



## Santa Barbara Museum of Art

### *Architecture, Artisans, Ancient Mayan Cities & Villages in the Yucatán with Florencio Moreno*

December 2 to 9, 2025

The Yucatán Peninsula in southeastern Mexico was once a center of Mayan civilization and later a wealthy exporter of the crop henequen, a type of fiber made into twine or rope from the native agave plant, whose industry brought prosperity to local families and provided financial autonomy to the entire region. That wealth is still evident today in the architecture of Mérida and in the more than 150 haciendas that are spread throughout the Yucatán Peninsula in the Mexican states of Yucatán and Campeche.

Join cultural anthropologist and Mayan expert Florencio Moreno, one of Museum travelers' favorite tour leaders, on this exclusive custom-designed SBMA tour, designed with care to immerse travelers in the history, archaeology, and artistry of the Yucatán. Insider access includes rare behind-the-scenes experiences, providing a genuine window into Yucatec culture few travelers encounter.

Begin in the cultural hub of Mérida, capital of the Yucatán, for four nights, then stay at Yucatán's finest hacienda hotel for three nights. Learn about Mayan civilization at

two of the area's most important archeological sites—Chichén Itzá (cover image) and Uxmal, enjoy the gourmet food of the region, and expect to be spellbound by this lesser-visited area of Mexico in December—the best and coolest time to visit. Return home laden with gifts for the holidays. One does not have to travel far to encounter the historic treasures, artistic masterpieces, and festive traditions of Mexico.

## *Hotels*



**Four nights at *The Treehouse in Mérida***, a stylish boutique hotel with an interior courtyard. With just 15 rooms, it retains much of its private residence atmosphere. The interiors combine period architecture and traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design and modern amenities in a unique and memorable blend. Those in need of two beds will stay next door at the lovely Boutique by the Museo, which is made up of suites in a carefully restored hacienda with the same owner. Mérida is a delight to explore on foot, and the hotels' location offers easy access to the city's vibrant restaurant and cultural scene. From The Treehouse as home base, we also explore the Mayan archeological site of Chichén Itzá, well-preserved architecture in nearby colonial towns, and traditional craftsmanship.



**Three nights at *Chablé Yucatán in Chocholá***, a beautifully restored 19<sup>th</sup>-century hacienda turned luxury retreat, that seamlessly blends elegant design, Mayan heritage, and exceptional cuisine. Stone walls frame airy, contemporary casitas, and all rooms have small private pools. The superb spa is built



beside a crystal-clear *cenote*—a naturally occurring pool commonly found in the Yucatán and sacred to the ancient Maya who believed they were portals to the underworld. Located south of Mérida, Chablé is a perfect base for exploring Uxmal and other archaeological sites, artisan villages, and contemporary art projects, all while enjoying modern comfort, wellness, and a deep connection to the Yucatán's cultural heritage.



### *Tour Organizer, Leader, Guide, Scholar*



**Florencio Moreno** has led over 20 tours for the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and is unquestionably one of SBMA's favorite guides and scholars. A cultural anthropologist, historian, and captivating storyteller, he has an innate ability to bring the history and legends of Mexico's vibrant past to life. He graduated from the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (UAM) in Mexico City with a degree in Cultural Geography and a Masters in Colonial Iconography and Iconology, as well as Astro-archaeology. As a member of the Astronomical Society of Oaxaca, Florencio teaches at local schools and also lectures within and outside of Mexico on Meso-American and Mexican anthropology and history. He is a native of Oaxaca and fluent in English, French, Spanish, and Zapotec. His broad knowledge and expertise of colonial iconography, history and archeology, as well as his affable personality make him a favorite tour guide-lecturer of Santa Barbara Museum of Art travelers. He lives in Oaxaca and has two sons. *"I have been on two tours with Florencio and it never ceases to amaze me that he does everything—he is the guide, the academic leader/scholar, AND he runs the logistics of the tour—all with such calm and compassion. I have been on other tours where there are three people doing each of those three roles."* – Anonymous

## *Itinerary*



### Tuesday, December 2

### U.S. / Mérida

Fly to Mérida and meet guide and tour leader Florencio Moreno. SBMA will send a suggested flight schedule once the group is formed. A group transfer from the airport to the hotel is provided for those on the suggested flights. Check in and gather for a **casual reception to toast the start of the tour with a special musical welcome by a talented Mérida-based quartet.**

*The Treehouse (Reception)*

### Wednesday, December 3

### Mérida

Begin the day with a **walking tour of Mérida**. On the site of the ancient Mayan city of T'ho, the conquistador Francisco de Montejo y Leon named the city Mérida after the ancient Spanish city in 1542. **Walk along Paseo de Montejo**, Mérida's grand boulevard lined with 19th-century mansions, to **Plaza Grande, the main square** and vibrant heart of the city. Step inside **Mérida's cathedral—one of the oldest in the Americas**—constructed using stones repurposed from a Maya temple, and discuss the façades of different historic buildings. Walk through the **central market**, see murals, and make note of great restaurants you may wish to return to for dinners. After lunch near Plaza Grande, visit the **Grand Museum of the Maya World**, which houses more than 1,100 artifacts offering deep insight into Maya heritage. Continue to **Casa T'Hō Concept House**, a creative space for showcasing the best of Yucatán's contemporary design and craftsmanship in a 19th-century mansion.





*Casa T'Hō Concept House*

In the evening, gather for a **Welcome Dinner at Kuuk**, where a tasting menu will introduce the enticing flavors and cuisine of the area.

*The Treehouse (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

#### **Thursday, December 4**

#### **Mérida to Chichén Itzá to Valladolid and return**

After breakfast, drive to the great ancient Maya city of **Chichén Itzá, one of the most preserved and fascinating Mayan archeological sites**. While popular, this is a must-visit for its architectural and astronomical significance. We will arrive early to avoid the heaviest crowds. Continue to the **Valladolid, a colonial town with well-preserved architecture**, boutique museums, and authentic Yucatecan cuisine. Visit a **private home collection of Mexican folk art**.

Return to Mérida, where evenings invite a leisurely stroll before or after dinner, allowing one to soak in the lively atmosphere of the main plaza and admire the local culture in motion. **The SBMA host will offer the option of joining a no-host dinner at a nearby restaurant and a stop at an art gallery with an option for casual shopping.**

*The Treehouse (Breakfast, Lunch, no-host Dinner)*

#### **Friday, December 5**

#### **Mérida to Txcocob to Izamal to Kimbila and return**

Travel to the small village of Tixkokob and visit a **private home for a traditional Yucatec cooking demonstration**. Guests are welcome to participate or simply observe. Learn how **Relleno Negro, one of the Yucatán's signature dishes**, is prepared, beginning with an introduction to the region's distinctive ingredients. The dish is then placed in the family's *pib* (pit oven) to cook—a time-honored method still used today. While the dish cooks, continue to **Izamal, a charming colonial town affectionately known as "The Yellow City"** for its striking yellow-painted buildings. With roots that stretch back to pre-Hispanic times, Izamal beautifully blends Maya, colonial, and modern influences. Stroll through its atmospheric streets, visit the striking yellow Convent of St. Anthony of Padua—built atop

an ancient pyramid—and meet artisans in their workshops to see exquisite handmade crafts. Next, visit the nearby village of **Kimbilá**, home to 2,500 residents and renowned for producing *guayabera* shirts, beloved worldwide for their craftsmanship and style. Return to Tixkokob to open the *pib* and share the stew-like delicacy with the family—a memorable experience that even visiting chefs rave about—before heading back to the hotel for an evening at leisure. Schedule permitting, a special surprise is in the works.

*The Treehouse (Breakfast, Lunch)*



*Convent of St. Anthony of Padua in Izamal, a town filled with bold yellow buildings*

#### Saturday, December 6

#### Mérida to Tecoh to Ochil to Chocholá

Check out and drive south to **Tecoh** for a visit to artist **Jorge Pardo's** extraordinary **architectural complex**, set within the ruins of a 17th-century hacienda. This unique space seamlessly integrates modern design, traditional craftsmanship, and lush landscapes, creating an immersive artistic experience. Continue to **Hacienda San Pedro Ochil**, built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with Moorish and neoclassic architectural elements. It thrived in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the production of henequen fiber, contributing to the prosperity in the region. Within the property's enchanting amphitheater, which merges seamlessly with a natural cenote, is **Árbol de Luz (Tree of Light)**, a **site-specific light installation designed by American artist James Turrell**, that illuminates the environment and creates a mesmerizing harmony of art and nature. After lunch in the area, drive to Chablé Yucatán for check-in. Settle in and enjoy a relaxed evening with dinner together on the estate's historic grounds.

*Chablé Yucatán, Chocholá (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

#### Sunday, December 7

#### Chocholá to Uxmal and return

This morning, depart for the **ancient Maya city of Uxmal**, one of the most breathtaking in the Americas. This UNESCO-listed site, known for its elegant architecture and intricate



carvings, is widely considered the pinnacle of Puuc-style design. Lunch will be arranged privately at Hacienda Xocnaceh near the remains of its centuries-old chapel. Continue to **Kabah along the Puuc Route to see the detailed carvings in stone of the rain god Chac** and other ancient Mayan sites. End the day in the **village of Muna where gourds are carved with Maya symbolism**, before returning to the hacienda for an evening at leisure.

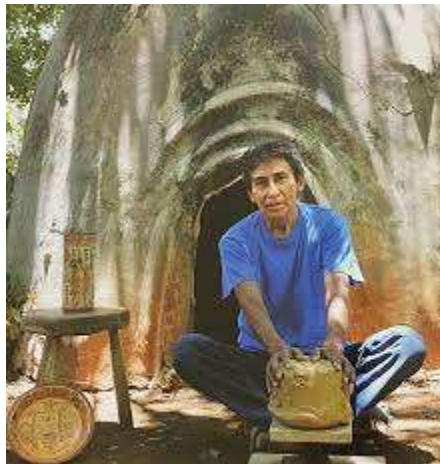
*Chablé Yucatán, Chocholá (Breakfast, Lunch)*



*The ancient Maya city of Uxmal; stone carvings in Kabah along the Puuc Route*

**Monday, December 8**

**Chocholá to Ticul to Maní and return**



Journey to the **traditional village of Ticul to meet with Roger Juarez, an exceptional potter, in his home and learn about his artistic process.** Continue to the **village of Maní, famous for the making of traditional Yucatec textiles and an apiary dedicated to melipona bees (stingless bees, sacred to the Maya), tended by a priest who preserves the ancestral Maya practices and shares the honey's traditional medicinal uses.** Staying in this area of the peninsula means that we can experience visits to these traditional rural villages, an experience that SBMA Members appreciate.

*Potter Roger Juarez*

Our Farewell Dinner will be a special celebration at Chablé Yucatán, featuring a light yet flavorful menu to reflect the flavors and memories of our journey.

*Chablé Yucatán, Chocholá (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

**Tuesday, December 9**

**Chocholá to Merida Airport to U.S.**

This morning, transfer to the airport and return to the U.S.

*(Breakfast)*

### Tour Costs:

- ❖ Per person in shared rooms: \$5,245
- ❖ Room to yourself: add \$1,950
- ❖ Plus SBMA donation: \$850 per person

**Early Booking Discount:** Deposit received by September 1, 2025 ~ \$250 discount per person.

### Included:

- ❖ Hotel accommodations as described.
- ❖ Breakfasts and lunches daily, welcome reception, welcome dinner, festive dinner mid-way through the tour, and farewell dinner
- ❖ All land transportation by private vehicles for included activities including airport transfers in Mexico for those on the suggested flights
- ❖ Private visits and special access through SBMA connections
- ❖ Admissions to museums and monuments, sightseeing, and tours as described, plus guides at certain local venues
- ❖ Expertise of study leader and guide, Cultural Anthropologist Florencio Moreno
- ❖ A pre-tour gathering in Santa Barbara a few weeks before departure

### To reserve space:

**Phone:** (805) 884-6431

**Fax:** (805) 966-6840

**Mail:** SBMA Travel,  
1130 State St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

### Questions?

**Email:** [travel@sbma.net](mailto:travel@sbma.net)

**Web:** [www.sbma.net/travel](http://www.sbma.net/travel)

**Not included:** Flights from home gateway in and out of Merida; airport transfers within the U.S.; airport transfers in Mexico for those not on the suggested flights; personal travel insurance for health, baggage and trip cancellation; passport fees; customary tips to guide and hotel housekeeping; items of a personal nature such as room service, not-included meals and beverages; telephone or internet charges; deviations from the scheduled tour; and any items not specifically mentioned as included.

**Payment Schedule and Cancellation Policy:** Your reservation deposit (\$1,000 per person) is refundable until September 1, 2025, minus a \$400 cancellation penalty. Final payment is due by check October 1, 2025 and becomes fully non-refundable November 1, 2025. (Between those dates, cancellation penalty amount increases as departure nears.) The \$850 tour-associated donation to SBMA may be paid anytime before October 1, 2025 and is not refundable and not insurable. **By placing a deposit on the tour, you are acknowledging acceptance of terms and cancellation penalty, and that you have read the section on Requirements. Please consider travel insurance.**

**Travel Insurance:** Travel insurance information will be sent to you upon receipt of your tour deposit. While optional, travel insurance is highly recommended. Adding the "CFAR" option is recommended if you are a more cautious traveler and might cancel because of personal reasons due to world events while the trip is still operating, as having this option will be your only means for getting a partial return of your funds. If you do not purchase insurance and have to cancel, there will be *no flexibility with the cancellation terms for any reason* including but not limited to any illness or fear of travel due to a health outbreak or political unrest. While the need for insurance is always unexpected, the benefits can be significant. Travel insurance can be time-sensitive depending on the benefits desired.

**Air Arrangements:** To allow maximum flexibility for travelers, the flights to and from Merida are not included in the cost of the tour. A suggested flight schedule will be sent once the group has been formed. **Please do not book your flights until you are notified by SBMA that the minimum group size has been reached.** Airport transfers will be included for those on the suggested flights. Flights are subject to



change. In the case of flight changes the participant is responsible for any costs for hotels, transfers, and meals required as a result. Trip Cancellation/Interruption Insurance is strongly encouraged.

**Museum Membership Requirement:** Travel is a benefit of Museum Membership. Non-members will be required to join at the “Friend” (\$100 per household) level (\$80 senior rate) or higher and will receive full membership benefits for a year.

**Other Requirements/Health:** Participants must be physically fit and in active good health. Days will be busy with a moderate amount of walking and standing. Sightseeing excursions may last for a few hours. Participants must be able to keep pace with a larger group, get on and off vehicles and navigate uneven terrain, stairs, and slippery surfaces with ease and without assistance. Some walking uphill may be required and uneven ground with roots and rocks is common during visits. Good health and stamina plus a sense of adventure and a positive, flexible attitude about delays and inconveniences are essential. Participants should also enjoy being part of a group and understand that their actions influence others. Each participant will be asked to agree to SBMA Travel’s code of ethics that outlines expectations for travelers. The right is reserved to decline or retain any person as member of the tour, when such action is determined by SBMA to be in the best interests of the health, safety, enjoyment, or general welfare of the tour group or the individual participant. No vaccines are required, but we urge everyone to be cautious before departure and to take precautions while traveling and on tour to prevent the spread of all illnesses. Current guidelines require participants to not participate in tour activities if they are contagious. The infectious period may be determined by a doctor or current CDC guidelines at the time. We ask that all travelers kindly comply with requests from tour staff in the interests of everyone’s comfort and safety. We highly recommend travel insurance. When choosing to travel, you are accepting all risks. We greatly appreciate your help with keeping yourself and those around you as safe as possible.

**Additional Notes:** All arrangements are subject to change. Although SBMA and its suppliers will make every effort to adhere to the printed itinerary, on occasion it may be necessary to adjust arrangements because of circumstances beyond our control. Should an itinerary adjustment be necessary, substitution will be made to the best of our ability and additional costs necessitated by such changes may have to be covered by the tour member. If due to weather, flight schedules, or other uncontrollable factors, participants are required to spend any additional days or nights in the destination, they will be responsible for any additional expenses incurred, including hotel, transfers, and meal costs. Should you decide not to participate in certain parts of the program, or are for any reason prevented from joining parts of the tour, no refunds will be made for those unused parts of the program. There are no refunds if a portion of the tour is missed due to flight delays or cancellations. Depending on the situation, trip insurance may reimburse for missed portions of the tour. If a staff member is unable to participate, SBMA will make every effort to find a replacement with similar qualifications and no refunds will be made. The tour cost is based on a minimum of 15 participants and is subject to change due to tariffs or other changes. Aside from the deposit, tour payments should be made by check. SBMA’s California Seller of Travel License #: 209026



*Cathedral in the village of Maní*

## RESERVATION FORM – Yucatán

SEND TO: SBMA Travel, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

or FAX TO: (805) 966-6840

or RESERVE BY PHONE: (805) 884-6431

To reserve your space on the tour, a \$1,000 per person deposit is required by check or credit card. Final payment and \$850 tour-associated donation to SBMA are due by check October 1, 2025.

By placing a deposit on the tour, you are acknowledging acceptance of all terms & conditions, including strict cancellation penalty and an understanding of the requirements to participate. **SBMA will not be able to be flexible with the cancellation terms for any reason and highly recommends travel insurance as an important way of protecting your investment.**

☐ A check for the deposit, made payable to “SBMA”, is enclosed.

☐ Please charge the deposit to my credit card: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ AMEX

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as on card: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I/we are not current members; please charge for “Friend” Membership: ☐ \$100 OR ☐ \$80 (senior) OR ☐ \$1,000 “Curator’s Circle” Membership, which gives you advanced notice about SBMA’s custom travel programs and many other benefits. Visit [www.sbma.net/support/membership](http://www.sbma.net/support/membership) for full Membership details.

☐ I will be sharing a room with \_\_\_\_\_ OR ☐ Single Supplement

☐ One Bed OR ☐ Two Beds (based on availability)

☐ Please share any room requests or other requirements and/or limitations you have:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

IMPORTANT: By placing a deposit on the tour, you are acknowledging acceptance of terms and strict cancellation penalty, and that you have read the section on Requirements. A confirmation letter and travel insurance information will be mailed to you upon receipt of your reservation form and deposit. While optional, travel insurance is highly recommended and can be time-sensitive depending on the benefits desired.