

temperatures are cooled by trade winds. Aug-Nov is traditionally hurricane season.

Paraguay

The climate of this low-lying country is subtropical and continental – expect extremes! Dec-Mar is extremely hot and humid, with average temperatures in February reaching 35°C. From July to September, temperatures are extremely variable and it can be cold in the daytime and very cold at night. Most precipitation falls between October and April but it can rain at any time of the year.

Peru

In **Cusco** and the highlands, Jun-Sep can be very cold at night, but days are usually extremely clear with sun. Nov-Apr are the wettest months of the year (the Inca Trail is closed throughout February) – note that rains tend to be in short, heavy bursts, rather than continual showers, with rains clearing towards the end of April. Nights are cold throughout the year at altitude.

Lima has a perpetual mist (*la garúa*) that comes in from the sea, principally from May-Oct, but is otherwise fairly dry throughout the year.

In the **Amazon** the climate is generally hot and humid (about 30°C). The dry season is from Apr-Oct and the wet season from Nov-Apr. The wet season is characterised by a few hours of rain each day and temperatures that can reach up to 40°C. In May there is often a layer of low cloud over the rainforest.

Suriname and French Guiana

Both have a tropical humid climate with dry and rainy seasons. There is a short rainy season in December and January and again from April to July.

The most pleasant times to visit are the dry seasons from February to April and from August

to November. Throughout the year the coastal average daily temperature rarely varies beyond 25° and 32°C. Both Suriname and French Guiana lie outside the hurricane zone and the most extreme weather condition is the *sibibusi* (which means forest broom), a heavy rain shower that passes quickly.

Uruguay

The weather is mild all the year around. Temperatures range from 10-16°C in the southern hemisphere winter, while in the summer (Nov-Mar) they hover in the mid-twenties. Wet and windy conditions outside high summer are not unheard of, and can make it feel very chilly. Rainfall is moderate and varies little over the year, apart from during July and August when there are prolonged wet periods.

Venezuela

There are two main seasons: December to April, when it's hot and dry, and May to November, when it's hot and wet. The Orinoco plains are usually flooded from June to October; Angel Falls is typically inaccessible by canoe from mid-December to mid-April due to low river levels. As you'd expect, altitude influences temperature – it is about 4°C colder for every 1000m above sea level. Caracas is at about 900m.

6. WHAT TO TAKE

• Money-belt

- Containing those items stated in section 1.5 (Document Checklist)

• Medical kit

- Anti-diarrhoea tablets and Dioralyte sachets of re-hydration salts
- Antiseptic/antibiotic cream
- Insect-bite ointment/insect repellent (please see section on Malaria)
- Lipsalve + sunscreen (high factor with protection against UVA and UVB rays)
- After-sun lotion
- Sticking plaster
- Painkillers
- Personal medication

NB: All these items and many more can be purchased over the counter in pharmacies throughout Latin America.

6.1 Clothing – General

When embarking on any of our tours or tailor-made itineraries, the following clothing list may be useful as a guide to what you will need to take. For warmth it is usually better to wear several thin garments rather than one thick one. If your route takes you to both the high Andes (where it is often very cold at night) as well as to jungle or very hot regions, then three or four shirts/t-shirts and one medium-weight jersey is a much better combination than one shirt/t-shirt and one thick jersey. If travelling to Brazil, Yucatán, Belize, Venezuela, Galápagos Islands or the Caribbean and lowlands of Central America you will need to adapt your clothing for primarily hot weather. Pack light cotton t-shirts, shorts, skirts and trousers.

For travel to Patagonia, and high-altitude regions, you can expect some days of severely cold weather, especially in the Chilean/Argentinian winter (June to October) and year-round in the Bolivian or Peruvian highland (*altiplano*). For these trips it is advisable to bring thermal underwear and good quality outer-shell clothing, including gloves, hat and scarf.

6.2 Amazon and Mato Grosso/Pantanal Trips

Temperatures are typically tropical in all months with average midday temperatures in the range 27°C/80°F-32°C/90°F. Frost is almost unknown, although in Mato Grosso/Pantanal occasional cold spells lasting a day or two and known as *friagem* can cause night temperatures to fall below 10°C/50°F from May to September. Rainfall throughout the year is above 1,500mm/60in a year and in much of the region over 2,000mm/80in.

Clothing should be casual, comfortable and resistant. Light colours are beneficial against sun and bugs. Dark clothes attract mosquitoes. (The best colours to wear are light tones, like brown, beige and green, which don't highlight you in the landscape, not scaring the animals. Avoid strong colours like yellow, blue and red.)

It is important that you always keep at least one set of dry clothes for the evening.

The following items may prove useful:

Clothing

- Short and long-sleeved shirts/t-shirts (lightweight wicking fabric controls perspiration and dries quickly)
- Long-sleeved shirts in a light colour (cotton)
- Lightweight trousers
- Shorts
- Swim suit

- A light sweater (it gets surprisingly chilly in the rainforest, especially on boat trips)

- Sun hat/cap

Footwear

- Comfortable outdoor shoes/trainers for evening use
- Rubber boots up to size 10 are provided at most lodges.

Foul Weather Gear

- A lightweight raincoat or waterproof poncho

Cold fronts can sometimes pass through the Amazon and Pantanal very suddenly and temperatures can drop drastically; heavier clothing can be beneficial.

Travel Accessories

- Insect repellent (50% deet)
- Sunglasses (suitable for strong UV conditions)
- Torch with extra batteries/head torch
- Water bottle/canteen
- Antihistamine tablets and an epi-pen for people with serious allergies to stings
- Zip lock bags – to keep things dry
- Swiss army knife (this cannot be taken as hand luggage during your flights).

For some excursions to the jungle and Pantanal lodges, you may find you are restricted to a maximum baggage allowance of 10kg (owing to limited space in canoes or light aircraft). In these cases, the local operator will provide secure storage of the remainder of your luggage.

6.3 Galápagos Islands

Clothing requirements onboard boats cruising the Galápagos range from very informal to “smart casual”, depending on the grade of vessel. The smarter boats prefer you not to wear jeans,

shorts or trainers for dinner.

Maximum luggage allowance for the flight to the Galápagos is 20kg (one suitcase/bag).

The following items would prove useful:-

Clothing

- Lightweight trousers
- Shorts
- Short-sleeved shirts/t-shirts (cotton is cool in hot climates, but light-weight wicking fabric controls perspiration and dries quickly)
- Long-sleeved shirts in a light colour (cotton)
- Light sweater or sweatshirt (nights can get rather cool and you don't want to miss stargazing on deck)
- Wind resistant jacket
- Swim suit
- Wetsuits are recommended in the cold water months (July to September). These can be hired locally; some boats provide them.
- Sun hat/cap

Footwear

- Sandals (for the boat)
- Trainers (for dry landings and rocky shores)
- Teva-style sandals (for wet landings)

Travel Accessories

- Sunscreen or sun block
- Sunglasses
- Beach towel and bath towel (most yachts provide bath towel)
- Water bottle/canteen
- Camera and plenty of film or – if digital – plenty of memory! (underwater camera beneficial)
- Binoculars
- Most yachts will provide snorkelling equipment

(but if you have your own equipment, we recommend bringing it)

At the luxury/first class end of the spectrum you can use credit cards, and there are laundry facilities. These facilities are not available on budget/tourist class vessels.

6.4 Trekking

If you intend to do any hiking or trekking, you should get into training by doing a few long walks before departure. If you have bought new walking boots, this will provide a chance for you to wear them in. If you are doing any walking in very wet conditions or difficult terrain, you will need waterproof boots or trainers that provide ankle support and have a solid sole.

Before undertaking a hike involving points of high altitude, you should take a few days to acclimatise in a town or village over 3000m. If you have any heart or respiratory conditions, you should consult your doctor before going to high altitudes and should avoid strenuous hiking or trekking altogether.

The hikes that we offer in the south of Chile or Argentina do not involve ascending to high altitudes but the weather conditions can be severe and it can be rough or boggy underfoot. Please be sure you have all the equipment you will need for hiking before leaving your home country, since good quality gear can be difficult to obtain and be more expensive in some destinations. The degree of comfort you feel will be directly related to the effectiveness of your clothing and equipment. If not travelling in a supervised group, the dangers of hypothermia should not be overlooked. In Patagonia it is particularly important that you have windproof garments.

For our group tours, please see individual trip dossiers for detailed equipment and clothing lists. Bespoke clients should ask their travel

consultants for specifics though the following general equipment list may be useful:

Clothing

- Should be suitable for different types of weather, light and fast drying.
- Light-weight trousers (consider convertible trousers – where the below-knee can be unzipped)
- Shorts
- Short-sleeved shirts/t-shirts (cotton is cool in hot climates, but light-weight wicking fabric controls perspiration and dries quickly)
- Long-sleeved shirts (as above)

Footwear

- Good quality, well worn-in walking boots
- Trekking/thick socks
- Comfortable outdoor shoes/trainers/Texas for evening use

Foul Weather Gear

- Rain/wind proof jacket or poncho (consider similar trousers)
- Warm sweater/fleece pullover (layering lighter garments is better than one heavy fleece)
- Gloves and scarf
- Headgear
- Warm hat
- Sun hat/cap

Travel Accessories

- Suntan lotion/sunscreen and lip balm
- Torch with extra batteries
- Insect repellent
- Water bottle/canteen
- Sunglasses (suitable for strong UV conditions)
- Swiss army knife (this cannot be taken as hand

luggage during your flights)

- Plastic bags of various sizes for keeping things sorted out in your baggage. Zip-lock bags work well. (They're also great for camera gear.)

6.5 Camping

For group tours, see individual trip dossiers for details of what you should take if you are joining a trip that involves camping. Bespoke clients should ask for specific information from their travel consultants. As a general rule, sleeping bags are often available locally but we cannot ensure their quality. For that reason some clients prefer to take their own sleeping bag or a sleeping bag liner.

7. USEFUL INFORMATION

Telephone Services

Phone calls can be made from most hotels of 3 stars and above, though there is a fee charged for this that may vary from 10 to 100% of the call cost. Most hotels will allow you to make reverse charge (collect) calls as well as use a telephone charge card. Always check with the hotel prior to calling – most make a service charge.

It is cheaper to go the local phone centre (*telefónica*) to make an international call. Procedure and prices vary. Most telephone companies have direct dialling. You will usually receive a plastic tag with a number for the respective booth, make all your calls, then hand in your number and be charged accordingly. There is generally a charge for a collect call from these booths.

Most countries now operate with telephone cards, bought in most kiosks or telephone

company shops. These can then be used from pay phones in the street for national and international calls. Be careful in those countries where there is more than one phone company (e.g. Chile) as often the cards are not accepted by other companies. Beware of being sold a “phonecard” which is actually a pre-paid top-up card. If it states the word “*celular*” anywhere on the card, don't buy it.

Similarly, some denominations of phonecards may be insufficient to make international calls. If in doubt, ask first! Very occasionally, a “*ficha*” or “*cartão telefônico*”, may have to be bought to make local calls. In Buenos Aires and in Cusco, Peru, small “call shops” seem to be springing up on every street corner. These are cheap and open long hours.

Mobile phone coverage abroad depends on your network and phone model. You should contact your service provider for details. Note that in remote areas there will be no mobile coverage. The service is constantly improving – there is now coverage, for example, at Machu Picchu and sporadically in the Sacred Valley and Cusco-Puno routes in Peru.

Internet and Email

Internet access is widely available in Latin America (although it is limited in Cuba) in cities and tourist areas, either in internet cafes or from your hotel. Your tour leader or local guide should be able to point you in the direction of the nearest internet centre. More and more hotels offer broadband connections, and usually provide cables if their service is not wireless.

Electrical Voltage

110-120 volts: Cuba (older buildings), Mexico, Guatemala (mostly), El Salvador (flat pin plugs), Honduras (flat pin plugs), Nicaragua, Costa Rica (flat pin plugs), Panama, most parts of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Belize, and Bolivia

(outside of La Paz).

220-240 volts: Cuba (newer hotels), Panama (modern homes and hotels), Argentina, Bolivia (in La Paz), the north-east of Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

Standard British plugs will need an adapter to two-pin plugs. The sockets usually accept both round and flat pins, but some on 110 voltage are flat pin only, so you will need an adapter with both (worldwide adapter). You can buy these in electrical shops, branches of Boots (in the UK), luggage shops and at airports.

For quick-reference see:

<http://electricaloutlet.org/>

Photography

The majority of travellers now have digital cameras. Memory cards (often expensive) and batteries can be bought at many of the principal tourist destinations, but do not rely on this – bring them from home. If you need to free up memory space, there are outlets in many main towns where you can download your images onto discs.

Film for old-style cameras should be purchased before you go if you use transparencies, as slide film can be hard to come by. Film for prints is almost universally available but can be more expensive, especially at main tourist sites. It is advisable to buy from shops where it looks as though they have a reasonably good turnover of film, and don't store it in very warm conditions – check the expiry date! If you are going to a jungle area it is advisable to buy some fast film (e.g. 400 ASA) in advance. The canopy cover of rainforest regions makes photography very difficult if you are using 100 ASA speed film. Conversely, a clear day in the high Andes will make slow film, (e.g. 100 ASA) a better bet. If possible, do not develop your film in Latin America, as the service is frequently sub-standard.

Laundry

Most hotels except the very cheapest have a laundry service, and they usually take between 10 and 24 hours to return your clothes. Hotel laundry services tend to be expensive, but can be more convenient and often offer a faster service than the cheaper laundrettes which can often be found nearby.

8. VISAS

The following information relates to British passport holders and to stays of 30 days or less, and in all cases to clients whose personal and professional circumstances do not preclude their entry to a country, or their transit through it. Other passport holders should enquire to the consulates of the countries to be visited.

Most Latin American countries do not require British passport holders to obtain a visa.

However, if on your route to Latin America your plane will touch down in the **USA**, you will be required to complete an ESTA form. Please ask for our detailed fact sheet.

Most nationalities (except CARICOM members) do require a visa to visit **Suriname**. The nearest consulate is in Amsterdam. Please enquire for our detailed fact sheet if you are making your travel arrangements through Journey Latin America.

British passport holders require a tourist card to visit **Cuba**. We can issue these – at a cost of £25 if you are making your travel arrangements through Journey Latin America.

10. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Our Responsibility

To us, sustainable tourism is nothing new. Ever since we started in 1980, we have believed that it's our responsibility to do all we can to protect the places to which we send clients and to ensure that as much as possible of the money spent filters through to local economies. Since 2008, we have held AITO's prestigious 5-star sustainable tourism status, in recognition of our efforts in this area.

We, and everyone we ask to deliver services to you, take pride in offering sustainable holidays with minimal impact on the environment and maximum support for community development, and in ensuring good working conditions.

For more information about our sustainable travel initiatives, please visit the sustainable travel section on our website for more information:

www.journeylatinamerica.co.uk/rt.aspx

How You Can Help

We have seen for ourselves how tourism, if well-managed, eco-friendly and sustainable, can and does benefit the destination. While you are on holiday, just a small effort will help to protect the natural environment, traditions and culture of your destination – the things that make it so special in the first place.

Before You Go

- Learn something about the countries you plan to visit to find out about the culture, politics, geography, religion and local customs.
- Try and remove unnecessary packaging from any products you are taking with you, and dispose of it at home first. Recycling has yet to really take off in Latin America so the less you leave the better!

- Consider offsetting the carbon emissions from your transatlantic flight using the TICOS scheme.

Whilst on your travels remember...

Out and About

- Remember to respect local traditions and culture.
- Ask permission before photographing indigenous people and events, particularly religious processions.
- Ask for an address and send photos to the people you photographed – many won't have photos of their families.
- Simple gifts for children, such as crayons, balloons, colouring books or even a mini football can bring a huge smile to a child's face. Resist handing out sweets as dental care is, mostly, poor.
- Giving money to children on the street only encourages begging; instead consider donating to schools or local conservation or charitable organisations.

In the Market

- Buy local handicrafts and support local artisans.
- When bargaining, remember that a small saving for you could make a big difference for the seller.
- Don't buy ancient artefacts or anything made with endangered animals or plants e.g. hardwoods, shells, exotic feathers, coral, furs or eggs.

Eating out

Where possible, choose smaller local restaurants, bars and cafes; your money will benefit individuals instead of companies, plus you will get a far more authentic gastronomic experience by sampling typical dishes at very reasonable

prices. Our tour leaders and travel consultants can make some great personal recommendations about where to sample local delicacies.

Speaking with People

- Why not try and learn some of the lingo? Speaking a few words of the local language, even if it is just '*hola*' or '*gracias*', will change the way people react to you. You'll get a much warmer welcome and this in turn can enrich your experience and interaction with the local people.
- Traditions and ways of life differ greatly across the cultures of Latin America. As a rule of thumb, people in lowland regions are more gregarious and relaxed than those who live a more austere life in the mountains, and many Latin Americans are modest and camera-shy.
- Please try to be sensitive to local customs. The pace of life outside the main cities is slower than in the UK, and you may have to draw on your reserves of patience in some situations.
- There is still widespread poverty in many countries: you may like to consider taking clothes, shoes or toys with you that you might be happy to leave behind.

Minimise Your Environmental Impact

- Stick to the paths and walkways whether you are in the jungle, on a mountain trek or in a Mayan ruin. They are there for your safety and also to preserve the local wildlife and help to avoid further erosion of the landscape.

In Your Hotel

- Clean water is a precious resource, so use it sparingly. Try and take quick showers rather than baths as this helps to save water.
- Advise your hotel that you don't need towels or sheets laundered daily. This can save on water and energy.

- Conserve electricity by switching off lights, air-conditioning or heating when you leave your room.
- Use environmentally friendly shampoos and detergents, particularly when you are outside big cities in 'the wild' and your shower water is going to end up in a river!
- Try to reuse and refill your drinking water bottles where possible. Many hotels have water '*garrafones*' filled with treated '*agua potable*' that is perfectly safe to drink. If your hotel does not, you could leave a suggestion that they provide one.

11. RECOMMENDED READING

ARGENTINA

Labyrinths

– *Jorge Luis Borges*

The best short stories by the father of modern Latin American fiction.

The Uttermost End of the Earth

– *Lucas Bridges*

An interesting history of the settlement of Tierra del Fuego in the 19th century by British missionaries. Includes some fascinating anecdotes about their interaction with the native Indians.

Bad Times in Buenos Aires: A Writer's Adventures in Argentina

– *Miranda France*

The author shares her experiences as a young freelance journalist living in Argentina in the early 1990s.

The Real Life of Eva Perón

– *Nicholas Fraser*

A well-researched, historically accurate and unbiased view of Evita's life.

Santa Evita

– *Tomás Eloy Martínez*

A highly readable exploration of the myth of Eva Perón in Argentine society.

BOLIVIA

Bolivian Diary

– *Ernesto Che Guevara*

These 1966 and 1967 diaries were written during Che's attempt to establish a guerrilla insurrectionary movement in Bolivia.

Sons of the Moon: A Journey in the Andes

– *Henry Shuckman*

An account of the author's trip to visit the Aymara – a people living in a remote, isolated region of the mountains in Bolivia.

BRAZIL

Dona Flor and her Two Husbands

– *Jorge Amado*

Amado's lively narrative takes the reader on a tour through Bahia using the story of a young woman haunted by her late husband's ghost.

Futebol: The Brazilian Way of Life

– *Alex Bellos*

Bellos's study of football in Brazil, its history, its players, supporters and legends, works from the standpoint that Brazilian football is one the modern wonders of the world – 'the beautiful game' being an art form in itself and a universally recognised trademark and brand.

Rebellion in the Backlands

– *Euclides Da Cunha*

Da Cunha reflects on his experience of the aftermath of the Canudos war: a historical episode of 1896-97 that culminated in the extermination of a religious sect that had effectively denied the legitimacy of the Brazilian Republic.

The Testament

– *John Grisham*

An ageing multimillionaire knows his greedy

children are circling like vultures as he waits to die. As his beneficiary he chooses an unknown missionary living deep in the wilds of Brazil. Accurate descriptions of the Brazilian Pantanal abound.

The Hour of the Star

– *Clarice Lispector*

This lucid, charming book tell the story of Macabea, a typist who does not know how to type. She represents the under-classes in Brazil. The book gives a clear insight into life in the country.

CHILE

The House of Spirits

– *Isabel Allende*

An epic novel tracing Chile's turbulent history through the story of the tragedies befalling successive generations of females within a family.

In Patagonia

– *Bruce Chatwin*

Drawn to Patagonia since an early childhood fascination with his grandmother's scrap of hairy Giant Sloth skin, Chatwin is intrigued by odd miners, Darwin, the Welsh and the log cabin built by Butch Cassidy. (The book covers Chilean and Argentinian Patagonia: the famous Milodon Cave is actually in Chile.)

Curfew

– *José Donoso*

Accounts of life under the Pinochet dictatorship.

The Nanny and the Iceberg

– *Ariel Dorfman*

A humorous account of an exiled Chilean returning to his motherland following the end of the dictatorship, and his struggles to win the affections of his father and a beautiful Chilean girl.

Between Extremes

– *Brian Keenan and John McCarthy*

A well-written testament to friendship by Keenan and McCarthy whose dream of making a million

from yak farming in Chilean Patagonia was born in their shared Beirut prison cell.

Clandestine in Chile

– *Gabriel García Márquez*

A picture of life under Pinochet, told by a film director who returns, after 12 years, under a false identity.

Twenty Love Songs and a Song of Despair

– *Pablo Neruda*

Some of the most beautiful love poems ever written. Every Chilean can recite at least half a dozen of these poems.

My Invented Country

– *Isabel Allende*

The life story of Isabel Allende, which focuses on her relationship with Chile and its complicated history and politics.

Eight Men and a Duck

– *Nick Thorpe*

A very readable book about the author's trip from mainland Chile to Easter Island in a reed boat made on Lake Titicaca.

The Postman

– *Antonio Skármeta*

Subsequently adapted for the silver screen in the award-winning film, *Il Postino*, *The Postman* is a story of poetry, love, politics and life set in the years preceding the Pinochet dictatorship.

COLOMBIA & VENEZUELA

The Lost Steps

– *Alejo Carpentier*

A composer, fleeing an empty existence in New York City, embarks on a journey to an area relatively untouched by civilisation – the upper reaches of the Amazon.

Love in the Time of Cholera

– *Gabriel García Márquez*

A touching story of love and mortality set in a traditional Colombian coastal town at the turn of the 19th Century.

One Hundred Years of Solitude

– *Gabriel García Márquez*

An epic magical realist novel that tells the story of generations of the Buendía family – founders of Macondo, a remote Colombian town.

The Fruit Palace

– *Charles Nicholl*

The Fruit Palace of the title sells only fruit, but it happens to be in Santa Marta, the small town at the centre of Colombia's cocaine trade. Nicholl relates his quest for "The Great Cocaine Story" with madcap energy and vividness in this classic travel book.

In Trouble Again: A Journey Between the Orinoco and the Amazon

– *Redmond O'Hanlon*

O'Hanlon ventures into the Venezuelan jungle encountering poisonous snakes, Yanomami Indians and recalcitrant guides. With an enthusiasm and attention to detail rivalling that of the 19th Century explorers who influenced him (such as Henry Walter Bates) he adds his own brand of satirical observation making his Amazon account an extremely witty and intelligent read.

CUBA

Our Man in Havana: An Entertainment

– *Graham Greene*

Greene makes light of spying during the Cold War. A vacuum cleaner dealer is recruited as a spy for a secret British organisation in Cuba. The main character struggles to keep his life in check and his conscience within bounds.

Selected Poems

– *Nicolás Guillén*

Fidel's official poet laureate of the Cuban revolution.

The Old Man and the Sea

– *Ernest Hemingway*

Hemingway was at his shining best when he wrote about the fearless old man, Santiago, and

his epic personal battle with a hooked marlin. Inspirational stuff even if you're not a fisherman.

Cuban Music: From Son and Rumba to the Buena Vista Social Club and Timba Cubana

– *Maya Roy*

An account of Cuban music through the ages; includes an extremely interesting and updated section on contemporary Cuban music from a social perspective.

Cuba: The Test of Time

– *Jean Stubbs*

A short analysis of the first 30 years of the Cuban Revolution from the historical and economic viewpoint. Still fascinating and useful even without the upheaval of the '90s.

CENTRAL AMERICA

The President

– *Miguel Ángel Asturias*

A dark, often harrowing account of life under the Guatemalan dictator, Manuel Estrada Cabrera, which denounces the atrocities committed by those who held absolute power. A real life tale that, disturbingly, creates some parallels with Orwell's fictitious novel 1984.

The Lost Chronicles of the Maya Kings

– *David Drew*

Explores the collapse of the Maya Empire, including a fascinating and well-crafted portrait of the Maya world.

Selected Writings

– *Rubén Darío*

Originally from Nicaragua, Darío is considered the father of Latin American poetry.

Green Mansions

– *W H Hudson*

A poignant meditation on the loss of wilderness. First published in 1904.

I, Rigoberta Menchu

– *Rigoberta Menchu*

The testimony that catapulted an indigenous

Guatemalan woman onto the political stage. Menchu's powerful voice records the plight of the Guatemalan people during the Civil War, which claimed the lives of her brother, mother, and father.

The Full Montezuma

– *Peter Moore*

An Australian backpacker's odyssey through Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean with the Girl Next Door, dodging political riots, cockroaches and hurricanes along the way.

Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey

– *Salman Rushdie*

Travel tales and social commentary set in Nicaragua. Stirring and original in its simple descriptions of the country that provides an impressionistic picture of the country in bright, patchwork colours unavailable in usual journalistic dispatches.

Time Among the Maya: Travels in Belize, Guatemala & Mexico

– *Ronald Wright*

An entertaining and educational travel book about the Maya region. Highly recommended for those interested in the ancient and modern Maya.

MEXICO

Like Water for Chocolate

– *Laura Esquivel*

Set in turn-of-the-century Mexico, it tells the tale of the youngest of three daughters whose fate is to remain single so that she can take care of her mother in old age. Forbidden love and family traditions are mixed together with a hint of magical realism.

The Old Gringo

– *Carlos Fuentes*

Interweaving politics, history and the mysterious death of writer Ambrose Bierce, Carlos Fuentes' novel is a love story set within the rebel army of Pancho Villa during the Mexican Civil War of 1913.

The Death of Artemio Cruz

– *Carlos Fuentes*

Chronicling a family history from the pre-Revolution period through to 1960s allows Fuentes to show the failure of the Mexican Revolution.

The Labyrinth of Solitude

– *Octavio Paz*

An attempt to define the identity of the Mexican people through culture and history.

The Savage Detectives

– *Roberto Bolaño*

Bolaño's award-winning epic tale of two poets, Ulisses Lima and Arturo Belano, and their lives in Mexico City in the 1970s and subsequent travels in Europe and Africa.

Tinisima

– *Elena Poniatowska*

A biography of the Italian-American photographer Tina Modotti, focusing largely on the Mexican cultural revolution and its leading protagonists, including Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo.

PERU

Deep Rivers

– *Jose María Arguedas*

An account of the influence of pre-Hispanic cultures on modern life in Peru. Good descriptions of Cusco and the Sacred Valley.

Conquest of the Incas

– *John Hemming*

A readable and authoritative book of Pizarro's conquest of Peru and his search for El Dorado in the 1530s. An astonishing account of war strategies and upsets between unequal forces with vastly different technologies.

It gives a real understanding into present-day relationships between Spanish and native peoples in South America.

Exploring Cuzco

– *Peter Frost*

An excellent book giving up-to-date information

on where to go and what to see in and around Cusco. (Best bought on arrival in Cusco from one of the shops around the main square)

General Song (Canto General)

– *Pablo Neruda*

The Latin American continent through history and poetry. In section 2, The Heights of Machu Picchu, Neruda chronicles his own journey to the ancient Inca citadel.

The Dancer Upstairs

– *Nicholas Shakespeare*

A thriller and detective story set in the era of the Shining Path guerrilla movement.

Touching the Void

– *Joe Simpson*

The story (recently made into a film) of a climbing accident in Northern Peru when Simpson's partner was forced to cut the rope.

The White Rock

– *Hugh Thomson*

An exploration of the Inca heartland. Part travelogue, part history lesson – British filmmaker Thomson relates his travels through Peru and Bolivia.

Cochineal Red

– *Hugh Thomson*

A journey back from the world of the Incas to the first dawn of Andean civilisation.

Peregrination of a Pariah: 1833-1834

– *Flora Tristan*

A lively and fascinating eye-witness account of life in 19th-century Peru.

Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter

– *Mario Vargas Llosa*

Highly original novel set in 1950s Lima. The anxieties of an aspiring writer, his fears, doubts, failures and experiences are conveyed using Peruvian society as a microcosm of Latin America. (There are many more excellent novels by this highly acclaimed author.)

GENERAL

The Trail to Titicaca

– *Rupert Atlee*

A bicycle journey through Chile, Argentina and Bolivia in aid of Leukaemia research.

Reasons of State

– *Alejo Carpentier*

A novel that looks into the classic despotic Latin American dictator.

Papillon

– *Henri Charrière*

The author's memoirs, now considered to be an amalgam of many stories from the forçats condemned to the notorious penal colony in French Guiana. A bestseller in its time.

The Voyage of the Beagle

– *Charles Darwin*

A landmark of natural history, Darwin's account of a voyage in 1831 to map the coast of South America.

One River: Exploration & Discoveries in the Amazon Rain Forest

– *Wade Davis*

Davis is an ethnobotanist interested in the native use of plants. He has a rare ability to mix technical science writing with a deep knowledge of history, culture and politics and make it flow into coherent narrative. A must for anyone interested in the cultures and history of the Amazon basin.

The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts

– *Louis De Bernières*

Set in a fictitious Latin American country, this novel offers all the tragedy, ribaldry, and humour Bernières can muster from a debauched military, a clueless oligarchy, and an unconventional band of guerrillas. There's a plague of laughing, a flood of magical cats, and a torture-happy colonel. This is the first of a trilogy, and is followed by Señor Vivo and the Coca Lord and The Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman.

Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent

– *Eduardo Galeano*

A left-wing masterpiece – though some critics hate it. It touches the heart of capitalism and explores it in a way few have dared. More than a history book, it is a compilation of essays that shows how the 'strong' abuse and stand over the 'weak'.

Saddled With Darwin

– *Toby Green*

An interesting voyage in the footsteps of Darwin by a young intrepid explorer with a fantastic sense of humour. A good balance of history and adventure.

Motorcycle Diaries: A Journey Around South America

– *Che Guevara*

Full of high drama and comedy, Che's book is the story of a remarkable road journey. Moving examples of Guevara's idealism and solidarity with the oppressed are recounted in a vivid record that provides an insight into Che's mind. The film version was released in 2004, starring Gael García Bernal.

The Feast of the Goat

– *Mario Vargas Llosa*

The best dictatorship novel to come from Latin America. An insight into the life of Rafael Trujillo, who ruled the Dominican Republic with an iron fist between 1930 and 1961.

The Endurance

– *Ernest Shackleton*

A first-hand account of the Endurance expedition to the South Pole as the Great War raged in Europe. The ship was crushed by the ice and the men were forced to survive in and escape from one of the world's most hostile environments.

A Penguin History of Latin America

– *Edwin Williamson*

Williamson combines the sensibility and mastery of language of a man of letters with the rigour and depth of knowledge of an academic historian to give us an introduction into Latin America through her history. An extremely readable synthesis.

Conquistadors

– *Michael Wood*

Wood describes fairly and sensitively the vast gulf that separated the Bronze Age (Aztec and Inca) cultures of Latin America from the Western behemoth that overwhelmed and destroyed them, stressing in particular the near total inability of each society to comprehend the morals and values of the other.

Guidebooks and Maps

Below is a brief summary of some of the publishers that provide guidebooks and maps to Latin America. Their publications are widely available in major bookshops, or online.

Footprint

Publishers of the South American handbook since 1923, Footprint now produces single country titles too. The most comprehensive guides for budget, upmarket and business travellers alike. Compact and updated regularly. Highly recommended.

Lonely Planet

The Travel Survival Kit series is aimed at the independent traveller. Travel tips, clear street maps and cheap food and accommodation listings make these books good value for money. Lonely Planet also produces phrasebooks, city guides and travel atlases.

Rough Guides

Useful off-the-beaten-track information and excellent sections on history, music and literature. What they lack in practical tips Rough Guides make up for in background information.

Insight Guides

Glossy, coffee table guides containing excellent photographs and cultural and historical essays.

Bradt

Aimed at walkers, naturalists and adventurous travellers. More emphasis is laid on useful maps and trail-routes than practicalities. A good read and useful companion to the general travel books.

ITM Road Maps

ITM maps are good if you are travelling to one particular area. They are more detailed and each map is annotated with historical and geographical descriptions.

Collins

6 clear maps of Latin America and the Caribbean. Ideal for general use.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. These books have been recommended by our staff though there are many more.

Disclaimer

The information in this dossier has been compiled with all reasonable care and is accurate to the best of our knowledge. We try to update the printed version once a year, but the information is inevitably subject to change without notice. Journey Latin America accepts no responsibility for the dossier's accuracy, and will entertain no claim for compensation, for inconvenience or contingent liability should information prove to be incorrect or out of date. Where possible we have given website addresses for you to check the latest information. See our website: **www.journeylatinamerica.co.uk**

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