



Guatemala

Ring of Fire – 4 Volcanoes in 10 days

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



Itinerary

'Ring of Fire' – 4 Volcanoes in 10 days

10 Days • 9 Nights

Antigua – Volcan de Pacaya – Acatenango – Quetzaltenango –
Tajumulco – Zunil Ridge – Lake Atitlan – Antigua

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike an active volcano and Central Americas highest Mountain, Volcán Tajumulco
- Watch and hear explosions while camping beside Volcán de Fuego
- Spend time in the beautiful cobblestone city of Antigua, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Enjoy relaxing on stunning Lake Atitlan

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Trekking Adventure
Tour Start	Antigua
Tour End	Antigua
Accommodation	6 nights hotels, 3 nights camping
Included Meals	7 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 3 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Difficult

HIKE THE 'RING OF FIRE'



Guatemala's landscape is dominated by the 33 volcanoes that make up the Pacific Coast ring of fire. We will focus on four of the most scenic volcanoes: active new-comer Pacaya volcano, Guatemala's 3rd largest and Antigua valley resident Acatenango volcano, Central America's highest point Tajumulco volcano, and Zunil volcano with her beautiful ridgeline approach and stunning campsite views. We will take in a huge cross section of the Guatemalan highlands, and see many towns, villages and Mayan culture along the way. Each volcano is distinctly different in their terrain, difficulty, view and environment, which makes for a truly unforgettable experience.



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Guatemala, an overview

Guatemala ('place of many trees') lives up to its name and gives visitors an thrilling view of Central America. The country with the highest and most active volcanoes, remarkable Mayan ruins, dense jungles and an indigenous culture that flourishes through its traditional music, lively dance and colourful embroidered clothing. The Mayan heart of Central America, Guatemala borders Mexico to the north and west, Belize to the northeast and Honduras and El Salvador to the east. Scattered around this mountainous and jungle covered country, the impressive ancient Mayan ruins and colonial buildings are a reminder of Guatemala's heritage and civilised past. Until recently, Guatemala was little visited and this culturally rich, archaeologically fascinating country, with its diverse natural environment, is a one-off that must be visited to be understood. At the end of this trip you have an optional 3 day extension to visit Monterrico on the Pacific Coast. This all black sand beach is a haven for turtles and you can visit the nurseries of the Parlama turtle as well as enjoy a mangrove tour or simply relax on the beach listening to the ocean.

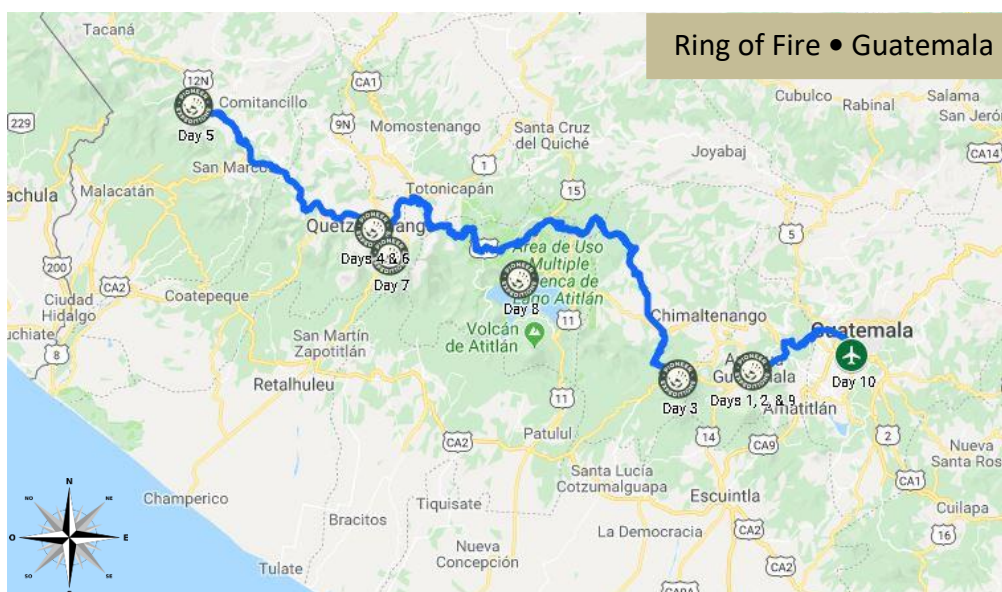
Why Pioneer Expeditions

Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures. The team have a real passion for wildlife and adventure travel which we love to share with our clients. We delight in searching the world for new destinations, new experiences and creating the most incredible adventures.

We like to introduce our clients to unique, the different, and the incredible. Whether it is through wildlife tracking, sea kayaking, snorkelling, trekking, rafting, cycling or observing wildlife in its natural environment, we want to give you the real Pioneer experience.

From the moment you choose to travel with Pioneer Expeditions until you return back home, you are supported by our dedicated team. We listen to what you want and can create an itinerary around your specific needs, working with your budget and with a commitment to responsible travel.

Itinerary



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DAY 1: WELCOME TO GUATEMALA

We spend the day walking off the jetlag and exploring the cobblestone colonial city of Antigua, Guatemala. This former Spanish capital still boasts a bustling center of culture and markets, and is decorated by numerous 17th and 18th century ruins to explore. On the Eastern edge of the valley lies the majestic Acatenango and Fuego volcanoes, the third and fifth highest peaks in Central America.

Overnight at Hotel San Jorge, Antigua

DAY 2: HIKE VOLCÁN DE PACAYA (B,L)

In the morning we'll drive out of the Panchoy Valley and through the lowlands of Guatemala's Pacific shelf. An hour's drive will take us to the base of Pacaya Volcano, where we will begin our warm up hike for the coming trip. Pacaya has been one of Guatemala's most active volcanoes since its recorded history began. It has erupted over 20 times since the Spanish arrived, and has a constantly smoking crater. Arriving below the crater, we will be able to explore the vast dried lava fields and lunar-like landscape. We'll even toast marshmallows in active heat vents!



Overnight Hotel San Jorge, Antigua

DAY 3: HIKE ACATENANGO TO CAMP (B,L,D)

Our morning begins with a scenic transport up Acatenango's slopes, and into the small, sleepy mountain village of La Soledad (2390m). Our five-hour hike takes us through a myriad of changing microclimates and provides many scenic views of the surrounding countryside. We will spend the night in our private campsite, bench cut into the side of Acatenango, and overlooking the nearby Fuego Volcano, just 4km away. Fuego is the most constantly erupting volcano in recorded history, and during our night in camp, we will have plenty of time to appreciate the incredible sights and sounds of its eruptions.

Overnight Acatenango campsite

DAY 4: SUMMIT ACATENANGO AND DRIVE TO QUETZALTENANGO (B,L)

After an early rise to enjoy the sunrise over the Antigua Valley, we will start our last push to Acatenango's summit (3,975m). We ascend on sand and gravel scree-trail dotted with dwarf pines, taking in incredible views the whole way up. Atop the impressively large summit, we enjoy unparalleled 360-degree views of the entirety of the Guatemalan Highlands, including the peaks that make up the volcanic spine of Guatemala, stretching all the way to Mexico. After our 3.5hr descent, we make our 3.5hr drive to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala's second largest city.



Overnight Hotel Modelo, Xela



DAY 5: HIKE TAJUMULCO TO CAMP (B,L,D)

To get to our next hike, we will take a 3 hour transfer heading even further up into the Mayan heartland of the Guatemalan Highlands. After passing by many local towns and farms, we arrive at the town of Tuichan (3030m) where we will begin our ascent of Tajumulco. With a relatively easy approach, we have a nice day of trekking through beautiful forest trails and wide-open landscapes. As we come toward the cone of Tajumulco, we make our way to our camp just below the false summit of Punta Concepcion. We will enjoy another warm campfire at high altitude (4000 m), and prepare for an early morning summit.



Overnight Tajumulco campsite

DAY 6: SUMMIT TAJUMULCO (B,L)

We will roll out of camp with our headlamps on in order to catch a spectacular sunrise as we make our final ascent up Tajumulco. On the summit, the highest in Central America (4220m.), we will enjoy incredible and breathtaking views over the countryside and above the clouds, looking eastward over the entire volcanic chain of Guatemala. After a 3 hour decent, we will take our transport back across the highlands, arriving back in the town of Quetzaltenango, and rest up for our last hike along the Zunil Ridge.

Overnight Hotel Modelo, Xela

DAY 7: HIKE TO CAMP ON ZUNIL RIDGE (B,L,D)

After breakfast we'll ride out to Xicam at the base of the Zunil Ridge. We will start our hike on these dirt roads, crossing through an area where a major battle took place between the Maya and Spanish Conquistadors. Once up at about 3000m, we join onto the historic Seven Crosses trail, walking atop this vertically s-curved ridge. As we hike toward our campsite on this ridge, we will see a series of crosses along the trail, marking memorials for certain deaths from the Mayan Genocide. This ridge is steeped in history from the Guatemalan Civil War, and also an important religious point for the local Maya. We will make camp for the night on this ridge, with incredible views from the central backbone of the spine of volcanoes in Guatemala, all the way back across Lake Atitlan and to Antigua, and up to Mexico.



Overnight Zunil ridge campsite

DAY 8: HIKE DOWN ZUNIL AND DRIVE TO LAKE ATITLAN (B,L)

After sunrise and breakfast, we will hike down 3 hours to the town of Zunil, where a transport will meet us and drive us up to local hot-springs. This drive up the slopes of Volcan Zunil highlights some of the lushest farms in the country, as we get a picture of local farming life in Guatemala. Once at the hot-springs, we will rejuvenate our legs and can



rest and relax until early afternoon. From here we take a 1.5 hour drive to Lake Atitlan. At the lake we will be staying in a beautiful cliff-side hotel, isolated and only accessible by footpaths and boats. Lake Atitlan, with 3 towering volcanoes rising from its shores, is about as picturesque as it comes.

Overnight Hotel Casa del Mundo, Lake Atitlan

DAY 9: RELAX ON LAKE ATITLAN AND DRIVE TO ANTIGUA

We will spend our last full day relaxing on Lake Atitlan. With 3 towering volcanoes rising from its shores, is about as picturesque as it comes. The lake itself, the deepest in Central America, formed in the caldera of a former volcanic formation after the lava had been almost completely omitted in an eruption 84,000 years ago. Your guides will help facilitate if you would like to rent kayaks, explore other villages, shop, or you may simply want to relax in a hammock. In the late afternoon, we'll make our final 2.5hr drive back to Antigua where we'll celebrate an amazing trip with a Guatemalan feast!

Overnight Hotel San Jorge, Atitlan

DAY 10: ADIOS!

Transfer to airport from Antigua

Important Information

INCLUDED

- 🌍 Accommodation based on double occ.
- 🌍 Private transfers, Guides and drivers as mentioned
- 🌍 Tours and entrance fees as mentioned
- 🌍 Meals as indicated
- 🌍 Boat transfers where necessary
- 🌍 Service at all Meals

NOT INCLUDED

- International or domestic flights
- Meals other than mentioned
- Border Fees
- Guatemala / Belize Departure Taxes
- Personal Expenses
- Tips for Guides and Drivers
- Drinks during meals (alcoholic or non-alcoholic)



Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION	5-7 hours per day
SEASON	Dec – May, Jun, Oct, Nov
BEST TIME TO GO	November through May
GROUP SIZE	Maximum 8 pax
GROUP DEPARTURE	Tailormade trips available only – please contact us with your preferred dates!
DIFFICULTY LEVEL	Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'difficult level' (5 – 7 hours of activities per day. This means you will need more than a basic level of fitness and some specific training may be required.

