Central America

Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras



February 2027 | 24 Days

$15,990 per person, twin share
Solo Supplement: $2,850



Tour Highlights

- Walk the ruins of Tikal in Guatemala, a pre-Colombian archaeological site
- Explore this elegant colonial city of Antigua, overlooked by three volcanoes
- Boat trip through the jungle from Rio Dulce to Livingston
- Guatemala's Lake Atitlan and surrounding villages
- Copán UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of the greatest Maya ruins in the Americas
- Explore the lively colonial cities of Granada and Leon in Nicaragua
- The vibrant ecosystem and endemic species of Honduras' highly protected National Parks



Central America







Tour overview

Four countries… similar, but different. Nicaragua is the largest of the Central American countries by land size. Colonised on the Pacific coast by the Spanish and on the Atlantic coast by the British. Add an African-Caribbean influence with the indigenous peoples and you have a melting pot of cultures. The contra war of the 1980's caused wide-spread poverty and casualties however more recently, there has been economic growth, albeit very small. The country has a growing tourism industry and now is a good time to visit given tourism is in its infancy and you can experience the genuine culture.

By contrast, El Salvador is Central America's smallest country by land size and the only country in the region without a coastline on the Atlantic/Caribbean side. It has a high population density with around 7 million inhabitants living in a size less than half of Tasmania. It is a very mountainous country and part of the Pacific Rim of Fire, and subject to earthquakes. Spanish explorers became the first European visitors and went about the changing the lives of indigenous Pipil Indians forever in the mid 1500's. Coffee, corn, beans and rice form its main agricultural produce.

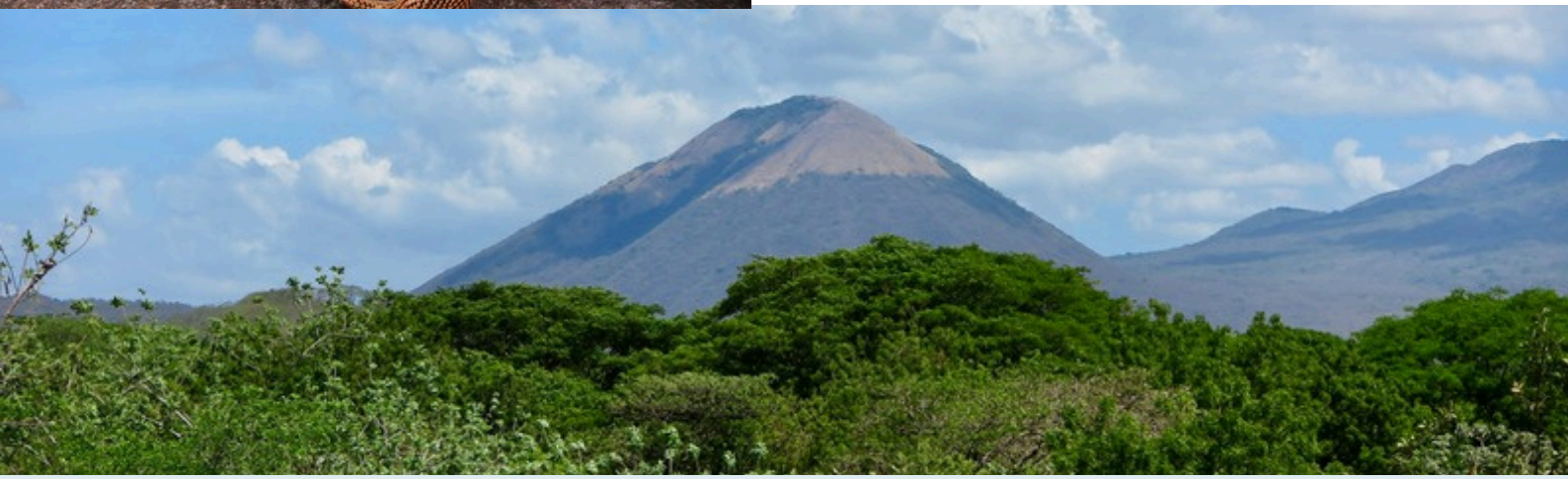
Honduras is a predominantly Roman Catholic country also ruled by Spain from the 16th Century. After Independence in the 1830's it was briefly annexed to Mexico and by mid the 1900's it was ruled - ever so corruptly – by the military generals of the army. The country welcomed the US army during the contra war of its neighbours during the 1980's and was spared most of the turbulence that the others experienced. It remains a poor country with coffee, bananas, sugar, and forestry the main exports.

There is a rich, cultural heritage in Guatemala that is unlike the other countries of the region. Its population is over 65% indigenous Maya Indians. There is evidence of mankind from around 10,000 years BCE however the country is well known for being the heart of the Mayan culture which existed from around 1,600 years ago. It too was conquered by the Spanish and annexed to Mexico in the early 1800's. Since the end of the civil war which lasted for 36 years, up to 1996, Guatemala has remained relatively stable from a political sense and has enjoyed moderate economic growth.



Activity rating: Moderate

You should be able to maintain a steady walking pace, manage flights of stairs, stand at attractions for periods of time, and board and disembark transport independently



Friday 5th February 2027 DEPART AUSTRALIA
Depart for Guatemala City. All flights to be advised.

Day 1, Saturday 6th February ARRIVE GUATEMALA CITY
Upon your arrival at Guatemala City International Airport (GUA), a designated representative will escort you to your hotel. It's just a short ride from the airport. There's a welcome dinner featuring Guatemalan cuisine at the hotel. Overnight: Guatemala City **D**

Day 2, Sunday 7th February LAKE ATITLAN
After breakfast, we'll drive to Lake Atitlan (about 3 hours). The breathtaking scenery, featuring a turquoise lake nestled amidst majestic volcanoes and vibrant towns, is awe-inspiring. We'll explore Santa Catarina Palopo, also known as the Blue Town, identified by a sea of brightly painted blue buildings adorned with geometric patterns. The town's enchanting ambience is due to the dedicated efforts of Pintando el Cambio. This non-profit organisation painted over 850 buildings and homes with nuanced shades of blue, purple, and green. The organisation's meticulous approach has breathed new life into the town's architecture. Local women create beautiful textiles on traditional strap looms, dressed in rich purple headdresses. The intricate geometric patterns that adorn the buildings are a testament. Overnight: Lake Atitlan **B/L/D**

Day 3, Monday 8th February TOWN HOPPING IN LAKE ATITLAN
We'll start our day with an unforgettable village tour to experience the magic of Lake Atitlan and discover hidden gems known only to locals. The small Maya villages scattered along the shores provide an insight into Guatemala's Indigenous communities' art, history, and customs. The shores of Atitlan are home to several Indigenous Maya villages. Each stop offers the chance to explore local markets, shops, and cafes, where you can learn about Maya culture and traditions firsthand. We'll visit Santiago Atitlan, a renowned destination for its artisanal crafts. The town is also home to the Weaving Centre and Museum of Cojolya. Our next stop will be at San Juan La Laguna, an indigenous community on the lake's western shore. Here, we will experience a vibrant and colourful town. The weaving cooperatives run by women are the main attraction, selling traditional textiles and artwork that make excellent souvenirs. San Juan La Laguna is a small, authentic Guatemalan community that tourists often overlook. Finally, we will visit San Marcos La Laguna, one of the prettiest villages on the lake. The community mainly consists of Maya people, who occupy the higher ground. The town boasts one of the best views of the lake's volcanoes and several excellent restaurants and coffee shops. Overnight: Lake Atitlan **B/L/D**

Day 4, Tuesday 9th February ANTIGUA
Afterwards, we'll drive to Antigua and start our city tour by tasting the world's best coffee at a local plantation. During our visit, we will learn about coffee-making from the seed to the cup. Our walking tour of Antigua will take us to the city's lookout point, offering breathtaking views of the city and neighbouring volcanoes and mountains. Dinner is at a local restaurant. Overnight: Antigua **B/D**

Day 5, Wednesday 10th February YAXHA NATIONAL PARK
Early in the morning, we will drive for an hour to the airport to catch a domestic flight to Flores Island. Upon arrival, we'll drive about 1.5 hours to visit the Mayan site of Yaxha. Guatemala is home to thousands of Mayan archaeological ruins, and experts have yet to discover over 60,000 hidden structures. Despite their deep location in the jungle, these ruins offer a glimpse into an incredible civilisation that once existed. Yaxha National Park is an example of these hidden ruins, which played a significant role in Mayan civilisation. The park boasts three astonishing archaeological complexes to explore: Yaxha, El Naranjo, and Nakum. Yaxha, located between two stunning lagoons - Yaxha and Sacnab - provides a glorious view of its towering pyramids, well-preserved buildings, and lush jungle. Then we'll drive to our hotel. Overnight: Flores **B/L/D**

Day 6, Thursday 11th February MAYAN CITY OF TIKAL
Embrace the magic of the jungle and the ancient wonders of Tikal today. With a guide, we'll journey through lush greenery to reach Temple IV, the highest in Tikal. From this stunning viewpoint, we'll have a golden view of ancient temples and the surrounding jungle. We'll explore the vast ruins of Tikal while the sounds of the jungle engulf us, igniting a sense of wonder and inspiration. The drive is about 90 minutes each way. Overnight: Flores **B/L/D**

Day 7, Friday 12th February RIO DULCE
We will set off early this morning on a four-hour drive to Rio Dulce. Upon arrival, we'll check in at the hotel and embark on a boat excursion that will take us through the river to the fascinating township of Livingston. The distance from Rio Dulce to Livingston is roughly 32 kilometres – roughly an hour's boat trip. Along the way, we will pass through a conservation area that boasts rainforests and diverse species. As we approach Livingston, a breathtaking sight awaits you as the river gradually narrows. The final stretch to the Caribbean Ocean has long, steep rock walls enveloped in lush tropical vegetation. The boat ride is an incredible experience, with towering limestone walls up to 100 meters high and the canyon walls draped in tropical jungle. Livingston is a town that remains disconnected from the rest of the country because there are no connecting roads. Despite this, the town's rich history, enigmatic location, Garifuna culture, and delectable cuisine render it an enticing destination for visitors. With its captivating past, Livingston offers travellers the opportunity to explore a unique culture steeped in tradition and charm. Furthermore, the town's remote location and limited connectivity offer a sanctuary for those seeking to escape the hustle and bustle of modern life. Livingston's appeal lies in its unique cultural heritage, offbeat Caribbean vibe, and proximity to some of the most scenic and evocative destinations. After a few hours strolling around the township and stopping for a coffee, we'll head back down the river, visit the Castle of San Felipe de Lara, and then return to our hotel for just one night. Overnight: Rio Dulce **B/D**








Day 8, Saturday 13th February CASTLE OF SAN FELIPE - HONDURAS
Today, we will take a short boat ride from our hotel to Rio Dulce. Then, we'll drive to Tela, Honduras. This long but rewarding 5-hour drive includes a border crossing into Honduras. Accommodation at a delightful eco lodge with a butterfly garden, waterfall and scenic walking trails set amongst the property. Overnight: Pico Bonito **B/D**

Day 9, Sunday 14th February PICO BENITO NATIONAL PARK
Today's activities include as little or as much as you like. There are some great walking tracks from the resort grounds, which your tour leader will brief you on. It can be planned to suit the group's pace and physicality. If trekking is not your thing, the resort is a lovely place to spend some downtime, go for walks, take a swim, photograph hummingbirds and other wildlife, and have a day of leisure. Overnight: Pico Bonito **B/L/D**

Day 10, Monday 15th February LANCETILLA BOTANICAL GARDEN
Today we will drive to the Cerro Azul Meambar National Park, stopping at the Lancetilla Gardens. East of Lago de Yojoa, this well-maintained national park boasts kilometres of trails leading to waterfalls, caves and untouched cloud forest. The park, also known as Panacam, covers 300 square kilometres. Overnight: Pulpahanzak **B/D**

Day 11, Tuesday 16th February PULHAPANZAK WATERFALL AND LAKE YOJOA
Today, we will have a full day of adventure at Pulhapanzak Waterfall and Lake Yojoa. Discover the lush greenery of the woods, the raw power of Pulhapanzak Waterfall, and the ancient rock formations of the Caves of Taulabe, set against the calm of Lake Yojoa. Pulhapanzak's waterfall is an impressive 43-metre (141-foot) cascade, set amid a lush park with places to swim in the river. The water has a powerful force as it flows over the cliff, creating a mist throughout the canyon. Overnight: Pulpahanzak **B/L/D**

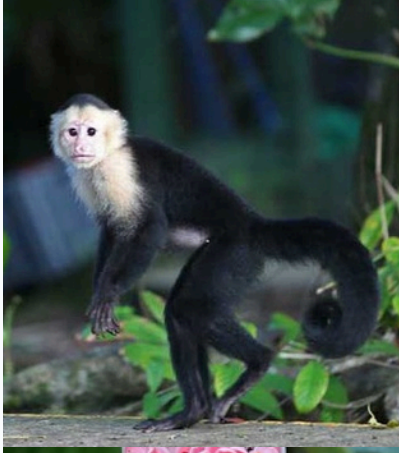
Day 12, Wednesday 17th February COPAN
Today, we'll drive for approximately 5 hours to Copan and briefly tour the town. Copan is the cutest town in Honduras, in the country's northwest, with an antique Central American vibe, its colourful houses and easygoing atmosphere. As small as it is, it is home to one of the most extraordinary Mayan Cities in the Mayan World, Copan Ruins. During the city tour, we will visit the Tea and Chocolate Place. Here, you can reconnect with nature, learn about assorted tea brews, and taste exceptional chocolate beverages. We will also visit the Macaw Mountain Reserve - a tropical bird reserve that cares for rescued, endangered birds from the American tropics. Stroll through the large flight aviary or relax on the decks and view the birds around you. Overnight: Copan **B/D**

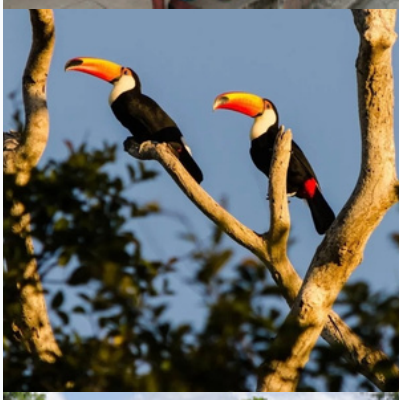
Day 13, Thursday 18th February COPAN RUINS
Today is a highlight; we'll experience the inspiring world of the ancient Mayan civilisation and explore the Mayan Ruins of Copan. This UNESCO World Heritage Site, nestled in the stunning landscape of western Honduras, is a testament to the Maya people's unparalleled artistic expression, a legacy that continues to captivate us today. Experience the grandeur of Copan through its remarkable monuments. The towering 20m-high Hieroglyphic Stairway brings to life the stories of the city's rulers and the significant events during their reigns through over 2000 glyphs. The Ball Court, a well-preserved court from that era, is a testament to the past, displaying ornamental grandeur and prominence. The Great Plaza, once a hub of social gatherings, remains a source of inspiration, with its 15 stelae representing the kings who ruled over Copan. Later, we can take time to wander around Copan township. It is a delightful hillside town with enchanting cobblestone streets and welcoming locals. Overnight: Copan **B/D**

Day 14, Friday 19th February COPAN TO SAN SALVADOR
The group will drive to the capital of El Salvador, which translates to "The Saviour" in English, referring to Jesus. We'll have a leisurely start today and arrive at our hotel mid-afternoon, with a lunch stop along the way (at own cost). Our stay here in San Salvador is for five nights. Overnight: San Salvador **B/D**

Day 15, Saturday 20th February SAN SALVADOR - SUCHITOTO – LAKE SUCHITLAN
Today, we'll enjoy a tour of this picturesque colonial town atop a hill boasting views of Lake Suchitlan. This place is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and architectural marvels, showcasing the town's history. Then, we'll take an afternoon boat tour on Lake Suchitlán, capturing the activities of the many wonderful bird species. After the tour, transfer back to the hotel. Overnight: San Salvador **B/D**

Day 16, Sunday 21st February SAN SALVADOR
Today, we'll have a full-day tour of the capital and its environs, including El Boqueron, a natural park at the top of the San Salvador Volcano, the colourful colonial city of Panchimalco in the mountains of San Salvador, and the historic downtown. We'll take you to the National Craft Market to witness firsthand the incredible skill and artistry of artisans nationwide. Once we have finished exploring the market, we 'll stop at the El Rosario church (hopefully, it will be open to the public). Though its exterior may appear simple, inside the church, a stunning display of natural light and arches creates a rainbow effect across the altar. To truly appreciate the church's beauty, we'll visit it in the late afternoon when the lighting is most dramatic. Then, we'll drive to El Boqueron National Park, the most easily reachable volcano in El Salvador. El Boqueron is one of the two peaks of Volcano San Salvador. Watch the sunset over the city lights while relishing the delicious grilled meats and seafood at the famous restaurant Las Brumas. Overnight: San Salvador **B/D**





Day 17, Monday 22nd February RUTA DE LAS FLORES
El Salvador's La Ruta de las Flores - the flower route - is considered one of the most picturesque road trips in Central America. The route stretches from Sonsonate to Ahuachapan, boasting its stunning coffee fields, charming small villages adorned with flowers, bustling markets, colourful murals, and delightful shops. You'll spend a day exploring the western region of the country, with stops in the charming towns of Apaneca, Ataco, and Salcoatitan. You'll see the Apaneca (Green Lagoon) and the captivating Albanian Labyrinth. When visiting Ataco, we'll see Axul Artesanía, a handicraft shop that offers a truly immersive experience. You'll witness working looms and discover unique paintings that could easily be mistaken for high art. Overnight: San Salvador **B/D**

Day 18, Tuesday 23rd February JOYA DE CEREN, CERRO VERDE & LAKE COATEPEQUE
After breakfast, we will drive 1.5 hours to Joya de Ceren, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Joya de Ceren is an exceptional archaeological site, often called the 'Pompeii of the Americas' for its unique features. A volcanic eruption of the nearby Caldera Volcano buried the site around 590 AD. The site has been remarkably well-preserved since then. Unlike other Mayan ruins, Joya de Ceren is a farming settlement offering a rare glimpse into the daily lives of the Mayan people. The village is a farming settlement rather than a ceremonial site, underscoring its uniqueness. We'll have lunch admiring the picturesque vista of Lake Coatepeque, protected by a collapsed volcano crater. The most striking feature of the lake is its breathtaking hues, which shift from deep, vibrant blues to bright turquoise as the day progresses. We plan to take a 45-minute hike to Cerro Verde for those up to it. On clear days, this elevated vantage point offers wonderful views of the two other volcanoes, Izalco and Santa Ana, and the lake. Following our hike, we will indulge in some excellent coffee and dessert before returning to San Salvador. Overnight: San Salvador **B/D**

Day 19, Wednesday 24th February TRAVEL TO LEON, NICARAGUA
Today, we'll drive to the International Airport of El Salvador (SAL) to board your flight to Nicaragua. Upon your arrival at the destination airport, a driver will escort you to the city of Leon, located in the northern reaches of Nicaragua. We will then have the remainder of the day to explore the city of Leon at leisure. The drive from the airport to our hotel is about 2 hours. Overnight: Leon. **B/D**

Day 20, Thursday 25th February LEON & CERRO NEGRO
In the morning, embark on an informative city tour of Leon, taking you to several notable locations. During this tour, we will have the opportunity to visit the cathedral roof, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; the Ortiz-Gurdian Arts Museum; the churches of La Recoleccion and El Calvario; the church square in the indigenous Subtiava neighbourhood; and the local market. After the tour, you'll have lunch in the city (at your own cost) before returning to your hotel for rest. Later in the afternoon, at around 3.00 pm, we will depart for Cerro Negro by 4x4. An optional climb of 350 m on foot from the entrance to reach the top. The climb takes about an hour, during which you can see solfataras and enjoy a spectacular 360° view of the volcano and the entire volcanic mountain range of Los Maribios. Finally, we will witness the sunset over the Pacific plain. After the descent, we will have dinner consisting of a typical 'caballo bayo' in the colonial centre. Overnight: Leon. **B/D**

Day 21, Friday 26th February LEON VIEJO & RURAL COMMUNITY
Our departure for the lost city of Leon Viejo, an esteemed UNESCO World Heritage Site near Lake Xolotlan, is scheduled for the early hours. This ancient city had been lost for centuries, with its location rediscovered only twice: first in 1931 and later in 1967. Since then, identifying buildings, tombs of bishops and conquerors, plazas, and remnants of walls has proven vital in illustrating and locating significant events in Nicaraguan history. Later, we will drive to Granada, where we will check into the hotel to stay for the last three nights of our adventure. Overnight: Granada **B/L/D**
Optional: *Time and safety permitting, we'll drive to Masaya Volcano National Park to ascend to the highest crater for a splendid view of the volcanic complex as the sun sets behind the column of gases rising from the crater. As night falls, we will descend to the rim of the active crater to witness a mesmerising lava lake-like fountain with perpetually boiling waves. Because this is an active volcano, the government sometimes closes it due to its volcanic activity.*

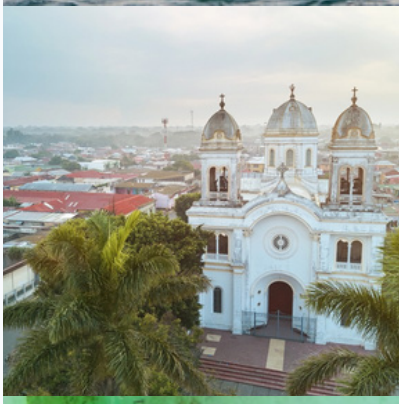
Day 22, Saturday 27th February OMETEPE ISLAND
To start this day, we will drive south to the port of San Jorge, where we will board a ferry to Ometepe Island, home to two awe-inspiring volcanoes - Concepcion and Maderas. These natural wonders are a significant draw for tourists and researchers alike, offering a unique opportunity to study volcanic activity and geology. The island's topography, characterised by the two towering peaks, has also significantly shaped the local culture and economy. We will be at a community of women who have organised a sustainable community tourism project called 'village-hotel. We will visit a community and local families in the charming village of La Paloma. This clustered, rural settlement is located near Moyogalpa. It features small, lightly wooded gardens that evoke tranquillity and peace. Later, we'll head back to our hotel for dinner. Overnight: Granada **B/L/D**

Day 23, Sunday 28th February GRANADA & LAS ISLETAS
Today, after breakfast, we'll take a city tour of Granada, starting with a visit to the traditional fruit and spice market within the vibrant and bustling colonial centre. A climb up the bell tower of La Merced church affords us a panoramic view of the city. We then stop at Café de la Sonrisa, enjoying a refreshing fruit smoothie - a favourite of the locals. The itinerary includes lunch at a restaurant and an afternoon of leisure to explore the city until late in the afternoon. Then, we will take a boat ride to visit the Isletas de Granada, an archipelago comprising more than 300 little islands that boast a serene paradise of water and jungle. This excursion concludes with the sunset behind the neighbouring volcano. We'll have a farewell dinner at the hotel. Overnight: Granada **B/L/D**

Day 24, Monday 1st March DEPART NICARAGUA
After breakfast, depart for our flights home – or to your next destination. Allow about an hour to transfer to the Managua International Airport (MGA) for your scheduled flight (to be confirmed). **B**

















Accommodation

Our hotels are carefully chosen to capture the local atmosphere and set you up in an ideal location. You can expect accommodation that comprises a mix of standard hotels, boutique-style hotels, and smaller, independently owned establishments. Below are some of the hotels on this tour. Final hotels may change, and a complete list will be shared with you.

Villa Santa Catarina, Lake Atitlan
villasdeguatemala.com

Hotel Los Almendros, San Salvador
losalmendrosdesanlorenzo.com

Panacam Lodge, Honduras
panacamlodge.com

Hotel Plaza Colon, Nicaragua
hotelplazacolon.com

Why Blue Dot?

Travel is more than just moving from one place to another; it is an opportunity to explore this vast planet, connect with its people and marvel at its beauty. We have established a group of loyal, like-minded travellers who share this feeling and have taken multiple tours with us. With Blue Dot, you'll experience

- Thoughtfully designed itineraries with unique experiences
- Small, inclusive groups with a maximum of 16 travellers
- The support of both an Australian tour leader* and experienced local guides
- Programs designed to meet the needs of mature-age travellers
- Hands on, personalised service including customised flight bookings
- Tipping included in your tour cost

*Australian leaders accompany groups with more than 10 travellers.

Blue Dot welcomes solo travellers

In fact, over half of our clients are solo travellers. We understand it can be daunting to travel on your own, and we'll ensure your travel is safe, inclusive and enjoyable. You can confidently join our groups, knowing that we bring solo travellers together to share the camaraderie of an unforgettable adventure.

Enquiries and bookings

A $500 deposit is required to secure your booking.

For more information:

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