



GIPPSLAND
TRAVEL

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DISCOVER THE BEST OF
CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO & PANAMA
29 April to 1 June, 2023
Personally escorted by Jacquely Turner



This is a region famous for its fabulous landscapes, wonderful wildlife and rich and diverse cultures. We visit colourful Mexico with its Mayan history; Panama, with its beautiful beaches, fortresses, canyons and stories of pirates; and the steamy jungles of Guatemala and Costa Rica.

Central America's rich mix of people and cultures has created a diverse and dynamic society.

Gippsland Travel Centre Pty. Ltd. ABN 70 065 385 337
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Saturday 29 April WELCOME TO MEXICO CITY (D)

We depart Gippsland and travel by private coach to Melbourne Airport for our flight to Mexico City. On arrival, we clear customs and will transfer to the airport hotel for an overnight stay.

Mexico City is a busy metropolis and the capital of Mexico. It is one of the most important Latin American cities and the hub for political, social, cultural, commercial and financial centres in the Americas. It was founded in 1324 and called Mexico Tenochtitlan. It is situated in the heart of Mexico upon a high plateau known as Valle de Mexico. The city is divided into 16 boroughs which are then further divided into neighbourhoods. From the historic centre of Zocalo to the sporadic museums and art galleries, this city is teeming with history and filled with endless attractions waiting to be explored.

Accommodation: **NH Mexico City Airport T2, or similar, overnight.**

Sunday 30 April MEXICO CITY – CHIHUAHUA (B)

We depart our hotel for our flight to Chihuahua. Chihuahua City is the capital of the Mexican state of Chihuahua. Some notable attractions include the Government Palace, the Metropolitan Cathedral, Plaza Mayor, Federal Palace, Museum of the Revolution, Grutas de Nombre de Dios and El Palomar Central Park. Surrounding the city is the natural beauty of rivers, mountains and the Copper Canyon Region, making it the ideal base for eco and adventure tourism.

Accommodation: **Chihuahua Quality Inn, or similar, overnight**

Monday 1 May CREEL (B D)

After breakfast, we board our coach for the magical town of Creel, with a visit to the Mennonite Museum, with tasting typical local products. We tour the Tarahumaras Valleys, rock formations and Jesuit Mission.

Creel is one of the star attractions along the Copper Canyon railroad and historically was a logging town although now tourism is its primary source of income. It is a town surrounded by rock formations and pine forests. The main street of Creel is lined with boutique stores, restaurants, and hotels. In the main plaza there are quaint churches and local handicrafts stalls.

Accommodation: **Best Western Plus The Lodge At Creel Hotel & Spa, or similar, overnight.**

Tuesday 2 May CREEL - CHEPE EXPRESS TO LOS MOCHIS (B)

This morning we board our train, the Chepe Express for our journey to Los Mochis. We travel to Divisadero, Bahuichivo, El Fuerte and arriving at Los Mochis in the afternoon.

Los Mochis is a coastal city in the Mexican state of Sinaloa. It is sometimes referred to as the gateway city to the famous **Copper Canyon** thanks to its location on the western end of the Chihuahua-Pacific railroad. Conveniently located just before traversing to the canyon. It is also the main port for ferries linking to the mainland Baja California. Around the city there is the green reserve of Sinaloa Botanical Garden, a delightful array of seafood restaurants, museums, the city's emblem Casa del Centenario, and the tranquil Cerro de la Memoria.

Accommodation: **Santa Anita**, or similar, overnight.

Wednesday 3 May LOS MOCHIS - MEXICO CITY (B D)

After breakfast, we shall transfer to the airport, departing Los Mochis mid-morning for our flight to Mexico City. On arrival we shall be met and transferred to our hotel. There will be time to relax and unpack before we get together for dinner at a local restaurant in town.

Accommodation: **Hotel Habita Polanco**, or similar, 3-night stay.

Thursday 4, Friday 5, May MEXICO CITY (B B L L)

Over the next few days, we really get to explore Mexico City visiting historical sites such as Shrine of Guadalupe and Teotihuacan Pyramids.

We visit the plaza of three cultures, the historical site where the last battle between the Aztecs and Spanish took place and symbolizes the merge of three cultural eras represented by the Aztec ruins. We will also visit the Tlatelolco Church and the Building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Basilica of Guadalupe; where we will see the original image of the virgin of Guadalupe. We will hear the story of how the image was stamped on the mantle of Juan Diego and see the ancient basilica located on Tepeyac Hill.

Then we will make our way to the highway and go directly to see the ruins of Teotihuacan; the city of the gods. This is where we can admire the breathtaking pyramids of the Sun and of the Moon; walk along the avenue of the dead; see the palace quetzal-mariposa and the temple of the feathered serpent; Quetzalcoatl.

During our time here we shall also see the Zocalo and the National Palace and visit the Anthropological Museum, which is the finest archaeological museum in the world. We will learn about Mexico's 30 centuries of human evolution and have the chance to see thousands of artefacts, including burial tombs, giant Olmec stone heads, the famous Aztec Calendar Stone and a reconstructed Mayan temple. Our guide will take us through the main room of the museum.



We travel to Coyacan and enjoy some food tasting at the local market, before a visit to Xochimilco including a boat ride before visiting the university. We will get to taste some local cuisine with lunch included on each day.

Accommodation: **Hotel Habita Polanco**, or similar

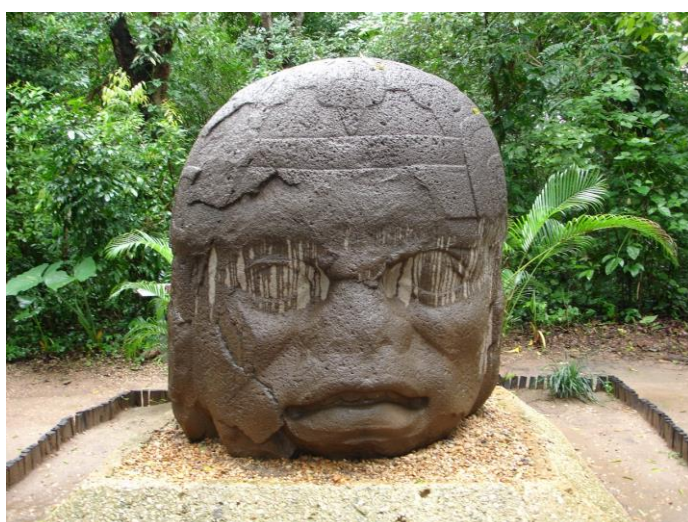
Saturday 6 May MEXICO CITY - VILLAHERMOSA (B D)

There will be time to relax a little before we check out and transfer to the airport for our flight to Villahermosa.

In this city, cobblestoned streets surrounded by majestic buildings merge into a mythical place where the shades turn in vivid colours and exuberant nature. Villahermosa (beautiful village), as its name indicates, is a beautiful city that balances modern buildings with a historic heart. Villahermosa was attacked by American and French invaders between 1846 and 1864, basically wiping it off the face of the earth. This is why in this 450 year-old city, only nineteenth and twentieth century buildings and monuments are preserved. Some of them open to the public since they turned into museums. It reappeared at the beginning of the oil exploitation, obtaining its current name in February 1916.

We shall check into our hotel before heading out on an afternoon tour to the La Venta Archaeological site. Dinner will be at the hotel tonight.

Accommodation: **Marriott Hotel Villahermosa**, or similar, for a two-night stay



Sunday, 7 May VILLAHERMOSA - PALENQUE (B L D)

There is much to see on our full day Palenque and Agua Azul Waterfall Tour as we travel to Palenque, where we visit one of the most beautiful archaeological sites in Mexico, known as The Maya Jewel. We also visit the main ruins such as: "The Temple of Inscriptions, Pakal King Tomb; "The Temple of the Cross", and "The Temple of the Jaguar". The Palenque archaeological zone is situated 8 km from Palenque city in the State of Chiapas, Mexico.

Palenque, located in the northwest of the Maya lowlands, is considered one of the most important archaeological sites of Mesoamerica. As in other Maya areas, here there was a vigorous development in religious and civil architecture, as well as in art and crafts. The earliest evidence of occupation date from about 100 BC, when it may have been a small farming village. Throughout the early classic (300-600 AD) the city grew steadily, and by the late 600-900 AC, it had become the power centre that ruled over a large part of what today is the states of Chiapas and Tabasco.

We will also visit the Cataratas de Agua Azul (Spanish for "Blue-water Falls"), found approximately 69 kilometres from Palenque in the state of Chiapas. With sparkling turquoise water set against a deep green jungle background, the falls are one of the most spectacular natural attractions in Mexico. Agua Azul is a long series of glittering cascades coursing over kilometres of lush valleys in the Sierra Madre de Chiapas Mountains. The larger cataracts may be as high as 6 meters or so.

Accommodation: **Marriott Hotel Villahermosa**, or similar

Monday 8 May

VILLAHERMOSA - CAMPECHE

(B L D)

We check out this morning and travel to Campeche, via the Gulf of Mexico coast. There will be a lunch stop en-route.

Campeche is, without a doubt, one of the most beautiful capitals in the country. UNESCO named it as a model of a colonial baroque city planning. Additionally, it was declared a World Heritage Site. It has 17 archaeological sites including Calakmul, the largest Mayan city that has ever been discovered. Campeche has charming corners including the beautiful colonial port, various Mayan ceremonial centres and majestic nature reserves. When we visit Campeche we will take a stroll along the Fort of San Miguel, San José el Alto, and the Door of the Earth; their buildings will tell the story of this beautiful city.

On our arrival in Campeche, we shall check in to our hotel, for an overnight stay and will have dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation: **Plaza Campeche Hotel**, or similar



Tuesday 9 May

CAMPECHE - MERIDA

(B L D)

We shall have a morning city tour of Campeche, before driving to Becal for Panama Hat demonstration at a Sisal Factory. In Campeche downtown, we visit the redoubt of San Jose El Alto, churches of San Francisco and San Roman, Main Square, cathedral, churches of Dulce Nombre de Jesus and San Roque, House of Teniende de Rey, Museum of Arms and Puerta de Tierra. Our tour also includes a visit to the Uxmal archaeological site.

Uxmal is one of the most well known of the Maya cities, and rated by many archaeologists as the finest. There has been much renovation work and the grounds are well tended, but wear good shoes if you intend to do any climbing. It is permitted to climb the largest structure, the Pyramid of the Magician, and the view from the top is well worth the effort, but the steps are extremely steep.

We then continue to Merida and on arrival, will check in our hotel. This evening we will be treated to a horse and carriage ride around Merida, before dinner at the hotel.

Accommodation: **Mansion Merida on the Park**, or similar, for a two-night stay.

Wednesday 10 May

MÉRIDA

(B L)

On our full day tour today, we will drive to the quaint fishing village of Celestun, located 90km west of Merida. The Celestun Biosphere Reserve is home to 587 plant species, 42 of which are endemic. The fauna found in the reserve include 304 bird species, including the Mexican pink flamingo, least tern, jabiru, king vulture and greater white-fronted goose. There are also 75 mammals and 64 reptile species.

We will take a boat ride through the estuaries to observe the beautiful pink flamingo and other birds. We will make a stop at fresh water springs where the water is sweet, transparent and ideal for swimming. A delicious seafood lunch is included in the tour.

Accommodation: **Mansion Merida on the Park**, or similar



Thursday 11 May

MÉRIDA - TULUM

(B L D)

Today, we travel to Tulum with a lunch stop and tour of Chichen-Itza, a world famous archaeological zone and recently declared one of the new "7 wonders of the world". Chichen - Itza is the most visited archaeological site in Riviera Maya because of its extraordinary architecture, beauty and the stature of its location.

We resume travelling along the Riviera Maya to Tulum, where we will check into our hotel.

Accommodation: **Ana Y Jose Charming Hotel & Spa**, or similar, for a four-night stay.

Friday/Saturday/Sunday, 12 13 14 May

TULUM (PLAYA DEL CARMEN)

(B B B L L D D)

There will be plenty to see during our time in Tulum but also plenty of free time for you to explore on your own.

We will drive to the archaeological site of Tulum, which is the only walled city the Maya built and the only one by the edge of the ocean. When the Spaniards first came upon the site in 1518, they recorded that it was as large as Seville. We will have time to explore the ruins, including the Castle, a beautiful pyramid perched on the edge of a cliff high above the pearl-white beaches below. From here one can see most of the ancient city, as well as a magnificent view of the Caribbean coastline.

We shall take a tour to Cozumel, the biggest enchanted island of Mexico and has the second largest reef in the world, a paradise for snorkellers and divers. A day trip to Cozumel Island is an ideal way to discover one of Mexico's vacation treasures. A short drive to the seaport of Playa del Carmen where you will board a modern ferry for a relaxing cruise

Accommodation: **Ana Y Jose Charming Hotel & Spa**, or similar

Monday 15 May TULUM – CANCUN – PANAMA CITY (B WD)

There will be some free time this morning before we check out of our hotel and transfer to the Cancun Airport for our flight to Panama.

Panama City is the bustling capital and largest city in Panama. Situated at the entrance of the Panama Canal, it was founded in 1519 by Spanish conquistador Pedro Arias Davila and was often used as the entry point to the Peruvian Incan Empire. Panama is a frequent transit hub into the Americas and is also one of the most developed in the continent. Due to its extensive and rich history there are endless attractions to see and activities to do in this fast-pace city.

Some notable attractions include the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Panama La Vieja, Casco Viejo - the historic heart of Panama City, the spectacular boardwalk of Amador Causeway, the engineering wonder of the Miraflores locks, and the brightly angular museum of BioMuseo.

On arrival, will check in to our hotel, with a welcome dinner included.

Accommodation: **Central Panama Hotel**, or similar, for a three-night stay.



Tuesday 16 May PANAMA CITY (B D)

An early start this morning for our half day Panama Canal and City Tour.

Casco Antiguo: The oldest sector of modern Panama City, founded in 1673, it is known as the Casco Viejo. This beautiful little area has several attractions that tourists shouldn't miss. Panama City: is a vibrant, cosmopolitan and beautiful city, Capital of the Republic of Panama, and located at the Pacific side of the American Continent.

Miraflores Locks/ Panama Canal: This classic experience brings you to the very best that Panama has to offer: The Panama Canal. We will be able to witness the magnificent Miraflores Locks and most probably, its operation. An expert canal guide will take us back in time to be part of it. What a wonderful way to experience this magnificent architectural masterpiece and to have a breathtaking view of the 8th wonder of the World. This tour will also include a visit to the Miraflores Locks Exhibits.

Accommodation: **Central Panama Hotel**, or similar. Dinner at a local restaurant.

Wednesday 17 May

PANAMA CITY

(B L)

Today we have a full day tour to Aldea Indigena Embera (Tusipono). A peaceful ride in a dugout canoe, a trek through the wild jungle and the opportunity to learn from a magical culture – all in one day and within one hour from Panama City!

This trip is truly paradise found in its purest form! The enchanting journey takes us deep into the dense jungles of Chagres where the Emberá Indians have lived for centuries. Our adventure begins with a one-hour ride up the river in dugout canoes, the Emberá traditional, hand carved boats. Upon arrival to the village you will be taken back in time as you are immersed in the ancient Embera cultural dances and music that have not changed much since Columbus arrived in the 1500's.

The Indians will invite visitors to explore the area's abundant variety of birds and wildlife during a trek that takes you through the untouched jungle and past sparkling waterfalls. During our visit, the Emberas will give you a glimpse into their mystical rituals and amazing knowledge of medicinal plants and other natural remedies. The Embera women are known as one of the world's finest basket makers, and you will be able to watch them create these beautiful objects made out of palm leaves and dyed with natural dyes.

Before returning back to civilization, the Indians will offer us a traditional meal of fresh fish and plantains and you will have an opportunity to purchase some of their beautiful handicraft.

Accommodation: **Central Panama Hotel**, or similar.



Thursday 18 May

PANAMA CITY – GUATEMALA CITY

(B L)

This morning we shall transfer to the airport for our flight from Panama City Airport to Guatemala, where on arrival we shall be transferred to our Antigua hotel. Enroute, we stop at the Westin Camino Real hotel for lunch.

Antigua is the colonial capital of Guatemala and is one of two UNESCO World Heritage listed sites in the country. Its colonial charm is evident in its baroque architecture such as the churches, convents, and old residences. Be welcomed by its beauty with mountains as its backdrop and take in its relaxed ambience. Antigua's pre-Columbian history is evident in the northern and central highlands of Guatemala, with Mirador and Tikal as the two most populated Mayan cities. Walk through the city centre to see locals wearing indigenous wear, quite the contrast between the colonial architecture and cobblestone streets.

Accommodation: **Casa Santo Domingo**, or similar, for a two- night stay.

Friday 19 May

ANTIGUA

(B D)



This morning we enjoy a walking tour of Antigua. The tour takes in the main square, palace, Cathedral, La Merced Church, Capuchinas Convento, and St Clara & San Francisco Church.

Lunch and the afternoon are at your leisure and we will get together again for dinner at the hotel.

Saturday 20 May

ANTIGUA - ATITLAN

(B D)

We continue on our journey to Atitlan, where we shall enjoy a private boat ride to Santiago Atitlan, to walk through the village for a weaving demonstration.

Located in the highlands of Guatemala, framed by three magnificent volcanoes is 'the most beautiful lake in the world', Lake Atitlan. On the shores of its crystal blue waters; the lake is ringed by lush green hills and dotted by traditional villages and small Mayan towns.

Accommodation: **Atitlan Hotel**, or similar, for an overnight stay. Dinner at the hotel.

Sunday 21 May

ATITLAN - CHICHICASTENANGO

(B L D)

We travel to the village of Chichicastenango which is surrounded by valleys with the nearby mountains in the horizon and thus seems to be isolated from the rest of the country. The village is especially renowned for its two weekly markets, which are an enjoyable experience. The market days are lively and chaotic and anything from souvenirs to vegetables are available. We shall also visit the local cemetery and church.

The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure and dinner will be at the hotel.

Accommodation: **Mayan Inn Hotel**, or similar, for an overnight stay.



Monday 22 May **ATITLAN - GUATEMALA CITY** **(B L D)**

Today we continue on to Guatemala City through some stunning scenery. We shall have a stop at a roadside restaurant at Katok that have typica food with fresh handmade tortillas.

On arrival in Guatemala City there will be some time to relax before we get together for dinner at the hotel.

Accommodation: **Westin Camino Real Guatemala City**, or similar, for an overnight stay

Tuesday 23 May **GUATEMALA CITY - SAN JOSE** **(B D)**

This morning we transfer to the airport for our flight to San Jose, arriving in the afternoon to be met and transferred to our hotel.

In the heart of Costa Rica in the Central Valley lies the capital and biggest city of the country, San Jose. The city boasts a rich history reflected in its buildings, residents, art, music and food. It is home to a collection of art galleries, modern and traditional museums, sweeping colonial architecture and landmarks, green spaces and tranquil parks, and bustling markets.

We will take a city tour through the Costa Rican culture and history. It begins with an orientation drive through residential areas and the Sabana Metropolitan Park, known as the lung of the city for being the closest green area to the city. Continuing, we walk through the historic National Theatre, a masterpiece in art and architecture; completed in 1897.

Next stop is the Pre-Columbian Gold Museum, boasting one of the largest collections of gold artifacts in Latin America. These ancient objects chronicle the history of the tribal people and civilizations that once inhabited the country. Some of these artifacts are more than 1,500 years old. Dinner tonight will be at the hotel.

Accommodation: **Grano De Oro Hotel**, or similar, for a two-night stay.

Wednesday 24 May **SAN JOSÉ** **(B L D)**

Today we visit the Irazú Volcano, a vulcanological museum, the colonial town of Orosi and a beautiful orchid garden. Irazú, the highest volcano in Costa Rica, provides great spots from which we will enjoy spectacular views of its four craters and, on a clear day, catch views of both the Pacific and Caribbean plains.

A stop at the first museum of vulcanological studies will complement our trip to Irazú and give us some more information on the behaviours and history of these geologic formations.

This tour also includes a visit to "Lankester," the most important orchid garden in Costa Rica not only for its history but also because there are over 7000 orchids belonging to 1000 species from around the world. There is a diverse variety of bromeliads, ferns and heliconias.



Lunch is included at La Casona del Cafetal.

To round up the tour, we've scheduled a visit to the town of Orosi. This calm, rural town has a long colonial history and possesses the oldest colonial church in the country, which is preserved as historical heritage. Lunch is included at La Casona del Cafetal. Dinner tonight will be at the hotel.

Thursday 25 May SAN JOSÉ - PAVONA - TORTUGUERO (B L D)

Early in the morning, we will depart from San Jose Central Valley to the Tortuguero area. On the way, we will pass through the Braulio Carrillo National Park, a flora and fauna sanctuary covered by an emerald-green mass of vegetation.

We will have the chance to see, from the comfort of the coach, open pasture lands, small farming towns, and will also notice a change in the climate, as it becomes a bit warmer and humid but very pleasant. We may stop for fruit snack at a local restaurant in the town of Guapiles.

The journey will continue to the embarking point deeper into the Caribbean side, where the boats are waiting to transfer us to the lodge. A two-hour boat ride will take us through the canals sheltered in the jungle of the rain forest. From the boat, we will be able to admire the unique flora and fauna of this area. On the way to the lodge, we will have the chance to see different birds.

Upon arrival, there will be a short briefing of the lodge and the activities included during our stay, followed by lunch. The afternoon will be at leisure and dinner will be at the lodge restaurant.

Accommodation: **Evergreen Lodge**, or similar, for a two-night stay.

Friday 26 May TORTUGUERO (B L D)

Tortuguero is a great place for ecotourism lovers. During this day we can explore the secondary canals, where we can see different species of mammals, birds and reptiles. Tortuguero offers full contact with Mother Nature. Much of the National Park extends along its unspoiled beaches that serve as refuge for spawning of the sea turtles. After the tour, we will return to the lodge for a delicious breakfast.

In the afternoon we will visit the village of Tortuguero where we will learn the lifestyle of local residents and the significant conservation efforts that some NGOs have developed to protect the sea turtles that come to spawn each year along the 22 miles of the protected coastline.

Lunch and dinner will be at the hotel.

Saturday 27 May TORTUGUERO - ARENAL (B L D)

We can enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel, and at mid-morning our journey continues with a charter flight back to San Jose, where we will board a private coach that will transfer us to the Arenal Volcano area.



On the way to La Fortuna town, we will visit the Else Kietzler Botanical Garden and will have a delicious lunch surrounded by exotic tropical plants.

Along the way, we will enjoy the beautiful scenery, which includes amazing views of the mountains and one of the major sources of revenue in the area: the agriculture. You will have the opportunity to observe several crops, such as pineapple, bananas, sugar cane and others.

We arrive into the town of La Fortuna late in the afternoon, where the mighty Arenal Volcano will welcome us with its impressive perfect conic shape. We check in at the hotel and have some time before dinner will be at the hotel.

Accommodation: **Arenal Kioro Suites & Spa**, or similar, for a two-night stay.

Sunday 28 May **ARENAL** (B L D)

A day to discover the nature and culture all around the Arenal Volcano area. At Mirador Arenal 1968, the view is simply breathtaking. You will be in front of the volcano, but on the left you see the lava flows of 1968 eruption and to your right the Arenal lake. This angle of triple view undoubtedly offers the visitor a unique experience so you can sit pleasantly to observe these natural monuments and with a little luck witnessing an eruption.

Then, at the Tram, we will be able to fly among the trees inside a comfortable and spacious gondola while you watch local wildlife nearly at our fingertips. As we move among the forest, we will see how it starts changing due to the height. Here we will enjoy the fantastic views of Arenal Volcano and its highly known lake, as well as great views of the Tilarán mountain range.

As the afternoon ends, we enjoy a guided journey of a local property and gather the tubers, fruits, and vegetables that have been organically produced. Mill and enjoy your own delicious juice of sugar cane squeezed in the handmade trapiche. At the restaurant, La Guaria Morada, we can be part of the classes of Costa Rican typical cuisine and be shown how to prepare traditional recipes.

Monday, 29 May **ARENAL - TORO AMARILLO** (B L FD)

This morning we depart from Arenal Volcano to the Toro Amarillo Valley, in the Poas Volcano area. On the way we will visit the beautiful town of Sarchí. Known as the most important hotspot of Costa Rican handcrafts, it is the home of an abundance of craftsmen who work fine woods. We will have time to see the artists in their workshops while they make the famous oxcarts, declared a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Here, we will also be able to choose a gift to take back home as a souvenir of your visit to Costa Rica.

We arrive to the hotel in the afternoon, and the rest of the afternoon is at leisure to explore the grounds and relax. Re-join the group later this evening for a delicious Farewell Dinner.

Accommodation: **El Silencio Lodge & Spa**, or similar, for our final night.

Tuesday, 30 May **SAN JOSÉ – JUAN SANTAMARIA AIRPORT** (B – Inflight meals)

Breakfast is at the hotel before we transfer to the Juan Santamaria International Airport in San José for our flight back to Australia via Los Angeles.

Thursday, 1 June **ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**

We arrive at Melbourne airport in the morning and after clearing customs, we shall be met and transferred by coach back to Gippsland



YOUR TOUR ESCORT

Jacquey Turner has more than 36 years' experience as a highly successful travel agent and tour leader.

With this itinerary, Jacquey will guide you through this intriguing destination that she found fascinating when she explored it in 2019. Along with the local guides she will ensure you have a most memorable journey.

CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO & PANAMA 2023

TOTAL TOUR COST:

Based on per person twin share:	\$ 29,500
Single Supplement:	\$ 4,800

- ★ Upgrade to business class – cost on application
- ★ Should you wish to extend your travel arrangements after the tour, please contact me to discuss further options.
- ★ Should you select to travel on flights other than the included group flights, or upgrade to business/first class, payment for the air fares will be required at the time of booking the flights.
- ★ Please note that a surcharge due to currency fluctuations may arise. If applicable, this will be confirmed prior to the balance of deposit being due.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Deposit	\$1000 per person - to secure place on tour
Balance of payment	Due by 30 January 2023

The tour cost is based on a minimum of 15, maximum of 20 participants. In the unlikely event that this number of participants is not reached, Gippsland Travel reserve the right to cancel the tour. In this instance only, a full refund of all deposits paid will be refunded.

INCLUSIONS

- Melbourne / Mexico City economy airfares and taxes
- San Jose / Melbourne economy airfares and taxes
- Economy flights within Central America, Mexico & Panama as per itinerary
- Gippsland/Melbourne/Gippsland coach transfer
- Fully escorted by Jacquey Turner with 24-hour assistance
- All airport & hotel transfers and overland transportations between cities/towns, as per itinerary.
- Maximum group size will be 20 participants; minimum group size 15 participants
- Expert local English-speaking guides throughout tour.
- Local guides ensure you benefit from their intimate knowledge, passion and culture
- First class (or best available) hotel accommodation in twin/double bedded rooms with private facilities
- Air-conditioned private coach travel
- Bottled water supplied throughout tour
- All entrance fees to local sights and national parks as per itinerary
- Porterage/baggage handling fees (one suitcase per person)
- 73 Meals as per itinerary - 31 Breakfasts (B), 19 Lunches (L), 23 Dinners (D)
- ALL tipping/service charges of waiters/restaurant staff at included meals throughout the tour
- ALL tipping of local guides and drivers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Walking tour of Mexico City including murals of Diego Rivera and Museum of Anthropology
- Visit historical Coyoacan
- Visit Teotihuacan pyramids – walk along the avenue of the dead
- Explore jungle swathed ruins of Palenque
- Ride the CHEPE train, snaking through Copper Canyon
- Full day tour of The Maya Jewell, one of the most beautiful archaeological sites in Mexico
- Overnight stay in the World Heritage Site of Campeche
- Day tour of Chichen – Itza archaeological zone
- Cozumel, the biggest enchanted island of Mexico
- Natural aquarium of Chankanab Lagoon
- UNESCO World Heritage Site of Panama La Vieja
- Spectacular boardwalk of Amador Causeway
- Angular Museum of BioMuseo
- Panama Canal/Miraflores Locks and city tour
- Aldea Indigena Embera tour
- The incredible colourful market at Chichicastenango
- A stay on the shore of the beautiful Lake Atitlan
- The wonderful flora and fauna of Costa Rica
- The stunning Gold Museum in San Jose
- Time spent in the area of the Arenal Volcano
- Two-night stay in the ancient capital of Antigua, Guatemala

EXCLUSIONS

- ▶ Travel insurance
- ▶ Optional activities
- ▶ US Visa Waiver
- ▶ Expenses of a personal nature like laundry, telephone/fax calls, alcoholic beverages, medical expenses, foreign currency.

CANCELLATION FEES

Cancellation date	Cancellation fee
Cancellation received after full deposit has been paid	\$1000pp
Cancellation received on or after 30 January 2023	100% of tour cost

All costs are based on the exchange rate prevailing as at 30 September 2022.

SPECIAL NOTES

- Flight schedules are subject to change.
- The order of the sightseeing may vary depending on local conditions.

GIPPSLAND TRAVEL ESCORTED TOURS - TERMS & CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION:

This contract is governed by Gippsland Travel Centre Pty Ltd and all members of the travelling parties as listed on your itinerary. Gippsland Travel Centre acts as the agent selling and coordinating products on behalf of a third-party travel supplier/s. A separate contract with the supplier/s will apply and will be governed by the supplier's Terms and Conditions. Gippsland Travel cannot guarantee the performance of any third-party supplier/s. Gippsland Travel may receive fees, commissions, gifts or financial incentives from third party supplier/s under this contract.

COVID POLICY

If the tour cannot operate due to COVID-19 state border closures and restrictions, the tour will be rescheduled and any funds paid will be transferred to the new tour date.

Due to the ongoing and evolving Covid-19 situation in Australia we have been advised by our suppliers that all guests must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Fully vaccinated means that there has been at least 14 clear days from the second dose and the date of our departure.

Those who have a medical exemption from receiving the Covid-19 vaccine can still travel. Guests will be required to show a Covid-19 vaccine medical contraindication prior to our departure.

LATE BOOKINGS

Higher deposit payments are required for late bookings. A guarantee of full payment is required at the time of booking for all bookings received within 4 weeks of departure.

GOVERNING LAW

These booking conditions are governed by the law in force in Victoria, Australia.

PASSPORT and VISA

A valid passport is required for all international travel. If you do not hold an Australian passport, you may require a resident return visa. Some countries require a visa to be issued before you depart Australia. Gippsland Travel will advise you of all passport and visa requirements for this tour.

The Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade regularly updates travel advice on various destinations. We recommend that you refer to www.dfat.gov.au for the latest updates before choosing to travel and prior to departure.

GENERAL CONDUCT

Gippsland Travel reserves the right to remove a traveller from a tour if they are acting in a way that interferes with the general operation of the tour or compromises the general enjoyment of the tour by other travellers in any way

HEALTH & FITNESS

A minimum level of fitness is required to be able to participate on a Gippsland Travel Tour, you are required to at least:

- Be able to walk at least 1 hour on uneven surfaces without the use of any walking aid (walking stick for stability is acceptable)
- Walk up flights of stairs and short, steep hills
- Stand for 20 minutes without needing to sit down, often in hot/humid climates
- Carry your own hand luggage / handle your own suitcase when portage is not supplied eg. at airports.
- Get on and off various modes of transport without assistance, including small boats. Assistance will be offered where necessary.

Passengers must inform us of any medical conditions which may affect your ability to participate in the tour.

At our discretion we can exclude you from a tour or any activity if we consider that you are unable to safely participate in that tour or activity or we consider your participation may place the safety of other guests at risk.

You will be requested to supply a letter from your doctor indicating your prescription medication and your reason for taking it, which shall be carried in the event of an emergency. This information will remain confidential and can be supplied in a sealed envelope.

FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Airlines schedules are subject to change without notice. Voluntary date changes will incur fees. Gippsland Travel is not liable for delays or disruption of air travel.

BOOKINGS SOLD ON A SHARE BASIS

Bookings may be accepted on a share room basis on the proviso that the person requesting the share reservation agrees that while every effort will be made to match suitability of the passengers there is no guarantee that a share room can be provided. If a share room is not available at the time of final payment, either the single room supplement will apply, or the cancellation conditions detailed in your itinerary will apply.

UNUSED COMPONENTS OF THIS TOUR

We regret refunds will not be given for any unused component of this tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation or transfers.

ITINERARY CHANGES and ITINERARY VARIATIONS

Gippsland Travel reserves the right to amend the hotels, itinerary and excursions if deemed advisable or necessary due to adverse weather conditions, road conditions or other unforeseen circumstances. Any necessary alternative arrangements will be made to a similar standard. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of Gippsland Travel make it necessary to change airlines, hotels or amendments to daily activities. We will inform you of any changes as soon as they occur.

FORCE MAJEURE:

Force Majeure means the occurrence of an event that is beyond Gippsland Travel's reasonable control and which could not have been reasonably prevented by Gippsland Travel. Force majeure includes, but is not limited to: acts of God, accident, riots, war, terrorist act, epidemic, pandemic, quarantine, outbreaks of infectious disease or any other public health crisis, civil commotion, breakdown of communication facilities, natural catastrophes and natural disasters (including but not limited to flooding, fire, earthquake, landslide), adverse weather conditions, high or low water levels; government directed travel restrictions or omissions, changes in laws or regulations, national strikes, explosion, generalised lack of availability of raw materials or energy, nuclear or other industrial accident causing environmental pollution or contamination; change in law, meaning, enactment, amendment (including repeal) in the law or administration of any law in Australia or any jurisdiction or territory relevant to the booking contract, which includes changes in statute, regulation, determination, by-law, declaration, licence and the common law as applicable from time to time.

For the avoidance of doubt, Force Majeure shall not include (a) financial distress nor inability of either party to make a profit or avoid a financial loss, (b) changes in market prices or conditions, or (c) a party's financial inability to perform its obligations hereunder. In the event that a Force Majeure is declared, the customer will be bound by the third-party supplier/s Terms and Conditions, if applicable.

TERMINATION OF BOOKING CONTRACT OR CHANGE OF TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS DUE TO FORCE MAJEURE

If Gippsland Travel, in its reasonable opinion, considers that any Force Majeure event prevents Gippsland Travel (whether directly or through its employees, contractors, subcontractors and agents) from lawfully or safely providing any products or services subject of the booking contract with you, Gippsland Travel may immediately by written notice; (a) terminate the booking contract (in whole or part of); or (b) change your travel arrangements as reasonably practicable to ensure your safety and invoice for any additional costs. If you are eligible for a refund once a booking has been cancelled, the balance less any non-refundable amounts will be forwarded to you once received by Gippsland Travel from the third-party supplier/s.

Gippsland Travel is not responsible for any delays of refunds from the third-party supplier/s. Refunds from third party supplier/s can take in excess of 6 weeks. Refunds will be processed as per original form of payment.

Travel insurance policies may provide cover for cancellation fees subject to their terms and conditions.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY:

Subject to Australian Consumer Law, Gippsland Travel does not accept any liability in contract, tort or otherwise for any injury, damage, loss, delay, additional expense or inconvenience caused by a third-party supplier/s over who we have no direct control. Gippsland Travel is not liable for Force Majeure or any other event which is beyond our control or which is not preventable by us.