

**PROPOSED TOUR TO
GUATEMALA
05TH – 18TH Feb 2011
Tour Leader: Sue Lewis
In association with World Odyssey**

Guatemala has been a centre of power since pre-classic Mayan times and the colourful **Mayan** people add an additional unique dimension to any visit to Guatemala. The incredible ruins of their ancestors lie scattered across the Peten region at Yaxha and Tikal whilst their heritage lives on today, evident in the vibrant markets of **Chichi and Solola**, the traditional reed collecting on the shores of **Lake Atitlan** and the unique weaving methods of the K'iche, Kaqchiquel and Achi communities. Now throw in the cobblestone streets, beautiful churches, hidden convents and colonial plazas of Antigua and you have Guatemala; a truly fascinating, mysterious and enchanting country.

05 February (Saturday)

Please proceed to London Heathrow where you will meet Sue Lewis and check in for your Iberia flight to Guatemala City via Madrid.

IB 3169 (Economy Class)

Check-in London Heathrow	05:00 hrs
Depart London Heathrow	06:20 hrs
Arrive Madrid	09:40 hrs

NOTE: For those that are prepared to fly via the US there are more sociable flights options available from London.

On arrival in Madrid please proceed to check-in for your onward Iberia flight to Guatemala City as follows:

IB 6347 (Economy Class)

Check-in Madrid	On arrival
Depart Madrid	12:05 hrs
Arrive Guatemala City	16:35 hrs

On arrival in Guatemala City please proceed to Immigration & Customs for the entry formalities. You will then be met by our representatives and transferred to the beautiful old city of Antigua where you stay at Palacio dona Leonor for the next 3 nights.

Set in a beautiful old, colonial mansion in the heart of Antigua and close to the central park, the Palacio dona Leonor is a delightful property named after the formidable wife of the 16th Century conquistador Pedro de Portocarrero.

The property has just twelve rooms each of which is individually styled and named after a family member of Dona Leonor herself.

There is a restaurant and outdoor lounge and a pretty central garden around which the rooms are set.

This evening you enjoy dinner at a local restaurant that serves traditional Guatemalan cuisine.

Palacio dona Leonor (Luxury Room) (D)

06 February (Sunday)

After a leisurely breakfast you will be picked up at 1100 hours and taken for a morning coffee tour. As Green as it Gets (GAIG) is a charity working to support small independent coffee producers and promoting environmentally responsible agriculture in Guatemala. This tour takes guests to visit some of the families supported by this organization where they can work side-by-side with small coffee farmers in their daily coffee processing, pick, pulp, ferment, wash, dry, trilla, sort, and grade the coffee (depending on the season, the coffee season is November to March), roast coffee over an open fire and grind by hand on a grindstone before sampling their handiwork.. (This tour includes a donation to GAIG).

This afternoon you will be picked up and taken on a walking tour of Antigua with your private English-speaking guide. The tour takes in the architectural & historical highlights of this delightful colonial city with a look at some of the many ruined churches, convents and cathedrals. Entrances are included to the Iglesia San Francisco, the Cathedral, Central Park, and La Merced Church.

Palacio dona Leonor (Luxury Room) (B)

07 February (Monday)

This morning you will be picked up and taken on a walk up the local Pacaya volcano (8366 feet) (approx. 2 hour trek each way). Pacaya is a complex volcano, consisting of an older stratovolcano, domes, flows, tephra, and the modern basaltic stratovolcano. Most of the complex has formed in the last 23,000 years. Pacaya has erupted at least 23 times since 1565, although little is known about the early historic eruptions due to the remote location of the volcano. This is still an active volcano and you can often see lava flows on the trek. It is possible to do the trip on horseback as well through this delightful area, which was declared a National Park in 2001 and offers wonderful views out across the surrounding area.

The rest of the day is at leisure.

Palacio dona Leonor (Luxury Room) (B,L)

08 February (Tuesday)

This morning you will be picked up and driven through the beautiful countryside to the town of Comalapa (1 hour drive). On arrival you see the famous painted mural that the school children of the town painted depicting mayoral events in Guatemala's history up to the signing of the peace accords in 1996. From here you visit some local painters who continue the tradition of naïve paintings for which the town is so famous. You also visit the wonderful market of Comalapa (Tuesdays & Fridays) to see the local people go about their daily life still dressed in the traditional textiles of the area. You can also visit the small museum dedicated to the composer who wrote Guatemala's national anthem who came from Comalapa.

Comalapa is a highland town en route to Lake Atitlan & Panajachel. In the pueblo of San Juan Comalapa, which is surrounded by 20 villages, lays the heart of the Kakchiquel people (one of the many different Indian tribes of Maya people). You will then be transferred on to Lake Atitlan (approx. 2 ½ hours drive) and the Hotel Atitlan where you stay for the next 4 nights.

Hotel Atitlan is situated in picturesque Panajachel and enjoys a wonderful lakeside location with great views out across the lake and the surrounding forest and volcanoes.

All the rooms have been tastefully decorated in a traditional 18th Century colonial style and offer comfortable accommodation with all the necessary amenities. The restaurant offers a wide variety of delicious local and international dishes as well as great lake views from the terrace. There is also a bar next door, which is the perfect place for a quiet pre-dinner drink.

The property also has beautiful gardens with wonderful lake views as well as a sauna and an outdoor swimming pool.

The word 'atitlan' is a Mayan word that translates as 'the place where the rainbow gets its colours'. Panajachel is an 800 year old town of about 14,000, mostly Kaqchikel Mayans and the Kaqchikel are among the largest of the 22 distinct Mayan groups living in Guatemala, each with its own traditional language, dress and custom. Together, they define the only native culture in the entire Americas that has survived intact the European invasion of 500 years ago. The Mayan culture still thrives in the highlands of Guatemala, especially around Lake Atitlan, which makes this region is culturally rich and fascinating.

The rest of the day is at leisure.

Hotel Atitlan (Standard Room) (B,L,D)

09 February (Wednesday)

This morning you will be picked up and taken for a boat ride across Lake Atitlan to visit some of the villages on the lake including San Juan La Laguna where you visit the women's textile cooperative to see hand weaving on a back strap loom and to see how they still dye with natural dyes. You also visit the studios / homes of the celebrated naïf painters.

From here you continue to the village of Santiago where you have lunch and tour the village visiting the house where the Maya God Maximon is living. Each year a different "brotherhood" has the privilege of taking care of their God so his location changes. Once with Maximon you may see local shaman performing rituals for local people and learn not only about the textiles, but also spiritualism and beliefs of the T'zutujil Maya.

This afternoon you return to the hotel via St Catarina Village.

Hotel Atitlan (Standard Room) (B,L,D)

10 February (Thursday)

This morning you will be picked up and driven up through the central highland region (approx. 1 hour) and you see the local Maya people in their traditional dress going about their daily lives - working in the fields, collecting firewood, travelling between markets, to the famous market at Chichicastenango (commonly referred to as Chichi). This twice weekly market (Thursdays & Sundays) is one of the most vibrant and colourful indigenous markets in the Americas. Not only do the local K'iche Maya come, but it also draws vendors from throughout the country who come to sell their wares in a fascinating cacophony of colour, dialects, costumes and smells. Lunch is included.

It is the perfect place for some bargain hunting as well as being able to see the Catholic Church of St. Tomas where local Maya people come to perform Maya rituals actually within the church - demonstrating the interesting way the two faiths have combined in recent times.

Later this afternoon you will be driven back to Lake Atitlan.

Hotel Atitlan (Standard Room) (B,L,D)

11 February (Friday)

This morning you will be picked up and driven up the mountainside to the town of Solola, which overlooks the lake. It is a highland market centre and is the headquarters for the Catholic Bishopric encompassing Solola and Chimaltenango. On market day (Tuesday & Friday) this town is bursting with life and local Maya people from all around the area flock to the market to buy and sell their wares for the week ahead. Everyone is dressed in the brightly coloured local textiles and even the men here wear the traditional costume of the area.

Lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon is at leisure back at Lake Atitlan.

Hotel Atitlan (Standard Room) (B,L,D)

12 February (Saturday)

This morning you will be picked up and driven to visit the old Mayan city of Iximche.

Iximche was the capital of the Kakchiquel Maya. The archaeological site sits atop a fortified hilltop site surrounded by a moat about nine feet deep, with a ball court & other structures. The patio for ball games is completely enclosed, which is common in many places in the highlands. The ball courts were built near an area containing four plazas. The Kakchiquel Maya were powerful warriors & skillful builders. The stucco faces of many stone structures are still intact. It is thought that Iximche was founded in the year 1470 AD and throughout the life of the city were the bitter enemies of the Quiche Maya. The first Spanish settlement on Guatemala soil was in Iximche.

You have lunch in a local restaurant.

You will then be transferred back to Guatemala City and the airport for your flight to Flores as follows:

TA 7978 (Economy Class)

Check-in Guatemala City	16:45 hrs
Depart Guatemala City	17:45 hrs
Arrive Flores	18:55 hrs

On arrival in Flores you will be met & transferred to La Lancha Hotel, where you stay for the next 4 nights

La Lancha is a delightful jungle lodge perched on a hillside and enveloped by the forest, which is home to a huge variety of flora and fauna and within easy reach of Tikal itself (approx 50 minute drive).

There are just 10 rooms nestling amongst the jungle overlooking Lake Peten Itza and the romos are to be found along winding paths which lead to either lakeview or rainforest view casitas. All the rooms offer very comfortable accommodation, each brightly decorated with indigenous Guatemalan fabrics.

The main thatched lodge has an open-air restaurant serving delicious local Guatemalan cuisine. There is also a swimming pool and bikes to rent for exploring the local area.

La Lancha (Casita) (B,L)

13 February (Sunday)

This morning you visit the Cerro Cahui Reserve, a small, but important conservation area that was established in 1988 and stretching to 6 ½ sq kms of undisturbed tropical rain forest. It is home to a huge diversity of flora, such as mahogany trees, orchids and many epiphytes as well as a rich variety of fauna including howler monkeys, armadillos and a remarkable 450 species of birds.

This afternoon you will be taken on a guided tour to Yaxha, one of the most important of all Guatemala's ancient Mayan ruin sites, lying on the shores of the Yaxha lagoon.

Yaxha (or 'green water' in *q'equchi*), was discovered in 1904 by architect Teobert Maler, and is situated within the Maya Biosphere Reserve along with the sites of Nakum and El Naranjo. It was occupied from pre-classic (800 BC) to post-classic (1600 AD) times and covers 3 sq kms with more than 500 buildings discovered, including the only twin pyramid complex outside of Tikal. It was allied to Tikal and an enemy of El Naranjo, from whom it suffered various defeats. Nearby is Yaxha lagoon, in the centre of which was another Mayan site called Topoxte, where building continued after the classic collapse until 1450.

What makes this particularly interesting is that far fewer of these amazing relics, structures and monuments have been fully unearthed from the thick vegetation so you can see the state they have laid in for many centuries. The sunset observed from in front of Temple 216 is not to be missed.

La Lancha (Casita) (B,L)

14 February (Monday)

This morning you will be picked up and driven to Tikal National Park to explore the awe-inspiring UNESCO protected Mayan Temple site of Tikal, arguably the greatest of all the ancient Mayan cities, where huge Mayan temples rise above the jungle canopy and monkeys and tropical birds (more than 330 species) are abundant in the surrounding rainforest.

For over two thousand years the ruins of the ancient city of Tikal have been entombed in thick jungle, but some of the forest has been cut back to reveal an astounding 3,000 temples, shrines, plazas, terraces and stone monuments.

Estimates suggest that during the Classic period, more than 50,000 people lived in Tikal. The metropolis was occupied during the period between 800BC and 900AD, but the earliest architecture originates from the 4th Century BC. The nobility resided in the Central and North Acropolis, the administrative center of the city, which is also where some of the rulers were buried.

You have most of the day in the park with picnic lunches included.

La Lancha (Casita) (B,L)

15 February (Tuesday)

This morning you visit the small, but intriguing town of Flores. Set on an island in Lake Peten Itza, this historic little town, which dates as far back as the 15th Century is on the site of the old Mayan city of Tayasal and is connected to the mainland by a causeway. You enjoy a walking tour around its quiet, cobbled streets, which allows one to enjoy the brightly painted houses and pretty little central plaza with its twin-domed cathedral.

The rest of the day is at leisure.

La Lancha (Casita) (B)

16 February (Wednesday)

Those who are extending to Belize will be transferred across the border to their next destination.

This morning is at leisure.

This afternoon the rest of the group will be transferred to Flores airport for your flight to Guatemala City as follows:

TA 7977 (Economy Class)

Check-in Flores 15:10 hrs
Depart Flores 16:10 hrs
Arrive Guatemala City 17:10 hrs

On arrival you will be picked up and transferred to the Vista Real Hotel where you stay for 1 night.

The Vista Real is a luxury 5 star hotel located in a lovely area of the city with delightful views of the Agua and Fuego volcanoes and conveniently located for the international airport.

There are 123 suites all of which have been tastefully styled and decorated to ensure a thoroughly comfortable stay. They all have en suite bathroom facilities, DVD/CD player, cable TV, Internet access, air-con, minibar, minisafe and either a balcony or patio with lovely views out across the gardens or city.

Las Ventanas Restaurant serves a delicious blend of traditional Guatemalan and International cuisine. The Vista Real bar is a great place to enjoy a quiet pre-dinner drink.

The hotel also has a fitness center, a sauna, steam room and an outdoor swimming pool.

Vista Real Hotel (Master Suite) (B,L)

17 February (Thursday)

This morning you will be picked up by your guide and taken for a tour of Guatemala City, which takes in all the archaeological highlights and interesting museums in the city. Lunch in a local restaurant is included.

This afternoon you will be transferred to Guatemala City Airport in order to check-in for the Iberia flight back to London Heathrow (Terminal 3) via Madrid as follows:

IB 6348 (Economy Class)

Check-in Guatemala City 16:00 hrs
Depart Guatemala City 18:00 hrs

18 February (Friday)

Arrive Madrid 14:25 hrs

On arrival in Madrid, please proceed in transit to check-in for your onward Iberia flight to London Heathrow (Terminal 3) as follows:

IB 3166 (Economy Class)

Check-in Madrid On arrival
Depart Madrid 16:30 hrs
Arrive London Heathrow 17:50 hrs

END OF SERVICES

The price of this itinerary based on 2 people sharing a twin/double room is:

- £ 3,776 per person **
- £ 565 per person (Single Supplement)

****OPERATION OF THIS TOUR IS SUBJECT TO MINIMUM NUMBERS**

Please note that these prices are Subject to Change for 2011.

OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

- £ 1,125 per person each-way for Business Class flights with Iberia

The price of your holiday includes:

- International economy class flights on Iberia
- Meet & Greet on arrival in Guatemala City
- All transfers as specified
- All accommodation as specified
- Meals as specified – (12 x breakfast, 10 x lunch, 5 x dinner)
- Sightseeing on a private basis
- Tips

The price of your holiday excludes:

- All government taxes (including flights and departure taxes)
- Drinks and meals not specified
- Optional activities
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls etc.
- Travel Insurance
- Departure taxes
- Visas

BELIZE EXTENSION

16 February (Wednesday)

Today you will be driven to Flores airport for your short Tropic Air flight to Belize City where you board another light aircraft to San Pedro on Ambergris Caye (approx. 15 minutes flight). On arrival you will be met and transferred by boat to Victoria House where you stay for the next 4 nights.

Victoria House is a small and exclusive hotel with only 45 rooms, suites and villas, all of which are located in lush tropical gardens and look out across the white sandy beach towards the crystal clear Caribbean waters.

Fresh local cuisine can be enjoyed at either the Palmilla Restaurant, the Poolside Patio or Admiral Nelsons Beach Bar. There is also a spa offering a variety of massage treatments as well as manicures and pedicures.

There are a number of activities on offer, amongst them of course watersports such as snorkelling and diving (offering a number of different courses), but also 'flats' fishing, reef fishing and deep sea fishing. Other activities include birding, sunset trails and golf.

Victoria House (Casita) (B)

17 - 19 February (Thursday - Saturday)

You now have three full days to relax on the beach and enjoy the facilities of the hotel, some watersports or go exploring on Ambergris Caye.

Victoria House (Casita) (B)

20 February (Sunday)

This morning you will be transferred back to the airstrip where you fly to Belize City and on to Flores in Guatemala.

You then check-in for your flight to Guatemala City as follows:

TA 7977 (Economy Class)

Check-in Flores	15:10 hrs
Depart Flores	16:10 hrs
Arrive Guatemala City	17:10 hrs

On arrival please proceed to Immigration & Customs for the entry formalities. You will then be met by our representatives and transferred to the Vista Real Hotel where you stay for 1 night.

The rest of the day is at leisure.

Vista Real Hotel (Master Suite) (B)

21 February (Monday)

This morning you will be picked up by your guide and taken for a tour of Guatemala City, which takes in all the archaeological highlights and interesting museums in the city. Lunch in a local restaurant is included.

This afternoon you will be transferred to Guatemala City Airport in order to check-in for the Iberia flight back to London Heathrow (Terminal 3) via Madrid as follows:

IB 6348 (Economy Class)

Check-in Guatemala City 16:00 hrs
Depart Guatemala City 18:00 hrs

22 February (Tuesday)

Arrive Madrid 14:25 hrs

On arrival in Madrid, please proceed in transit to check-in for your onward Iberia flight to London Heathrow (Terminal 3) as follows:

IB 3166 (Economy Class)

Check-in Madrid On arrival
Depart Madrid 16:30 hrs
Arrive London Heathrow 17:50 hrs

NOTE: For those considering this extension you may like to discuss possibilities of flying via the US as it would mean just one stop rather than two. Please call us for further details.

END OF SERVICES

The price of this extension itinerary based on 2 people travelling and staying in a twin/double room is as follows:

- **£ 1241 per person (based on 2 clients)**
- **£ 1148 per person (based on 4 clients)**
- **£ 523 per person (Single Supplement)**

The price of your holiday includes:

- Economy class flights
- Meet & Greet on arrival in Belize City
- All transfers as specified
- All accommodation as specified
- Meals as specified (5 x breakfast , 1 x lunch)

The price of your holiday excludes:

- Drinks and meals not specified
- Optional activities
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls etc.
- Gratuities
- Travel Insurance
- Departure taxes
- Visas