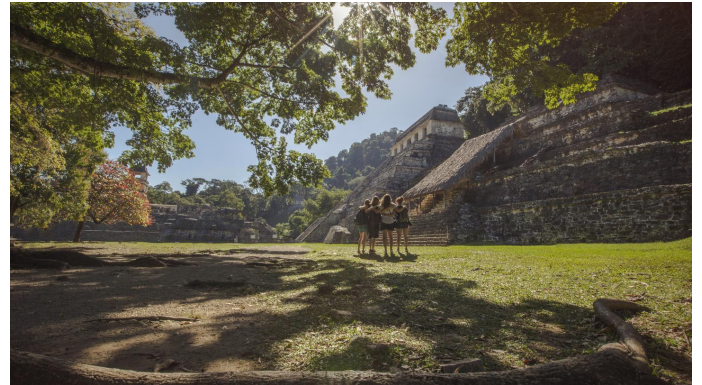




Mexico's Yucatan and Mayan Highlights

Vibrant in every way, Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula delights with its bright turquoise waters, pastel-hued buildings and traditional culture that's still alive and kicking today. Learn the ancient secrets of the Maya during visits to Chichen Itza, Muyil and the Tulum archaeological site.



YOUR
ADVENTURE
AWAITS

8 days/7 nights

ITINERARY

Day 1: Puerto Morales

Welcome to Mexico! Your adventure begins in Puerto Morelos, a charming seaside town on the Yucatan Peninsula, known for its stunning turquoise waters. You will be collected on your arrival at Cancun International Airport and transferred to your hotel. Here you will meet your local leader and fellow members of your group for a 6pm welcome meeting. If you arrive with time to spare, you may like to head to the local artisans' market to peruse a range of handmade hammocks, jewellery and crafts. The Yucatan's bountiful Caribbean coastline means it is home to some of the freshest seafood in the country, and after your meeting you will head to one of the best restaurants in Puerto Morelos to sample some yourself. Here you can enjoy a traditional feast of fresh fish, mussels, shrimp and clams.

Day 2: Valladolid

After breakfast, depart Puerto Morelos and head to the secluded Laguna Chabela. Here you will meet a local Maya family who have lived here for generations. Gain a deeper understanding on their way of life as you tour their farm, see what they grow and learn how they live off the land. Enjoy a demonstration on how to make delicious tortillas in the Coba style then sit down to a traditional lunch. In the afternoon, continue to the city of Valladolid, known for its delightful pastel coloured colonial buildings. On arrival, settle in to your hotel. Set on the city's main square, the charming hotel was converted from a 16th century colonial house and offers a perfect base for your explorations. The main square is flanked by excellent local restaurants serving up classic Yucatan cuisine - you may like to try one out for dinner this evening.

Day 3: Chichén Itzá - Mérida

This morning will be spent exploring the fascinating complex of Chichen Itza. Named as one of the new Seven Wonders of the World, Chichen Itza is considered the most important archaeological vestige of the Maya-Toltec civilization in Yucatan by UNESCO. Meet with a local historian for a guided tour to uncover the secrets of what is perhaps the most famous Maya site in Mexico, dominated by the Temple of Kukulcan, or El Castillo, a Mesoamerican step-pyramid. After your visit, you will be treated to a special lunch with a local family in the town of Pisté. Here you will enjoy a traditional Pibil feast, a Maya style of cooking that involves barbecuing underground, which the family have perfected over generations. After lunch, visit a beautiful cenote for a swim, then continue to the historic town of Merida. Founded in 1542, the city is the Yucatan capital and retains much of its old-world charm. Your feature stay accommodation for the next two evenings is the magnificent La Misión de Fray Diego - a 17th century mansion turned boutique hotel. Spacious rooms flaunt elegant decor with traditional touches, surrounding a glowing courtyard with a wonderful swimming pool. Enjoy exceptional service and a privileged location in the heart of the city.

Day 4: Mérida

This morning you will join your leader on a walking tour of downtown Merida to take in the splendour of its many colonial buildings and learn more about the Maya heritage of the town. Visit the market for a look at local life, and stop by the city museum, Montejo's House and the cathedral. Step inside the Palacio del Gobierno to admire the murals by Fernando Castro Pacheco, a famous Mexican artist from Merida. The paintings depict the history of the city and interactions between the Maya and the Spanish. The afternoon is free for further discoveries - you may like to relax in



the green and shady Plaza Grande, or browse the outdoor market selling Maya replicas. Regroup for dinner at a fantastic local restaurant serving up Yucatan specialties – the sopa da lima (lime soup) is especially delicious here.

Day 5: Merida

After breakfast, drive to the Celestun Bird Sanctuary and Biosphere Reserve. One of the first places migratory birds arrive for the winter, the reserve offers a birdwatching experience like no other. Here you will meet with a local conservationist to tour the area, learn about its unique flora and fauna and hear about the conservation efforts taking place in the region. Look out for the Yucatan woodpecker, Mexican sheartail, tropical mockingbird and depending on the season (usually November–March), you may be lucky enough to witness thousands of flamingos painting a pink streak across the landscape. Return to Merida for an afternoon at leisure. For a taste of Merida's 19th-century glory, you may like to take a walk along the mansion-lined Paseo de Montejo. Be sure to ask your leader for some great local recommendations for dinner this evening.

Day 6: Tulum

Depart Merida this morning and head towards Muyil, stopping off for lunch in the quaint village of Coba along the way. Continue to the Muyil archaeological site. This ancient Maya trading post is one of the oldest once-inhabited sites in the country, with a history stretching back to 350BC. Explore the ruins with your leader who will explain what life here once looked like. Next, head to the banks of the Maya River and board a small boat, from which you'll explore the canals and lagoons of the river. Admire Maya ruins on the riverbanks and enjoy a peaceful swim in the crystal-clear waters. You will be joined by guides from the local community who will help you get the most out of this tranquil experience. Carry on to Tulum, home to pristine beaches and ancient Maya history. Settle in to your boutique hotel, just steps away from the stunning white sand beach, then set out for an orientation walk with your leader to get a feel for this mellow town.

Day 7: Tulum

Depart Merida this morning and head towards Muyil, stopping off for lunch in the quaint village of Coba along the way. Continue to the Muyil archaeological site. This ancient Maya trading post is one of the oldest once-inhabited sites in the country, with a history stretching back to 350BC. Explore the ruins with your leader who will explain what life here once looked like. Next, head to the banks of the Maya River and board a small boat, from which you'll explore the canals and lagoons of the river. Admire Maya ruins on the riverbanks and enjoy a peaceful swim in the crystal-clear waters. You will be joined by guides from the local community who will help you get the most out of this tranquil experience. Carry on to Tulum, home to pristine beaches and ancient Maya history. Settle in to your boutique hotel, just steps away from the stunning white sand beach, then set out for an orientation walk with your leader to get a feel for this mellow town.

Day 8: Tour ends in Tulum

Your adventure comes to an end after breakfast this morning. If you would like to spend some more time in Tulum, additional accommodation can be booked ahead of time (subject to availability).

Details

Trip Code:

007423 - R15

INCLUDED

- Chichén Itzá and Tulum guided tours
- Mérida guided walking tour
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities
- Seven breakfasts, three lunches, three dinners

NOT INCLUDED

- Flights to/from Cancun
- Optional add-ons and activities not specified
- Travel Insurance
- Meals not specified
- Items of a personal nature

TOUR NOTES

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ROUTE MAP



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