



**Santa Barbara Museum of Art**

# *Chiapas*

*Mexico's Mayan Highlands and Jungle Ruins  
in Palenque and San Cristóbal de las Casas*

**with Florencio Moreno**

**November 8 to 16, 2022**

The heart of the Mayan world lies in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state. With a dramatic landscape that varies from mountainous highlands to dense jungle, Chiapas is considered one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world. The colonial architecture and vibrant indigenous culture of Chiapas stand as testament to the fascinating and sometimes turbulent history of the region, one of the first parts of Central and South America to be settled by the Spanish. Hidden in the jungle on twisting mountain roads, one finds monumental stone pyramids and temples—the majestic ruins of ancient Mayan cities of Palenque and Yaxchilán. The villages of the region are still populated by the descendants of the Maya who speak nearly extinct languages like Tzotzil and Tzeltal and are distinguished by their own unique dress, customs, handicrafts, and centuries-old cuisine.



Begin with *one night* in **VILLAHERMOSA** at the *Quinta Real*, located in the heart of the city and close to the airport where flights usually arrive late at night. In this region of Tabasco, the tour begins with two highlights: a private tour of a cocoa hacienda, a crop first cultivated over seven thousand years ago by the Olmec culture, and the monumental stone head Olmec sculptures at La Venta.

Continue to the jungle region of **PALENQUE** for *three nights* at *Hotel Chan-Kah*, located right near the archeological site. Stay in stone and wood bungalows set amid fifty acres of lush jungle. In addition to the extraordinary site of Palenque, we visit the ruins of the rivaling Mayan kingdom Yaxchilán. The distinguishable architectural differences between the sites illustrate the sharp contrast in their communal identities.



Complete the journey in **SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS** for *four nights* at the new *Hotel Bo*, now considered the city's best hotel. One of Mexico's most beautiful colonial towns, the small city of San Cristóbal de las Casas in the highlands is adored by SBMA travelers. Some of the highlights include Casa Na Bolom, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century hacienda of late archaeologist Frans Blom, now a museum and research institute focused on

preserving the area's heritage; a private lecture by Sergio Castro about the textile history of Chiapas; the ornate Church of Santo Domingo; the traditional market, where local villagers come daily to sell their wares in a lively setting overflowing with colorful produce, flowers, textiles, and handicrafts; and in the surrounding areas, opportunities to meet with local villagers who will demonstrate their unique weaving and embroidery techniques, pottery, ironwork, and other arts.

One does not have to travel far to encounter the historic treasures, renowned folk art, and festive traditions of Mayan Mexico. *Condé Nast Traveler* said about Chiapas: "Those in the know say to go now, while it has a similar draw to places like Oaxaca or San Miguel de Allende, but before the crowds arrived" in their list of *21 Places to Go in 2021*. There are no 5-star hotels in Chiapas, but the pay-off is an experience that is etched forever in the minds of travelers who go there.

Temperatures drop as one travels from the jungle to the highlands and November is an ideal time to travel to both areas. There is much variety in the itinerary, which is the new and improved version of SBMA's well-loved last Chiapas trip in 2008. The tour is custom-designed for, and exclusive to, SBMA Members. It is planned and led by one of SBMA's desired guides—cultural anthropologist, historian, and spellbinding storyteller Florencio Moreno—whose ability to bring to life the history and legends of Mexico's fascinating past has made him a favorite of museum travelers.



# Florencio Moreno

## *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.

### *What do Florencio's past SBMA Travelers have to say?*

"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

"Florencio is incredibly thoughtful, kind, helpful and personable. He is an absolute joy and keeps everyone's needs in mind...and makes each day the best it can be." – Anonymous

"Florencio was fabulous; he has such a wealth of knowledge." - Marjorie McShirley







**Tuesday, November 8**

**USA / Villahermosa**

Flights usually arrive in Villahermosa, capital of the state of Tabasco, in the late evening. SBMA will send a suggested LAX flight schedule once the group is formed. A private group transfer with guide and tour leader Florencio Moreno is included for those on the suggested flights to our hotel. Due to flight times, dinner is independent, during the layover in Mexico City. *Quinta Real*

**Wednesday, November 9**

**Villahermosa / Palenque**

After breakfast at the hotel, depart for the **La Venta Archaeological Park with its massive stone heads, artifacts of the Olmec culture that preceded the Maya by several centuries.** The thirty-three monumental sculptures are displayed in a fantastic tropical garden setting, an awe-inspiring way to begin our tour. Continue to the region of Comalcalco to a **traditional cocoa plantation for lunch, chocolate, and a tour.** Cocoa was first cultivated in this area by the Olmecs over seven thousand years ago and it continues to be one of the major crops of the region. Travel into Maya Chol and Lacandón Indian territory toward the town of Palenque. Check into the **Hotel Chan-Kah located right near the archaeological site.** A Welcome Dinner tonight will be at the hotel. *Hotel Chan-Kah (B,L,D)*





## Thursday, November 10

## Palenque / Yaxchilán / Return

Depart after breakfast for an active day in the **Usumacinta River region to visit the magnificent ancient Mayan city of Yaxchilán**. This area is located near the Guatemalan border where the dwindling population of Lacandón Indians still thrives. The site of Yaxchilán lies on the banks of the Usumacinta River and we take a boat to the site. (*One must be able to get in and out of the boat, walk the steep ramp, sometimes without railings, and steps.*) This powerful Maya kingdom dominated nearby Bonampak and was a rival of Palenque. Variations in architectural styles between all the sites demonstrate the distinct cultural boundaries that existed. Yaxchilán is particularly known for its well-preserved sculptured stone details. Lunch will be at Escudo Jaguar in Frontera Corozal, near Yaxchilán. Return to Palenque for an evening at leisure. *Hotel Chan-Kah (B,L)*

## Friday, November 11

## Palenque

Explore the archaeological site of **Palenque, one of the most extraordinary ruins of the Mayan world**. Surrounded by dense jungle, the towering temple pyramids and palaces covered in sublime ornamentation have mesmerized visitors since its rediscovery by a Spanish priest in 1740. Palenque's elegant architecture, descriptive stucco carvings, calligraphy, and decorative friezes reflect the height of artistic achievement in the Classic Period (6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE). Visit the **on-site museum** with a marvelous collection of the latest discoveries from the site. After lunch together, the remainder of the afternoon is free. The close proximity of our hotel affords us the opportunity to return to photograph the site in the late afternoon light; others may choose to enjoy the pool and grounds of the hotel or walk in the jungle to spot macaws, toucans, and howler monkeys in the dense canopy of ceiba trees. Regroup and go into town this evening for dinner at the traditional restaurant Maya Cañada. *Hotel Chan-Kah (B,L,D)*



### Saturday, November 12

### Palenque / San Cristóbal de las Casas

Depart the lush lowlands of Palenque for San Cristóbal de las Casas in the highlands, stopping along the rural route three times, first for a brief photo and to stretch one's legs at Mishol Ha waterfall, then for a longer stop and stroll at the pristine and very different **Agua Azul cascades**, and finally for lunch at La Selva in Ococingo. It is a slow-going drive with ubiquitous speed bumps ("topes", pronounced "TOH-peh") and the occasional roadblock, but once in San Cristóbal de las Casas, much can be explored on foot or by easier drives, and we remain there for our last four nights. Hotel Bo serves as our base from which to explore all that this favorite destination of past SBMA travelers has to offer. Dinner will be at the nearby relaxed restaurant Los Barrios de Jovel, which specializes in regional cuisine. *Hotel Bo (B,L,D)*

### Sunday, November 13

### San Cristóbal de las Casas

Set out on a morning walking tour of the **historic district of San Cristóbal de las Casas**, beginning with a walk through the **traditional mercado**. The market is a colorful scene with indoor and outdoor stalls overflowing with goods from the region such as peppers, fish, flowers, and handicrafts. From the market, walk through **the newly-reopened Anthropology Museum** and stop in front of the elaborate façade of the **Church of Santo Domingo**. After lunch in the dining room of the **Na Bolom Museum**, visit the museum, which is the former home of archeologist Frans Blom and his journalist/photographer wife, Gertrude Duby. The pair spent their lives dedicated to the study of the Lacandón Indians. Their house is now a museum and research center that continues the work of its founders by conserving the cultural and ecological heritage of San Cristóbal and the Lacandón Jungle. Our walking tour ends at **Taller de Leñateros, an artisan co-op of Mayan villagers** who produce handmade paper, books, and silk-screened cards and posters. *Hotel Bo (B,L)*





## Monday, November 14

## San Cristóbal de las Casas surrounding areas

Drive north into **Indian territory in the mountains surrounding San Cristóbal** where traditions preserved by the Tzotzil and Tzeltal peoples can be traced back to the Mayans. Begin in the Tzotzil market town of **San Juan Chamula**. Visit the unique church, the central gathering point of the town, where shamans perform rituals and cleansings, and learn how Mayan and Christian traditions have merged. Continue to the textile village of San Andres Larrainzar to **visit with Fidencia Perez Hernandez, an exceptional Tzeltal weaver**, who will demonstrate her family's fine embroidery techniques and use of natural dyes. After lunch back in town, visit a **small private space that showcases the iron works traditional to this region, including iron roof crosses found on many buildings in Chiapas**. End the day with **local silversmith Elizabeth Sanchez for a private viewing over cocktails** of her beautiful, unique designs that incorporate local gems. *Hotel Bo (B,L)*



## Tuesday, November 15

## San Cristóbal de las Casas surrounding areas

Head south this morning to the traditional Tzeltal villages that rarely see tourists, in the opposite direction than we traveled yesterday, and see how varied their artistic traditions are. Begin with a **women's co-op of blouse makers** in Aguacatenango. Their brilliantly embroidered textiles feature floral motifs as bright as their personalities. Visit with the **talented potters of the famous Chiapas Jaguars** at Amatenango del Valle and walk through the village. After lunch nearby at a small traditional restaurant, return to San Cristóbal. This evening **visit privately with Sergio Castro, a collector of textiles** from the surrounding Mayan villages and philanthropist. Sergio will discuss the history and symbolism of the Mayan weavings with our group (pending final confirmation). **Bid farewell to Mexico with margaritas and a festive dinner.** *Hotel Bo (B,L,D)*

## Wednesday, November 16

## San Cristóbal de las Casas / Tuxtla Gutiérrez / U.S.

After breakfast depart for the airport in Tuxtla Gutiérrez (1 ½ hours). SBMA will send a suggested LAX flight schedule once the group is formed and the transfer to the airport is included for those on the suggested flights. *(B)*



### Tour Costs:

- **Per person cost, double occupancy:** \$4,280
- **Per person cost, single occupancy:** \$5,555
- **Plus Tour-Related Donation to SBMA:** \$500 per person

### Included:

- Hotel accommodations for 8 nights
- Breakfast daily plus other meals indicated at the end of each day with the letter *L* for lunch and *D* for dinner.
- All entrance fees for included activities, excursions, sightseeing, tours, and special occasions as described
- All land transportation by private coach for included activities including airport transfers in Mexico for those on the suggested flights
- The services of Study Leader/Guide Florencio Moreno and SBMA host throughout
- Most gratuities including to porters, housekeeping, site guides, and waiters for included activities and meals
- Pre-tour gathering in Santa Barbara a few weeks prior to departure

**Not included:** Flights to Villahermosa and from Tuxtla Gutiérrez; checked baggage fees; airport transfers in home city; airport transfers in Mexico and porter tips for those not on the suggested flights; passport and all other airline and travel fees; customary tips to Florencio Moreno and drivers; optional travel insurance (highly recommended); expenses incurred as a result of delays or deviations; items of a personal nature such as room service, not-included meals and beverages, telephone or internet charges; and items not specifically mentioned as included.

**Air Arrangements:** To allow maximum flexibility for travelers, flights to Villahermosa and from Tuxtla Gutiérrez are not included in the cost of the tour. A suggested flight schedule will be sent to confirmed passengers once the group has been formed. Please do not book your flights until the minimum group size has been reached. Airport transfers between the airports in Mexico and the hotels will be included for those on these 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.

**Requirements:** For your own enjoyment and the enjoyment of the group, we must stress the following requirements. Participants must be physically fit and in active good health. Days will be busy with a moderate amount of walking and standing during tours. Sightseeing excursions may last for a few hours with distances of up to a few miles and participants must be able to keep pace with a larger group, get on and off of busses, and navigate uneven terrain, stairs, and slippery surfaces with ease and without assistance. On this tour in particular, participants must be able to get in and out of a boat and walk steep steps to get from the water to the entrance of Yaxchilán and must be amenable to a curvy road from Palenque to San Cristobal with many road bumps. Good health and stamina plus a sense of adventure and a positive, flexible attitude about delays and inconveniences are also essential. Participants must enjoy being part of a group tour. 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. We reserve the right to ask you for health information before you travel.

**Museum Membership Requirement:** Travel is a benefit of Museum Membership. Non-members will be required to join at the general "Friend" level (\$80 or \$60 for seniors) or higher and will receive full membership benefits for a year. Members at the \$500 "Enthusiast" level and above receive advance notice about SBMA-custom tours. Membership is separate from the \$500 donation, which is the portion of your tour cost that is tax deductible.

### FOR MORE INFO OR TO MAKE A RESERVATION:

**Phone:** (805) 884-6436

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

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

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



**Covid-19 Requirements:** For the protection of SBMA travelers and to adhere to the requirements of tour operators, suppliers, and the destinations (i.e. countries, hotels, museums, restaurants, many of which are requiring it), tour participants must be fully vaccinated for Covid-19 and provide SBMA with proof of vaccination prior to departure. A negative test before the tour begins is currently required by SBMA, if not already required by the destination. Other Covid-19 requirements may apply and further details will be sent prior to departure.

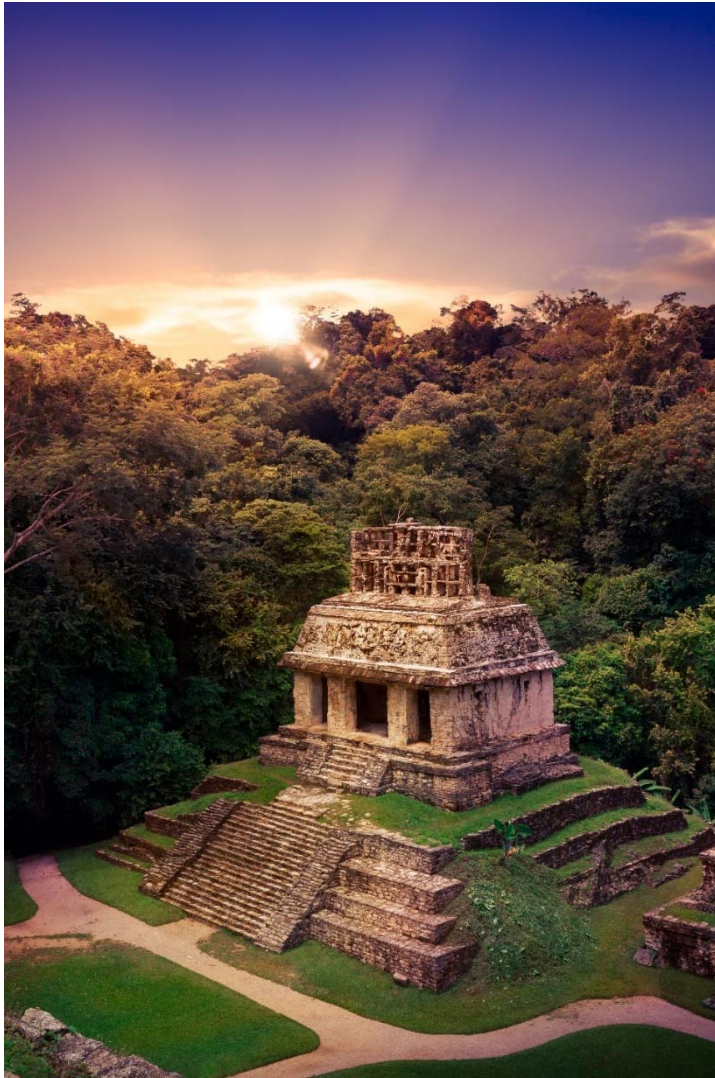
**General Caution:** This is a group tour taking place in the era of a pandemic and we urge everyone to be cautious before departure and to take precautions while traveling and on tour, in order to keep the group as safe as possible. Travel always has inherent risks. There are new and constantly evolving risks with travelling during the Covid-19 pandemic. When choosing to travel during this time you are accepting these risks. There will be times during the tour where you gather with your fellow travelers unmasked, such as during meals. There are things we as individuals can do to mitigate risk such as masking and distancing if possible and when appropriate. It is important to be aware of your personal health status and let tour staff know if you develop a sore throat, runny nose, cough or other symptoms. New policies may be implemented during the tour such as daily testing if deemed necessary by tour staff. We greatly appreciate your help with keeping yourself and those around you as safe as possible.

**Tour Protocols Regarding Covid-19:** Travel has the potential to transform people and places, to have a positive impact on those lucky enough to experience it, and to make one's life richer forever. Our goal is to make those experiences a reality while implementing science-based methods for staying healthy while traveling. At SBMA Travel we are committed to your comfort, health, and safety. Due to the ever-changing nature of the pandemic, protocols will be adjusted to fit the current health and safety guidelines at the time of travel. Information will be provided to participants before and during travel. SBMA and on-the-ground suppliers will take appropriate measures and reserve the right to make adjustments to respond to up-to-date regulations. Since guidelines change month-to-month, specific requirements for this tour will be shared closer to departure based on the requirements to operate a safe tour at that time. We ask that all travelers kindly comply with requests from tour staff in the interests of everyone's comfort and safety. Tour leaders reserve the right to enforce rules established for the tour and by any authority such as tour operator, SBMA, government, vendors, etc. Tour members who do not comply can be removed from the tour at their own expense.

If by chance you test positive for Covid-19 in the 72 hours leading up to the tour, or at any time during the tour, you will need to remove yourself from group activities and will not be able to rejoin the tour until testing negative on a clinic or physician issued test. It is for this reason that we highly recommend travel insurance. You should confirm with the insurance company what will (and will not) be covered in the event you contract Covid-19 and are unable to continue on the tour. You will also want to know what documentation the insurance company will require to support a claim should you need to file one. Tour staff will assist as needed with adjusting hotel reservations and transfers, arranging or offering guidance for doctor visits, testing, and interpreting the local regulations.

**Cancellation Policy:** Your reservation deposit (\$600 per person) is partially refundable before July 1, 2022, minus a \$250 per person cancellation fee. On July 1, 2022 your deposit becomes fully non-refundable. Final payment is due by check August 8, 2022 (3 months prior) and becomes non-refundable on September 8, 2022. The SBMA tour-related donation may be paid any time before the final payment 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.** We HIGHLY recommend a travel insurance policy with "Cancel for Any Reason" (CFAR) coverage, as SBMA will not be able to reimburse you in the event of cancellation. If SBMA and/or our operator call off the tour, we would likely postpone rather than cancel the tour and transfer monies paid to the new dates. If you are unable to participate in the future dates, we would attempt to reimburse you what we can, but reimbursements are not guaranteed since our suppliers are not legally obliged to give refunds. We can only refund what we can recover from the vendors.

**Travel Insurance:** A confirmation letter and travel insurance information will be sent to you upon receipt of your tour deposit. While optional, due to the Covid-19 pandemic it is highly recommended to get travel insurance with the benefit to “Cancel for Any Reason” (CFAR). It is crucial to purchase travel insurance within 21 days of your



deposit and that you understand all aspects of your policy. We recommend insuring only the deposit at first (please note, however, that it is your responsibility to insure the additional payments as soon as you make them; if you prefer not to have to think about this, please insure the total tour cost.) 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 fear of travel due to Covid-19, if you contract or show symptoms of Covid-19 prior to departure or during the tour, or you are exposed to someone with Covid-19 prior or during the tour, including from another tour participant. If the tour can be operated in compliance with U.S. safety guidelines and the destination’s government policies, and one makes the personal choice to cancel, all cancellation penalties apply. Insurance with the CFAR may be your only source of (partial, usually 75%) reimbursement. In addition, travel insurance policies usually include international health insurance that is crucial coverage if you get any illness, including Covid-19. As with any other sickness or injury, we and our suppliers cannot be held responsible or liable in the event that a participant contracts Covid-19, is prevented from traveling due to a positive Covid-19 test, is denied exit from, or entry to, a country or has to isolate abroad or on their return because of health issues, including Covid-19, or due to government/border regulations. Again, travelers are strongly advised to take out personal travel insurance with CFAR to cover for such eventualities.

**Misc. notes:** Arrangements, private visits, meetings with individuals, and tour cost are all subject to change. Some restaurant names are listed, but there are bound to be changes, especially due to the pandemic. Final restaurant selections will be based on the best options available in each place. 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 is based on a minimum of 8. Final payment is to be made by check. Regarding mealtimes in Mexico, typically group lunches will occur at around 1:30 pm (and in some cases 2 pm) in the tradition of the Mexican comida, and group dinners around 7:30 pm, with adjustments on certain days.



## RESERVATION FORM ~ CHIAPAS, MEXICO

**RESERVE BY PHONE:** (805) 884-6435

or **MAIL FORM TO:** SBMA Travel, 1130 State Street,  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

or **FAX FORM TO:** (805) 966-6840

or **EMAIL FORM TO:** [travel@sbma.net](mailto:travel@sbma.net)

To hold your space on the tour, a **\$600 per person deposit is required** (*refundable before July 1, 2022 minus a \$250 cancellation fee*) paid by check or credit card. Final payment is due by check August 8, 2022 (3 months prior). The tour-related donation to SBMA may be paid any time before final payment by separate check.

☐ A check 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Travelers using a credit card may reserve by fax: (805) 966-6840 or phone: (805) 884-6435.

☐ I/we are not current members; please charge for general membership: ☐ \$80 OR ☐ \$60 (senior)  
OR ☐ \$500, which gives you advanced notice about SBMA's most special 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)

☐ I/we are interested in knowing about room upgrade options.

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 sent 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.