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Mayan Footprints – 3 Country Journey

9 Days / 8 Nights, daily from San Salvador to Guatemala City
Approach: Mayan Culture & Colonial History

Day 1: San Salvador – Joya de Ceren – San Salvador (El Salvador)

In the morning your guide awaits you at the reception of your hotel to start your trip with a city-tour through San Salvador. Among other important monuments we visit the National Palace and the National Museum of Anthropology. This museum houses an impressive collection of pre Columbian antiquities from the Pre-classic era (1500 BC-250 AD). There are also relics belonging to the colonial era and various artifacts that have been part of the Salvadoran history and identity. Later we leave the capital towards Joya de Ceren (closed on Mondays). This archaeological site, which is also called the Salvadorian „Pompeii“, was inscribed in the UNESCO World heritage list in 1993 because of the completeness of the evidence that it provides of everyday life in a Mesoamerican farming community of the 6th century. The pre-Hispanic farming community was buried under a volcanic eruption in AD 590. The ash preserved the personal belongings of the inhabitants until today. Overnight in San Salvador.

Day 2: San Salvador – Tazumal – Antigua (Guatemala)

On our way towards Guatemala we visit the Mayan ruins of Tazumal, which are considered to be the most important and best preserved in the country. Highlight of this excavation site is a life-size, stone carved sculpture of the Nahua-God. Later we continue to Antigua, the earlier colonial capital of Central America founded in 1543. In 1979 Antigua has been declared UNESCO world heritage site as an outstanding example of preserved colonial architecture and of cultural value. An earthquake damaged great parts of the town in 1773, so that much of the architecture today dates from the 17th and 18th century. In the afternoon we stroll through the colonial city centre and visit the Main Square, the Cathedral and other buildings and colonial spots. 2 overnights in Antigua.

Day 3: Antigua – Chichicastenango – Antigua

In the early morning we depart to the western highlands to visit the small, stucco-white town of Chichicastenango. Its colourful handcraft markets held on Thursdays and Sundays attract not only the K'iche' Maya of the surrounding region, but vendors from all over Guatemala. Since pre-Hispanic times Chichicastenango has been one of the largest trading centres in the Maya area. We tour through the open-air market, where beautiful traditional Mayan textiles, handcrafts, fruits, vegetables, and much more are for sale. The manufacture of masks, used by dancers in traditional dances, has also made this town famous for woodcarving. We enter the 400-year-old church of Santo Tomás, where both catholic and pagan rites take place in a mystical atmosphere. Later we return to Antigua.

Day 4: Antigua – Copan Ruinas (Honduras)

Today our trip leads us to Copan Ruinas. After a scenic drive we arrive at the Honduran border in the early afternoon and shortly after at the pintoresque village. Upon arrival at your hotel, which is located in the centre of the village, you have plenty of time to discover it by yourself and enjoy the atmosphere of this romantic village. Besides a visit to the archaeological site located out of town, Copan offers various other activities, such as a horseback-ride to the Chortí community of La Pintada, for a look at the lifestyle of the direct descendants of the Mayas, or a visit to a bird reserve. 02 overnights in Copan Ruinas.

Day 5: Copan Ruinas

After breakfast we visit the legendary archaeological park of Copan, which is part of the UNESCO world heritage since 1980. It consists of two main sites: the ruins and the sepulchers, a residential and burial site of the Mayan nobles. One of the highlights of Copan is the hieroglyphic stairway, which forms with over 2,500 hieroglyphs the longest Maya text that has been discovered by now. The masterfully carved stelae also distinguish Copan from other Mayan sites. Appreciate to its full the significant number of ruins surrounded by giant trees that provide shades all over the site.

For reservations or questions please contact us
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Day 6: Copan Ruinas – Quiriguá – Río Dulce (Guatemala)

Again we set out for Guatemala, this time in a northerly direction, until reaching Quiriguá. This medium-sized archaeological site has been named UNESCO World Heritage in 1981 and is famous for an impressive series of stelae and sculpted calendars. One of the stelae is the tallest stone monument ever erected in the New World. It stands 35 feet (10.6 m) tall, 5 feet (1.5 m) wide and 4 feet (1.2 m) thick; and it weighs in at 130,000 pounds (about 59,000 kg). Afterwards we continue to Río Dulce, where we arrive at mid afternoon. The rest of the day you can relax in the hotel, have a cold drink and enjoy the amazing view overlooking the river. Overnight in Río Dulce.

Day 7: Río Dulce – Flores

Today we leave Río Dulce towards the Lake Peten Itza. On our way we pass the unsettled forest regions of Peten. In the early afternoon we arrive at Flores. This small town is above all starting point for tours to Tikal. However, the town itself with its colonial, red-roofed buildings, narrow cobblestone streets, the historic church and the Spanish plaza is also a charming destination. Discover the small island and enjoy the view overlooking the lake in one of the many restaurants. 2 overnights in Flores.

Day 8: Flores – Tikal – Flores

In the morning we drive to Tikal, located about one hour from Flores. The Mayan ruins of Tikal are situated in the middle of Tikal National Park, one of the oldest and best known national parks in Guatemala. Due to its historical importance both in terms of natural and human heritage it was declared UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. The ruins of Tikal are among the most outstanding ones of the Mayan world. Scientists assume that the city covered an area of approximately 30 km² and was inhabited by a minimum of 100,000 people at its height. During the tour through the park you visit various temples, that tower over 70 m high, and many other structures. Visitors are frequently accompanied by the shouts of numerous parrots and howler monkeys. In the afternoon we return to Flores.

Day 9: Flores – Guatemala City

You will be transferred to the nearby airport. After a short domestic flight (*) you arrive at Guatemala City on time for your international departure flight.

Services included:

- 8 nights lodging incl. breakfast
- Bilingual Mesoamerica Travel guide
- Transfers in A/C vehicle according to itinerary
- Entrance fees & transfers according to itinerary
- Local taxes

(*) Domestic flight not included

Border crossing fees are not included in the rate.

Please find the rates for up to 4 participants on our web.

Wholesalers and groups 5+ please inquire special conditions at

sales@mesoamerica-travel.com



Remarks:

- For a small additional charge we transfer you from Flores to San Pedro Sula in Honduras.
- You can book this tour in the opposite direction without additional costs. You can also extend or shorten it or propose program changes.
- We suggest extension stays at La Lancha Lodge at the Lake Petén Itzá, the Ambergris Cays (Belize) or the Bay Islands (Honduras).