



MEXICO - TIERRA MAYA - 7N/8D

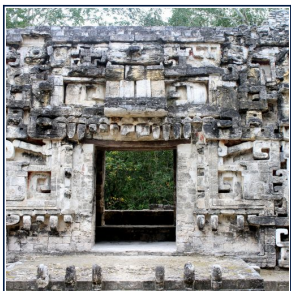


ITINERARY

Itinerary:

Day 1: Cancún / Chichén Itzá / Mérida

Transfer to the hotel in Cancún where the tour leaves for Mérida; then visit the Chichén Itzá archaeological site. Chichén Itzá was the Mayan capital of Yucatán that flourished between the 5th and 10th centuries AD. Visitors can admire the impressive buildings of the northern and central archaeological sites, such as the Kukulcán Temple, the Ball Game, the Observatory, the Warrior's Temple, the Convent of the Nuns and the Sacred Cenote. Lunch in restaurant. The trip to Mérida continues in the afternoon, followed by a panoramic visit to the city known as the "White City", which has Colonial houses as well as houses that date back to the beginning of the century in the Arabic, French and Italian styles. Those houses have witnessed all the old wealth that was generated thanks to the sisal culture. Stop at Mérida's Zócalo, where visitors can admire the city's main monuments, such as: the Cathedral, the Government's Palace, the Municipal Palace and the Francisco Montejo's House. Check-in to the hotel.



Day 2: Mérida / Uxmal / Campeche

Departure to the archaeological site of Uxmal, that means “built in three stages”, and it is a typical example of the classic and post-classic Mayan period. Uxmal’s main constructions are: Pirámide del Adivino (The Fortuneteller’s Pyramid), Palacio de los Gobernadores (Governor’s Palace) and the Cuadrángulo de las Monjas (Quadrangle of the Nuns). Afterwards the tour continues to Campeche which is the capital of the state with the same name. Check-in to the hotel. The afternoon schedule includes a short visit to the ancient town, surrounded by fort walls and towers built to protect this city from the pirates. Campeche keeps a Colonial mood thanks to its gorgeous houses and austere churches.

Day 3: Campeche / Palenque

Departure to Palenque and check-in to the hotel. Lunch break, and in the afternoon the tour continues with the visit to Palenque’s archaeological site. The area displays beautiful Mayan work made of stone and stucco; this area is often recognized as one of Mexico’s most beautiful places; its ruins are inside the Chiapanecan (from the State of Chiapas) jungle. Its most important temple is called Templo de las Inscripciones (Temple of the Inscriptions), where explorers discovered Pakal’s tomb with his famous jade mask.

Day 4: Palenque / Yaxchilán / Flores

Departure to Corozal at the Mexican border. This is approximately a two and half-hour trip and during the route visitors can admire the abundant vegetation of the jungle. At the end of this gorgeous track, the tour will proceed with a launch boat ride through the Usumacinta River for approximately one hour toward the ancient Mayan city called Yaxchilán, which is in the middle of the jungle. Yaxchilán is a peaceful place where the silence is only broken by the monkeys screeching and the birds flying around. Its luxurious palaces and numerous temples seem to be safely and magically protected by its surrounding deep forest. Yaxchilán was built between the years 200 and 900 AD. The city was ruled by Escudo-Jaguar (Shield-Jaguar) in the year 725; he expanded its territory after three marriage alliances and many wars. The Mayas were very aware of their history, and engraved it in stones describing the events of their governing class. Thanks to those engravings we know the first 300 years of the Mayan history. At the end of this wonderful visit, the tour will continue upriver back to Corozal for lunch in a rustic restaurant by the river bank. After lunch back to Palenque.

Day 5: Palenque / Chicanna’

Morning departure to Chicanná which is located in the amazing area of the Bec River, which got its name from the particular Mayan architecture style and where visitors can see recently discovered archaeological sites. Arrival and check-in to the Hotel, surrounded by an amazing Mayan jungle and in front of Chicanná archaeological site; its name means “House of the Serpent’s Mouth”. This site was only discovered in 1967 and stands out thanks to its doors marked with animal shaped masks; the Structure II is quite special due to its huge zoomorphic mask that probably represents Itzamná, God of the Sun. Return to the hotel. Visitors have the rest of the afternoon free to relax at their hotel while they listen to the cricket’s canto and other bird sounds from the jungle, which is a great way to refresh both body and spirit in a matter of minutes.

Day 6: Chicanna’ / Calakmul / Chicanna’

After a one-hour trip on the main highway, visitors will arrive at the drift that crosses the reserve of the country’s largest biosphere: Calakmul, which is the only real high jungle of the Yucatán peninsula. It hosts five of the six species of American wildcats as well as over 230 birds species and a great variety of flora. It is possible to see an incredible diversity of flora and fauna while traveling along this route. After one and a half-hour on a narrow road, the tour will arrive at the Calakmul archaeological site, considered one of the most important ones; it is located approximately 25 kilometers from the border with Guatemala. Hundreds of stelas (monoliths) surround this region which clearly shows its Mayan domain. At the top of one of its largest monuments, visitors can admire the “green sea” of the huge Mayan biosphere. The visit finishes with a break for packed lunch. After that return to the main road and before arriving at Chicanná, the tour will take a 15-minute drift to visit the magical archaeological site of Balamkú, where there is a huge stucco relief with people from the Mayan royalty and jaguars. Return to Chicanná.

Day 7: Chicanna’ / Cancun

Morning departure. The tour includes a visit to the Bacalar Lake also known as the “Lake of the Seven Colors” thanks to its water that reflects several colors, such as turquoise and jade, throughout its 50-kilometer extension. Lunch followed by trip to the Riviera Maya or Cancún. Arrival and check-in at the hotel.

Day 8: Tour Ends.