Guatemala is a charming potpourri of Maya and Spanish colonial heritage and the modern contemporary world of today. In Antigua, see a town preserved as it was as a Spanish capital in the 16th century. Chichicastenango is where Maya and Spanish religious practices co-exist and where you find the largest native market in Central America. The country's modern capital Guatemala City still reveres its Spanish architectural heritage. In addition, there is an explosion of color in the rich and varied Guatemalan crafts. Markets brimming with colorful designs and patterns passed on from generation to generation, wood, jade, textiles, clay and metals molded by the hands of today's Mayans. When you tour the spectacular ruins of Tikal emerging dramatically from the surrounding lowland jungle, it is hard to imagine that it was once the prime city of the Maya people populating the Yucatán peninsula. This lush rainforest is also home to monkeys and an abundance of birds providing a blend of nature and culture to a "must-see" experience.

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** This exclusive expedition is designed for Harvard alumni and friends who are interested in history, archaeology, anthropology, natural history, the ancient cultural traditions of the living Maya and modern Guatemala. There is daily walking over uneven terrain at a leisurely pace and some stair climbing. Typically the weather is spring-like in Guatemala City and in the highlands; in the Petén area where Tikal is located the temperatures are in the 80's. Nights and early mornings can be chilly in the area of Atitlán, but as a general rule the weather is delightful. Travel is by motor coach and boat. In order to enjoy this trip, a spirit of adventure, anticipation and the desire to experience first-hand another culture and explore natural and archaeological areas are musts. Flexibility is essential, since local conditions may require alterations in schedule.

**STUDY LEADER:** To be announced

**GROUP SIZE:** 12 to 24 guests

**PRICING:** $3,795 DOUBLE/$4,370 SINGLE
THURSDAY, MARCH 10
DEPART U.S. FOR GUATEMALA

Depart today on a flight for Guatemala City, Guatemala. Upon arrival, transfer to your historic hotel in Antigua built around the ruins of the Santo Domingo monastery.

At an elevation of 5,000 feet in a valley surrounded by 14,000-foot volcanoes, Antigua is one of the most charming of the colonial towns of the Americas. It has been declared by the UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. This magical and captivating town makes you feel as if time stopped 300 years ago. From its colonial architecture to its beautiful surroundings to strolling through town on the cobblestone streets, you will experience the splendors of colonial times!

Overnight at Casa Santo Domingo

FRIDAY, MARCH 11
ANTIGUA

Start your morning amidst the clear, balmy air and the brilliant colored bougainvillea’s cascading over white adobe walls as you tour the secrets and architecture of this beautiful town. This morning’s tour of the colonial town commencing at the Central Park includes a visit to the Ayuntamiento (administrative building), Cathedral, University, Colonial Museum, Convent of Capuchinas and Merced Church.

After your tour, enjoy time at leisure to explore Antigua on your own.

Gather tonight for a dinner at the Mesón Panza Verde. With its vaulted ceiling and candle lighting this restaurant is sure to make dinner a unique experience.

Overnight at Casa Santo Domingo (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, MARCH 12
ANTIGUA / LAKE ATITLÁN

Antigua is famous for growing one of the best coffees in Central America. Enjoy the scenery and the unique insight to a real coffee hacienda. Get up close and personal with the coffee making process, experiencing the smells, the sights, and the flavor of one of Guatemala’s most famous exports. From here, transfer to Lake Atitlán, a breathtaking lake with volcanic panoramas. The writer Aldous Huxley considered Lake Atitlán “the most beautiful lake in the world”.

Overnight at Hotel Atitlán (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, MARCH 13
CHICHICASTENANGO MARKET

This morning depart for Chichicastenango, an Indian village nestled in the highlands at 7,000 feet. Spend your morning meandering through the colorful native market, the largest in Central America. Gracing the square at one end is the Church of Santo Tomás, where two religious beliefs co-exist: Catholic and Pagan. It is on the weathered, crumbling steps of this church that the Indians pay homage to their pagan gods by burning incense and lighting candles as they enter the church to attend Christian masses.

In the afternoon, visit some of the cofradías, religious organizations where ceremonial costumes are made—so important in the life of the living Maya. See the indigenous women from surrounding villages wearing superb native dress of heavily embroidered blouses. In addition, you will see beautiful hand-carved masks.

In the afternoon return to your hotel overlooking Lake Atitlan.

Overnight at Hotel Atitlán (B, L)
MONDAY, MARCH 14
LAKE ATITLAN

This morning enjoy the views as you take a pleasant private boat ride across the lake to two very special and different towns: San Juan la Laguna and Santiago Atitlán.

Santiago Atitlán is home to Maximon, a venerated pagan saint who smokes tobacco and drinks moonshine. He resides in a different house each year. San Juan la Laguna is a quieter town, less visited, and is home to several textile coops and art galleries. Return to Panajachel for lunch.

After lunch return to Guatemala City.

Overnight at *Westin Camino Real*(B, L, D)

TUESDAY, MARCH 15
GUATEMALA CITY / TIKAL NAKTIONAL PARK / GUATEMALA CITY

Early transfer to the airport to fly to Flores, located in the Petén jungle (box breakfast provided).

Upon arrival, transfer to the ancient metropolis of Tikal, one of the oldest and grandest of Maya cities, and perhaps the finest gift to us from the Maya heritage. Tikal flourished during the Classic Period from A.D. 250-900, and then suddenly collapsed around A.D. 900 when its population vanished. To this day no one knows exactly why.

Explore the temples, architecture, and theories as to why the site was abandoned. Visit the small Tikal museum, which houses a collection of artifacts excavated at the site.

After lunch, transfer back to the airport for a flight back to Guatemala City.

Overnight at *Westin Camino Real*(B, L)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16
RETURN TO U.S.

After breakfast, transfer to the international airport for your return flight to the U.S. (B)