



PROJECT EXPEDITION

The Highlights of Central America





Central America

If you can imagine packing everything in your house into a single suitcase, then you can understand just how difficult it was for us to decide which highlights to include in this guide. **Central America** is truly a travelers paradise, with more things to see and do than you can fathom.

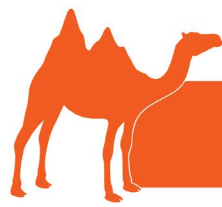
If you are a nature lover, then you should know that Central America is home to nearly 7% of the world's biodiversity, despite only accounting for 0.1% of the world's surface area.

Or, if history is your passion, then you can explore some of the many ruined cities left behind by the Mayans. You can even climb some of the temples that were once host to their ancient rulers from centuries ago.

If you can't travel without a dose of sand and sun, rest easy because there is no place in Central America that is further than 125 miles from an ocean! Oh, and if you like an adrenaline rush, then you will find plenty of options, land or sea.

Belize, Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras all bring something special and unique to Central America, and we are excited to share, in no particular order, a few of our favorites.





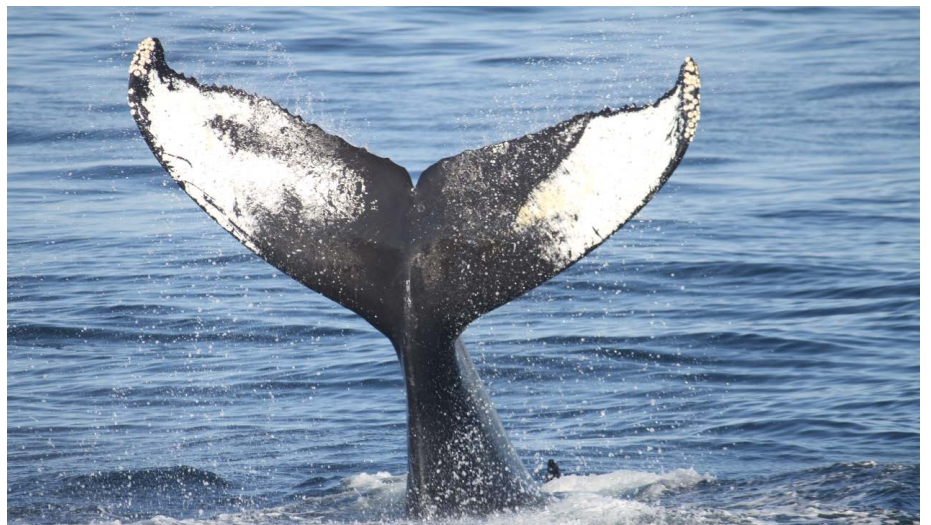
Panama

Embera Village is an indigenous village in the Darien Province of Panama that is popular among travelers who crave an authentic cultural experience that is hard to find anywhere else. These friendly people will introduce you to their rich culture and daily way of life, which has stood the test of time. You can even stay overnight and wake up to the sound of the jungle.



The **Panama Canal** opened in 1914 and was named one of the seven wonders of the modern world by the American Society of Civil Engineers. And we have to agree with them, this is a sight to be seen! We recommend the **full transit tour**, but if you don't have time, you can visit **Gatun Locks** and watch the massive ships be raised and lowered 85ft before heading on their way.

Contadora Island is where the Spanish used to count the pearls harvested from the nearby islands - hence the name "the one that counts." But history and white sand beaches aren't all you will find here. In the months from July to October, thousands of humpback whales come to Panama to nurse their young. That means some of the best **whale watching** in the world!



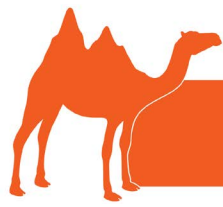


Costa Rica

Adventure travel is characterized as involving two of these three things: interaction with nature, cultural immersion and physical activity. Costa Rica has an abundance of all three, securing themselves a spot amongst the world's great adventure destinations!

Try **hiking** up to **La Fortuna Waterfall** and take a dip in the refreshing pool below the falls. Or, if you are more adventurous, you can **zipline** through the trees on a canopy tour. When it comes to **scuba diving**, it is hard to beat **Cano Island**, where you will encounter white tip reef sharks, huge schools of fish and graceful rays. And if you are in **Jaco** or another beach town, be sure to **ride horseback** along the beach and into the sunset!





Belize

The **Great Blue Hole** is a famous marine sink hole that you can quite literally (scuba) dive right into. We recommend also getting an aerial view with a **plane or helicopter tour**.

But if you are looking for an aquatic activity a little closer to shore, head over to **Shark Ray Alley** to **snorkel** with friendly nurse sharks and rays.

If you head west, away from the sea, you can find the remnants of the ancient Mayan civilization that once had a population larger than modern day Belize. The ancient ruins of **Lamanai** and **Xunantunich** are particularly a must-see.

While inland, you also have to try **cave tubing**, which is the leisurely way to tour the underworld!





Guatemala



Guatemala is part of the "Ring of Fire," which means you have the chance to try a **volcano hike**, which will yield incredible views, the chance to peer into a crater, or even a glimpse of an eruption (from a safe distance!).



If high-altitude hikes aren't your thing, then instead try climbing the steps of one of the temples at **Tikal**. This is one of the most impressive ancient Mayan cities and it will definitely bring out your inner "Indiana Jones."

Before you leave Guatemala, make sure to visit the picturesque city of **Antigua**, where you will find Spanish Baroque influenced architecture and lots of local flavor.





Nicaragua



Cerro Negro, meaning “Black Hill” is the youngest volcano in Central America, but it is also famous for one of Central America’s most unique thrills: **volcano boarding**. This extreme sport involves sitting down on a board and sliding down the side of this still-active volcano at speeds clocking in at up to 59 mph!

But if 3 mph is more like your style, then you can’t miss **Granada**. Take a walk around and you will see all of the great colonial attractions, some dating back to the early 1500s.

More ‘modern’ attractions include the colorful Catedral de Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion, or “Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption” (pictured).



Honduras

When visiting Honduras, we recommend hopping on a boat and heading out to the Bay Islands.

The largest of these is an island called **Roatan**. Here, you will find many beautiful beaches, villages rich in culture and great eateries. You can see it all with a **town tour**, or you can **sail a catamaran** around the Island for a more unique perspective.

Utila is the smallest of the Bay Islands, but for what it lacks on land, it more than makes up for under water. Utila is considered one of the best places in the world to **scuba dive**, and if you visit at the right time, you may even bump into one of the majestic whale sharks that cruise through these waters.



[photo credit](#)





El Salvador



El Salvador's **Cerro Verde National Park** is home to some of the best nature and volcano **hikes** in the country. We recommend hiking the **Izalco Volcano**, which is also known as "The Lighthouse of the Pacific" because ships would use the glow from its eruptions as a navigational beacon.



Long before ships were guiding themselves towards volcanoes, however, the Mayans were running from them! **Joya de Ceren** is an archaeological site that is referred to as the "Pompeii of the Americas" because a volcanic eruption buried the entire village in a layer of volcanic ash. No bodies were uncovered though, so the Mayans escaped!



How to Book

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Email: bookings@projectexpedition.com

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Private tours and customized packages are also available.

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