

# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MAYA

Villahermosa - Palenque - Calakmul - Campeche - Mérida

March 6 - 17, 2015



*A custom-designed tour exclusively for the*  
**San Diego Natural History Museum**



# In The Footsteps Of The Maya

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## Program Highlights

The Maya were, in many ways, among the most advanced people living in the world during their time, with remarkable transportation networks, important scientific achievements, and stunning temples and palaces. The mysterious demise of Maya domination has long been one of history's great uncertainties.

This journey through the Maya world is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure for those who are both fascinated with ancient genius and curious about the diverse people that thrive today in the jungles and lowlands of Mesoamerica.

The itinerary focuses on the most important Maya cities and subgroups within Mexico that competed for dominance over a thousand years of history. There is a wonderful diversity among the archaeological sites and romantic ruins: many are buried deep in beautiful tropical jungles, half-excavated at best; others are carefully managed major tourist destinations. Some feature soaring pyramids or enormous ball courts, while others boast colorful murals, unique stone carvings, or ancient brickwork.

Alongside San Diego Natural History Museum President and CEO Dr. Mick Hager, enjoy the companionship of one of Mexico's best guides, Florencio L. Moreno, who has led numerous trips of the Maya world, including Harvard and Yale alumni associations. Learn about the Maya people of the ancient past as well as their descendants living today, and interact with fascinating local people in markets, villages, and artisan workshops.

## Study Leader, Florencio L. Moreno

Florencio L. Moreno is a cultural geography scholar from the UNAM Mexico City, with concentrations in colonial iconography, iconology, and astroarchaeology. As a member of the Astronomical Society of Mexico, Florencio teaches at local schools and also lectures within and outside of Mexico on Mesoamerican and Mexican anthropology and history. He is a native of Oaxaca and fluent in English, Spanish, and Zapotec. Mr. Moreno is also a licensed guide and applies his broad knowledge and expertise leading tours for numerous U.S. alumni associations and art museums.

Included meals are indicated with the following designation:  
B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner



Palenque



Local artisan and traditional crafts



# Itinerary Highlights

## **Fri. March 6 - U.S.A. / Villahermosa, Mexico**

Take independent flights to Villahermosa and transfer to the city's five-star Hotel Quinta Real.

*Hotel Quinta Real*

## **Sat. March 7 - Comalcalco & Villahermosa**

Explore Comalcalco, the only Maya city built with bricks of baked clay instead of stone. At a charming hacienda renowned for its chocolate, enjoy lunch, a chocolate tasting, and a demonstration. Visit the famous La Venta Park to see an amazing collection of sculptures from the ancient Olmec civilization, including four colossal Olmec heads. Be treated to a welcome dinner at a lively local restaurant.

*Hotel Quinta Real (B, L, D)*

## **Sun. March 8 - Villahermosa / Palenque**

Drive to Palenque and enjoy an early lunch. Spend the balance of the day exploring Palenque, one of the most remarkable ancient Maya kingdoms, gorgeously situated in a lush jungle setting. At the Main Plaza, see the great Temple of the Inscriptions where the Tomb of Pakal was found in 1951, one of the most sensational discoveries of the ancient world. Enjoy dinner together at your ecological resort.

*Hotel Chan Kab (B, L, D)*

## **Mon. March 9 - Palenque**

Return to Palenque in the early morning to see the Group of the Crosses. Head deeper into the jungle to visit lesser-known and later built temples, including Temple XIX in the Southern Acropolis where the remains of a stucco panel a perfectly-preserved, intricately-detailed stone carving depicting the lower legs and feet of a standing figure were recently found in situ. After a comprehensive tour of the site's grand temples and tombs, enjoy a spectacular jungle walk along the cascading Usumacinta River to Palenque's impressive on-site museum. Following a relaxing lunch, enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

*Hotel Chan Kab (B, L)*

## **Tue. March 10 - Palenque / Calakmul**

Enjoy a scenic drive deeper into the jungle to the remote Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, the largest tropical jungle in Mexico and the second most important biosphere reserve in America. Within the reserve, over 180 species have been registered, including the endangered king vulture and two eagles. Enjoy lunch and explore the smaller ruins of Chicanná. Check into the Chicanná Ecovillage





Panoramic of Edzná by El Ágora



Keel-billed Toucan, Rainbow-billed Toucan (native species of the Maya world)



Campeche by Adam Jones

Resort, an ecological boutique resort. Enjoy dinner together at the hotel's restaurant.

*Chicanná Ecovillage Resort (B, L, D)*

### **Wed. March 11 - Calakmul**

Spend the day exploring the incredibly remote UNESCO World Heritage site of Calakmul. During its height between 250 and 750 AD, Calakmul was the crossroads for several Maya cities in Mexico and Guatemala. Visit the great temples and plazas of the site, and examine the detailed carvings on over 120 steles. Images include richly attired characters and calendar pictographs between 500 and 850 AD. Calakmul is one of the most structure-rich sites within the Maya region and a remarkable example of the Río Bec style of Maya architecture, found only in the state of Campeche.

*Chicanná Ecovillage Resort (B, L, D)*

### **Thu. March 12 - Calakmul / Edzná / Campeche**

Drive to Edzná, an important Maya city, which was inhabited by 400 BC and abandoned circa 1500 AD. Following lunch, explore the site's most important structures, including the main temple that is built on a platform over 40 meters high and the impressive ball court. Continue a little more than an hour to Campeche, a quintessential harbor town from the Spanish colonial period in the New World. The delightful historic center has kept its outer walls and system of fortifications, designed to defend this Caribbean port against attacks from the sea. Check into the Hotel Plaza Campeche, and enjoy dinner together in a popular seafood restaurant.

*Hotel Plaza Campeche (B, L, D)*

### **Fri. March 13 - Campeche**

Enjoy a change of pace during a city tour of Campeche. At the Museo de la Ciudad, Campeche's city museum, get a better understanding of the design and construction of Campeche's fortifications and see its excellent collection of ship models. Pop into Campeche's beautiful cathedral, and walk along the city's fortification walls. At the Fuerte-Museo San Miguel, a small fort that General Santa Anna captured in 1842, see the Museum of Maya Culture, which exhibits artifacts from archaeological sites in Campeche, including impressive jade masks found at Calakmul. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

*Hotel Plaza Campeche (B, L)*

### **Sat. March 14 - Kabah / Uxmal / Mérida**

En route to Mérida, drive along the Puuc route, famous for the unique architectural style of its ancient cities' buildings, with façades that are kept very simple to draw attention to the ornate friezes above. At Kabah, focus on the elaborate Palace of Masks, renowned for its Chenes-style façade, completely covered in a



Uxmal



Chichen Itzá



Mérida by Adam Jones

repeated pattern of 250 masks of Chaac. Following lunch, drive to nearby Uxmal, considered the most beautiful site of the peninsula because of its rich geometric stone façades. See the unforgettable Pyramid of the Magician, unique because of its oval shape, height, steepness, and heavy ornamentation, and the Governor's Palace, an imposing edifice with intricate Puuc-style stonework. Continue to Mérida and check into the five-star Fiesta Americana.

*Fiesta Americana (B, L)*

### **Sun. March 15 - Chichén Itzá**

Enjoy an in-depth exploration of Chichén Itzá, one of the largest and most active cities in the ancient Maya world. Explore the site's complex of structures, including its great ball court and the iconic El Castillo step-pyramid, which exemplifies the Maya's remarkable achievements in astronomy. Stop in Izamal, one of Mexico's "Magic Towns", a gorgeous colonial town with beautiful old houses painted in white and ochre, cobblestone streets. See the remarkable San Antonio de Padua monastery, which is built on top of a Maya acropolis. The atrium of the Monastery was second in size only to the Vatican's in 1561. Visit Kinich Kak Mo, a great pyramid to the Maya Sun God, which is one of five huge Pre-Columbian structures in Izamal. Then learn about mezcal production and the harvesting of locally grown agave plants.

*Fiesta Americana (B, L)*

### **Mon. March 16 - Mérida**

Spend the morning exploring Mérida, a sixteenth-century city that preserves an ambiance of Spanish Colonial Mexico combined with modern Maya traditions. Mérida has the highest percentage of indigenous persons of any large city in Mexico with approximately 60 percent of all inhabitants being of Maya ethnicity. During a walking tour, see the Plaza Mayor, Mérida's beautiful town square and the buildings that surround it, including the 16th-century cathedral that was built on the site of the main temple in the ancient Maya town that preceded Mérida. Visit the Anthropology and History Museum, housed in the beautifully renovated Palacio Canton, a former governor's mansion. Among the exhibited artifacts displayed are treasures retrieved from the sacred cenote at Chichén Itzá, as well as evidence of Maya "beauty" practices such as setting precious stones in their teeth. Enjoy a free afternoon to explore the city. This evening enjoy a farewell dinner in a memorable setting.

*Fiesta Americana (B, D)*

### **Tue. March 17 - Departure for U.S.A.**

Check out of the hotel and transfer to Mérida's international airport for independent return flights to the United States.

*(B)*



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Local artisan and traditional crafts

Photos without captions: by Mexico Tourism Board

## For Additional Information or Questions:

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## Tour Information

### Dates:

March 6 - 17, 2015

### Cost:

Land only, adult package: .....\$6,295

Single supplement: .....\$995

\*Tour Price is per person based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 16 paying participants. Land prices are calculated as of October 2014 and are subject to change.

### Activity Level

Moderate/Strenuous

### What to Expect

This is an active program involving walks of one to two miles over uneven terrain, often in tropical forests. Archaeological sites may have high thresholds and stairs without handrails. All of the hotels are charming, but some are only partly equipped with modern amenities. Some motorcoach rides between destinations are several hours long and can be over small bumpy roads.

### Deposit & Final Payment:

A deposit of \$1,000 per paying participant will be required to guarantee participation in the program. This may be paid by check or by Visa or MasterCard. Final payment will be invoiced and is due on or before November 24, 2014. Final payment must be made by check payable to International Seminar Design, Inc. Registrations will be accepted beyond November 24, 2014 on a space-available basis.

### Air Arrangements:

International and U.S. domestic airfare are not included in the package cost.

### Terms & Conditions

ISDI and the San Diego Natural History Museum ("SDNHM") reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure for any reason including insufficient numbers of participants, as well as the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour at any time. If bookings fall below the minimum required, passengers will be advised of additional costs or itinerary alterations before departure date. All cancellations must be received in writing by ISDI, and charges are calculated as of the day notification is received in writing by ISDI. If a tour member cancels, the following scale of charges is incurred: There is a non-refundable administrative fee of \$500 per person. The costs associated with any tickets purchased for planned activities (as indicated in the itinerary) are non-refundable. Written cancellation received by ISDI on or before November 24, 2014: full refund minus \$500 administrative fee. Written cancellation received by ISDI between November 25, 2014 and January 19, 2015: 50 percent of tour cost per person. Written cancellation received by ISDI on or after January 20, 2015: no refund. After the tour has commenced, it is not possible to issue any refunds. No refunds for any unused portion of the tour including, but not limited to, occasional missed meals or any missed sightseeing tours. Costs for promotion, staff, and other group expenses are not refundable. In the case of cancellation, substitutions are not acceptable. The tour cost is non-transferable. A package of cancellation, baggage, and medical insurance is strongly recommended. A confirmation letter and travel insurance application will be mailed to you upon receipt of your deposit.

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## Registration Form

Enclosed is my credit card info or deposit by check made payable to **International Seminar Design, Inc.** in the amount of **\$1,000 per person**. I understand final payment is due on November 24, 2014 and is payable by check only.

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FULL NAME - PARTICIPANT 1

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FULL NAME - PARTICIPANT 2

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ADDRESS (If using credit card for deposit, please use Billing Address)

---

CITY

STATE

ZIP

---

DAYTIME TELEPHONE

---

E-MAIL ADDRESS

---

NUMBER OF PERSONS / \$  
AMOUNT ENCLOSED

☐ VISA      ☐ MASTERCARD

---

CREDIT CARD NUMBER /  
EXP. DATE (MM/YY)

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NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD

- ☐ Double Occupancy      ☐ Single Supplement (\$995)  
☐ I will share a room with \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ I would like a roommate but will pay the Single Supplement if one cannot be found.

*The undersigned has read the tour itinerary and recognizes and accepts any risks therein. The undersigned also understands and hereby agrees for and on behalf of his/her dependents, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns to abide by the conditions set forth in the terms and conditions listed in this flier and to release and hold harmless San Diego Natural History Museum (SDNHM) and International Seminar Design, Inc (ISDI) and any of their officers, trustees, agents, licenses, or representatives, from any and all liability for delays, injuries, or death or for the loss of and/or damage to his/her property however occurring during any portion of, or in relation to, this tour.*

**EACH PARTICIPANT MUST SIGN:**

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SIGNATURE - PARTICIPANT 1      DATE

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SIGNATURE - PARTICIPANT 2      DATE

**Complete and return by mail or fax to:**

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