitlan, stopping at local villages such as San Juan la Laguna and Santiago Atitlan

DAY 6

Free morning to relax by the lakeside before transferring to Guatemala City for the evening flight to Flores. Transfer to Ni'tun Eco lodge which overlooks Lake Peten Itza

DAY 7

Enjoy a full-day guided tour of Tikal, immersed within the tropical rainforest

DAY 8

Road transfer into Belize and the Cayo District. Chaa Creek is an award winning lodge set by the Macal River

DAY 9

Free day to explore. The lodge offers a variety of on site activities.

DAY 10

Road transfer to Belize City for your flight to the crystal clear waters and white sands of Ambergris Caye. Stay at Victoria House for 3 nights

DAYS 11-12

Spend time relaxing on the beach, taking snorkelling trips or venture out and dive in Belize's famous Blue Hole

DAY 13

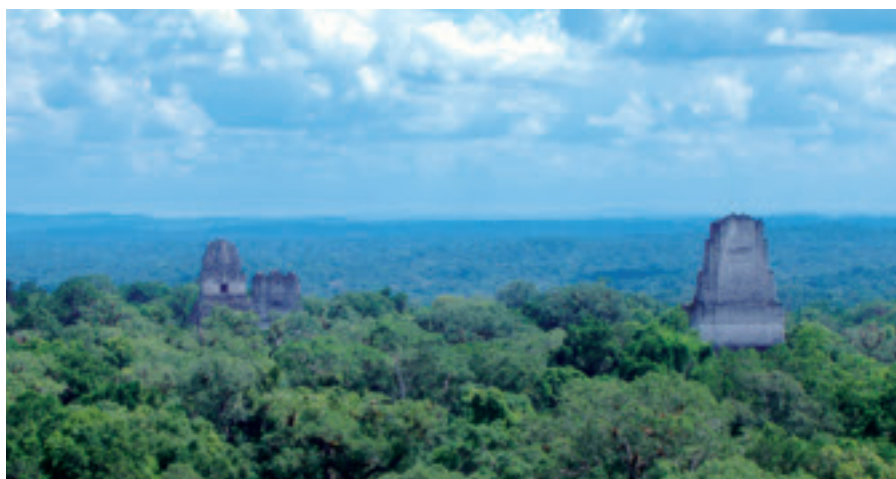
Fly to Belize City for your international connection to the UK via the USA.

The Mayan World

Copan – Rio Dulce – Tikal – Merida – Chichen Itza – Cancun

This 13-day itinerary visits the major Mayan sites in Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico, as well as Central America's volcanic scenery and tropical jungles.

This itinerary takes you to the Mayan communities of Copan in Honduras, Tikal in Guatemala and Chichen Itza, Uxmal and Kabah in Mexico, all of which will contribute to in-depth understanding of Mayan culture and traditions. A great way to end your trip is with a relaxing beach break on the Riviera Maya in Mexico, just ask us for details.



DAY 1

Daytime flight via the USA to Guatemala City and transfer to your hotel, Westin Camino Real

DAY 2

In the morning journey across the border to Honduras for the Mayan site of Copan. Here you stay at Hacienda San Lucas, situated in the hills above the Copan Valley

DAY 3

Half day tour of Copan ruins with your knowledgeable local guide

DAY 4

Travel back across the border into Guatemala and on to the town of Rio Dulce, close to Guatemala's Caribbean coast. Afternoon boat tour of the Rio Dulce area including Ak' Tenamit and Bird Island

DAY 5

Journey on to the Flores area where you will stay at La Lancha, a rainforest resort near to the Mayan site of Tikal and with views of Lake Peten Itza

DAY 6

Spend a full day exploring Tikal, one of the best known of all the Mayan sites, with your private archaeology guide

DAY 7

Free morning to relax. In the afternoon transfer to Flores airport for the short flight to Guatemala City where you spend the night at the Westin Camino Real

DAY 8

Fly to Merida, the capital of Yucatan, via Mexico City where you will stay in the boutique Hacienda Merida, a quiet retreat

DAY 9

Half day private tour of Merida city which includes a visit to the magnificent Cathedral of San Ildefonso, built with the stones of ancient Maya temples

DAY 10

Full day private tour to explore the Mayan sights of Uxmal and Kabah

DAY 11

Travel by land to Hacienda Chichen located close to the ruins of Chichen Itza, a perfect base

DAY 12

Tour the ruins of Chichen Itza, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, on your own early in the morning before the crowds arrive

DAY 13

Afternoon transfer to Cancun for your return flight direct to the UK.



Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a natural wonderland of active volcanoes, bewitching cloud forests and verdant rainforests, packed with exotic birds and flowers. It also has some fantastic beaches.

This small, lush country on the narrow isthmus of land between the Pacific and the Caribbean has an enlightened approach towards conservation. Approximately a quarter of the land is protected by national parks and wildlife reserves, which encompass volcanoes (you can soak in their thermal springs), rainforest, tropical dry forests, mangroves, wetlands, coral reefs and beaches. Many of the lodges and hotels have impeccable environmental and social credentials, and the verification 'leaf' scheme run by the Costa Rica Tourist Board has helped to make the country a leader in sustainable tourism.

Two favourite places are the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, a magical place surrounded by whirling mists where you can visit orchid gardens and coffee plantations, and Tortuguero National Park, where you journey by small boat through waterways in search of alligators, iguanas and a myriad of birdlife. Harder to reach but no less rewarding is the Osa Peninsula where visitors can completely get away from other tourists.

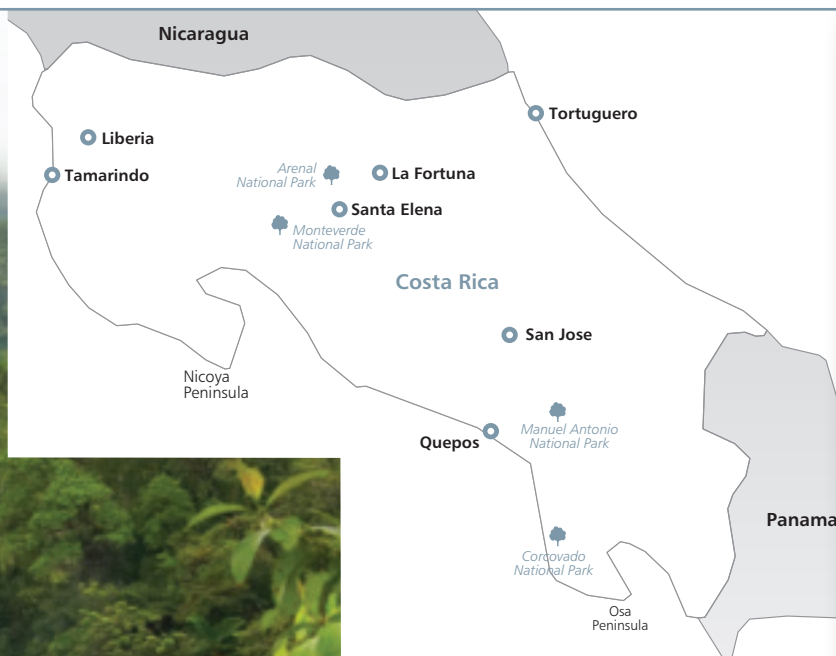


La Fortuna Falls

Things to do in Costa Rica:

- See turtles lay eggs in Tortuguero from July to October
- Zip-line through the canopy in Monteverde Cloud Forest
- Look for three-toed sloths in Manuel Antonio National Park
- Spot Costa Rica's 'special', the Resplendent Quetzal
- Horse ride on the beaches of the Osa Peninsula

Costa Rica



Jan ✓	Feb ✓	Mar ✓	Apr ✓	May ✓	Jun ✓
Jul ✓	Aug ✓	Sep ✓	Oct ✓	Nov ✓	Dec ✓

When to go

The best time of year to visit Costa Rica is between December and May. Central America has a long rainy season, though 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 from the UK. Iberia flies from the UK via Madrid to San Jose and a number of US airlines fly on a daily basis via their hubs in the US.

GMT: -6 hours

Visas

British citizens do not require visas to enter Costa Rica, though if you fly via the US, an ESTA will be required.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter Costa Rica.

Throughout the country, you can take walks on well-marked trails with expert local naturalist guides, who will point out monkeys, frogs, hummingbirds, and much, much more.

After exploring Costa Rica's many natural highlights, most visitors opt to relax on one of the country's many golden sand beaches that line its beautiful Pacific coast.

'Pura Vida' in Corcovado

Casa Corcovado Jungle Lodge, on the Osa Peninsula.

"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 onto 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."



San Jose & the Central Valley

Cost Rica's capital, San Jose, in the Central Valley is the most likely point of arrival into the country. The climate in the city and surrounding valley is milder and less humid than on the coasts making it a pleasant place to spend a night or two before venturing further into the country's lush forests and numerous national parks.

There are a number of attractions right on the city's doorstep with dozens of tours on offer including trips to the Poas Volcano and La Paz waterfalls, canopy walks, butterfly farms and white-water rafting. There is a good range of comfortable hotels in the city or just out of town in the coffee region, where visitors can stay on working coffee plantations.



Grano de Oro

Silver
B/B

Situated just off Paseo Colon, the main street in downtown San Jose, Hotel Grano de Oro is a converted Victorian mansion dating back around 100 years. The building has been carefully restored to create a hotel with 40 rooms and suites that have retained the feel of a comfortable private house. The rooftop garden terrace has loungers and two outdoor Jacuzzis, and the hotel's restaurant serves traditional Costa Rican and European dishes. The hotel is committed to sustainable policies that support local social projects.



Finca Rosa Blanca

Silver
B/B

This friendly boutique eco-resort is set within a coffee farm plantation in Costa Rica's Central Valley, and is only 25 minutes from the international airport. All 15 rooms are individually designed and have a Jacuzzi bath and spectacular views. The resort puts strong emphasis on sustainability and a tour of the coffee farm is available. The restaurant uses organic produce, some from its own gardens, and serves classic Costa Rican dishes. Other facilities include a comfy bar with sofas set around a fireplace, infinity pool and spa.



Tortuguero & the Caribbean Coast

Costa Rica

Tortuguero National Park, on Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast is one of the most important nesting sites in the world for the Green sea turtles, which find their way onto the brown sand beaches every year between July and October. Its territories protect not only the turtle-nesting beaches, but also the surrounding forests, canals and lagoons that are home to alligators, iguanas, Howler monkeys, boa constrictors and numerous bird species.

Everything in Tortuguero centres on the waterways and access is by boat or air only. All the lodges include boat trips and many offer carefully regulated night tours to see the turtles, in season. The national park's peaceful atmosphere attracts nature and wildlife lovers and has managed to develop a low-density tourism system.



Mawamba Lodge

Bronze
Full-board & excursions

Mawamba Lodge is set amidst the lush jungle in Tortuguero National Park, between the Caribbean Sea and the Tortuguero canals. The lodge has 58 rustic style rooms, two docks for easy access to canal trips and a swimming pool with a Jacuzzi. Many excursions are included at Mawamba Lodge such as nature trails, kayaking and night tours. Guests can also explore the national park via the canals for spectacular bird-watching. Green sea turtles come to Tortuguero to lay their eggs between July and October.



Evergreen Lodge

Bronze
Full-board & excursions

Ideal for visitors who want to be completely immersed in the wildlife-rich national park, Evergreen Lodge has 55 rustic jungle-style cabins set in tropical gardens. Built to blend in with the landscape, the cabins provide a comfortable and spacious base. There is a good restaurant, a bar that looks out over a lagoon, a spa service and a fun turtle-shaped swimming pool. Many activities are included such as fishing, kayaking and a canopy tour. The lodge has a strong environmental focus and is a Rainforest Alliance verified property.



Arenal Volcano

Volcanoes are prominent throughout most of Central America but the perfect cone of Arenal is one of the most scenic.

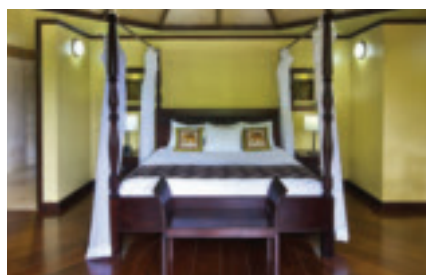
At 5,437 feet the Arenal Volcano dominates the lush forests and pastures of the La Fortuna area that surrounds it. Dormant until 1968 when huge explosions triggered lava flows, it has remained active ever since. Many adventures can be arranged locally including hikes on the slopes of the volcano and relaxing in one of the hot springs created by the natural geothermal heat that warms the groundwater. Adrenalin activities such as white-water rafting, canyoning and zip-line tours are popular as are the more slow-paced Sky Tram rides.



Arenal Kioro Suites & Spa

Silver
B/B

Located 10km northwest of La Fortuna in San Carlos, this five-star luxury mountain hotel looks out directly on the Arenal Volcano. The hotel is set in 11 hectares of undulating forest, edged by two crystalline streams that originate in the Arenal National Park, and has private thermal springs where guests can bathe. The hotel has a total of 53 suites with balconies and panoramic views of the volcano, a superb restaurant serving local cuisine and a spa that offers a range of beauty and massage treatments.



Arenal Nayara Hotel & Gardens

Gold
B/B

This small, stylishly 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 outdoor shower and Jacuzzi on a private terrace. This award-winning hotel has top class facilities including small whirlpools, a wet bar and an exclusive restaurant, that serves traditional gourmet cuisine. At the spa guests can enjoy an unusual variety of treatments such as coffee scrubs and volcanic mud wraps.

Arenal to Monteverde on horseback

"This is a novel and exciting way to transfer from Arenal to Monteverde and was one of the highlights of my two-week Costa Rica trip. A minivan picked us up from our hotel and took us a short way to the Arenal Dam, where we crossed the lake on a small covered boat. The views of the towering volcano were breathtaking.

On the other side our guide was waiting with the horses and we set off on the 2½ hour ride along the lake path. The route is incredibly picturesque, passing through lush rainforest, tropical jungle and scenic farmland. Our guide was fantastic and the horses were healthy and energetic. I would highly recommend this tour for any intermediate rider."

Monteverde Cloud Forest

Costa Rica

A few hours by road from Arenal, the Monteverde Cloud Forest is an enchanting place with emerald green foliage surrounded by swirling mists.

The forest is perched on the edge of the Tilaran Mountains some 1,400 metres above sea level. Over 400 bird species have been spotted here, including 30 known species of hummingbird. There is a huge choice of activities here and the area is popular with both families and those who love exploring the outdoors. Hiking in the cloud forest, canopy tours, butterfly gardens, night tours, orchid gardens and coffee plantation tours are offered as well as trekking and horse riding. The nearest town is Santa Elena.



El Establo Mountain Hotel

Silver
B/B

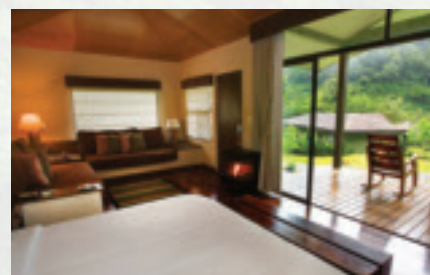
This family-owned lodge in Monteverde has 155 comfortable rooms and is a good option for those looking to immerse themselves in nature but who still want their creature comforts. The lodge offers everything from restaurants, bars, tennis and a heated indoor pool, all within a beautiful forest setting. A highlight is the hotel's private canopy tour that guests can traverse in their own time. The lodge is committed to the environment and promotes sustainable and responsible practices that ensure a minimum impact on nature.



Hotel Fonda Vela

Bronze
B/B

Situated just 2km from the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Hotel Fonda Vela is set in 35 acres of grounds surrounded by lush forest that are perfect for bird-watching and hiking. Rooms are comfortable and spacious, many with large windows and forest views. There are two restaurants, one with superb views and another with a warm fireplace and deck seating, a covered pool with a country club style locker room and two Jacuzzis. The hotel can arrange tours to Monteverde, coffee plantations, butterfly gardens and night walks.



El Silencio, Bajos del Toro

Gold
B/B

El Silencio Lodge is a wonderful luxury eco-hotel situated in 500 acres of tropical cloud forest reserve in the Central Valley. Dotted around this peaceful destination are 16 stylish cottage suites featuring outdoor whirlpool tub and furnished viewing deck with mountain or river views. A variety of activities are available locally including horseback riding, river rafting, visiting the local orchid farm. There are also bird-watching trails nearby. Relax at the Esencia Spa with its lovely yoga deck and enjoy healthy meals at the on-site Los Ventanales restaurant.

Manuel Antonio National Park

Costa Rica's Pacific coast is one of the country's most visited areas with something for everyone – gorgeous beaches, water sports, scuba diving, deep sea fishing, adventure tours and all with a spectacular verdant rainforest backdrop.

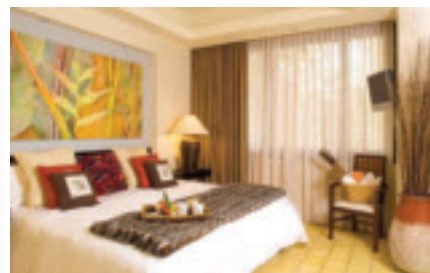
The sheer beauty of the Manuel Antonio National Park makes it one of the most popular spots along this coast, especially as it is easily accessible by road from San Jose in just a few hours. Its sand beaches are backed by dense lush rainforest with well-marked trails and prolific wildlife, and there are some very comfortable places to stay in the area, either around the town of Quepos, along the coast adjacent to the park or on the cliffs overlooking the ocean.



Parador Resort & Spa

Silver
B/B

Perched high above the sweeping central Pacific coastline on 12 acres of rainforest teeming with wildlife, Parador is a secluded, environmentally responsible resort with spectacular views, world class amenities and personal service. Next to a white sand beach, the resort is also just minutes from Manuel Antonio National Park and the village of Quepos. 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.



Arenas del Mar

Gold
B/B

Arenas del Mar occupies a great beachfront location within 11 acres of tropical rainforest next to the Manuel Antonio National Park. Built with sustainability in mind, the 38 rooms and suites have king size beds, local organic soaps and have views towards the beach or rainforest. The two restaurants, Playitas and El Mirador overlook the Espadilla beach. There are many activities on offer including white water rafting, mangrove kayaking, boat tours, rainforest hikes and horseback riding. There is a pool, spa and small shop.

Osa Peninsula & Corcovado

Costa Rica

The remote primary rainforest of the Osa Peninsula in the far southern Pacific coastal area holds the greatest variety of plants and animals of any protected area in Costa Rica. It is ideal for the more adventurous traveller with a real interest in wildlife and includes the wonderful pristine rainforest of the Corcovado National Park.

With little road access, some of the country's most luxurious lodges are located here and are reached by air from San Jose to Palmar Sur and then either four-wheel drive vehicle or boat. Activities include hiking forest trails looking for sloths, monkeys or even tapirs and snorkelling off small islands to spot dolphins, Manta rays and colourful schools of tropical fish.



Spider monkey, Corcovado National Park



Casa Corcovado Jungle Lodge

Silver

Full-board & excursions

On the remote Osa Peninsula, tucked away in the trees and cooled by the ocean, this 170-acre private reserve borders the Corcovado National Park. It has been carefully designed and built by an American naturalist, with over 30 years of local experience. Despite its remote location, Casa Corcovado Jungle Lodge has a choice of luxurious suites and bungalows, a bar, dining room and a terrace where guests can sit and watch the sunset. The lodge offers a number of excursions including snorkelling and scuba diving at Caño Island.



Lapa Rios

Silver

Full-board & excursions

Eco-friendly Lapa Rios is situated in a private 1,000 acre tropical rainforest nature reserve and is home to thousands of creatures including monkeys, macaws and puma. The luxury lodge has 16 thatched bungalows all with wooden floors, king or queen beds, bamboo furniture and a private deck with a garden shower. The lodge has strong community values with many of the staff coming from the local area. A host of activities are available such as birding and waterfall tours, and the nearby beach is just a short hike away.

Costa Rica

Sustainable Wildlife Tour

San Jose – Arenal – Monteverde – Manuel Antonio – Corcovado

Visit Costa Rica and experience this diverse country whilst knowing that the properties you stay in are highly recognised by the Sustainable Tourism Certification programme (CST).

Travel through different ecosystems from the lush Central Valley, famous for coffee production, to the spectacular Arenal Volcano and the cloud forest. Relax by the beaches of Manuel Antonio National Park before venturing to the remote Osa Peninsula



DAY 1

Daytime flight via Madrid or the USA to San Jose. Spend the next 2 nights at the Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation & Inn located in the lush Central Valley

DAY 2

Free day for excursions such as hiking to Barba Volcano, bird-watching and horse riding. You can also take an optional tour of their own sustainable organic coffee farm

DAY 3

Land transfer to Arenal and the Arenal Springs hotel which has two hot spring swimming pools and a spa offering a range of treatments

DAY 4

Half day trek as part of a group to Arenal Volcano for some spectacular views. Explore the lower slopes of the volcano and visit the area destroyed in the first eruption in 1968

DAY 5

Travel across Lake Arenal to the Monteverde Cloud Forest and Fonda Vela lodge. Part of the transfer is by horseback allowing you to enjoy the spectacular scenery

DAYS 6

Half day hike in the Monteverde Reserve with a local naturalist guide. Learn about the lush ecosystem of the cloud forest and the diverse flora and fauna

DAY 7

Transfer to the Pacific Coast and spend 2 nights at Arenas del Mar, close to the Manuel Antonio National Park

DAY 8

Half day visit to Manuel Antonio National Park. The naturalist guide will help you appreciate this beautiful area and spot sloths, birds and reptiles, as well as orchids, butterflies and tropical trees. Free time in the afternoon

DAY 9

Transfer by road to Palmar Sur and then onwards to Casa Corcovado by road and then boat. Immerse yourself in this remote, pristine area

DAYS 10-11

During your stay enjoy hikes to Corcovado National Park, snorkelling off Caño Island, bird-watching, horseback riding, scuba diving and kayaking

DAY 12

Return to Palmar Sur airport for the short flight to San Jose and overnight at the Grano de Oro

DAY 13

Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK.



Costa Rica Highlights

San Jose – Tortuguero – Arenal – Monteverde – Manuel Antonio

Costa Rica

Enjoy the many highlights of Costa Rica on this 12-day itinerary, including volcanoes, lakes, cloud forest and both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts.

Costa Rica is a country of great natural beauty and every highlight has something unique to offer. Whether you are watching the Arenal volcano whilst bathing in hot springs, walking in the canopy of Monteverde's cloud forest or relaxing on one of the many beautiful beaches that adorn its coastline, Costa Rica really is a nature lover's paradise.

DAY 1

Daytime flight via Madrid or the USA to San Jose. Overnight at the charming Grano de Oro

DAY 2

Free day in San Jose or take an optional excursion to La Paz waterfall or one of the nearby coffee plantations

DAY 3

Land transfer to Tortuguero, on the Caribbean coast, for 2 nights, exploring the many channels and wildlife habitats that exist here. In season you can see turtles laying their eggs on the beach and later in the year the baby turtles hatching

DAY 4

Full day exploring the Tortuguero waterways by boat with your local guide

DAY 5

Transfer to the Arenal region for a 2-night stay at the base of the magnificent volcano. Enjoy the national park and spend time relaxing in the Arenal hot springs

DAY 6

Free day in the Arenal region for optional tours including white water rafting and volcano treks

DAY 7

Travel across Lake Arenal to the Monteverde Cloud Forest and Fonda Vela lodge. For the more adventurous we can offer this transfer on horseback

DAY 8

Spend your time exploring the lush ecosystem of the cloud forest

DAYS 9-11

From the coolness of the cloud forest, head to the steamier Pacific. Spend 3 nights at the Parador Resort, close to the Manuel Antonio National Park. Spend your days exploring the park or relaxing on the beach

DAY 12

Transfer by land to San Jose in time for your overnight flight back to the UK.



Nicaragua & Panama

Both Nicaragua and Panama have perfect cone-shaped volcanoes, lush virgin rainforests, colonial towns, exciting modern cities and offer genuine interaction with indigenous communities – yet amazingly they remain two of the least visited countries in Latin America. Both are also superb beach destinations, with Panama best for the Caribbean coast while Nicaragua's best beaches are along its Pacific coast.



Things to do in Nicaragua and Panama:

- 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 at San Juan del Sur
- Wonder at the engineering of the Panama Canal
- Visit the indigenous community in Chagres National Park

Nicaragua & Panama

Jan ✓✓	Feb ✓✓	Mar ✓✓	Apr ✓✓	May ✓✓	Jun ✓
Jul ✓	Aug ✓	Sep X	Oct X	Nov ✓	Dec ✓✓

When to go

The best time of year to visit both Nicaragua and Panama is between December and May. Central America has a long rainy season, though 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 US hubs. For Panama City, Iberia flies from the UK via Madrid and KLM flies via Amsterdam, or alternatively fly via the US.

GMT:

Nicaragua is GMT -6 hours

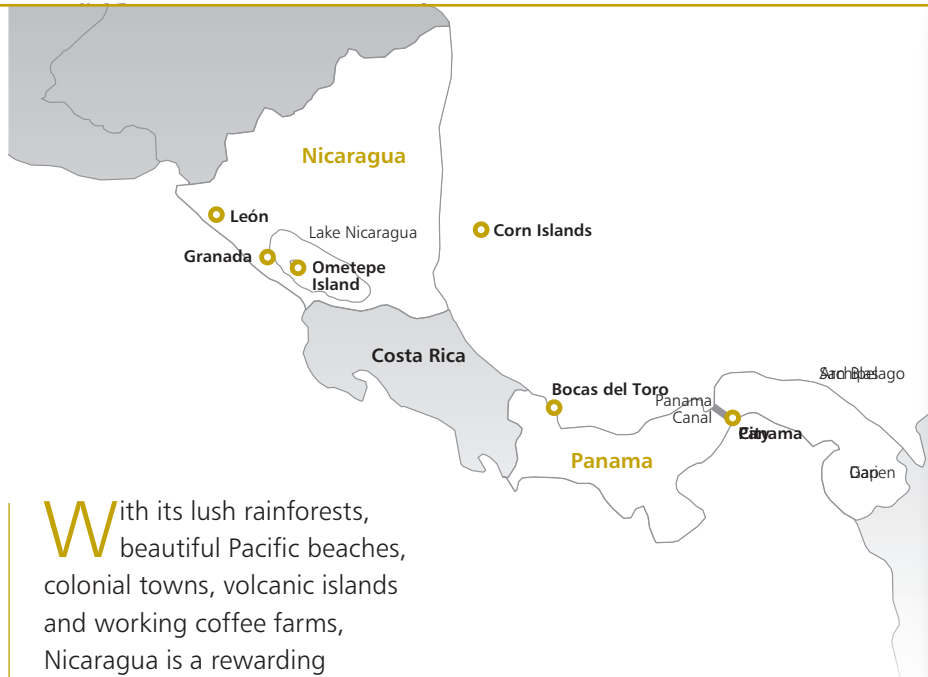
Panama is GMT -5 hours

Visas

British citizens do not require visas to enter Nicaragua or Panama, although if you fly via the US an ESTA will be required.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations required to enter either country.



With its lush rainforests, beautiful Pacific beaches, colonial towns, volcanic islands and working coffee farms, Nicaragua is a rewarding destination. The highlights of a trip include a stay on the volcanic island of Ometepe, a beach escape at San Juan del Sur and time wandering through the beautiful cobbled streets of Granada and León.

However, be sure to delve a little deeper. Nicaragua can provide testing hikes to the summit of both dormant and active volcanoes, unique insights into the thriving coffee industry and can offer visitors the chance to explore the tropical Caribbean Corn Islands.

To the south of Nicaragua, Panama's role as a corridor between South and Central America, and more recently as a link between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, has shaped its history. No one visiting the country should fail to visit the famous 80-kilometre-long Panama Canal. Completed in 1914, and now used by

some 14,000 vessels a year, this astonishing feat of engineering is also home to a remarkable amount of wildlife, including sloths, monkeys and crocodiles.

Panama is also a nature destination par excellence. On Panama City's doorstep, the Soberania National Park has registered over 600 bird species.

Other draws include the escapist San Blas Islands, governed by their indigenous communities, and lively Panama City. The capital has a growing number of great hotels and restaurants, and an absorbing Casco Viejo (old town) now a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is gradually being restored.

Collared Aracari Toucan

Located on the eastern banks of the Panama Canal, Soberania National Park is the closest gateway to Panama's rainforest. The national park is home to some 105 species of mammal, 525 bird species and 79 species of reptile.



Nicaragua's colonial towns, coffee region & beaches



Iglesia La Recoleccion, the 'Yellow Church' León

Granada and León are Nicaragua's two most attractive cities, with well-preserved examples of colonial architecture. Granada is on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, where the focal point is Ometepe, an island dominated by the two volcanoes. León is some 90 km northwest of Managua and has the largest cathedral in Central America.

Away from the cities, in the northern highlands, the coffee region offers a fascinating insight into the industry where visitors stay in simple rooms, on real working coffee farms. On the Pacific coast, San Juan del Sur has good hotels, restaurants and beach bars, with smaller quiet beaches along the coast. In the Caribbean Sea, the Corn Islands offer visitors real Creole culture and beautiful beaches.



Villa Paraíso, Ometepe

Bronze
B/B

Hotel Villa Paraíso is set on Santo Domingo Beach, one of the most attractive on Ometepe, an island in the great fresh water Cocibolca Lake, located between the Concepción and Maderas volcanoes. Simple cabins are set within lush forest where some have spectacular views over the lake. Restaurant La Mariscada serves typical Nicaraguan dishes including fresh fish. Outdoor pursuits in this pristine landscape include hiking on the volcanoes, a trip to San Ramon waterfall, bird-watching on a forest tour and a visit to the natural springs.



Hotel Plaza Colon

Bronze
B/B

Positioned in the heart of Granada, Hotel Plaza Colon flanks the main square. This elegant colonial house has been lovingly restored to its original beauty and features an attractive internal courtyard. The 27 luxurious rooms are all traditionally furnished and some have a balcony overlooking the square with its iconic cathedral. There is a small pool and bar serving the traditional Nicaraguan cocktail 'El Macua' and from the street in front of the hotel, guests can take a horse drawn carriage trip around the city.



Morgan's Rock Hacienda & Ecolodge

Silver
B/B

Close to San Juan del Sur on the Pacific Coast, Morgan's Rock Hacienda & Ecolodge has 15 deluxe bungalows that are set on a forested hill, overlooking a mile-long curved beach and private cove. Each bungalow is built using sustainable wood and has a private terrace from where guests can spot Howler monkeys and sloths. This is both a luxury lodge and a community development programme. It is set within a 4,000 acre reserve that is a mix of pristine rainforest, low-impact agricultural land and sustainable tropical forest.

Panama – the canal, wildlife & beaches

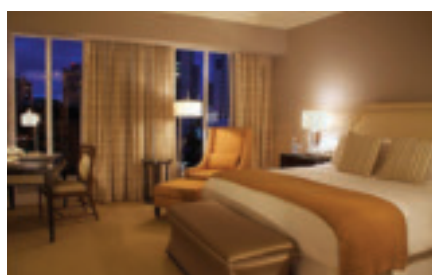
Nicaragua & Panama



Bocas del Toro

More than just the canal, Panama's geography of volcanic highlands, coastal plains and dense, orchid filled rainforests results in an impressive bio-diversity of wildlife species. A day trip from the capital takes you deep into the Chagres National Park, to spend an action-packed day with the Embera Parara Puru Community.

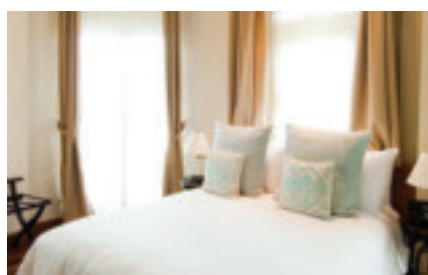
Panama is also a superb beach destination. The idyllic Bocas del Toro islands on its Caribbean coastline, near the border with Costa Rica, have white sand beaches and aquamarine waters, fringed by lush rainforests. Spot dolphin, snorkel and look out for Hawksbill, Leatherback and Green turtles. Further east, the San Blas Archipelago is jaw-droppingly beautiful and home to the indigenous Kuna Indians.



The Bristol

Gold
B/B

The Bristol is a contemporary, luxury retreat in the centre of Panama City's financial district, close to Balboa Avenue and many of the city's shopping and cultural highlights. There are 119 stylishly designed rooms and suites inspired by the vibrant art, architecture and history of Panama, with custom-designed fabrics and furnishings. Dining at the Salsipuedes Restaurant in The Bristol is a real treat and the bar also serves rum from over 20 countries. There is a spa offering a range of indulgent health and beauty treatments.



Las Clementinas

Gold
B/B

Las Clementinas is a small luxury boutique hotel located in the historic Casco Viejo district of Panama City. Originally an apartment building in the 1930's, the property was carefully refurbished over a three year period from 2007 until its opening in 2010. The hotel has six rooms all of which have retained the spaciousness of the original design. From the rooftop terrace there are spectacular views of Panama City and the Pacific Ocean, and the lobby café and bar provide a pleasant space for guests to meet and dine.



Punta Caracol

Silver
Half-board

Idyllically situated in Bocas del Toro on a stretch of coral reef coast, Punta Caracol is a peaceful retreat in a totally virgin and natural environment. There are nine two-level cabins standing on stilts above the crystal clear Caribbean Sea, built with natural materials and boasting uninterrupted views from the private terraces. Romantic candlelit dinners are served on the terrace at the restaurant. Guests can visit the local archipelago villages, relax on the untouched beaches, snorkel around the coral reef or hike in the nearby rainforest.

Panama & Costa Rica

Panama City – Arenal – Monteverde – Manuel Antonio National Park

This 13-day itinerary highlights the best of Panama and Costa Rica and is a great introduction to the variety that each of these countries has to offer.

Your journey starts in Panama where you take a small boat cruise on the iconic Panama Canal, before moving on to the natural wonders of Costa Rica; the Arenal volcano is a real 'must-visit'. Explore the lush cloud forest region of Monteverde before relaxing on the beaches of the Manuel Antonio National Park.

DAY 1

Daytime flight via the USA to Panama City for a 3-night stay at the Bristol Hotel

DAY 2

Free day to explore the city at your own pace. Perhaps visit Casco Viejo, the oldest part of the city

DAY 3

Half-day cruise on the famous Panama Canal, where you experience this world-famous feat of engineering

DAY 4

Take the short flight to San Jose, Costa Rica, and transfer by land to Arenal and the Nayara Resort & Spa

DAYS 5-6

Explore the Arenal Volcano National Park and relax in the hot springs with magnificent views of the volcano



DAY 7

Transfer by land and boat to Monteverde Cloud Forest and stay at the Fonda Vela for 3 nights. It is also possible to do this transfer on horseback

DAYS 8-9

Free days to explore the forest from the ground and the canopy walkways. Take the opportunity to look out for the famous Resplendent Quetzal

DAY 10

Transfer by land to the Pacific coast for a relaxing stay by the beach at the Parador Resort. The hotel also provides easy access to Manuel Antonio National Park for further wildlife including the Three-toed sloth

DAYS 11-12

Free days to relax or take an optional boat cruise

DAY 13

Transfer to San Jose for your return flight to the UK via the USA.



Panama & Nicaragua

Panama City – Bocas del Toro – Granada – San Juan de Sur

Nicaragua & Panama



This 13-day itinerary encompasses the highlights of these two small countries which still remain relatively undeveloped.

Start in the bustling Panama City where you experience the Panama Canal. Relax by the Caribbean Sea in your overwater bungalow before continuing to the small colonial town of Granada in Nicaragua. Finish on the Pacific Coast in the San Juan del Sur which retains its small town feel.

DAY 1

Daytime flight via the USA to Panama City for a 2-night stay at the Bristol Hotel

DAY 2

Half-day partial transit of the famous Panama Canal. Experience the series of locks which make up this world-famous feat of engineering

DAY 3

Transfer to the airport for the short domestic flight to Bocas del Toro in the Caribbean sea. Stay at Punta Caracol in an overwater bungalow

DAYS 4-5

Days to relax or explore the archipelago by boat. Take a snorkelling tour or hike in the pristine rainforest

DAY 6

Return flight to Panama City and overnight at the Bristol Hotel, as before

DAY 7

Fly from Panama City to Managua in Nicaragua. Transfer by land to the colonial town of Granada and overnight at the Plaza Colon located on the main square

DAY 8

Half day tour exploring the town of Granada and the islets on Lake Nicaragua, which were formed by a violent volcanic eruption

DAY 9

Free day to further explore the town or take an optional excursion to the nearby Masaya volcano and local market

DAY 10

Transfer by land to the Pacific coast and the town of San Juan del Sur. Stay 3 nights at Morgan's Rock with fantastic views over the ocean

DAYS 11-12

Free days to relax and explore the local area

DAY 13

Transfer to Managua for your return flight to the UK via the USA.



Know before you book

Please read these notes carefully as they contain important information and can help to avoid any misunderstandings about your trip. Thank you.

HOW TO PROCEED

There are a lot of variables to consider when planning a holiday in Latin America, but the task need not be daunting. Once you've had a look through these pages, we suggest that you call or email us and share your thoughts and ambitions. We need to know the type of accommodation you prefer, the length of your stay and any special interests you wish to pursue.

Our website contains detailed additional information on the places we go to and the accommodation we offer, as well as many more sample itineraries. The brochure only gives a flavour of what we offer. The day-by-day details of all our tours, with current prices, are also on our website and we can easily mix and match your destinations and adapt the trip to meet your individual requirements.

BOOKING PROCEDURE

When an itinerary has been agreed, we ask for a deposit. The exact deposit required shall be made clear at time of quotation/booking. We will then request your accommodation, which is subject to availability. We do not begin to book until we receive the deposit because of the time and expense involved in making these arrangements in Latin America. If we cannot book the itinerary you want, or a substitute you find acceptable, then we will refund your deposit in full. Please read the Booking Conditions in this brochure carefully, as they constitute the conditions on which your booking is accepted.

FLIGHTS AND AIR FARES

All our holidays can be booked with or without international flights. We offer reduced fares with the scheduled carriers to Latin America, from the UK. Because flights to Latin America are long haul, premium economy seating is popular, and the number of airlines offering this choice of cabin is increasing. Business class seats can be offered on most international flights.

Air fares are constantly changing and in particular, fluctuating fuel surcharges continue to be levied and add to the cost

of many return fares to Latin America.

When air fares are part of your package, taxes and surcharges are included in the price. In addition, some countries charge departure and other taxes which have to be paid locally and we will advise you of these before you travel.

AIRCRAFT SEATING

Please note that, although we may be able to assist with the pre-booking of seats, pre-assigned aircraft seating cannot be guaranteed. A number of airlines now charge for this service so please ask at the time of booking. Emergency exit rows can generally only be allocated at check-in.

PAYMENT OF BALANCE

The balance is usually due 8 weeks before you travel however in some cases we may require the balance up to 90 days before travel. Payment is due immediately upon confirmation of bookings made within this period. Payments by VISA/Mastercard credit card are subject to a 1.98% surcharge and payment by AMEX 2.5% surcharge. There is no charge for debit card payments. If payment is not made by the due date, we are entitled to treat this as a cancellation and retain the deposit. We will of course endeavour to contact you first.

INSURANCE

It is a condition of booking that all passengers be fully insured, including 24-hour emergency medical cover and repatriation insurance. We will require details of your insurance before we issue your final documents.

CHANGES AND CANCELLATION

After a booking has been confirmed, any changes you request may incur additional costs and are also subject to administration charges to cover costs. While we will do what we can to accommodate changes in your arrangements, please be aware that most air tickets are 100% non-changeable and non-refundable and our suppliers also levy cancellation charges. See our booking conditions for full details of our policy on amendment and cancellation.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

For travel in Latin America, you need a full 10 year passport which is valid for six months beyond your date of return. Children require their own passports. Your passport and air ticket must be in the same name. For travel via or to the USA, you must obtain an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation) before travel. It is your responsibility to ensure you have all the valid documents for travel.

If you do not hold a British passport, please inform us when you book, otherwise, we cannot be held responsible for any difficulty, delay or extra expense incurred.

HEALTH

We recommend that you visit your GP at least six weeks before departure with regards to health and vaccination issues, including malaria and yellow fever protection. As a guideline we suggest you look at www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx

A number of destinations in the Andes are located at altitudes from 2,400 to over 4,300 metres above sea level. Such heights may not be suitable for people suffering from heart problems or high blood pressure and we recommend you check with your doctor. Please ask us for more information on altitudes in your trip.

TRAVEL IN LATIN AMERICA

Latin America is very different from Europe. Vast distances, tough physical conditions and cultural differences mean that things do not always happen as scheduled. You must be prepared to adapt your plans if necessary and accept that there is a degree of uncertainty in Latin American travel.

Hotel standards can be inconsistent and flights can be cancelled at short notice. Should this occur, we will do our best to minimise the inconvenience, but we emphasise that travel in these countries, and indeed throughout Latin America requires a flexible attitude.

HOTEL SERVICES

Even in the best of hotels occasional hiccups can occur, although these are usually very quickly resolved. Minor problems can usually be resolved by reception, whilst others may need a prompt but discreet word with senior management. It is in everyone's interest that problems are given the opportunity to be resolved whilst you are in the hotel/resort. This can particularly apply to items such as air conditioning and hotel service. Please do not wait until you have returned to the UK to register your complaint. Hotels are much more receptive to dealing with such problems whilst you are there.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Latin America can be as dangerous or as safe as any other destination. Wherever you are travelling, it is wise to take precautions against theft and do not leave valuables in a vehicle or luggage visible in a car unless it is under constant supervision. It is better to leave valuables at home in the UK. Keep a close eye on your bags in airports.

When possible, use the hotel safe deposit boxes for passports, money and cameras and be careful with your bags. Do not put any valuables in luggage to be checked-in on airlines. We recommend that you do not walk in unlit areas at night unless you know the area well and always adhere to local advice. These are no more than sensible precautions for travellers anywhere in the world and in general, people are friendly and helpful in the tourist areas of Latin America.

Safety standards and regulations in many Latin American countries are different from the UK and may not be as rigorous. Please acquaint yourself with the safety precautions such as the fire drill shown in your room, taking particular note of the fire exits. Most hotels will display this on the door or in your room information kit. If you are not certain please ask the hotel to explain. Please be vigilant with the safety of your children, particularly younger ones, and ensure they do not

play in unsafe areas (such as near a lift). Hotel swimming pools rarely have lifeguards, in most cases you will be responsible for your own safety. Please familiarise yourself with the depth of the pool before you dive in.

SWIMMING IN THE SEA

It is not possible for us to obtain detailed, up-to-date information on sea conditions at all our destinations. If you choose to swim, snorkel or dive, you must first check locally to ensure that the currents are safe, free from rip-tides and that there are no visible or unseen hazards.

WILD ANIMALS

Take particular care when visiting areas where dangerous animals wander. Follow the advice of your guides: do not walk on your own, keep a safe distance, do not touch plants or animals. You should acquaint yourself with the risks involved and take responsibility for your own safety. You must be prepared to sign personal indemnity forms. We cannot guarantee sightings of any particular wildlife species.

TRAVEL ADVICE

To be aware of the information supplied by the UK government we recommend you check with the Foreign Office (FCO) 'Know before you go' website at www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo

This is based on information provided to the Foreign Office from the UK government representatives based in each country, and is updated on a regular basis. In addition to advice and warnings about possible acts of terrorism, this also carries relevant information that can be of interest to travellers, particularly relating to health and safety. For more information visit www.fco.gov.uk or call 0845 850 2829.

FINANCIAL SECURITY

All Package holidays in this brochure that include flights are ATOL protected as we hold Air Travel Organiser's Licences granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is 10417. When you

pay you will be issued with an ATOL Certificate. If we, or the suppliers identified on your ATOL certificate, are unable to provide the services listed (or a suitable alternative, through an alternative ATOL holder or otherwise) for reasons of insolvency, the Trustees of the Air Travel Trust may make a payment to (or confer a benefit on) you under the ATOL scheme. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid to us for an advance booking. For further information visit the ATOL website at www.atol.org.uk. We are a member of ABTA. For further information visit the ABTA website at www.abta.com

THANKS TO

We would like to thank the tourist boards, representation companies, hotels and lodges that have contributed photos for this brochure, as well as our own staff, John Warburton Lee from AWL Images, Gary Calton – Panos Pictures, Laurie Gough (photo of Diane McTurk) and Shutterstock.



This brochure is printed on paper from sustainable forests and trees from ISO14001 certified mills.

Preferred Airlines

British Airways



Rainbow Tours has a long-standing commercial relationship with British Airways, and we are proud of our affiliation with the airline. Among the benefits to you as a Rainbow Tours customer is that you are able to take advantage of some truly remarkable low-cost upgrades to either British Airways First, Club World or World Traveller Plus – you can choose to upgrade both ways or one way in either direction. Please note that the number of seats allocated to each flight at our quoted upgrade supplement is strictly limited, therefore early booking is recommended.



CLUB WORLD

- With a dedicated check-in and exclusive facilities, choosing Club World means travelling in comfort and freedom. Dedicated departure Lounges and Elemis Travel Spa Δ are designed to give you choice before your flight, whether you wish to relax, dine or be pampered.
- The Club World seats give you your own space and time to do what you want, when you want. Bigger, wider and more comfortable than ever, you can guarantee complete comfort in any position.
- The very best in local and international cuisine is served, along with a dedicated wine cellar. But if you are still peckish you are free to help yourself to healthy snacks and tasty treats from the Club Kitchen.

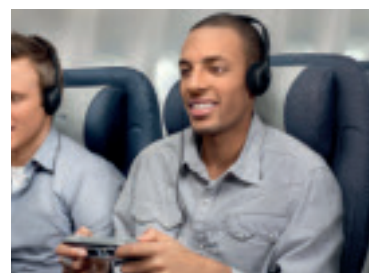


WORLD TRAVELLER PLUS

- World Traveller Plus is a separate, quieter and smaller cabin with a maximum of six rows providing you with a more relaxing and peaceful journey.
- Enjoy more personal space than World Traveller and enjoy a complimentary three-course meal with choice of entrée from the Club World menu.
- Stretch out in the additional seven inches more legroom and benefit from the added recline, adjustable headrest, lumbar support, footrest and legrest.
- Two USB ports which allow you to use personal electronic devices with the in-flight entertainment system

* Fitted on most aircraft and currently rolling out across the rest of the fleet.

Δ Available at London Heathrow and New York JFK Terminal 7.



WORLD TRAVELLER

- World Traveller has been designed with your comfort in mind, from ergonomically designed seats, complete with lumbar support and headrest, to your own seat-back video screen
- Choose from the latest films, TV programmes, games, audio books, music and radio with Highlife Entertainment Audio Video On Demand (AVOD)*
- Complimentary bar service available throughout your flight with 3 course meals and snacks
- World Traveller makes flying with children a little more enjoyable with a range of services designed especially for young families such as the 'Kids Eat First' policy and dedicated children's TV content from Disney/Cartoon Network

American Airlines



American Airlines® offers direct flights to the US with connections to Mexico and Latin America. With the delivery of the new Boeing 777-300ER aircraft on select routes, the onboard experience is designed with your comfort in mind. In First and Business Class, enjoy fully lie-flat beds, all offering direct aisle access. In the Main Cabin sit back in a generously sized seat and soak up the superb inflight entertainment, meal service and beverages including complimentary beer and wine. For extra space, Main Cabin Extra makes travel more comfortable and convenient by providing up to six inches of additional legroom and priority boarding.

LAN&TAM

Together, LAN and TAM, companies in LATAM Airlines Group, offer access to South America's most extensive network of destinations, with greater connectivity within the continent reaching more than 115 destinations in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador and Paraguay.

From London Heathrow Airport, TAM flies directly to Sao Paulo – Brazil and LAN flies, via Madrid, to Santiago – Chile, Lima – Peru and Guayaquil in Ecuador.

Both companies are members of Oneworld, the best alliance according to Skytrax.

In LAN, passengers can enjoy the Premium Business Class recognised by the 2012 and 2013 World Travel Awards as Latin America's best Business Class. Seats recline to become beds and passengers can enjoy a modern in-flight entertainment system with individual touch screens and indulge in a menu prepared by regional culinary experts.

The Economy Class of LAN offers ergonomically designed seats with adjustable headrests for superior comfort. With even the simplest service details, like a smile or a friendly greeting, we seek

Iberia



Iberia offers flights from London Heathrow to 16 destinations in Latin America, via Madrid. Iberia's new long haul products feature the best in technology and comfort available on all new Airbus A330 aircraft and embodiment is well underway on A340-600 planes. The new Business Plus cabin has seats that convert into fully flat beds, nearly two metres long, with direct aisle access. The new economy Tourist Class offers an individual entertainment system with an intuitive 9" touch screen which offers passengers feature films, TV series, documentaries as well as children's programmes. The ergonomic seats offer additional room and greater comfort.



to demonstrate our constant commitment to offering the best onboard service.

In TAM, Business Class passengers will benefit from an award winning wine list and menu that combines functional, healthy and organic ingredients. Sit back and enjoy our angle flat seat.

Economy Class passengers will also travel in style enjoying a wide selection of music, movies, TV series and games as well as all the videos available on YouTube. Choose from two meal options, or simply request any special meals, such as vegetarian in advance.

Booking Conditions

Please read these Terms & Conditions carefully. They contain important information about your holiday contract.

1. CONTRACT

Your contract is with Western and Oriental Travel Limited trading as Rainbow Tours of Layden House, 76-86 Turmill Street, London EC1M 5QU, referred to as “we” or “us” in this contract. A binding contract is only entered into when we issue a confirmation invoice. By contacting us, and/or your travel agent, to make a booking you accept that you have the authority to bind all members of your party to these terms and conditions. It is essential that you check the travel details on the confirmation invoice and inform us immediately of any errors. Your booking is also subject to the conditions of carriage of your chosen airline.

2. YOUR FINANCIAL PROTECTION

When you buy a holiday package from us, The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 require us to provide security for the monies that you pay for the package holidays booked from this brochure and ensure that your money is refunded or that you are repatriated in the unlikely event of our insolvency (for all UK citizens, except residents of the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

We are holders of Civil Aviation Authority ATOL licence 10417, which will protect any holiday package including a flight, except for residents of the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, as described in the paragraph above. If the holiday you buy from us is an ATOL-protected air holiday package you will receive a confirmation invoice from us (or via our authorised agent through which you booked) confirming our arrangements and your protection under our Air Travel Organiser's Licence number 10417.

If we, or the suppliers identified on your ATOL certificate, are unable to provide the services listed (or a suitable alternative, through an alternative ATOL holder or otherwise) for reasons of insolvency, the Trustees of the Air Travel Trust may make a payment to (or confer a benefit on) you under the ATOL scheme. You agree that in return for such a payment or benefit you assign absolutely to those Trustees any claims which you have or may have arising out of or relating to the non-provision of the services, including any claim against us, the travel agent (or your credit card issuer where applicable). You also agree that any such claims may be re-assigned to another body, if that other body has paid sums you have claimed under the ATOL scheme.

In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid to us for an advance booking. For further information, visit the ATOL website at www.atol.org.uk

3. ABTA

We are a Member of ABTA, membership number Y1152. We are obliged to maintain a high standard of service to you by ABTA's Code of Conduct. We can also offer you an arbitration scheme for the resolution of disputes arising out of, or in connection with this contract. Further information on the Code and arbitration can be found on ABTA's website.

The arbitration scheme is arranged by ABTA and administered independently by IDRS, part of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. It provides for a simple and inexpensive method of arbitration on documents alone with restricted liability on you in respect of costs. Full details will be provided on request or can be obtained from the ABTA website. The scheme does not apply to claims for an amount greater than £5,000 per person. There is also a limit of £25,000 per booking. Neither does it apply to claims which are solely in respect of physical injury or illness or their consequences.

The scheme can however deal with compensation claims which include an element of minor injury or illness subject to a limit of £1,000 on the amount the arbitrator can award per person in respect of this element.

The application for arbitration and Statement of Claim must be received by IDRS within nine months of the date of return from the holiday. Outside this time limit arbitration under the Scheme may still be available if the company agrees, but the ABTA Code does not require such agreement.

For injury and illness claims, you may like to use the ABTA/Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Mediation Procedure. This is a voluntary scheme and requires us to agree for mediation to go ahead. The aim is to help you resolve your dispute in a quick and cost effective way. Details on request or from www.abta.com

4. PAYMENT FOR YOUR HOLIDAY

Your deposit is considered part payment towards your holiday. The exact deposit required shall be made clear at time of quotation/booking. On occasion full payment may be required to secure certain elements of your trip, if this does arise we shall inform you of this at time of booking. Deposits are non refundable and as such a security towards confirming your holiday. Normally the balance and final payment should be made no less than 8 weeks prior to departure. However, on occasion some components and/or destinations may require final payment no less than 90 days prior to departure, in which case you shall be informed of this at time of booking. If any balance remains unpaid, travel documentation will not be issued and we reserve the right to treat your booking as cancelled and apply the cancellation charge set out below. Final travel documents will usually be sent out approximately 2 weeks before departure. All money paid to a travel agent will be held by the agent on our behalf. Payment must be in the currency of the invoice and you are responsible for bank charges. If you choose to pay the balance of your holiday by credit card a 1.98% levy will be charged, and a 2.5% levy will be charged for Amex. No charge is levied for payment by debit card. In some cases quotations will be based on instant purchase, limited availability non refundable airfares and full payment of the total holiday cost must be made at the time of booking. Full details will be given at the time of enquiry.

5. INFORMATION

Whilst we make every effort to ensure that the information in our brochure is as accurate as possible, it is published many months before your holiday takes place. We reserve the right to make changes to the brochure and any information it contains. You will be informed of any material changes before booking. Western and Oriental Travel Limited are only responsible for information contained within our own publications and websites. We are specifically not responsible for third party information (from tourist boards and hotels for example) contained in any other brochures or websites.

6. AMENDMENT AND CANCELLATION BY YOU

(A) AMENDMENT

We will do our best to assist you in altering your arrangements after booking but cannot guarantee this will be possible. If alterations can be made you will be responsible for all extra charges and costs and we reserve the right to charge an administration fee per person plus any applicable charges levied by our suppliers. In some cases, flights cannot be changed after booking and the full cost of a new air ticket will be payable. We also reserve the right to treat any amendment less than eight weeks prior to departure as a cancellation and apply the cancellation charges set out below.

(B) CANCELLATION

All cancellations must be made in writing by the person who made the booking and are effective on the day we receive it. As we incur substantial costs and losses on a cancellation, we will apply the following cancellation charges based on payment/balance date of 8 weeks prior to departure. For those bookings where additional amounts were paid in excess to the standard deposit at the time of booking or before standard balance due date, then these shall be considered non refundable.

Number of days prior to departure	Cancellation charge as percentage when cancellation notice received of total holiday price
Up to 56 days	Forfeit deposit
55-43 Days	50%
42-31 Days	75%
30 Days or less	100%

Agents or third party organisations acting on our behalf are unable to amend or change the contract or terms and conditions within it.

7. AMENDMENT AND CANCELLATION BY US

(A) AMENDMENTS

It is occasionally necessary for us to make changes to advertised products and services and we reserve the right to make such changes. In exceptional circumstances we may have to modify your holiday after booking. If the change is minor we will do our best to notify you in advance but are not obliged to do so and no compensation is payable. If the change is material (for example, a change of flight time by more than 12 hours, change of destination or to a lower standard of accommodation), we will notify you as soon as practically possible and offer you the choice of (i) accepting the alternative arrangements or (ii) arranging an alternative holiday with us or (iii) cancelling your holiday. Whichever option you choose we will pay you compensation unless the change has been caused by force majeure or low bookings as defined below.

Days before departure	Compensation per person
43	Nil
42-29	£40
28-15	£50
14-0	£70

(B) CHANGES DURING THE HOLIDAY

If we are unable to provide a significant proportion of your holiday whilst you are away, suitable alternative arrangements will be made for you at no extra cost or, if we are unable to do so, you will be returned to your point of departure and given a pro-rata refund for any part of the holiday not received. This does not apply to minor changes in your accommodation, itinerary or transportation.

(C) CANCELLATION BY US

Whilst we hope we will never have to cancel your holiday this does very occasionally happen and we reserve the right to do so. Should it be necessary to cancel your holiday we will endeavour to offer alternative travel arrangements of equivalent or similar standards, together with a price refund if appropriate. Alternatively we will provide a full and prompt refund.

(D) FORCE MAJEURE

Compensation will not be payable in any cases where an amendment, change or cancellation is due to “force majeure”, being unusual or unforeseeable events or circumstances beyond our control, the consequences of which neither we nor our suppliers could avoid. These include, but are not limited to, war, threat of war, riot, civil disturbance or strife, terrorist activity (actual or threatened), industrial disputes, technical or maintenance problems with transport, machinery or equipment, power failure, natural or nuclear disaster, fire, flood, drought, adverse weather conditions, levels of water in rivers, acts of God, closure of airports, changes of schedules or operational decisions of transport providers.

(E) LOW BOOKINGS

Compensation is not payable if a holiday or tour does not take place because a required minimum number of passengers to enable the holiday or tour to take place has not been reached and you were informed of that requirement at the time of booking. We will notify you at least 8 weeks before departure if your holiday has not reached the minimum number and is therefore cancelled, where possible we will offer a similar holiday on a different date or an alternative departing at or around the original date.

8. OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOU

We take care to ensure that all involved in the preparation and supply of your holiday maintain the highest standards. Please remember that the appropriate standards will be those prevalent in your destination which may not be the same as developed international standards.

(a) We will pay reasonable compensation (subject to (c) below) if the product supplied to you is not of the standard described or contracted for by you. This compensation will be limited (except in the case of death or injury) to no more than twice the holiday price of the person affected.

(b) Should you suffer injury, illness or death as a result of the proven fault of ourselves, our suppliers or their employees acting in the course of their employment we will offer you compensation as would be paid in an English Court. If the incident relates to you or any member of your party being killed, injured or becoming ill during or as a result of, carriage by aircraft, ship, train or coach as part of the holiday arrangements organised by us our liability to pay compensation is limited in accordance with the liability of the carrier/service provider under any international convention which governs such services. Copies of these Conventions are available upon request.

(c) Our liability to you does not apply if you or any member of your group is at fault; if the failure is the fault of someone else not connected with providing the services which form part of our holiday contract with you; the failure is due to any unusual or unexpected circumstances beyond our control, which we could not have avoided even if we had used all care possible or the failure is due to any event which we or the supplier of any service could not help, expect or prevent.

(d) Any acceptance of liability is subject to you agreeing to assign to us your rights against any third party responsible for the events leading to your claim and to you affording us all necessary assistance in pursuing that claim.

9. COMPLAINTS

If you have any complaint or problem whilst on holiday you must inform us, our representatives or the supplier as soon as possible to give us the maximum opportunity to rectify it. Any unresolved complaints must be notified to us in writing within 30 days of your return.

10. PASSPORTS, VISAS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTATION

It is your responsibility to ensure that all necessary passports are machine readable. You should also ensure that all necessary visas, international driving licences, vaccinations and other health documents are in order. All passports must have a validity of at least six months from your scheduled return date to the UK. You will generally need clear/clean pages for visas, as required, to be inserted. You must read all documentation that is supplied to you and ensure that all information contained within is correct. Failure to do so may incur amendment charges which are your responsibility. Some countries and airlines now require additional passenger information (API). We will inform you which countries require this information. This information is compulsory and is required by authorities. It is essential that all clients provide the API prior to travelling. Failure to provide this information may result in you being denied boarding for your flight. No refund will be permitted and any additional costs will be borne by the named clients.

11. TRAVEL INSURANCE

Your holiday package with us does NOT include travel insurance and it is your responsibility to ensure you have adequate insurance cover. In accordance with normal industry practice, we will require you to have adequate travel insurance to provide accident and medical cover before your holiday departs. Such insurance should ideally be valid from the date of booking, be valid throughout the holiday duration and financially cover any probable loss through cancellation, amendment, accident or health related problems. You should ensure you are covered for all activities you are planning on your trip.

12. MEALS

All pre-booked meals will be on a table d'hôte basis. Supplements can apply for à la carte items or restaurants.

13. SPECIAL REQUESTS

Whilst we will endeavour to comply with any special requests such as airline seating, diets and room requirements, we can only do so on a “goodwill” basis. As these are usually only provided at the discretion of the relevant supplier, we cannot guarantee availability and cannot be held responsible if they are not provided.

14. EXCURSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

We are only responsible for excursions and activities sold by us prior to departure and which form part of your holiday contract. Should you purchase excursions in resort, your contract and any liability arising from it will be with the supplier directly.

15. JURISDICTION

This contract is governed by English Law and is subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

16. DATA PROTECTION POLICY

In order for us to process your booking we need to store and record your information, including data as supplied. This may include transfer of such information outside of the European Economic Area to parties involved in the arrangements of your holiday. Equally we use such information for updating our mailing lists, for fraud prevention, market research and analysis and from time to time you may receive travel related information from us or from another company from within Western and Oriental Travel Ltd. Should you not wish to receive such literature please advise us in writing.

17. UK FOREIGN OFFICE ADVICE ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL

It is now assumed that British citizens are at risk of terrorism, be it in the UK or when travelling overseas. History has shown us these attacks can either be spontaneous or premeditated. For your guidance we suggest you visit the website of the Foreign Office on: www.fco.gov.uk or tel: 0845 850 2829. The website is regularly updated and provides you with country-specific information, including advice on terrorism and general matters on health and safety.

18. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to these general booking conditions, specific relevant destination information may be contained within the individual brochures and website.

Registered in England Number: 07558669
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