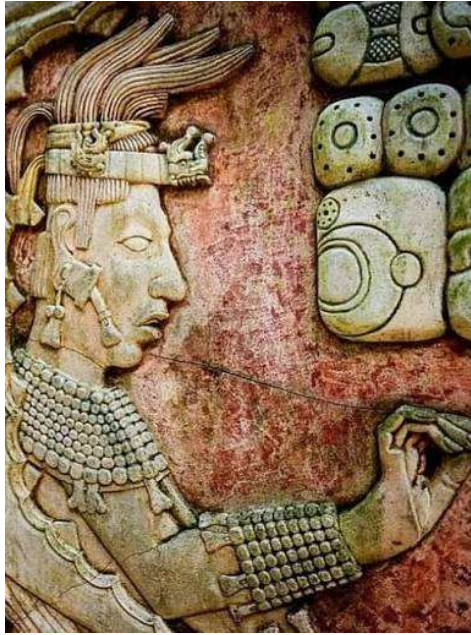


‘MYSTERIES AND MAGIC OF THE MAYA’

AN 9-DAY TOUR OF DISCOVERY

January 22 - 30, 2027

Three thousand years ago, the jungles of Central America witnessed the birth of one of the most remarkable and mysterious civilizations the world has ever seen – The Maya.



For almost two thousand years, Maya kings and queens ruled over kingdoms, cities, and dynasties that rivalled those of Egypt or Rome. Maya agriculturalists developed farming systems that allowed them to support huge populations on the barren soils of the jungle. Armies marched and waged bloody campaigns of conquest. With extraordinary precision, Maya astronomers mapped the movement of the stars, and philosophers pondered the meanings of human existence



The Maya were one of the great civilizations of world history. But they are still a mystery. Where did they come from? What were the secrets of their rise and fall? Theirs was one of the most dramatic civilizational collapses of all history. What caused it? Only now are scholars beginning to grasp the reasons and their relevance to our own world today.

‘Mysteries & Magic of the Maya’, a tour led by award-winning filmmaker and anthropologist Graham Townsley, takes its participants deep into Maya worlds that very few see and offers a life-changing experience of cultural and spiritual discovery.

DAY 1 TRAVEL DAY / ARRIVING IN MERIDA



Participants arriving on American Airlines at 3:30 pm (via Miami) or United Airlines at 6:52 pm (via Houston) will be met at Merida’s International Airport (MID) by Tour Coordinator William Dent for the transfer to our hotel in the city’s Historic District, within an easy walk of the main square and Cathedral. After checking in, we will have a welcome toast and chat with our Tour Leader, Graham Townsley (see his bio on page 7).

DAY 2. MERIDA

Mérida, vibrant capital of the Mexican state of Yucatán, has a rich Mayan and colonial heritage. We will do a walking tour of the Historic District, including the city’s main square, the Plaza de la Independencia, bordered by the fortress-like Mérida Cathedral and white limestone Iglesia de la Tercera Orden, both colonial-era churches built using relics from ancient Mayan temples. We will enjoy a **Welcome Luncheon** together (‘La Comida’) at a local restaurant featuring Yucatan regional cuisine. In the evening, Tour Leader Graham Townsley – Director of six PBS films on the Maya – will give us an introductory talk on Maya civilization with its mysteries and magic we will explore.

DAY 3. UXMAL AND CENOTE VISIT



Just one and a half hours from Merida are the extraordinary Maya Ruins of **Uxmal**, including one of the most spectacular of all Maya pyramids. It is the perfect introduction to the splendors and mysteries of the ancient Maya, their temples, cities, and enigmatic hieroglyphs. Talk: Upon arrival in Uxmal, Mr. Townsley will give an introductory talk providing an overview of the site before local guides lead us on a detailed tour.



After a hot day in the ruins, we will cool off in the stunning, crystalline blue-water **cenote** of X Batun before returning to Merida. This is a unique connection with nature in the Yucatan. Please be sure to bring your swimming gear.

DAY 4 TRADITIONAL MAYA FARM



There are still over 5 million Maya people. Their culture is very much alive. The astonishing achievements of their ancestors rest upon remarkable agricultural innovations that Maya people still practice to this day, techniques that permit sustainable agricultural production on the poor soils of the jungle. They also gave the Maya the template for their deeply spiritual worldview and their humility in the face of the natural world. With this visit, we explore a traditional farm of contemporary Maya not far from Merida and meet Maya people who still share the worldview of their ancestors.

Day 5. TRAVEL BY TRAIN TO PALENQUE



The ultimate goal of our tour is to share the true jewel of all ancient Maya cities, **Palenque**. To get there, we will take the recently opened Tren Maya, a multi-billion-dollar train network that traverses various Maya sites of Mexico. The 7-1/2-hour journey from Merida to Palenque takes us on a remarkable scenic ride through the jungles and coastlines of Yucatan and Chiapas. Arriving in the town of Palenque, we transfer to a luxurious villa-style hotel where we will spend three nights and enjoy the sounds and sights of the surrounding jungle.

Day 6 PALENQUE

The jewel of the Maya world, the most beautiful, atmospheric and mysterious of all ancient Maya cities is, without a doubt, Palenque. Created by one powerful Maya King of the 7th century, Lord Pakal, it is a consummate expression not just of Maya thinking and history but also of the life of one of the most remarkable and enigmatic rulers of the ancient world. He was at once architect, philosopher, and warlord, leaving a remarkable legacy. Today and tomorrow, we explore his life story and the beautiful city he built.

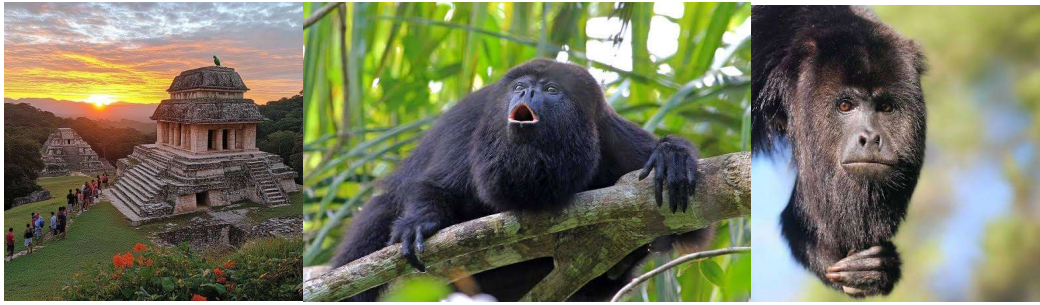


Palenque's centerpiece is the spectacular tomb built for Pakal by his son. It is also one of the most complete representations of the Maya cosmos and Maya beliefs in the afterlife in existence. The day culminates deep in the heart of the tomb in front of his sarcophagus and its elaborate carving of Pakal at the moment of his death, falling into the underworld to be reborn as the maize god. It is one of the great masterpieces of Maya sculpture and a perfect representation of Maya ideas of death and rebirth.



Day 7 – PALENQUE SECOND DAY

The riches and beauty of Palenque demand more than one day. The second day here starts at dawn with a gorgeous sunrise over the city accompanied by the atmospheric sounds of the jungle and the extraordinary calls of the howler monkeys who patrol the surrounding jungle. It is an unforgettable moment.



Then, for those who would like it, we dive deeper into some aspects of the city and the Classic Maya world as we explore the ruins further. Others may wish to investigate the site's beautiful museum and its gift shop. Others still may wish to relax back at the hotel. This is a day to be at peace and absorb the sights and marvels of the Maya world.

Day 8 RETURN TO MERIDA (TREN MAYA)



As the tour approaches its end, we return by train to Merida. In the cool of the late afternoon, we will again enjoy the beauties of the city's squares and colonial architecture and learn about the extraordinary love affair at the heart of its revolutionary past – the story of firebrand Bolshevik governor in 1924, Felipe Carrillo Puerto – fluent Maya speaker and fierce defender of Maya rights - and his tragic love affair with NYT journalist, Alma Reed.



A moving story of passion, treachery, soaring idealism set amongst the Maya ruins of Yucatan, it is soon to be a six-part drama series written by tour guide Graham Townsley.

Day 9 DEPARTURE AND/OR BEACH

Unless you ask for us to arrange an extension, the tour ends with check-out this morning. Earlier risers can spend the morning at the beach and then catch their return flights in the afternoon. If you wish to spend more time in Mérida, please let us know. We can help you with hotel and other arrangements.



Our Tour Leader - *Mysteries and Magic of the Maya* is a revelatory and transformational journey guided by anthropologist and award-winning filmmaker, **Graham Townsley**. Graham has made many films about the Maya and devoted much of his life to understanding the belief systems of indigenous peoples including, **Dawn of the Maya**, a National Geographic special about the discovery of the Maya Preclassic, **Maya Apocalypse**, a three-part series for the Discovery Channel about Mayan prophecies of the end of the world and **Passage to the Maya Underworld** for the History Channel.

As an anthropologist, apart from the Maya, Graham has specialized in the cultures and shamanism of the Amazon Basin and highland Peru where he has spent many years.



PRICING / Terms & Conditions.

Mexico Maya / Tour Land Package.

Our land package includes:

- . **Lodging** (double-occupancy) 8 or 9 nights (depending on your arrival day).
 - . **Tour services/talks by Maya expert Graham Townsley**, plus local archeological site guides
 - . **Land transportation:** Airport-hotel transfer/ Van & driver (Days 3 & 4), RT Maya train to Palenque.
 - . **Meals:** Breakfast (daily), Welcome & Farewell Dinners, plus a group meal at Uxmal & Palenque.
 - . **Entry fees** to Uxmal, two cenotes, and the Palenque archaeological site.
 - . **Mérida Historic District tour**, including Cathedral, local artisan shops.
 - . **Visit to contemporary Maya family farm** – insights into their economic and social activities.
- Not included:** Airfare, additional meals, drinks, and services not specified above.

Package Price: \$3,895 pp (double occupancy) / Single supplement **\$600 pp**

Deposit: US\$ 500.00 to hold your place. Payment in full is due 45 days before departure.

For Terms & Conditions, please visit: <https://www.magicalplacetours.com/terms-conditions>

For more information, contact **William Dent** at williamdentjr@gmail.com or text at (202) 487-5343.

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RESERVATION FORM

To hold your place, please complete and send this form with your \$500 deposit to:
William Dent, Magical Places Tours, 4740 Connecticut Ave NW Ste #1012, Washington, DC 20008.

Full Name [Please print]:

Street Address:

Apt. No.

City:

State: Zip:

Cell Phone:

Email:

ACCOMMODATIONS – Circle one: Double-occupancy / Single-occupancy

DEPOSIT PAYMENT

☐ Enclosed is my check (payable to Magical Places Tours/NP)

☐ I am making a Zelle transfer to nonprofit Natural Partners (identifier: wdent@npartners.org)

☐ I wish to pay by Credit card (3% fee charged)

I/We confirm that I/we have read the Terms & Conditions and agree to full payment at least 45 days before departure.

Signature(s) & Date: _____