

maya research program:

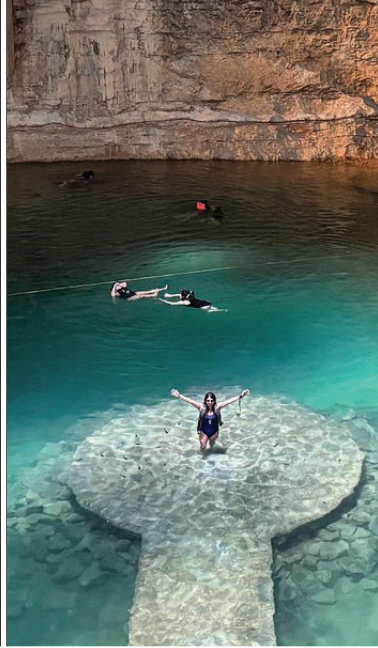


15th NEW YEAR'S EVE TOUR

MERIDA

AND NORTHERN YUCATAN

December 28, 2026 to January 7, 2027



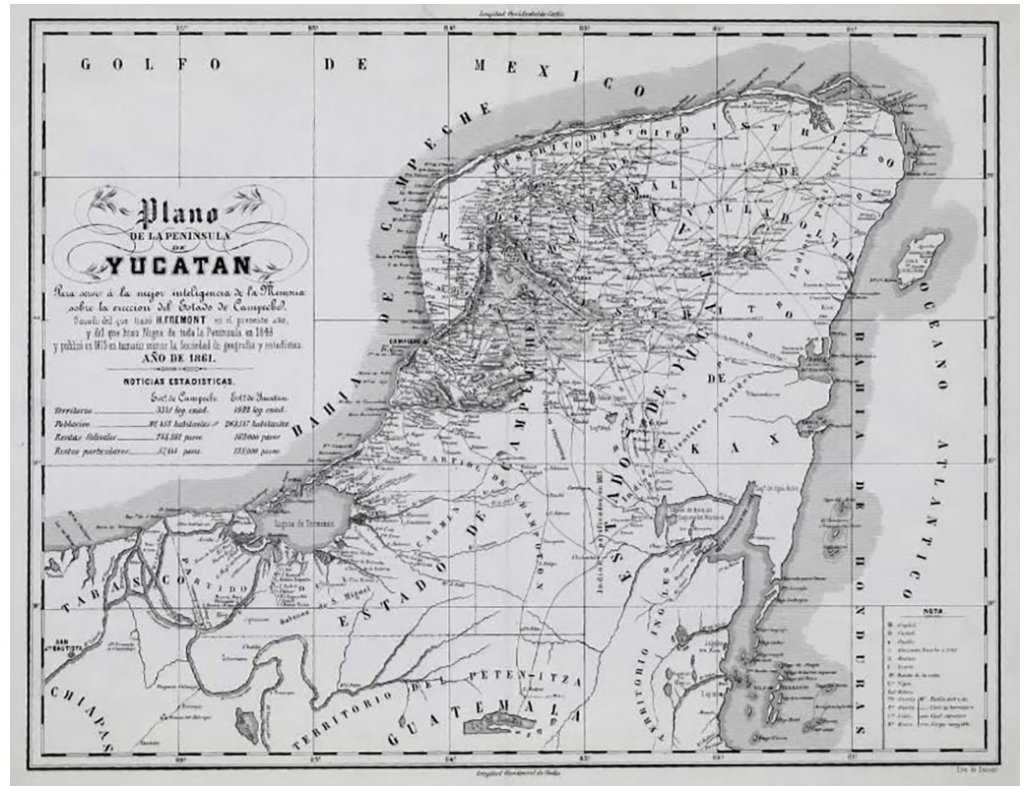
maya

RESEARCH PROGRAM

For more information call 817-831-9011 or email mrpinquiries@gmail.com | www.mayaresearchprogram.org

“Livin’ it up it’s takin’ all of our time... But we ain’t givin’ it up, it never crosses our mind...” — Jimmy Buffet on Yucatan*

Yes—Yucatan evokes visions of Jimmy Buffet and beaches. We will get a bit of that but, as you know, we take the roads less travelled. Our basecamp will be the well-loved Casa del Balam in Merida, walking distance from the attractions of the colonial town. We will make a 5-night excursion from Merida but return to Casa del



Balam. Many thanks to Ecoturismo Yucatan for tons of hard work checking out our crazy ideas for this trip. This is their home and this trip shows it.

We will explore the rich sights and sounds of the colonial city, the grandeur of the largest Maya city, the amazing natural world of Yucatan and how it is preserved, and, of course, we should advertise this as a culinary tour. There is even a gastronomic museum! Led by Riaz Escobedo, we may even get lucky and see Alfonso and Roberta.

Monday, December 28, 2025:

Arrive in Merida! We will be staying at Casa del Balam.

Tuesday, December 29:

Tour Merida. We begin with a walking tour of the historic center of Merida; the markets, plazas, cafés and historic seditious art in the Governor’s Palace. Spend all the time you like in this lovely old Colonial city, with modern points of interest, too. Learning from recent trips, we are on our own for dinner. While there are no Michelin star restaurants in Merida, there is fantastic local food and every cuisine on the planet is available (*breakfast and lunch provided at Casa del Balam*).



***More cunningly concealed music clues throughout... spot the song and name the artist. Answers at the the end!**

Wednesday, December 30:

Dzibalchultun and Progreso.

One of the wonders of Yucatan is that even long trips are short. From our hotel it is only 30 minutes to Dzibachaltun with its sacbeh, the Temple of the *Siete Muñecas* (the Seven Dolls), which is oriented as a solar observatory. There is also a colonial church where Maya were brought to be taught Catholicism after the conquest. There is a lovely cenote, Xlakah, in case you wish to take a dip! Then it's on to Progreso by the Gulf. A stroll along the Malecon will take us to a restaurant for a fresh-caught fish dinner – the grouper is always excellent! We visit the Meteorite Museum in the Malecon area. This is a display related to an ancient meteor hitting the Earth 65 million years ago which wiped



out most of the dinosaurs, allowing us mere mammals to gain a better foothold in existence (all votes not in yet on whether that was a good or bad thing!). After this, we go to El Corchito by small boats to see the manglars and an *Ojo de Agua* (breakfast and lunch provided at Casa del Balam).

New Year's Eve: Thursday, December 31:



Merida will be busy and lively. We will visit museums in town and spend the evening on the *Zocalo*. If some people want, we can make a drive to Xcambo, the ancient port north of Merida (breakfast and lunch provided at Casa del Balam).

Happy New Year! Friday, January 1, 2026:

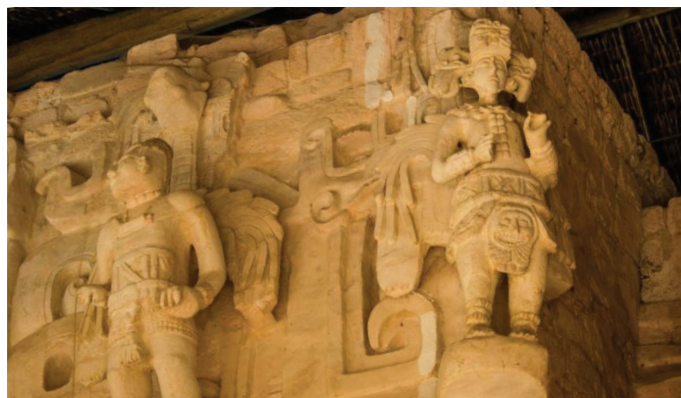
The Road. It's a relatively quiet day at Chichen Itza and we will take advantage by going there! Usually, the site is TOO busy. We think today will be much more relaxed. There's always something new to see, as excavations are going on all the time. Then we visit Yaxunah, the focus of Grace Bascopé's fieldwork all these years, and where the Community Cultural Center gardens have recently been designated as a pollinator reserve by the World Wildlife Fund. The gardens are home to butterflies, bugs, bees (both native Maya stingless and domesticated European/African varieties), and several types of bats. A tour of the Community Cultural Center and gardens will be capped off by a wonderful late lunch of *cochinita*



pibil, prepared by center employees just for us. If you'd like, take a dip in the Lol-Ha cenote just across from the center. A generous donation from friends has allowed the community to install new, safe, and easily accessible stairs down to the water (*breakfast and lunch at Hotel Villas Arqueologicas, Chichen Itza*).

Saturday, January 2:

On the Road Again. Ek Balam. It's always great to see those wonderful high-relief sculptures on the façade of one of Ek Balam's principal structures and contemplate the walls and check-gates that once guarded the city. We'll look in at the site of Kuluba 40 minutes drive East of Tizimin. We end the day in the wonderful, Colonial Hotel Real Hispano in Valladolid (*breakfast and lunch provided*).



Sunday, January 3:

Take It Easy in Valladolid. We spend the morning in the city of Valladolid. Something's always happening on the plaza there. We'll eat at the cenote, Zaci, and visit the Casa de los Venados, a private home literally dripping with examples of the best of Mexican folk art (*breakfast and lunch provided at Hotel Real Hispano*).

Monday, January 4:



Sitting at the Wheel to Izamal and Aké. We'll go "puebloando" back toward Uxmal but make several more stops, Izamal, *Ruinas de Ake* where we also visit a *henequen* factory. If you've been hankering for a top-quality Yucatan hammock, we'll visit the town of Tixkokob, where the finest are made. If time permits, a short visit to Acanceh. Maybe lunch at Izamal. If we are too early, Atixkokob offers a superb restaurant, Pueblo Pibily. We end the day, feet up and relaxed at the wonderful Hacienda Uxmal (*breakfast and lunch provided*).

Tuesday, January 5:

Now that I have seen Uxmal, I've Been Everywhere. Today we visit the enormous Puuc site of Uxmal which is as breathtaking as Chichen Itza but without the crowds! After lunch we are off to visit the smaller but still amazing site of Kabah and return to Hacienda Uxmal for the evening (*breakfast and lunch Provided*).

Wednesday, January 6:

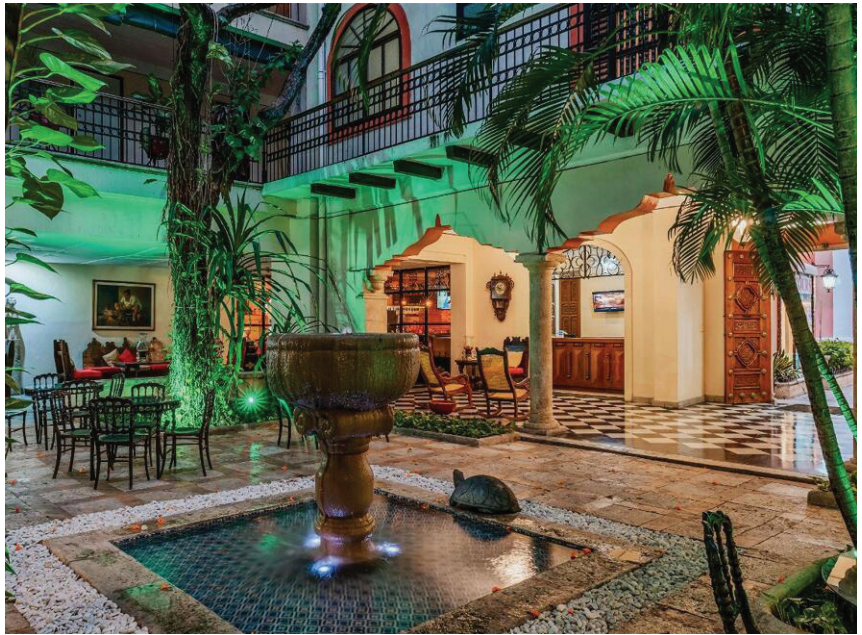
It's not Route 66, but today is a super special treat. Millsaps College and the excavators of Ek Balam have developed a research station and ecological reserve Kaxil Kiuik. Go ahead, Google it, it will be totally cool. We will visit both and



then return to Merida early so people can have a last free evening in Merida (*Casa del Balam*).

Thursday, January 7:

We did it again, the archaeological sites were awesome, the food was ... amazing and, as always, the company was outstanding, loving and informed. Merida being Merida, we met some memorable guests of the tour along the way. It is a quick 20 minutes to the Merida airport and it is one of the easiest in the world to navigate. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the friendly skies. Smile about our time together and look forward to next time. Happy Trails to you, until we meet again!



Weather Alert! Northern Yucatan is low, flat and hot, so we can expect highs in the mid-80s and lows temperatures in the High 60s(F). Days should be sunny and bright, so hats, sunglasses and maybe even a bit of sunscreen might be called for.

Getting There! If there is a way to avoid the Mexico City airport, it should be done! Happily, Merida has a small international airport (coded MID) with direct flights from DFW and Miami on American Airlines for about \$650-\$700 and United has direct flights from Houston for about the same.

Our Pricing. Included in your costs is a \$1000 tax-deductible donation to MRP to support our archaeological field work in Belize.



Dr. Thomas Guderjan is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Texas at Tyler and an archaeologist with 4 decades of experience in Central America. He is the founder and President of MRP and co-directs the Blue Creek Archaeological Project.



Colleen Hanratty is an anthropologist with the Center for Social Science Research at UT-Tyler and a member of the board of directors of Maya Research Program and co-director of the Blue Creek Archaeological Project.



Riaz Escobedo is the second generation Escobedo at EcoTourismo Yucatan. He has led groups in Oaxaca, The Yucatan Peninsula and Central Mexico including joining our group multiple times in the past.

**Quiz answers in order. Jackson Browne, Willie Nelson, The Eagles, Moody Blues, Johnny Cash, Bobby Troup (as performed by Asleep at the Wheel), Simon and Garfunkel, and Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.*

15th NEW YEAR'S EVE TOUR MERIDA AND NORTHERN YUCATAN December 28, 2026 to January 7, 2027

Each participant must complete and sign a separate registration form. Please make additional copies as needed.

Name: _____
(as it appears on your passport)

Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Accommodations: ☐ Double ☐ Single

☐ I will be sharing with: _____

☐ Share – Please assign a roommate (not guaranteed)

I am a ☐ Non-smoker ☐ Smoker

Deposit type (Please check one):

☐ Check payable to: Maya Research Program

☐ I will pay via credit card on the MRP website: www.mayaresearchprogram.org
(please let us know if you need assistance)

Cost:

\$3,980 US per person for 11-day tour (\$1,000 is a tax-deductible donation to MRP)
\$500 deposit required by September 1, 2026. Full payment due by October 15, 2026.
Single supplement: \$1,100

This tour is limited to 24 participants so please tell us soon if you want to join us!

Print and complete BOTH sides of this form, sign and mail to:
MAYA Research Program, 1912 East SE Loop 323 #296, Tyler, Texas 75701
or register online at www.mayaresearchprogram.org

Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate. It is understood that refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the tour for whatever reason nor to passengers whose required documentation for entry into any country on the itinerary is delayed or denied.

Responsibility:

Maya Research Program (hereinafter "Sponsors"), and the tour operator, and/or its agents (hereinafter "Operator") assume no liability for failure to provide the services, transportation, lecturers and accommodations referred to in this brochure to the extent that such services and accommodations cannot be supplied due to delays or other causes beyond the control of Operator, which include but are not limited to sickness, epidemics, pandemics, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, and acts of God. In the absence of negligence on the part of Operator, the participant agrees that Operator has no responsibility or liability of any nature whatsoever for damage to or loss of property, or injury to, or death of persons due to any act, omission or negligence of any carrier, hotel, restaurant, bus carrier, tender service, sightseeing company, or any other persons rendering any of the services or ground portions of the itinerary. The participant further waives any claim against Operator and Sponsors for any such damage, loss, injury or death. Operator and Sponsors shall not be responsible for any additional expenses, delays, substitution of equipment, and/or any act or omission whatsoever by the suppliers of such services, their agents, servants and employees, and the participant hereby waives any claim arising there from. Operator and Sponsors reserve the right to decline, accept or retain any participant at any time. Sponsors and Operator reserve the right to cancel this tour prior to departure, in which case payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part, except when trip cancellation, itinerary changes and/or delays are mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the passenger shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as Operator and Sponsors are able to recover on the passenger's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, Operator and Sponsors shall not have any obligation or liability to the passenger beyond the foregoing. All refunds of passenger payments are the responsibility of the Operator, and the participant agrees that the organizers bear no financial responsibility for refunding of participant's payments. The passenger contract in use by the carriers concerned (when issued) shall constitute the sole contract between the transportation companies (such as ship operators and airlines) and the purchaser of this tour and/or passage. Participants are encouraged to purchase airline tickets no sooner than 60 days before the tour begins to avoid airline cancellation penalties if a tour is canceled or otherwise modified subsequent to the participant's purchase of those tickets. Sponsors and Operator accept no liability for the purchase of non-refundable airline tickets to the tour departure city and return. Baggage and personal effects are at all times the sole responsibility of the participant. By forwarding of deposit, the passenger certifies that he/she agrees with these terms and conditions, and that he/she does not have any mental, physical or other condition or disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other passengers. Itinerary: Sponsors and Operator reserve the right to change the itinerary due to weather conditions, availability of anchorages, political conditions and other factors beyond our control without consulting the participants. Participants have no right to any refund or other considerations in the event of these itinerary changes. Rates are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect at the time of printing and are subject to change prior to departure. Substantial changes in tariffs, exchange rates, the price of fuel, services and labor may increase the cost of arrangements significantly, and we reserve the right to alter our prices.

As a condition of acceptance, each participant must agree to, and sign, the following release of liability:

RELEASE: Notwithstanding anything set forth above or otherwise contained herein, the signatory clearly understands that the Sponsors are in no way responsible and can assume no liability of any nature whatsoever for the tour and any acts, omissions or negligence by the Operator or by companies and persons with whom the Operator may contract. The signatory has carefully read the list of activities, requirements and conditions as listed in the brochure and application for the tour and is/are aware that the tour and its activities involve the risk of personal injury or death and damage or loss of property. In consideration of the benefits to be derived from participation in the tour, the signatory voluntarily accepts all risk of personal injury or death and property damage or other loss arising from participation on the tour and hereby agrees that he/she and his/her dependents, heirs, executors and assigns, do release and hold harmless Sponsors and the employees, officers, directors, trustees or representatives of Sponsors, from any and all claims, including claims of negligence, illness, personal injury, death or property damage or loss, however caused, arising from or related to this tour.

The signatory has read carefully this agreement, and will abide by the conditions set by Sponsors and the Operator as described in the brochure and in the Terms and Conditions of this and other sections as stated herein or elsewhere published. The signatory affirms that he/she has not received or relied on any oral or written representation of Sponsors as a basis for executing this Release.

Signature of Participant_____ Date_____



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