Code MCJ **Scenic Cancún to San José**

Tour Dossier Introduction

Dossier Last Updated: 26-08-2014
Tour Code: MCJ
Duration: 23 nights / 24 days
Joining City: Cancún
Departure City: San José
Nearest Joining International Airport: Cancun International Airport (CUN)
Nearest Departing International Airport: San Jose Juan Santamaria Intl Airport (SJO)

Please check this document just before departing in case of last minute changes to your tour.

Tour Documents

PDF Document Web Page

- Belize Dossier
- Costa Rica Dossier
- Guatemala Dossier
- Honduras Dossier
- Mexico Dossier
- Nicaragua Dossier
- Spanish Language Guide

What's Included

- Caye Caulker
- Guided tour of Tikal ruins
- Rio Dulce boat tour to Livingston
- Guided tour of Copán ruins
- Roatán Island
- Ometepe Island

- 23 nights in hotels, hostels & guesthouses
- Travel by local public bus, boat, taxi, on foot, 1 flight(s)
- Tucan Travel tour leader, English-speaking local guide(s) on included excursions

What's not Included

- International flights and departure taxes
- Domestic flight taxes if applicable
- Tips on included excursions, visas, travel insurance, personal items and single rooms.

- Airport transfers and pre and post tour accommodation
- Spending money – budget for meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras
- Optional excursions - Please see our optional excursions guide on the dossier page for a comprehensive list of optional activities and excursions available on this tour.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 to 1 - Arrive Cancún

The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

Until 1970 Isla Cancún (Cancún Island) had only three residents, the caretakers of the coconut plantation with only 117 people living in nearby Puerto Juarez, a fishing village and military base. The island was home to some of the Caribbean's most beautiful beaches and with the advent of mass market tourism it was an ideal location. Due to the reluctance of investors to bet on an unknown area however, the Mexican government had to finance the first nine hotels.

Today over two million visitors a year, come to Cancún to relax on one of the beautiful beaches in what is now known as the 'hotel zone' and to swim in the crystal clear turquoise waters. If the activity of Cancún becomes too much for you, you can always take a ferry out to the more relaxed Isla Mujeres or arrange a snorkelling or diving excursion.

Optional Excursions: Isla Mujeres – US$7 ferry • Wet & Wild Water Park – US$29 • Xelha Theme Park - US$35 • Xcaret Theme Park - US$53 • Swimming with whale sharks (seasonal May - Sept) – US$140

Day 2 to 2 - Playa del Carmen

The beautiful beach resort of Playa del Carmen is only an hour bus ride away from Cancún. Here you can relax on a white sand beach or take advantage of one of the several interesting optional activities available in the area such as visiting the island of Cozumel or the amazingly located Maya/Toltec ruins of Tulúm. There are also many cenotes to explore.

Optional Excursions: Tulum Ruins – US$5

Day 3 to 4 - Caye Caulker

Belizeans know how to relax, and hopefully the locals' expertise on relaxation will be contagious during your stay on Caye Caulker. If not, there are signs to remind you to "Go Slow", "Take it easy", and even "No shirt, no shoes, no problem". We spend a couple of very laid back nights on Caye Caulker, where you can throw away your shoes to wander the sand filled streets, spend the evenings eating seafood, drinking cocktails, and listening to reggae music in one of the bars.

During the day we can organise a range of different optional snorkelling trips for you, such as to Shark and Ray Alley, where you can swim within a few feet of nurse sharks and majestic sting rays, or weather dependent, you may have the opportunity to swim with sea-cows! Another optional snorkelling tour takes you out to Hol-Chan Marine Reserve where you are guaranteed to see lots of colourful fish and interesting reef formations. Qualified divers can explore the so-called bottomless "Blue Hole", made famous by the explorer Jacques Cousteau (please note: this optional excursion does not go every day, check locally for availability). Other options include sunning yourself, riding a bike around the island, or trying your luck at fishing. If you are lucky, you can take your catch to one of the local restaurants so they can BBQ it for you.

Optional Excursions: Half/full day Caye Caulker snorkelling – US$25-45 • Manatee combo tour. Visit the breeding and feeding area of the manatees and also stopping at 3 locations in the reserve to snorkel. – US$60 • Scuba diving - Blue Hole – US$190 • Various Scuba diving options – US$45-90 • Night Snorkeling – US$45 • Island Hopping tour – US$95

Day 5 to 6 - San Ignacio

We continue on to San Ignacio referred to as "Cayo" by the locals, this agricultural centre is also known to be the 'adventure' and 'nature' capital of Belize. The surrounding jungle, wildlife, waterfalls, rivers and caves, have created the ideal location for the numerous optional excursions that are available, from canoeing downriver and tubing through caves, to visiting the famous caves Actun Tunichil Muknal, where they found untouched Mayan ceremonial and sacrificial remains.

Optional Excursions: Tubing – US$65 • Caving – US$85 • Canoeing – US$30-35 • Caracol Ruins, the largest and most important Mayan ruins in Belize • US$65 • Mountain Pine Ridge Reserve – US$35

Day 7 to 7 - Flores

Our next stop is the charming island-town of Flores, the last town to be conquered by the Spanish and situated in the centre of Lake Peten Itzá. Flores is our base for exploring the breathtaking Maya site of Tikal, it is regarded as the greatest city of the Maya world and is nestled deep in the jungle. This complex is one of the biggest Maya sites discovered, and you will have most of the day to explore and learn about the flora, fauna, and amazing Mayan history with our knowledgeable local guide.

The area around Tikal has been declared as the Tikal National Park and the preserved area covers 570 square kilometres. The ancient city has been completely mapped and at its height covered an area greater than 16 square kilometres, with more than 3000 structures. Today the main centre covers an area of approximately two and a half square kilometres, As you wander the site, you will see several tall mounds which are temples that have not yet been excavated, and you will have the opportunity to climb some of the tallest Mayan temples.

The emphasis was on height when creating these imposing structures because the Maya believed the higher the building, the closer they were to the gods. Around Tikal there is a lot of animal life, and if you're lucky, you will have the chance to spot the noisy howler monkeys, pizotes (a racoon-like animal), exotic birds such as toucans, and much more!

Included Excursions: Tikal Ruins

Day 8 to 8 - Rio Dulce

We carry on to the river town of Rio Dulce where we overnight in cabins right on the water. In the afternoon the boat tour along the 23 kilometre stretch of waterway to Livingston allows you to experience one of the most scenic areas of Guatemala. Livingston is situated at the mouth of the Rio Dulce, where it joins the Bay of Amatique, and is inhabited by the Garifuna people. This lively little town has a Caribbean atmosphere different to the rest of Guatemala and is a great place to try the delicious local specialty tapado (seafood coconut soup) and listen to the local African-style punta music.

Included Excursions: Boat tour to Livingston

Day 9 to 10 - Antigua

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Antigua is one of the most delightful colonial towns in Central America.The local indigenous can be seen throughout the cobbled streets and plazas of the city in their colourful costumes, selling their crafts and textiles. As the cultural centre of Guatemala, Antigua is an ideal place to experience the traditional music, architecture and art of the country. Rich in ornate churches, convents, parks, plazas, cafés, restaurants, bars and colourful street markets and surrounded by awe-inspiring volcanoes, Antigua is one place you will never forget.

Optional Excursions: Pacaya volcano climb – US$15 • Horse riding in the hills behind the Cerro de la Cruz – US$15 per hour • Cerro de la Cruz free • Cemetery – free • Walking tour (2.5 hrs) - US$18 • Cooking school – US$50

Day 11 to 12 - Copán

We leave Guatemala and cross into Honduras and the charming town of Copán. Within walking distance of the village is one of the best-kept and most intriguing of all the ancient Maya sites, the Copán ruins. On your guided tour you will see the intricately carved stelaes (carvings/statues) depicting the 16 rulers of this once magnificent and influential city, the spectacular staircase, ball courts and enormous main plaza.

In the afternoon you can enjoy a trip up to hot springs surrounded by the lush vegetation of the surrounding hills, a horse-trek through the countryside, or a coffee tour of a local plantation (all optional).

Included Excursions: Copán Ruins
Optional Excursions: Horse riding – US$15 • Hot springs and BBQ – US$25 • Coffee tour (includes lunch) – US$30 • Butterfly and bird park

Day 13 to 15 - Roatán Island

From Copán we take a bus through coffee growing districts for the coastal town of Tela before moving on to La Ceiba for the trip by ferry across to Roatán. This is the largest of the beautiful sun-soaked Caribbean Bay Islands. Development on the island means there is plenty to do, but it is also easy to find a deserted beach lapped by warm Caribbean waters. Here you will find palm-fringed lagoons, turquoise water, friendly locals, lively nightlife and stunning underwater scenery, with some of the cheapest diving and snorkelling in the world! You can elect to swim with dolphins, a truly unforgettable experience, or get into the true Caribbean sprit with a sunset cruise (optional).

After a few days on Roatán, we fly to Tegucigalpa where we will drive to Leon, Nicaragua.

Optional Excursions: Snorkelling with dive boat – US$15 • Scuba diving – US$25 per dive • Scuba diving introduction dive (up to 15m) – US$100 Botanical gardens – US$5 • Swim with dolphins – US$85 • Kayak rental – US$5 per hour • Butterfly garden – US$5 • Scooter rentals – US$35 per day • Bike re

Please note: Your flight from Roatan Island to Leon has a luggage restriction. Each passenger is entitled to check up to two bags which cannot exceed 35lbs (15.87kg) combined. Each passenger may bring onboard one personal item plus one carry on back which must not exceed 10lbs. Excess baggage

is accepted based on availability at an extra cost. If there is no availability on that flight, any excess luggage will be send on the next available flight.

Day 16 to 18 - León

Crossing the border into Nicaragua, the lovely town of León, with its colonial charm, is our next stop. We have plenty of free time here to take a break in the shady gardens and plazas. This is an especially good place to buy leather work souvenirs. There are various museums, churches the cathedral and the Plaza de la Constitution to explore. The Templo Expiatorio also has a collection of catacombs which are worth seeing.

Day 19 to 20 - Granada

After passing through the capital, Managua, and the tobacco growing regions, we arrive in Granada, on the shores of Lake Nicaragua. Granada is one of the most characteristic and colourful colonial towns in Central America. Founded in 1524 at the foot of the Mombacho Volcano, due to its Moorish feel, this lovely town will remind many of its Spanish counterpart. Here there are many optional excursions to visit the surrounding countryside, including a visit to the Masaya National Park, with its double-crested active volcano, and the Masaya handicraft markets nearby (great for buying hammocks). Alternatively, you can choose to go for a boat tour of the islands on the lake or a trek and/or zipline through the Mombacho Volcano Cloud Forest.

With two free days in Granada you also have plenty of time to take a day trip into Managua to explore. After years of civil war and the devastating earthquake of 1972, the city centre was left in shambles. There are still buildings with huge cracks and weeds growing through them, the strange old Cathedral being one. However, this now peaceful city is in the process of rebuilding itself. The recently restored National Palace offers a fascinating tour into the past.

Optional Excursions: Horse and cart – US$2 per hour • Masaya markets and volcano – price depends on numbers • Isletas tour – US$15 • Mombacho canopy tour – US$45

Day 21 to 22 - Ometepe Island

Travelling onwards, we cross the vast Lake Nicaragua, the largest lake in Central America. This lake was once a large ocean bay, but seismic activity caused the land to rise, cutting it off from the sea. This has left the lake with fresh water sharks and other salt-water species. We take a boat to the unspoilt and tranquil island of Ometepe, located in the middle of the lake. This is the 'true heart of Nicaragua', and is the perfect place to escape from the fast-paced normalities of life.

The name of the island means "between two hills" and was formed by the two volcanoes, Concepción and Madera. The fertile volcanic soil provides the local population with perfect farming conditions for the many crops grown. You may choose to hire a local guide and spend your free time touring the island and searching for ancient stone statues and petroglyphs which have been found all over the island. Those feeling athletic can go for volcano hikes or horseback riding on the black sand beach, while the less energetic can spend their time lying in hammocks, or taking a dip in the lake or the nearby freshwater spring. Either way, you can be sure that Ometepe Islands beauty, tranquillity, and kind-hearted residents will make this a highlight of your trip.

Optional Excursions: Horse riding – US$17 for three hours • Volcano Maderas trek – US$23 • Volcano Concepcion trek (8-10 hrs, you must physically fit to complete this walk) – US$23

Day 23 to 23 - San José

The capital city of Costa Rica, San José, is nestled in a fertile valley among coffee and sugar-cane farms. There is not much left of the colonial era architecture, due to the damage done by earthquakes, but it is certainly worth seeing the National Theatre, built in 1897. Maybe you'll be lucky enough to catch a performance whilst you're here. The Gold, Jade and National Museums are also particularly recommended for a visit

There are plenty of interesting optional day trips that can be undertaken within a close vicinity of San José such as visits to the Poás or Irazú volcano, white water rafting, the Turu BaRi Topical Park or the Rain Forest Aerial Tram.

Optional Excursions: Jade Museum – US$5 • Museum National – US$4 • Butterfly farm – US$6 • Theatro National – US$5

Day 24 to 24 - Depart San José

Your adventure of a lifetime comes to an end today. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.

Day by Day Itinerary

Day	Activity	Country	Meals	Single Room
Day 1	Cancún	Mexico		✓

Day 2	Playa del Carmen			✓
Day 3	Caye Caulker	Belize		✓
Day 4	Caye Caulker			✓
Day 5	San Ignacio			✓
Day 6	San ignacio			✓
Day 7	Flores	Guatemala		✓
Day 8	Rio Dulce			✓
Day 9	Antigua			✓
Day 10	Antigua			✓
Day 11	Copán	Honduras		✓
Day 12	Copán			✓
Day 13	Roatán Island			✓
Day 14	Roatán Island			✓
Day 15	Roatán Island			✓
Day 16	Leon	Nicaragua		✓
Day 17	León			✓
Day 18	León			✓
Day 19	Granada			✓
Day 20	Granada			✓
Day 21	Ometepe Island			✓
Day 22	Ometepe Island			✓
Day 23	San José	Costa Rica		✓
Day 24	San José			✓

(B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner included)

For tours that include the option of a single supplement, a ? will indicate in which destinations single rooms are available. The detailed and day by day itineraries above are provided in good faith and it is our intention to adhere to the published route. Changes may be made before or during your tour for operational or safety reasons or to incorporate improvements. Impromptu changes may also occur whilst you are travelling as a result of one-off circumstances such as an excursion being closed on a particular day, weather conditions or transport. Delays are rare but occur occasionally and for this reason and the reasons above this itinerary should be considered as a guide only. Published transport times are approximations and may vary depending on local conditions.

Travel Style

This is an Adventure Tour, we see a destination from the locals' perspective using a variety of transport and staying in small locally owned accommodation. There is a maximum of 16 travellers with an average group size of 8-12. All our Adventure Tours are priced per person on a shared room basis meaning there is no compulsory extra payment for those travelling on their own. Please read the Adventure Tour travel style dossier to ensure you understand the style of travel you are undertaking: **http://www.tucantravel.com/travel-styles/dossier/adventure-tours**

I'd like my own room

If you are a solo traveller, a single room is available on most occasions at an extra cost. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. This must be booked in advance.

Joining your tour

Your joining location is:

The Plaza Carrillos
Calle Claveles #33 y 35
Cancún,
Mexico

Tel: (+ 52) 998 884 12 27

The hotel does not serve breakfast but we recommend 100% Natural, on Av. Yaxchilan. It serves excellent healthy breakfasts (as well as lunch and dinner) and fantastic juices. The hotel has safe deposit boxes for your use (you will get an itemised receipt). Please leave all of your important documents, money and travellers cheques here when you go out but remember to carry some form of ID and a photocopy of your passport with you

It is advisable not to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in major Central American cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety.

Arriving in Cancún

When arriving at Cancún international airport we recommend that you obtain some Mexican pesos as soon as you arrive. There are numerous international ATMs inside the airport, as well as money exchange offices offering a good rate. The rate will always be slightly lower at the airport than in the city centre, but it may be inconvenient to find an exchange office open in the city.

Making your own way

To make your own way to and from your hotel, you will find pre-pay taxi booths inside and outside the airport. There are different booths for different taxi companies (all are official), but some are cheaper than others (usually the booths outside are better). Tell them the name of the hotel and they will collect your money and give you a voucher to give to any official taxi driver waiting for you outside. An official taxi (approximately US$35-40 per taxi) does not have meters, however drivers will accept taxi vouchers sold at the official taxi booths. Note that taxis are much cheaper going in the opposite direction back to the airport (about US$20). Shuttle bus vans (called ‘colectivos’) cost about US$9 per person. These will take you all the way through the hotel zone first, dropping people off, then finally to downtown Cancún where our joining hotel is. The cheapest option is to take a bus. ADO has a non-stop bus service from the airport to downtown Cancún bus terminal. The cost is only 15 pesos ($1.50) each way, and they run until late (the last bus from the airport leaves at 12:30am). Note that this is different to the airport workers bus which discourages luggage. Catch this bus at Terminal 2, at the other end of the terminal from where international arrivals exit customs. You will then have to get a taxi from the Cancún bus terminal to the hotel which will cost roughly 40 pesos (US$4) or walk.

Pre-Departure Meeting

When you arrive on day one of your trip, you should find some local information at the hotel lobby. Your tour leader will be staying in the hotel and should have put up a welcome note to let you know what room they are in. A pre-departure meeting is usually held in the afternoon or early evening of day one. You will need to bring the following important items to the meeting with your tour leader:

- Your passport, including any necessary visas and at least one photocopy to give to your tour leader
- Vaccination certificates if relevant to any destinations on your tour
- Travel insurance policy and a photocopy to give to your tour leader
- Your travel voucher
- Your local payment in US$ cash (Budget Expeditions only)

Missing the tour departure

If you miss the start of your tour, please ask at the reception of the hotel for a message from your tour leader which will give you instructions on how to catch up with the group. Any associated costs will be at your own expense (although, depending on the reason, you may be able to claim these from your travel insurance so ensure you keep all receipts).

If you know in advance that you are unlikely to arrive on time, please contact Tucan Travel immediately so we can inform the tour leader. Tucan Travel cannot be held responsible should your airline/boat/coach be delayed and we are unable to refund any unused portion of your tour.

Time Keeping

Punctuality is very important and throughout the tour your tour leader will give you the time to meet in reception. Tour leaders will often post notes at reception with meeting times, so remember to always look out for these.

Although rare, delays can occur and we therefore advise you not to arrange your onward travel too close to the end of the tour. We take no responsibility for any missed flights or additional expenses If the group arrives late into the departure city at the end of the tour.

Emergency Contact Details

In the case of an emergency before you meet your tour leader, please contact Rolf Stanley, Latin American Destination Manager:

Tel: (+51) 984 76 21 64 (phone only)
Email:**sacrew@tucantravel.com**

In the unlikely event that you unable to reach the number above, please contact Keiko on (+51) 984 65 3726

Please note that these numbers are a service for emergency calls only. We respectfully request that you consider the urgency of your enquiry. Non-urgent enquiries should be made during office hours. Please be considerate of time zones.

Opening Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-5.30pm; Saturday 9am-1pm (based in Peru)

Keeping in Touch

Your tour leader will point out internet cafes in all major cities and towns and Wi-Fi may be available in some hotels. Mobile phones may not work locally depending on your network. If you have an unlocked phone you may be able to purchase a local SIM card. Hotel details, apart from the joining hotel, are not given in advance and are subject to change, so if someone needs to contact you urgently during your tour the best method is to contact our office who can pass a message on to the tour leader.

Money

For personal spending money you should bring US dollars or Euros in Cuba to use alongside the local currency (where applicable). While bank cards provide a very good way to access funds overall, it is not recommended to rely on them as your sole source of funds as cash machines do not always work and may not be available in remote locations. We recommend you bring along a minimum of US$200 cash in small denominations (no $100 notes). Make sure all notes are the new style, and are not damaged, defaced, rubber stamped or written on, as many places will refuse them if they are not in perfect condition. It is a good idea to try to maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Your spending money should cover some meals, optional excursions, souvenirs, drinks, laundry, border and airport taxes and any visas obtained locally. We provide guideline prices for optional excursions in the itinerary to help you budget, but ultimately the amount you will need to budget for your trip very much depends on your individual requirements. We recommend bringing extra money to cover emergencies or unexpected situations.

Tipping

Tipping is a part of the life in Central America, but you should not feel obliged or pressured to tip if you have not received good service. A gratuity of 10% of the total bill is recommended in restaurants. Gratuities are usually expected for local guides on included and optional excursions. Tips are also appreciated by Tucan Travel tour leaders at the end of your tour and we recommend an average of $2-$4 per person per day for the duration of your tour. This is only if you feel that their service was up to standard and is completely at your own discretion.

Packing List

The best advice when packing is to travel light and leave space for souvenirs in your bag.

Luggage

It is important to bring luggage you can carry and lift comfortably, potentially up several flights of stairs in hotels where elevators are not available and between bus/train stations and hotels. There may be times when you have to get your luggage through crowded streets which may be cobbled or store your luggage in lockers. Luggage too large for lockers will have to be left insecurely or carried for the duration of the day.

We recommend a frameless backpack or a sports type shoulder bag which fits comfortably on your shoulders, as they are less bulky and easier to handle than rigid suitcases or framed backpacks. Suitcases are not suitable for our tours and are not recommended. Tucan Travel takes no responsibility for damage to your luggage while on tour. If your tour includes regional flights, there may be a weight limit to the amount of luggage you can take. Please see your detailed itinerary for more information.

In addition to your main bag, you will need a small daypack for your everyday excursions. Try to keep this bag as light as possible and make sure that all main sections of your bags can be padlocked. This daypack should have enough room to carry food and snacks for long hikes and treks and space to carry belongings for overnight excursions.

Sleeping Sheet

Sleeping bags are not required on this tour, but a sleeping bag liner/sleep sheet is optional if you wish to bring one along. Some passengers like to use them on long bus journeys and overnight trains.

Clothing and Footwear

We recommend packing lightweight and durable clothes including at least one pair of warm trousers and thinner sweaters/fleeces which you can layer. Nights can be cold in some locations such as Guatemala and San José at certain times of year, so it is a good idea to bring at least one pair of warm trousers plus several thinner sweaters / fleeces which you can layer. Please avoid military or camouflage-patterned clothing as it can cause problems and in some countries may be illegal.

Good, comfortable walking shoes are essential. These do not need to be expensive boots, but they should have good ankle support and grip, be worn in and ideally waterproof.

Essential items:

- [ ] A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- [ ] East to pack wide-brimmed hat of cap
- [ ] Towel - you will need a towel for most overnight excursions
- [ ] Swimwear
- [ ] Sandals or thongs/jandals/flip flops

Suggested items:

- [ ] Money belt
- [ ] Sunglasses
- [ ] Small calculator
- [ ] Small collapsible umbrella
- [ ] Universal washbasin plug
- [ ] Head torch or flashlight
- [ ] Travel alarm clock
- [ ] Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor
- [ ] Wet wipes
- [ ] Cheap plastic watch
- [ ] Plenty of spare memory cards for your camera
- [ ] Spare rechargeable batteries for camera
- [ ] Writing materials, address book and diary
- [ ] Travel games, cards and a couple of paperbacks
- [ ] Toilet paper (best to carry a roll with you at all times and/or tissues)
- [ ] Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc.
- [ ] Plastic bags for waterproofing
- [ ] Inflatable pillow
- [ ] Swiss army type penknife
- [ ] Binoculars
- [ ] Travel plug adaptor with a USB port
- [ ] Small sewing kit
- [ ] Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream
- [ ] Antibactarial hand clensing gel
- [ ] Ear plugs and sleep mask
- [ ] Travel sickness tablets
- [ ] Spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and solution
- [ ] Hard drive or USB stick to back up your photos
- [ ] Pocket size phrasebook
- [ ] Pegless washing line & travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferable)
- [ ] As gifts for local children - pens, coloured pencils, small notepads. To discourage a begging mentality we recommend that you try to give these gifts at schools or childcare centres rather than on the street.

Laundry

There are usually laundromats or laundry services in or near most of our hotels. Hotel services can be pretty costly however your tour leader will be able to recommend cheaper options. If you wash clothes yourself take care not to be too obvious where you hang them as most hotels do not like guests washing and drying their clothes in the hotel rooms.

Electricity Supply

The power supply and plug types in Central America vary from country to country. The power supply in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama is 110-120 volts. Mexico is 127 volts and Cuba and Belize generally have 110V/220V dual voltage but you should check with the hotel. All countries typically use a two pin flat pronged plug (non grounded) or 3 pin grounded plug used in the United States. Belize may also use the British

plug and socket type and Cuba may use the European standard. We recommend bringing a universal plug adaptor with you.

Health, Fitness & Safety

Vaccinations

It is important to consult your doctor or travel clinic in good time before your tour departs to determine what vaccinations you require. You may need several vaccinations and/or malaria tablets and you should be aware that some inoculations require more than one visit and can take several weeks to administer. Always carry your International Certificate of Vaccination with your passport.

For areas with malaria, make sure you pack sufficient prophylactics for the duration of your tour and the incubation period after. As of 2013, the vaccination against Yellow Fever is only recommended in some parts of Panama. This must be acquired before departure and takes ten days for your body to build up a resistance. This certificate must be taken with you on your tour with a photocopy stored somewhere safe. You do not require a vaccination to enter any countries in Central America unless you are coming from a Yellow Fever zone.

Pack a Medical Kit

A medical kit is handy for minor wounds and ailments. In areas with limited or dubious medical facilities, an emergency medical kit containing sterile syringes is also advisable. By law our staff are not allowed to administer first aid or give drugs to travellers, so please be prepared with your own supplies.

If you are taking medication, please ensure you bring an adequate supply and a letter from your doctor to avoid potential issues at border crossings.

Fitness & Suitability

This is a public transport-based tour so it is essential that you be able to carry your bags over distances between bus and train stations and hotels, generally for up to 20 minutes. Disruptions happen and while your tour leader will make every effort to ensure your trip runs smoothly, patience, a sense of humour and willingness to get involved and help your tour leader are essential ingredients for a successful and happy group.

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions please let us know at the time you book or as early before departure as possible. Depending on the severity of the condition, you may be asked to produce a medical certificate from your doctor approving your participation in this tour. While this would only happen in very exceptional circumstances, if we consider you incapable completing this tour or you have concealed an existing medical condition which is affecting your ability to participate in the tour of Tucan Travel reserve the right to turn you away without reimbursement.

Safety & Security

Central America is generally safe, even more so in a group. Reasonable precaution is advised; do not bring valuable jewellery or watches (even fakes can catch the eye of a thief), do not walk by yourself at night, heed your tour leader's advice and always keep an eye and a hand on your camera and bags in public places. Tucan Travel cannot accept responsibility for any valuables left in safe deposits in hotels or on public transport.

A word of warning: Do not take shots of military and police buildings or at borders. Some locals particularly dislike having their photos taken, especially some indigenous people in Mexico.

Travel Guides

If you would like to discover more about your destination, including history, geography, climate and language, please have a read of our country travel guides available here: **http://www.tucantravel.com/destination-travel-guides/central-america-travel-guides**.

Documents

Passport

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after you have finished your tour with sufficient blank pages for visas and immigration stamps. Photocopy your passport, leaving one copy at home and taking one with you on tour. If you lose your passport while on tour, you will be responsible for any expenses incurred such as extra accommodation and transport while replacing your passport and will not be entitled to a refund of any unused portion of your tour.

Tour Documents

Before you depart you will be issued with a voucher for your tour and separate vouchers for any extra services such as airport transfers and pre/post tour accommodation. Please print these out and bring them with you. This dossier is updated regularly, so we recommend checking our website for the latest version just prior to the start of your tour.

Final Balance

The balance for your tour is due no later than 60 days prior to the start of your tour and no tour vouchers will be issued until this is received. In addition please send the following details at least 60 days before you depart:

- Passport number, date of issue, date of expiry, nationality and place of issue
- Your full name and date of birth
- Flight arrival details in your starting city
- Special requirements, e.g. special dietary requirements or allergies

Please let us know if you are travelling with another person on the tour but have made separate bookings and we will endeavour to make suitable rooming arrangements.

Visas

All countries have visa requirements that are subject to change at short notice. A general guideline for visa requirements is available here: **http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/visa-guide**, but you must check with your local embassy or consulate for the very latest visa requirement information based on your nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have all necessary visas for your tour. If you would like help applying for visas, we have recommended visa agencies on our visa page that we work with regularly.

Important things to check when applying for visas:

- Does the validity of the visa cover the duration of your time spent in the country?
- Do you require a single or multiple entry visa(s) for your tour?
- Are you required to show additional documentation when you arrive in a country? (Examples include proof of onward travel and travel itinerary)

Some visas are only valid for entry within three months of the date of issue which means on some of our longer tours the visa would expire before you are scheduled to enter the country. In these cases you must obtain the relevant visa during your tour. If it is necessary for you to obtain any visas en-route, please contact Tucan Travel or your travel consultant and inform your tour leader at the start of the tour. If you do not have the appropriate visas, Tucan Travel will not reimburse any expenses incurred in acquiring visas or any unused portion of the tour.

It is best to apply for visas in your home country if possible. If applying for visas by post, please allow plenty of time before departure and send your application by registered mail. Postal applications tend to be given a lower priority than in person applications and can take longer to process.

Special Note: If you have dual nationality it is advised not to obtain different visas in different passports. Although this may sometimes be cheaper, you may encounter problems at border crossings if your exit stamps from one country are not the same as your visa for the next.

Travel Insurance Policy

Travel insurance is compulsory for all tours. You must be adequately insured for medical, hospital, baggage and personal expenses, any necessary extra travel (rejoining tour or repatriation) as well as curtailment and cancellation.

We strongly recommend that all clients carry a copy of their full policy document with them at all times, together with any certificate showing the policy number and emergency contact details. Your tour leader will also ask for a photocopy of your insurance document, so please take this to the pre-departure meeting at the start of your tour. You will not be able to commence your tour unless you can provide proof of insurance to your tour leader.

Document Checklist

- [ ] Tour Voucher & Vouchers for extra services
- [ ] Passport (with photocopies of information pages and visas)
- [ ] Tour Dossier
- [ ] Cash & credit/debit cards (best to take a mixture and more than one card in case one does not work)
- [ ] Travel Insurance Certificate and photocopy for tour leader
- [ ] Travel consultant's phone number and email address
- [ ] Proof of onward travel, ie airline ticket

Optional Excursions

Optional excursions are not operated by Tucan Travel and while every effort is made prices may not be up-to-date and are intended as a general guide to help you budget for your trip. Prices for vehicle-based excursions such as game drives are approximate based on the optimum number of participants and the actual price may vary depending on group size.

Sufficient safety equipment such as helmets and life jackets are sometimes not available and Tucan Travel is unable to provide this equipment. If you intend to participate in an optional excursion you may like to consider bringing your own safety gear.

Excursions are run by a local operator or third party with both Tucan Travel and the Tour Leader acting as a booking agent only. Optional activities are not part of the tour and Tucan Travel's booking conditions do not apply to them. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct travel insurance for the excursions you intend to take part in and Tucan Travel is not liable for any injuries incurred.

Responsible Travel

We work hard to ensure our tours are sustainably and ethically run. You can read our responsible travel policy and advice on how you can travel responsibly here: **http://www.tucantravel.com/about-us/responsible-travel**.

Meet Up

Our free Meet Up app, available on Facebook, on iTunes and Google Play is an opportunity to chat with others passengers before you depart or keep in touch when you arrive back from tour. Information on the app is available here: **http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/meet-up**

Add-ons & Extras

On many of our Group Tours, we spend one night in our arrival and departure cities. If you want to explore these cities more we can book pre and post tour accommodation, city tours and airport transfers for you. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. We also have **Add-ons** - short packages that can be booked alongside a tour or on their own and have been carefully designed to ensure you don't miss out on popular highlights.

Illegal Drugs

The possession or use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our tours. When overseas you are subject to local laws and the penalties for breaking these laws can be harsh. In order to safeguard the interests of the group as a whole, our tour leaders have been instructed to insist that any person found with illegal drugs leave the tour immediately – without refund. The tour leader's decision on this matter is final. If you need to carry certain drugs with you for purposes of medication, please inform your tour leader and ensure that you carry a copy of your prescription or letter from your doctor.