



Service Learning in the Yucatan

Mérida • Uxmal • Tixcocab • Chichen Itza



Day 1 • Departure/Mérida

Our journey begins as we board our international flight bound for Merida, capital of the state of Yucatán, Mexico. Upon arrival we meet our Mexico tour guide as well as our host families. We transfer to our homes to get acquainted with our hosts. **D**

Day 2 • Mérida

We have an early bus transfer to the Mayan archaeological site of Uxmal, known as the “thrice-built city.” At Uxmal we visit the 115 foot high “Pyramid of the Magician” and the impressive “Governor’s house,” a wonder of the ancient world for its precision and architectural beauty. Then we head off to the fascinating caves of Calcehtok, the biggest cave system in the Yucatan. We return to Merida in the afternoon. **B/L/D**

Day 3 • Mérida

Today we visit a shelter home, *Hogares Juveniles*, where about twenty kids live. Activities can include painting, gardening, cooking, playing. In the afternoon we have a walking tour of *el centro de Merida* to visit the Cathedral, the “Casa de Montejo,” and the beautiful “Plaza Grande.” At night we see a performance of traditional music and dance, *la Vaqueria*. **B/L/D**

Day 4 • Mérida

We spend some time with kids this morning as well as assisting their teachers at a public school for students of low income families. In the afternoon we visit two marvelous *cenotes* located in the small village of Cuzama. *Cenotes* are sinkholes created by underground rivers breaking through the limestone crust of the earth. We can swim in their crystal clear water surrounded by jungle. **B/L/D**

Day 5 • Mérida

This morning we return to *Hogares Juveniles*. In the afternoon we visit a public hospital, where we spend some time with the kids and take them some small gifts from our hometown. The rest of the day is free to spend with our host families. **B/L/D**

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Day 6 • Mérida

We return for a second visit to the elementary school in the morning. In the afternoon we enjoy the hot sun of the Yucatan at Progreso beach. We sing, dance and have dinner at the beach with a traditional *lunada*. **B/L/D**

Day 7 • Mérida

An excursion off the beaten path takes us to the Mayan village of Tixcocab, where local artisans teach us about the art of hammock making. We also have an opportunity to practice our Spanish at the panaderia, the tortilleria, and the carniceria at a traditional *mercado*. In the afternoon we go back to *Hogares Juveniles* for our last activity there and to say good bye to our new friends. **B/L/D**

Day 8 • Mérida

Today we visit the Celestun National Park, a habitat for the largest population of Pink Flamingos on the continent. To visit the birds we take a boat tour where we also learn about the importance of mangroves in the region. **B/L/D**

Day 9 • Mérida

Today we visit the famous site of Chichen Itza. This important center combines majesty and nature. This awesome site is an impressive example of the immense depth of the Mayas' knowledge of the cosmos. Our visit includes the largest ball court existing in Mayan world. After our visit we have time to shop for handcrafts. We return to Merida in the afternoon to spend time with our families. This evening we enjoy a farewell dinner at a great Mexican restaurant. **B/L/D**

Day 10 • Return

We have an early transfer to the airport, returning home with first-hand knowledge and experience of life in Mexico and having formed many new friendships here. Adiós Mexico! **B**

Abbreviations for Meals: B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner

Cost of tour: \$989*

*Land portion only

Based on 24 paying participants

Included

Transportation

- All land transfers by van or private deluxe air-conditioned motor coach
- Public transportation to volunteer sites

Accommodations

- Home stays (2 students per family)
- Hotel accommodations for chaperones

Meals

- As indicated in itinerary

Program

- Admission to all activities as indicated in itinerary
- Coordination of services at volunteer sites

Tour Guides

- Professional tour director throughout
- Local guides for city tours and major attractions

Taxes and Tips

- All taxes and tips for provided services except end of tour tip for tour director and driver

Complimentary Tours

- One tour per 8 paying participants

Not included

- Roundtrip air transportation to Mérida
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Beverages, except with breakfast
- Donations, gifts, and materials for schools, agencies, and institutions
- End of tour tip for driver and tour guide
- Items of a personal nature such as passport fees
Passport must be valid for 6 months beyond return date
- Travel Insurance

Tour Code: SPMV10

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