Please join us on our sixth international adventure as . . . .

AARCH goes to Guatemala

FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 8, 2021

On this eleven day guided journey we will explore the UNESCO World Heritage city of Antigua with its rich Spanish-influenced architecture, see Maya ruins, native villages around Lake Atitlan, and enjoy the food, music, arts, and people of this fascinating Central American country. The tour will be led by guide, author, and preservationist Elizabeth Bell and her professional Antigua Tours staff.

Antigua, with one of several volcanic peaks that surround the town in the distance

Please join us on another exciting and educational AARCH-sponsored adventure, our first to Central America.

$3,750 per person (based on double occupancy)
Please add an additional $899.00 for single occupancy

PLEASE NOTE: This cost does NOT include round-trip airfare to Guatemala City. Each traveler will be responsible for arranging his or her own air transportation.
Introduction

Guatemala is one of the most diverse and beautiful countries in Central America with its extraordinary landscapes and a civilization-spanning culture that reaches back centuries. On this outing, we will explore the best that Guatemala has to offer adventurous travelers, including the rich architecture and cultural life of the Spanish Colonial capital of Antigua, the Mayan ruins of Tikal, Iximché, and Uaxactun, and the native villages around stunning Lake Atitlan. We will be led by author, guide, and preservationist Elizabeth Bell and her professional staff and you’ll be in the good company of fellow AARCH members, friends, and staff.

ITINERARY

Friday, February 26, 2021—Arrival Day

Morning arrival in Guatemala City, group transport by bus to Antigua, lunch on own, and check in at Hotel Posada de Don Rodrigo, where we’ll spend four nights. Late afternoon lecture “Antigua Behind the Walls” by our guide Elizabeth Bell and a welcome dinner at the hotel with live marimba music and a folkloric dance “Los Moros.”

Saturday, February 27 —Antigua Day 1

Built at an elevation of 5028’, Antiqua was the capital of the Spanish Captaincy-General of Guatemala from 1543 to 1773 when, after a devastating earthquake, the capital was moved to Guatemala City. While the capital for 230 years, Antigua developed as the cultural, religious, economic, and educational center of the entire region. Its streets were laid out in an Italian Renaissance inspired grid the pattern and the city is rich in Spanish Colonial Baroque architecture and known for its charming vernacular neighborhoods. Antigua is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

This day will include a morning tour of the local market and an afternoon guided tour that focuses on the city’s history, cultural trends and restoration efforts and will include a visit to the Paseo de los Museos (museum) at Hotel Casa Santo Domingo, a walk to Central Park, the City Hall Palace, Royal Palace, San Jose Cathedral, and a tour of the Capuchinas church and convent. There will also be an afternoon reception at the home of Sarah Cohen.

Sunday, February 28—Antigua Day 2

In the morning we will walk to the nearby town of Santa Ines, where we will admire the elaborate carpets made of flowers and sawdust carpets near the church and watch the street procession with the sculpture of Jesus Nazareno and the Virgen de Dolores. After lunch at Restaurante Fermento we will have a private tour of the Popenoe House.

Monday, March 1—Antigua & Environs—Day 3

In the morning we will travel by bus to see the La Recoleccion church and monastery for a guided tour, then we’ll continue to Colibri to visit a weaving project, traditional candy store, and the Casa para las Artes (art gallery). We’ll also visit the nearby Maya Jades Museum to learn about Maya archeology. After a return to Antigua and lunch at Arrin Cuan, we’ll purchase out tickets for visiting for Tikal and have the rest of the afternoon on our own to explore Antigua.
Tuesday, March 2 — Iximche and Panajachel

In the morning we will check out of our hotel and travel by private shuttle to the Maya ruins at Iximché. Situated at 7000’ on high plateau, Iximche was the capital of the Late Kaqchikel Maya kingdom from 1470 until its abandonment in 1524. There are 160 mapped structures at this fortress city, including six plazas, a number of pyramid temples, palaces, and two Mesoamerican ballcourts. Iximche were declared a Guatemalan National Monument in the 1960s. We’ll have a guided tour of the ruins and talk about the history and architecture of the site, the Maya calendar, and the Maya ball game.

In the afternoon, we’ll travel to Panajachel and check in at the Hotel Posada de Don Rodrigo there (for two nights). After lunch at Chichoy Agua Escondida, we’ll have the rest of the afternoon on our own to explore the town. Panajachel is a village on the north shore of Lake Atitlan, one of the most beautiful lakes in the world.

Wednesday, March 3 — the Maya Villages of Lake Atitlan

Today we will travel by boat around Lake Atitlan to first visit San Juan la Laguna, where we’ll visit a textile cooperative and local painters’ workshop. We’ll then continue by boat to Santiago Atitlan, the largest town at the lake, where we’ll visit the local church built in 1547 and learn about Priest Stanley Francis Rother and his beatification. After lunch at the Hotel Bambu in Santiago, we’ll boat back to Panajachel for some free time, dinner, and drinks at the nearby Sunset Café, while the sun sets over the lake.

Thursday, March 4 — Chichicatenango and beyond

After checking out of the hotel, we’ll travel by shuttle to Chichicatenango, where we’ll visit its colorful market, the Santo Tomas church where Maya-Catholic rituals are held, and see the “Moreria,” a ceremonial masks workshop. We’ll then continue to the Tecpan region for lunch in Katok, then make our way to Guatemala City, where we’ll first visit the Museo Ixchel (indigenous weaving, textiles, and clothing) and Popol Vuh (Mayan art and archeology). Overnight at the Hotel Marriott Courtyard in Guatemala City.

Friday, March 5 — Tikal National Park

An early morning start will take us to the Guatemala City airport to fly to Flores and then, by shuttle, to Tikal National Park. Tikal is a complex of Maya ruins deep that includes more than 3,000 structures. It was the capital of one of the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient empire and was
occupied from about the 4th century BC to 900 AD. Tikal is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Through both a guided tour and time on our own, we will explore Tikal’s Complex Q, the Central Acropolis and Central Plaza, North Acropolis and Temple IV. Overnight at the Hotel Jungle Lodge.

**Saturday, March 6—Uaxactun**

In the morning we will travel by bus to Uaxactun. This settlement was among the first Maya archaeological sites excavated in the Maya Lowlands. Rediscovered in 1916 by famed archaeologist Sylvanus Morley (1883–1948), formal research and excavation began in 1924. In these pioneering digs, archaeologists developed methodologies for Mesoamerican studies that are still used today, including the denomination of E-Groups—a building cluster typology found in many sites and commonly assumed to have served as astronomical observatories. The earliest known public date back to 600 BC, yet archaeological research suggests that the site may have been occupied 400 years earlier. It was one of the longest-occupied Maya settlements. In the afternoon we will travel by bus to Flores Island with an overnight at the Hotel Isla de Flores.

**Sunday, March 7—Flores**

After some free time in the morning to explore Flores, we will fly back to Guatemala City, check into the Courtyard by Marriott, and have some free time to explore Guatemala City.

**Monday, March 8—Departure**

After breakfast and check-out, transportation will be provided to the Guatemala airport for return flights home.

**Note:** some small details to this itinerary may change. A more detailed itinerary, along with lots of other travel planning materials, will be provided to participants well ahead of trip.

**What Is Included?** The tour cost includes: nine hotel overnights, 10 breakfasts, 7 lunches, and 6 dinners, all in-country transportation, admission fees, tips (for drivers, guides, bellboys, housekeepers, and wait staff), taxes, and special events. The tour cost does not include air transportation to Guatemala, meals not specified, and other personal expenses.

**How Do I register?** Please confirm your interest in this trip by emailing info@aarch.org or by mail by Friday, February 15, 2020. Within your response please include a paragraph or two expressing why you are interested in this trip, along with any previous international travel experience. If you have traveled with us in the past to Cuba, Armenia, or Slovakia there is no need to include your past travel history. The tip is limited to 23 participants (plus AARCH staff members). If we have more than 23 interested participants, we will choose participants through a lottery process.