

A TASTE OF THE MAYA WORLD

HIGHLIGHTS

- MAYA CULTURE AND CUISINE
- IMPRESSIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
- DELIGHTFUL HACIENDAS

From ancient pyramids to modern sky scrapers, Mexico's ancient past and present collide in the glorious metropolis of Mexico City to create a unique synergy with a foot in both worlds. Cities stand proud in the colonial heartland - the splendour of Teozon and the old city walls of Campeche matched only by the spectacular archaeological sites of Teotihuacán and Uxmal, while Mayan traditions remain in remote communities in the jungles of Chiapas. This journey takes in cultural and archaeological highlights of this fascinating country, and culminates on one of the finest white beaches on the Riviera Maya.



DAY 1

London/Mexico City

Depart from London Heathrow on a direct flight to Mexico City, where, on arrival, you will transfer to the Four Seasons Hotel. Set amid the fast pace of historic Mexico City and ideally located on the celebrated Paseo De La Reforma, the Four Seasons offers a sense of quiet seclusion, with elegant

colonial style rooms surrounding a fountain courtyard.

DAY 2

Mexico City

Start the day on the outskirts of the city with a visit to the astonishing archaeological zone of Teotihuacan, an ancient site containing the famous Aztec Sun and Moon temples, the



world's third and fourth largest pyramids that are synonymous with the city itself. This afternoon enjoy a tour of Mexico City's historic centre, sacred precinct of the Aztecs and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. See the Plaza de la Constitución, one of the largest squares in the world; visit the Metropolitan Cathedral, the oldest cathedral in the Americas inspired

by the gothic buildings of Spain; and marvel at the Templo Mayor, dedicated to the Aztec gods of war and agriculture.

DAY 3

Mexico City/San Cristobal de las Casas

Take a morning flight to Tuxtla Gutierrez, the gateway city of the state of Chiapas. Enjoy a private boat tour along the

scenic Grijalva River through the towering walls of Sumidero Canyon, before continuing by road to San Cristobal de las Casas, the centre of one of Mexico's predominantly Indian regions. Stay at the colonially-styled Casa Felipe Flores, listed on the Registry of National Monuments and close to the cobblestone streets, quaint cafés, and lively markets of the town.

DAY 4

San Cristobal de las Casas

Situated in the temperate Valle de Jovel, pine tree forests envelope San Cristobal and its numerous ►



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indigenous communities. Experience Mayan culture with a visit to the nearby villages of San Juan Chamula and Zinacantan, isolated communities where the highland traditions of back-strap weaving, religious syncretism and colourful markets live on.

DAY 5

San Cristobal de las Casas/Palenque

An early start takes you on a scenic drive descending the Sierra Madre to the steamy jungle lowlands, visiting the impressive temples at Tonina and the Misol Ha waterfall en route to Palenque. Defined as one of the most important cities of the Maya; Palenque offers a glimpse into the ancient worlds of times long past. Spend the night at the simple Chan-Kah Village Eco-Resort.

DAY 6

Palenque/Campeche

Begin the day with a guided tour of Palenque enjoying the 'Templo de las Inscripciones', one of the most renowned burial monuments in the Americas. Drive north this afternoon to the walled fortress of Campeche on the Gulf of Mexico. Set within the city walls of Campeche opposite the Yucatan's oldest cathedral, the Hacienda Puerta Campeche

displays a collection of carefully restored 17th century houses. Thick stone walls, beautifully tiled floors and warm and rich colours give a traditional feel to this colonial gem.

DAY 7

Campeche

Spend today relaxing at the hotel in a woven cotton hammock (for which the Yucatan is famous) fine dining in a hideaway overlooking the old city walls. Alternatively you may like to wander the cobbled stone streets of this UNESCO World Heritage site, strolling the boardwalk and visiting the forts that still have cannons aimed toward the open seas. A short city tour this evening by moonlight followed by a sound and light show will illuminate the bygone pirate era of this fascinating city.

DAY 8

Campeche/Temozon

Continue your exploration of the Maya world with a visit to the fabled archaeological site of Uxmal to see the Governor's Palace, Adivino or 'Pyramid for the Magician', and many other monuments. Enjoy a classic Maya lunch of 'pollo y cochinita pibil' (earth cooked chicken and pork wrapped in banana leaves) before resuming



your journey with a drive to Temozon. Once a family-run estancia and the largest producer of sisal in the area, the beautiful Hacienda Temozon recreates the belle époque of the Mexican south east region, offering a taste of the grandeur and affluence of the past in a tropical rainforest setting.

DAYS 9 AND 10

Temozon

Two days to enjoy the colonial splendour of Hacienda Temozon: relax by the pool, visit the spa or take an afternoon stroll through the tropical gardens. Alternatively, we recommend the 'Taste of Yucatan' one day culinary overview and cooking lesson (available for a private or group session). You may also like to visit the Celestun Biosphere Reserve, its unique ecosystem home to vast numbers of flamingo, as well

as heron, pelican and many other bird species.

DAY 11

Temozon/Riviera Maya

An early morning departure to avoid the crowds takes you to one of the new Seven Wonders of the World, the amazing site of Chichen Itza displaying the astonishing level of astronomical and engineering accomplishments for which the Mayas are famous. Continue to the Caribbean coastline of the Riviera Maya to spend four nights at Esencia, a classic example of elegance and simplicity in the perfect setting of Xpu-Ha beach, with large windows that capture the tropical garden and sea beyond. The heart of Esencia is the magnificent 'Casa Grande', with its unusual Catalan dome roof overlooking a beautiful beachfront pool area.



DAYS 12 TO 14

Riviera Maya

Hide away on one of the Riviera Maya's finest white beaches, enjoying 'rustic cuisine' and home-grown ingredients in the casual, al fresco setting of the Sal Y Fuego. The Aroma Spa is set in a quiet corner of the estate and offers an array of treatments based

on indigenous fruits, plants and herbs grown in the nearby herb garden. The Lime Ritual is especially refreshing.

DAY 15

Riviera Maya/London

Transfer to the airport for a midday flight to London via Mexico City, arriving the following day.

All our journeys are individually tailored to suit your interests and timescale, and you may like to remove or add on a few extra days according to your requirements. As a guide, a 15 day journey in Mexico will cost from £4,295 per person based on two adults sharing with flights from the UK, subject to availability. *Please bear in mind this is not a prescriptive itinerary but a suggestion to give you a taste of what is possible with the very highest level of comfort, service and convenience. Accordingly, we aim to quote to a standard as opposed to a price.*

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