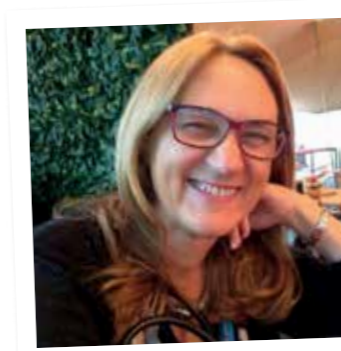




Peru, Cusco Province

Welcome



Travel has been my life for 20 years. St Augustine's famous quote remains as true to me today as it was when I first set up 2by2 Holidays – "the world is a book and those who do not travel, read only one page".

My first love was Africa, the place of my birth. Its remarkable wildlife and cultures continue to captivate me today. A recent visit to the gorillas of Uganda has starkly reminded me just how fragile the survival of so many endangered species remains. And reinforced my belief that travel must always have conservation at its heart.

In recent years I have discovered the joys of travel in the Indian subcontinent and Latin America. The iconic sites and cultures here are no less enthralling. And everywhere wildlife adapts and survives, from harsh barren deserts to cool mountain cloud forests and tropical wetlands.

My enthusiasm burns as brightly as ever and I continue to be as involved in every aspect of the business as I always have been, backed up by our superb travel team. I'm particularly thrilled that so many of our customers return time after time.

I do hope you find our latest brochure inspiring and we all look forward to hearing from you.

Hambe Kahle – Travel Safely

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Santa Catalina Arch, Antigua, Guatemala



Ambergris Caye, Belize



Granada Cathedral, Nicaragua



Howler monkey

Central America

With its smoking volcanoes, rainforests, dazzling beaches, colonial cities and Mayan ruins, Central America has something for everyone. Seven fascinating countries make up this narrow isthmus of land that links the Americas.

Linking Mexico in the north with Colombia in the south, these seven countries are attracting travellers keen on combining several countries in one trip. The white sandy beaches and Caribbean climate of tiny, English-speaking **Belize** (formerly British Honduras) has long been legendary. With its rich marine life, second longest coral reef in the world and 450 'cayes' (islands located between the mainland and the reef), Belize's coastline is a paradise for every kind of warm water activity, including diving the famous Blue Hole.

Beyond Belize's beaches, the steamy jungle attracts wildlife lovers with its jaguar sanctuary at Cockscomb Basin and the eco-lodges of Guanacaste National Park. The cooler hills of Mountain Pine Ridge offer excellent hiking to waterfalls and caves. The Mayans lived here and their spectacular remains can be seen all over the country. These include the ceremonial sites at Lamanai, Altun Ha and magnificent Caracol, thought to be one of the empire's main settlements.

Guatemala borders Belize to the west and it's an easy hop by light aircraft to visit the superb Mayan ruins at Tikal, but Guatemala deserves a visit in its own right. The colourful twice-weekly market at Chichicastenango is one of the most famous in Latin America and Lake Atitlan, formed in the crater of a huge volcano, is breathtakingly beautiful. Do not overlook UNESCO-recognised Antigua, with its well-preserved 16th century colonial architecture.

El Salvador borders Guatemala to the south, with 190 miles of sandy beaches on the Pacific Ocean. It is the region's smallest country and the least visited, but with its 20 volcanoes, 300 rivers, 500 birds species and 1,000 types of butterfly, it matches its neighbours for stunning natural attractions. These include the thermal springs at Cerro Verde National Park and the ruins at Joya de Cerén, where an entire pre-Hispanic village was preserved under volcanic ash.

Honduras, like its neighbours Guatemala and El Salvador, was home to the Mayans and their most famous

legacy here are the ruins at Copan, the southern most tip of their empire. For modern day visitors, the beautiful Caribbean coast in the north is the main draw, specifically Roatán and the other Bay Islands, with their spectacular turquoise beaches, marine life and dive sites along the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef. The Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve in the northeast is one of the few remaining tropical rainforests in Central America.

Nicaragua is Central America's largest country and one with exceptional ethnic, cultural and habitat diversity. The highlight is the beautifully preserved colonial city of

Granada, with more edgy León the cultural hub. Visitors can sail on Lake Nicaragua, one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world and stay on the island of Ometepe, complete with its twin volcanoes and an astounding array of wildlife.

Costa Rica is the undisputed jewel of Central America and is the most prosperous and progressive of the seven countries, boasting the highest quality of life in the region. This is the land of unbelievable wildlife and outdoor adventure and we cover it in more depth on pages 108 - 109. Visitors to Costa Rica can easily include a side trip to Nicaragua's colonial cities or go south to explore **Panama**.

Opened in 1914, the phenomenal engineering achievement of the Panama Canal transformed the world's shipping trade. The best way to appreciate its significance is to take a boat trip, stopping at Miraflores Locks to see the impressive locks in action. On the Caribbean coast, Portobelo became Spain's major port in the Americas during colonial times and the centre of their trade in gold and silver. The ruins of five Spanish forts bear testimony to the riches once stored here.

The idyllic castaway San Blas Islands, where local tourism is organised by the indigenous Guna people, and the virgin reefs and rainforest at Bocas del Toro, are two outstanding beach locations on the Caribbean coast. There are also many lovely beaches stretching all along the Pacific coast, with several within easy reach of Panama City.





Book with confidence

We have ATOL certification and membership of the Association of Tour Operators (AITO).

Booking your holiday

When you are ready to book, we will guide you through the process. In all our dealings we aim to be transparent and encourage you to read our terms and conditions thoroughly. These are on our website at www.2by2holidays.co.uk. Please do contact us if anything is unclear.

Financial Protection

Through our membership of ATOL (9025) and our Tour Operator Insurance, your holiday is fully financially protected wherever in the world you live, regardless of whether you book land-only arrangements or a complete holiday package with flights.

AITO Quality Charter

AITO is the Association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Our member companies, usually owner-managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating.

Exclusive Membership

AITO sets criteria regarding ownership, finance and quality which must be satisfied before new companies are admitted to membership. All members are required to adhere to a Code of Business Practice which encourages high operational standards and conduct.

Financial Security

An AITO member is required to arrange financial protection for all holidays and other arrangements (including accommodation only) booked by customers with the member under the AITO logo. This financial protection applies to customers who are resident in the UK at the time of booking and to most overseas customers who have booked directly with the member. In doing so, the member must comply with UK Government regulations. Members are required to submit details of their financial protection arrangements to AITO on a regular basis.

Accurate brochures and websites

All members do their utmost to ensure that all their brochures and other publications, print or electronic, clearly and accurately describe the holidays and services offered.

Professional service and continual improvements

All members are committed to high standards of service and believe in regular and thorough training of employees. Members continually seek to review and improve their holidays. They listen to their customers and always welcome suggestions for improving standards.

Monitoring standards

AITO endeavours to monitor quality standards regularly. All customers should receive a post-holiday questionnaire from their tour operator, the results of which are scrutinised by the Association.

Sustainable tourism

Our members acknowledge the importance of AITOs Sustainable Tourism ethos, which recognises the social, economic and environmental responsibilities of tour operating.

Customer relations

All members endeavour to deal swiftly and fairly with any issues their customers may raise. In the unlikely event that a dispute between an AITO member and a customer cannot be settled amicably, either party can call on an arbitration service to bring the matter to a speedy and acceptable conclusion.

To contact AITO call 020 8744 9280 or visit their website www.aito.com

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