



Yucatan dreams.

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MEXICO | 4DAYS / 3NIGHTS

Route: Round-trip from and to Cancun/Riviera Maya

Type of tour: Culture

Departure days: Two Wednesdays per month

TOUR OVERVIEW

Beyond her beautiful beaches, the Yucatan boasts an impressive cultural and historical heritage as the repository of treasures of Maya civilisation such as Chichen Itza and Uxmal. Journey back in time to appreciate the everlasting greatness of these ancient cities reclaimed from the jungle and discover the beauty of the colourful colonial towns of Izamal, Merida and Valladolid. Accommodation is in a holistic jungle getaway, a refurbished mansion and an atmospheric historic hacienda to enhance the trip's magical experience. Groups vary in size but are typically made up of about four to 10 travellers.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

DURATION: 4 days / 3 nights



Start & finish destination

1. Cancun / Riviera Maya

Destinations

2. Ría Lagartos	5. Mérida	8. Valladolid
3. Chichén Itzá	6. Uxmal	
4. Izamal	7. Sotuta de Peón	

Ría Lagartos: 395 species of birds reside in this biosphere reserve where you can observe flamboyances of flamingos and crocodiles roaming the mangroves

Chichen Itza: Uncover the mysteries of the Maya civilisation at this ancient archaeological site dominated by the imposing Temple of Kukulcan

Izamal: This 'magical town' is known as the 'City of Hills' because of its numerous ruins of Maya pyramids

Merida: Yucatan's 'White City' is famed for the elegant 19th century tree-lined boulevards

Uxmal: The enormous Pyramid of the Magician found in this UNESCO World Heritage Site majestically rises above the jungle canopy

Sotuta de Peon: Hacienda Viva is the restoration project of a landmark located in the heart of the ancient agave production zone in the Yucatan

Valladolid: A historic colonial city where you will have time to explore this charming 'magical town'

DON'T MISS!

Pitahaya: Savour this yellow or pink-skinned sweet fruit, which is low in calories and rich in vitamins



Cenote: Bathing in one of these natural pools is one of the ultimate experiences of any visit to the Yucatan



Playa Las Coloradas: A picture perfect place! The concentration of salt and microorganisms dye the water a peculiar pink tone



DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 | CANCUN/RIVIERA MAYA – RIA LAGARTOS – LAS COLORADAS – CHICHEN ITZA (345km – 5.5 hrs)

This magical four-day journey begins with pick-up from your hotel in Cancun/Riviera Maya. Today's adventure starts with a visit to **Ría Lagartos Biosphere Reserve** on the northern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, home to the largest flocks of pink flamingos in Mexico, in addition to the almost 400 birds species that have been identified here. Take a **boat trip** lasting around two hours through the mangroves in the reserve's estuary to observe flamingos, other birdlife and crocodiles. The trip also includes a visit to feeding areas, a stop for a Mayan mud bath with the mineral-rich white mud and a dip in the ocean. After lunch, continue towards **Las Coloradas Beach**, known for its high salt concentration and microorganisms that colour the water peculiar pink tone, making for a fantastic photo op. After the visit, continue to the hotel in Chichen Itza. This relaxing retreat is nestled in the rainforest jungle and boasts an exclusive viewpoint that overlooks the Temple of Kukulcan.

▪ **Overnight in Chichen Itza. Lunch and dinner included.**



DAY 2 | CHICHEN ITZA – CENOTE XCAJUM – IZAMAL – MERIDA (135km – 3 hrs)

Perhaps one of the most magical moments you can experience in Mexico is viewing the sunrise over Chichen Itza. Today we make an early start at 06:00 hrs in this enigmatic location, one of the most important archaeological sites of the Maya. On arrival to the site, observe your quiet surroundings, as you arrive before the grounds are open to the general public. The legendary Maya city of **Chichen Itza** has been laboriously reclaimed from the jungle - learn about the Maya and their civilisation as you admire the scale and detail of this ancient city. Behold the geometric perfection of the 25-metre-tall **Temple of Kukulcan**, popularly known as El Castillo ('the Castle'), which was built both as a representation of the mystical Maya calendar and to reflect the optical illusion of a serpent snaking its way up or down the pyramid during the spring and autumn equinoxes. Admire the Great Ball Court, the largest of 13 discovered at the site, see the haunting Skull Platform, where the heads of human sacrifice victims and prisoners of war were impaled, and also the Sacred Cenote, where sacrifice victims were dumped. Also extremely well-preserved are the Temple of the Warriors, the Ossuary, the Nunnery and adjacent Church, and the large observatory known as the Snail. Return to the hotel for breakfast.

We continue on our way towards the **Xcajum cenote**, one of the most beautiful cenotes in Mexico and the perfect place for a refreshing dip - don't forget your bathing suit and towel! Next, we make our way to the Mayan town of **Izamal**, known as 'the city of the three cultures', combining remnants of its pre-Hispanic past, the colonial period and the present. Izamal is one of Mexico's 'magical towns', a designation awarded to select locations famed for their cultural and historical heritage, whose Mayan name means 'Heavenly Dew'. Here you can see the **Convent of St Anthony of Padua**, which stands on a former Maya pyramid. Lunch at a typical Maya restaurant. We continue to the 'White City' of **Merida**, the capital of Yucatan, to enjoy a **city tour of the historical downtown**. Explore the Paseo de Montejo, where you will find a series of beautiful villas and palaces built in the 19th century. Enjoy the splendid Plaza Grande, home of the cathedral and the Casa de los Montejo, built in the 16th century in the plateresque style and whose beautiful façade has become a symbol of the city. We also see the Government Palace and City Hall, with free time discover the city on your own. Optional dinner.

▪ **Overnight in Casa del Balam. Breakfast and lunch included.**



DAY 3 | MERIDA – UXMAL – SOTUTA DE PEON (150km – 2.75 hrs)

After breakfast at the hotel, we start our day with a visit to the impressive archaeological site of **Uxmal** and enjoy a guided tour of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, which as you approach it comes into view as it rises above the canopy of the jungle. Unlike other Mayan cities, Uxmal was devoured by the rainforest after the Spaniards had arrived. The most famous structure is the 35-metre-tall **Pyramid of the Magician**, which towers over the remarkably well-preserved Nunnery Quadrangle with its ornately carved interior and exterior walls. Across the central plaza, just beyond the ballgame court, is the Governor's Palace with its elaborately decorated roof. At the southern end of the main complex is the Great Pyramid, of which only one side has been excavated with the other three still unclaimed from the bush. Continue to the **Hacienda Sotuta de Peon**, built in the late 19th century in Tecoh, Yucatan, with a stop en route to enjoy a delicious lunch at traditional Mayan restaurant. Then, take a tour through the active hacienda where the Mexican agave plant is still harvested and hear an explanation of the production process. The tour ends with a ride on a mule-drawn wagon through the agave plantation and a refreshing dip in a cenote. After, enjoy leisure time to wander the hacienda or relax at the pool.

▪ **Overnight in Hotel Hacienda Viva Sotuta de Peón. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.**



DAY 4 | SOTUTA DE PEON – VALLADOLID – RIVIERA MAYA/CANCUN (335km – 4.25 hrs)

Departure from Sotuta de Peon at approximately 11:00 hrs where we continue to the picturesque city of **Valladolid**, another of Mexico's 'magical towns', which was founded in 1543 and showcases beautiful architecture. Enjoy a visit through the city centre and a Mexican folk art museum, La Casa de los Venados. Have lunch, then continue to the Riviera Maya for drop-off at your selected hotel in Cancun or Playa del Carmen.

▪ **Breakfast and lunch included.**

END OF SERVICES

INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:

- Operated with qualified guides, bilingual English / Spanish

ACCOMMODATION:

- Three nights on a bed-and-breakfast basis

MEALS:

- Three breakfasts, four lunches and two dinners

TRANSPORT:

- Air-conditioned transportation in a luxury vehicle for transfers to and from hotels, between cities and during excursions

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:

- All monuments and visits as indicated: Ria Lagartos boat tour, archaeological sites of Chichen Itza and Uxmal, entrance to cenote Xcajum, visit of Izamal village, Hacienda Viva Sotuta de Peon tour, Merida city tour, Valladolid tour including entrance to Casa de los Venados

NOT INCLUDED

- Expenditures of a personal nature, drinks and meals if not stated explicitly in the programme
- International flight tickets or Mexican visa fees
- Airport taxes for domestic and international flights
- Gratuities for driver and guide

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Pre- and post-programme extensions are available on request. Please ask tour designer Melanie Goldbecker for rates and conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comfortable and light clothing is the most suitable for travelling in Mexico. Visitors should not wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts or skimpy clothing when visiting temples, religious or official buildings. Sun protection, sunglasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay.