

**DARE TO TAKE A WILD JOURNEY**  
**Into the Maya Biosphere Reserve**

**ATRÉVETE**  
**A VIVIR UNA TRAVESÍA**  
**SALVAJE**

*dentro de la Reserva de Biosfera Maya*



# Maya Trek

- What is the Maya Trek?
  - Tourism product comprising: nature, adventure, archaeology, culture and contact with the community
  - Community management to achieve sustainability
  - Promotes the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage
  - Development of archaeological and historical sites
  - 3 tours: Uaxactun, Carmelita – Mirador, El Zotz – Tikal





# Maya Trek, El Zotz - Tikal



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El Zotz - Tikal



# Community of El Cruce Dos Aguadas



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# San Miguel La Palotada Protected Biotope – El Zotz



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# Tikal National Park



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# Community of El Cruce Dos Aguadas

- The Tourism Commission of El Cruce Dos Aguadas is the sole entity authorised to provide tourist services.
- Tourist activity directly benefits more than 250 persons and indirectly benefits more than 400 persons
- Standard team hired for a tour
  - Local Guide
  - Cooks / Tortilla Makers
  - Muleteer
  - Assistants
  - Backpackers



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# Preservation of the Environment

- Tourist activity encourages the preservation of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, the San Miguel La Palotada Protected Biotope and the Tikal National Park
- Support for the financial sustainability of the Guatemalan Protected Areas System
- Acknowledgement of national and foreign tourists at various State institutions such as IDAEH, CECON and CONAP.
- Revenue diversification for the Cruce Dos Aguadas Community.



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# Preservation of Cultural Assets

- Historic route, following in the footsteps of Sihyaj K'ahk or Rana Humeante, who marked the event known as La Entrada, which led to the expansion of the Tikal
- Introduce the tourist to Q'eqchi culture. Most of the members of the community belong to this ethnic group of Mayan origin.
- Develop various archaeological sites such as El Zotz, El Bejucal, El Palmar and Chikin Tikal
- Acknowledge the work of archaeologists by observing first hand the work conducted during the research periods



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# Background

- 2009 – 2012: IDB – MIF – PACUNAM – FUNDESA Project provides support for community strengthening, consolidation of the Tourism Commission, product development, training, promotion and trade linkages
- 2013 – 2014: INGUAT conducts product development and promotion activities at the national and international levels



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# Specific Actions by INGUAT

- Brand Creation: Maya Trek
- Support for the construction of basic tourism infrastructure
- Development of microsites
- Launch of the brand in January 2014 with 15 former scholarship holders from Ruta Quetzal and the national media
- Preparation of promotional brochures in English and Spanish
- Presentation of the product and press conference at FITUR and ITB 2014
- Press trips with Lonely Planet Traveller
- Publications in the international media



# Future Activities

- Scheduled trips with national and international visitors
- Travel with national and international media
- Familiarisation trips with tour operators
- Webinars with foreign wholesale tour operators
- Continuous improvement through training
- Infrastructure and Services Management



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# Good Practices

- Physical load capacity estimated at groups of 30 persons maximum
  - Width of path in last segment
  - Camp capacity
  - Minimise negative impacts on biodiversity, the environment and cultural resources
  - Solid waste is collected by the support team and returned to the community.
  - Ecological latrines
  - Access by horses is limited to the final camp since the last segment leads to Tikal National Park



# Good Practices

- Physical load capacity estimated at groups of 30 persons maximum
  - Rain water is used for showers
  - In the dry season water is transported from the supply
  - There is no electricity. Candlelight is used and cooking is done with dry firewood sold by park rangers.
  - Purchase of local food





# Good Practices

- Operating load capacity of the community team estimated at groups of 30 persons maximum
  - 2 local guides
  - 2 cooks
  - 1 tortilla maker
  - 4 muleteers
  - 4 backpackers



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# Good Practices

## Adventure tourism:

- Trekking considered “hard” adventure tourism
  - 30% of Swedes practise hiking
  - 3 million in Italy
  - 4.9 million in France
  - 10 million in the United Kingdom
  - 22 million in the USA

Source (ATMS 2013)

*Very slight negative impact in the natural areas visited*



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# Good Practices

- Positive Results
  - Interest in participating in tourism-related activities by more community members
  - Greater respect for cultural resources and local biodiversity
  - Diversification of revenue by community members belonging to the Tourism Commission
  - Increase in the number of national and international visitors doing the tour



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# Good Practices

- Positive Results
  - Encourage the preservation of the environment and culture
  - Development of archaeological sites such as El Zotz and natural attractions like El Paredón de los Murciélagos
  - Increase in tourist visits ( 10 – 12 persons per week)



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# Good Practices

- Lessons learnt
  - Trekking is not for everyone. More than a physical challenge, it is a psychological challenge.
  - During the period August to November it becomes even more challenging.
  - There should be ongoing training for guides and the rest of the support team.



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Ministerio de  
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COMITÉ DE TURISMO  
CRUCE DOS AGUADAS



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