

The Maya World

Modern Discoveries and Ancient Ruins

Mexico · Guatemala · Belize

March 8-19, 2008

**With Dr. Walter Witschey, Ph.D.
Maya Archaeologist and
Professor of Anthropology, Longwood University**

Guided tours and companion lectures in such ancient Maya sites as Palenque, Yaxchilan, Tikal, Belize, and Calakmul.

Course of study: Daily orientation and introductory lectures cover topics from site archaeology to hieroglyphs and calendrics, and highlight the ecology, modern socio-political realities, and Pre-Hispanic and Colonial history of Maya World—all presented with great flair and enthusiasm by Dr. Witschey from the university course he teaches about the Ancient Maya.



Longwood University
Alumni Association

Covington
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Itinerary

Sat, March 8—Villahermosa, Mexico

Welcome to Mexico. Bienvenidos! We are greeted at Villahermosa Airport and transferred to the new Hotel Villahermosa Hilton. This evening we gather for a brief overview of the exciting days ahead. The unspoiled landscape of jungle, coastline, Peten and majestic archaeological ruins await our expedition.

Hilton Villahermosa

D

Sun, March 9—La Venta/Palenque

In the morning we visit the sculpture gardens of La Venta Park Museum in Villahermosa. Here are 28 megalithic Olmec sculptures—giant heads, intricate altars and intriguing stelae which are precursors of Maya religion, ball playing, and iconography, dating from 900 to 400 BC. We journey by motor coach to Palenque for lunch at La Selva restaurant, a visit to the Palenque Archaeological Museum and check-in at Hotel Misión Palenque.

Dine, swim and relax before the after-dinner lecture.

Course of study: Pacal's Tomb, presented by the Archeologist Dr. Christopher Powell.

Hotel Misión Palenque

BLD

Mon, March 10—Palenque

A UNESCO historical monument, Palenque is a world treasure. Ancient structures rise out of the lush rainforest on multiple terraces set against the mountains. There are many major buildings to explore, and new buildings are now being uncovered and studied. Many wonderful examples of art and history are sculpted into stucco bas relief on the building's façades, depicting the ancient Maya world. Several buildings are carefully astronomically aligned.

Hotel Misión Palenque

BLD



Carved panel at Yaxchilan

Tue, March 11—Usamacinta River/Yaxchilan/Bonampak/Tikal

On our way to the vast and rarely tourist-visited Yaxchilan archaeological site, we journey by boat down the mighty Usamacinta River. This breathtaking trip takes us into the rainforest of enormous trees, and abundant plant and animal life. Yaxchilan rises above the riverbanks with its temples and platforms above the tree lines giving way to vistas of rainforest stretching far into Guatemala. The modern Lacandon Indians (450 people remaining) still use Yaxchilan as a place of worship. It is also a home to the Howler monkeys and many exotic birds. Lunch is served at Escudo Jaguar along the Usamacinta. We travel on to Bonampak, home of famous Maya murals. Their ancient colors remain clear, a stunning example of Maya artistry. Several well preserved stelae have been deciphered and tell stories of important Maya history. This afternoon we leave Mexico and travel into Guatemala to Tikal.

Camino Real Tikal

BLD

Wed, March 12—Tikal

After breakfast, walking site lecture in Tikal and its museum. Tikal is both the largest and the most fully studied Maya site. We begin in the main plaza, flanked by Temples I and II, and tour the North Acropolis and Palace. Our tour includes internal roadways (sacbes) and the heart of this grand metropolis.

Camino Real Tikal

BLD

Thu, March 13—Uaxactun

After breakfast, excursion to Uaxactun, north of Tikal. With recent achievements in the decipherment of the ancient Maya hieroglyphic writing system, we know the ancient name for this site was something like Sian K'aan, "Edge of the Sky" or "Born in Heaven". The name "Uaxactun" was given to the site by its rediscoverer, U.S. archeologist Sylvanus Morley in 1916. He coined the name from Maya words to mean "Eight Stone" for an inscription dating from the 8th Baktun of the Maya calendar. It was then the earliest known Maya date. Evening boat trip for dinner at lake-view restaurant in Flores.

Camino Real Tikal

BLD

Fri, March 14—Yaxha/Belize City, Belize

After breakfast, proceed to Belize City, Belize, visiting on the way Yaxha. Unlike Tikal, restoration of this site is in the preliminary stages. Of the many temples, only one has been largely restored. Most are either covered in vegetation or being actively excavated. Here is an opportunity to visit an active site affording a greater appreciation for Tikal and the work of the archeologists. Continue to the border between Belize and Guatemala; paper work and border crossing take about 30 minutes.

Radisson Fort George

BLD

Sat, March 15—Lamanai/Chetumal

After breakfast, we visit the archaeological site of Lamanai, with a cross-river boat ride to get in to the ruins. Lunch is served on site. The Maya Site of Lamanai, one of Belize's largest ceremonial centers, is located on the banks of the 30-mile-long New River Lagoon in North Central Belize. With one of the longest occupation spans in the Maya World, Lamanai was occupied continuously for over 3,000 years. The Lamanai Archaeological Reserve also contains a museum, the remnants of two 16th century Spanish churches and a colonial sugar mill that was established in 1860. After this visit, we enter Mexico. Border crossing paper work takes about one hour. We continue to Chetumal, visiting the Museum of Maya Culture.

Holiday Inn Chetumal

BLD



Frescoes of Bonampak

Detail of giant stucco masks of the sun god -- Kohunlich



Sun, March 16—Dzibanche/Kinichna/Kohunlich/Becan/Xpuhil

After breakfast, depart for Chicanna, visiting on the way, Dzibanche, a Classic Maya center. Dzibanche means 'writing on wood' in Maya, and a number of finely carved wood lintels have been recovered from the site. We visit a later Maya hilltop Acropolis at Kinichna before visiting Kohunlich, famed for its giant molded stucco masks of the Sun God 'Kinich Ahau.' At the end of the route we visit Becan, Xpuhil.

Chicanna Ecolodge **BLD**

Mon, March 17—Calakmul/Chicanna

Early morning transfer to Calakmul. Walking site lecture through one of the largest cities in Maya culture. This Maya center stands amidst the high forests of southern Campeche, only 30 km from the Guatemalan border. Calakmul, known for its numerous carved monuments, is estimated to cover 70 square kilometers and to have had a population of 50,000 during the height of its power. The area we see is in two sections. The first is the Central Plaza, a large open area bounded by Structures II-VIII. The second is the Grand Acropolis, located in the northwestern quadrant of Calakmul's central core.

Chicanna Ecovillage **BLD**

Tue, March 18—Villahermosa

After breakfast, we travel to Villahermosa, visiting Balamku en route.

Hilton Villahermosa **BLD**

Wed, March 19—Villahermosa/Richmond, Va.

Early morning departure for Richmond, Va.

Pricing

LAND ARRANGEMENTS

\$2,975, per person, double occupancy, including:

- Personal accompaniment by Walter Witschey, Ph.D.
- Hotels, including taxes and service fees
- All meals
- Entrance to museums and archaeological sites
- Ground transportation
- Local guides and guest lecturers
- \$200 tax-deductible donation to the Longwood University Foundation

NOT INCLUDED:

- Passport fees
- Items of a personal nature
- Gratuities to drivers and guides
- Border fees and local departure taxes that cannot be collected in advance (approximately \$60.00 per person)
- Trip interruption and cancellation insurance

AIRFARE

Richmond-Villahermosa roundtrip via Houston, Tex. on Continental Airlines: \$715 per person, coach class. Airfare-associated surcharges and taxes are subject to change until ticketed.

For further information and to express interest, contact Dr. Witschey at WWitschey@SMV.org or (804) 928-7871.



To make reservations, please complete the form below and send to Anita Nelson Covington International Travel 4401 Dominion Blvd, Glen Allen, VA 23060 Tel: (804) 747-7077

Woman in traditional Chiapanecan wear

PRICING

Pricing is based on foreign currency exchange rates in effect on June 1, 2007 and on a minimum number of participants. If the minimum number is not met, Covington International Travel reserves the right to cancel the tour, with all deposits and payments refunded.

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A deposit of \$750.00 per person is required on or before November 1, 2007. Full payment is due no later than February 1, 2008. Credit card payments can not be accepted for this group tour. Payments by check are payable to Covington International Travel.

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DOCUMENTATION

A valid U.S. passport is required for this trip.

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Luggage is limited to one checked suitcase weighing up to 50 lbs and one carry-on bag per person.

DISCLOSURE AND LIABILITY

Airlines reserve the right to change equipment or schedules. The airlines' sole liability to ticketed passengers for delays or cancellations due to weather, or any other cause beyond the airline's control is to refund the ticket in the original form of payment. If the delay or cancellation results from factors within the airline's control, it will transport ticketed group passengers to their destination on the next flight on which seats are available in the class of service originally purchased. Passengers may also be entitled to a partial refund or certain other amenities in some cases.

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Reservation Request

"The Maya World: Modern Discoveries and Ancient Ruins."

March 8-19, 2008 • Land \$2975.00 • Air \$715.00

Please make checks payable to Covington International Travel.

We regret that we are unable to accept credit card payments for this group tour.

Enclosed is my deposit in the amount of _____ (\$750.00 per person).

I understand that final payment is due by February 1, 2008.

Passenger name(s) as it appears on passport: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (B) _____ Email: _____

Single Room Double Room Smoking Non-smoking

Special Dietary Requirements: _____

Please send me an application for baggage, accident and trip insurance.