

MEXICO'S YUCATAN WINTER GETAWAY

January 13, 2019 ~ 16 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$7075 double/twin

\$8560 single



- > This tour is limited to 25 people. Early booking recommended!
- > Please add 0.4% GST.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$300 discount on first 8 seats; \$150 on next 4
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 126 points; redeem 126 points by Oct 3.

25

* HIGHLIGHTS *

Sumidero Canyon cruise
Cascadas de Agua Azul
Palenque archeological site
Campeche walled city
Meet a local family in Tinúm
Pirámide del Adivino at Uxmal
Mayan ceremony for Rain God Chaac
Swim in Ikkil Cenote
Chichén Itzá with Light and Sound show
Oceanfront all-inclusive resort at Tulum

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Includes

- Transportation to/from Vancouver Airport
- 15 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Flight on Aeromexico from Vancouver to Tuxtla, Mexico
- Current air transport taxes and security fees
- Transfer from Tuxtla airport to hotel
- Coach transportation for 12 days in Mexico
- Boat excursion through Sumidero Canyon
- Tour of San Cristóbal and indigenous villages
- Demo of hand-making tortillas
- Casa Na-Bolom
- Agua Azul Waterfalls
- Palenque archeological site with Pakal's tomb
- Guided tour of Campeche
- Family visit in Tinúm
- Anthropology Museum of Camino Real
- Uxmal archeological site & Governor's Palace
- Choco-Story Museum
- Mayan ceremony for Rain God Chaac
- Henequen process at Sotuta del Peon
- Guided tour by carriage of colonial Mérida
- Great Museum of the Mayan World
- Swim at Ikkil Cenote
- Light and Sound show at Chichén Itzá
- Guided tour of Chichén Itzá
- Transfer from hotel to Cancun airport
- Flight on Westjet from Cancun to Vancouver
- Wells Gray tour director throughout tour
- Bilingual Mexican guide for 13 days
- Gratuities for Mexican guide and drivers
- Luggage handling at hotels and on flights
- **38 meals:** 14 breakfasts, 12 lunches, 12 dinners

Tour Notes

Travelling in Mexico: In the last ten years, you have probably seen stories in the media about the dangers of travelling in Mexico. The Mexican government has made heroic efforts to counteract this bad press and salvage their vital tourism industry by showing that Mexico is as safe to travel in as many foreign countries. Tourism has rebounded, but many people still pay attention to what they see on TV and in newspapers. Mexico still has some dangerous places to visit, but so do many countries including Canada and the USA. This tour is designed to visit popular tourist areas where safety is important. Come and enjoy this amazing region of Mexico and escape from a Canadian winter for two weeks!

Tour Director & Guide: A Wells Gray tour director is with you throughout the tour. A bilingual Mexican guide accompanies you from Tuxtla to Cancun. The Mexican guide provides commentary about scenery and culture, and assists with translation at the various stops.

Accommodation: All hotels on this tour are rated "Four Star Superior". This may not be the same standard as a four-star hotel in Canada. Hotels named in the itinerary could change, but substitute accommodation will be of similar quality.

Documentation: A passport is required for this tour. A tourist card is also required for Canadian citizens visiting Mexico. It is issued on arrival and must be kept throughout your visit and surrendered when you leave Mexico at Cancun Airport.

 **Tour 25:** This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning capacity of this tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

Important Tour Information will be available at final payment and contains suggestions about clothing, weather, food and drink, tipping, extra money needed, and Mexican exchange.



Activity Level: Moderate activity including walking up to 1 km, steps, and uneven walkways, side-walks and trails. Cobblestone streets are common in historic towns. Walking tours are arranged in some towns where coach transportation is impossible. There is considerable walking at the archeological sites of Palenque, Uxmal, and Chichén Itzá. Seeing everything mentioned in this itinerary requires active participation. There can be longer walks in the airports while travelling to Tuxtla and home from Cancun; request a cart or wheelchair in advance if this could be an issue for you. The coaches cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, Mexican guide, and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense, and travel insurance will probably not cover you.

Itinerary

Sunday, January 13:

Transportation is provided to Vancouver Airport and we stay overnight at the Fairmont YVR Hotel.

Monday, January 14:

We fly to Mexico City and change planes to continue to **Tuxtla**. Our coach and Mexican guide are waiting to take us to our accommodation at the Fiesta Inn.

Tuesday, January 15:

Meals: B,L,D

In the morning, we take a boat excursion through the awesome **Cañón del Sumidero** on the Grijalva River. The vertical walls reach as high as 1,000 metres above the river which winds through the canyon for 13 km. After lunch, we continue to San Cristóbal de las Casas and stay two nights at Villa Mercedes.

Wednesday, January 16:

Meals: B,L,D

San Cristóbal de las Casas is considered the cultural capital of Chiapas state. The city centre maintains its Spanish colonial charm and pleasing architecture with red tile roofs, cobblestone streets, and wrought iron balconies, often decorated with flowers. During a morning tour, we explore a typical local market where hundreds of Indigenous people sell their hand-made products. Later we visit the Baroque Santo Domingo Church founded in 1547 and the villages of San Juan Chamula and Zinacantán. We learn the process of **hand-making tortillas** and taste the local liquor Pox, an ancient Mayan elixir. In the afternoon, we visit the Casa Na-Bolom ("Jaguar House" in Tzotzil Maya), a museum and research centre housed in the former private home of anthropologists Frans and Trudy Blom, with a collection of pre-Hispanic artifacts and photographs.

Thursday, January 17:

Meals: B,L,D

We stop to view the **Cascadas de Agua Azul** (Blue Water waterfalls) on the Xanil River. The water has a high content of calcium carbonate and other minerals, and, where the spray falls on rocks or trees, it coats them with limestone. The drive from San Cristóbal to Palenque is along a scenic mountain road with abundant vegetation of this Chiapanecan zone. We stay two nights at Hotel Villa Mercedes Palenque.

Friday, January 18:

Meals: B,L,D

We visit the **Palenque archaeological site**, founded by the Mayans in 226 BC and occupied until 799 AD. After its decline, it was absorbed into the jungle of cedar, mahogany, and sapodilla trees, but has since been excavated and restored start-

ing in the 18th century. The area displays beautiful Mayan work made in stone and stucco. Its most important temple is called Templo de las Inscripciones (Temple of the Inscriptions), and it is here that explorers discovered **Pakal's tomb** with his famous jade green mask. The afternoon is leisure time and tonight we savour a pre-Hispanic-tasting dinner menu.

Saturday, January 19:

Meals: B,L,D

We head to Campeche, founded by the Spanish in 1540 and protected by fortress walls and towers built to repel pirates. **Campeche** keeps a colonial mood thanks to its gorgeous houses and austere churches. The afternoon is free time, and we stay overnight at Hotel Gamma Campeche Malecon. On our way to dinner at Restaurant Marganzo, we enjoy an insight into Campeche's history, listening to melodramatic legends of the past.

Sunday, January 20:

Meals: B,L,D

We travel to Uxmal along the "**Camino Real**", following the steps of the Empress Carlota. Along this stone-lined route from Campeche to Becal, we make stops in the villages of Tinúm, Pomuch and Hecelchakán. We **meet a local family** in Tinúm who share their traditions and show you their handicrafts, their orchard, and the process of canning and preserving fruit. In Pomuch, we taste traditional bread baked in stone ovens. In Hecelchakán, a large Mayan population still preserves its language. We visit its market and the Anthropology Museum of the Camino Real which displays artifacts from Isla de Jaina, an island located on the west coast of the Yucatán peninsula. Finally, we stop in Becal where the famous Panama hat is produced. We stay two nights at the Lodge at Uxmal.

Monday, January 21:

Meals: B,L,D

The archaeological site of Uxmal is a typical example of the classic and post-classic Mayan period, dating from about 500 AD. Its main structures are **Pirámide del Adivino** (The Fortuneteller's Pyramid), Palacio de los Gobernadores (Governor's Palace), and Cuadrángulo de las Monjas (Quadrangle of the Nuns). This afternoon, at the **Choco-Story Museum**, our guides demonstrate how chocolate was prepared using an ancestral recipe. Enjoy a freshly-made beverage, mixed with the ingredients of your choice including chili and other spices. Then join a Mayan ceremony held in honour of the **Rain God Chaac**, walking through paths across the rainforest and led by a Mayan priest.

Tuesday, January 22:*Meals: B,L,D*

We visit the Hacienda Sotuta del Peon where the **henequen**, the "old green gold of Yucatán", is still produced. Watch the step-by-step process of the transformation of the henequen from plant to fibre and to finished product. Afterwards, enjoy a refreshing swim in the cool waters of the Cenote, an underground river of crystal clear water, or in a huge swimming pool surrounded by lush gardens of tropical flowers and green trees and indigenous plants. In the afternoon, we continue to Mérida and stay two nights at Hacienda Misne.

Wednesday, January 23:*Meals: B,L,D*

We enjoy a panoramic city tour of **Mérida** during a pleasant carriage ride. Also known as the "White City", Mérida has houses that date back to the 19th century in the Arabic, French and Italian styles. These houses have witnessed the old wealth that was generated thanks to the sisal culture. We stop at Merida's Zocalo and admire monuments such as the Cathedral, the Government's Palace, the Municipal Palace, and the Francisco Montejo House. After lunch at La Chaya Maya, we stroll through the **Great Museum of the Mayan World**. It displays a magnificent collection of textiles, religious items, furnishings from the daily lives of the Maya, artistic and religious works of the colonial era, carvings, stone sculptures, pottery, and objects of gold, jade and shells.

Thursday, January 24:*Meals: B,L,D*

We travel through Izamal, the "Magic Town", to Chichén Itzá and visit the **Ikkil Cenote** to swim with the black catfish. The cenote is 26 metres below ground level and is sacred to the Mayans

who used this cenote for both relaxation and ritual services. The afternoon is at leisure. We stay overnight at The Lodge at Chichén Itzá. Tonight, we experience the extraordinary spectacle of the **Light and Sound show at Chichén Itzá**. After sunset, the lights turn on and project images of the Mayan legacy on the ruins at the main pyramid of Kukulcán.

Friday, January 25:*Meals: B,L,D*

Chichén Itzá was the Mayan capital of Yucatán and flourished between the 5th and 10th centuries AD. During a daytime tour of the extensive ruins, we admire the impressive buildings of the northern and central archaeological sites, such as the **Kukulcán Temple**, the Ball Game, the Observatory, the Warrior's Temple, the Convent of the Nuns, and the Sacred Cenote. Afterwards, we go to the beautiful colonial city of Valladolid and enjoy its typical Yucatán flair. We continue to the Riviera Maya and check-in at the **Grand Bahia Principe Tulum**, an oceanfront resort offering the all inclusive plan.

Saturday, January 26:*Meals: B,L,D*

This is a free day to enjoy the beautiful beach at the hotel or many other activities. A farewell dinner is a chance to reminisce with fellow travellers about our memorable days in the Yucatán.

Sunday, January 27:*Meals: B*

We drive to Cancun and fly to Vancouver, staying overnight again at the Fairmont YVR Hotel.

Monday, January 28:*Meals: B*

Transportation is provided to your pickup point.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due October 3, 2018. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$300 discount on first 8 seats and \$150 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after October 3.

Cancellation Policy: Up to September 3, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From September 4 to October 3, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From October 4 to November 3, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From November 4 to December 3, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After December 3, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes or currency exchange rates and surcharges from airlines and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups and dropoffs may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and the size of the chartered vehicle. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Photo Credit: Wikimedia (Kukulcán Temple)

E-points: This tour earns 126 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until October 3.

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