THE MAYA
With Archaeologist William Saturno • December 4–12, 2022

RISK-FREE DEPOSITS
Deposits are 100% refundable until September 5, 2022.
See inside for more details
DEAR COMMONWEALTH CLUB MEMBER,

The Maya, a Mesoamerican civilization noted for the only known fully developed written language of the pre-Columbian Americas, also made remarkable advances in art, architecture, mathematics, and astronomical systems. Chiapas is one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world, and this extraordinary itinerary ventures to the heart of the Lacandón jungle to remote archaeological sites, with scarlet macaws and troops of howler monkeys swinging in the treetops above you.

Our journey allows us to explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palenque as well as the more-remote but impressive sites such as Yaxchilan and Tonina to see remarkably well-preserved murals and ornate hieroglyphics. Also enjoy the architecture and vibrant indigenous culture of San Cristobal de la Casas, a stunning colonial city nestled in the mountainous central highlands. Meet with local guides, naturalists, and artisans to learn about the region’s rich legacies.

Featuring experts William Saturno and Margaret “Wiggie” Andrews, this trip will delve into the world of the ancient Maya civilization in a way few others can. To make your reservation, please return the attached reservation form, call us at 415-597-6720, or e-mail us at travel@commonwealthclub.org.

Sincerely,

Kristina Nemeth
Travel Director
Dec 4
Home / Villahermosa, Mexico
Depart home and fly to Villahermosa, Mexico. Gather with fellow travelers in the evening to savor local cuisine at a special welcome reception and dinner.
HYATT VILLAHERMOSA (R,D)

Dec 5
Palenque
Begin the day with a welcome orientation and lecture, followed by a visit to La Venta Park to see colossal Olmec sculptures. Drive to Palenque this afternoon and settle into the hotel, which is immersed in the jungle. Amenities include a full-service spa and cenote-inspired pool.
CHAN KAH RESORT (B,L,D)

Dec 6
Palenque
Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site Palenque, one of the most important Maya sites in the world. Enjoy a full day at the Palenque ruins, including the Temple of Inscriptions, Temple of the Sun, and Temple of the Foliated Cross, which holds the most comprehensive sources of Maya text known to exist. After dinner, enjoy a private after-hours sunset tour of the site.
CHAN KAH RESORT (B,L,D)

Dec 7
Palenque
Drive to Frontera Corozal overlooking the Usamacinta River. This journey takes you down the river by small motorized boat to remote Yaxchilán—said to be named for its green stone. The city’s position on the water gave it a central role in river commerce during the Classic period. Discover the site’s jungle-shrouded ruins, paying close attention to its ornate building facades and roof combs and keeping an eye out for the scarlet macaws and troops of howler monkeys that inhabit the surrounding treetops. Return to Palenque this afternoon.
CHAN KAH RESORT (B,L,D)

Dec 8
San Cristobal de las Casas
Visit Misol Ha waterfall en route to the archaeological site of Tonina and its spectacular mural of the Four Eras. Venture along paths carved through the jungle to the main sites, gnarled tree roots at your feet and howler monkeys swinging in the trees above your heads. Marvel at the jungle-shrouded ruins and remarkably well-preserved murals, where carved stone lintels span temple doorways and ornate hieroglyphics flank stairways. Your guide will decipher the scenes and explain how the Maya were able to create such vibrant hues using natural materials. Continue to San Cristobal de las Casas, arriving early this evening.
HOTEL BO (B,L,D)

Dec 9
San Cristobal de las Casas
Explore the Spanish colonial city situated in a small valley surrounded by hills in the central highlands of Chiapas. Enjoy a guided walk of the historic district and the town’s traditional market. Visit the Na Balom Museum and meet with local artists. The afternoon and evening are free for independent exploration, with time to wander and soak up the atmosphere at your own pace.
HOTEL BO (B,L)

Dec 10
San Cristobal de las Casas
Delve into the local economic landscape of the region with special focus on textiles, iron, silver, and handmade paper. Visit the smaller indigenous Tzotzil towns of San Juan Chamula and Zinacantan and learn about traditional weaving and metal works.
HOTEL BO (B,L)

Dec 11
San Cristobal de las Casas
Spend the morning with local artisans and learning more about the colorful textiles of Chiapas. The afternoon is free for independent exploration. Gather to celebrate your journey at a farewell dinner this evening.
HOTEL BO (B,L,D)

Dec 12
San Cristobal de las Casas / Home
Transfer to the Tuxtla Gutierrez airport for flights home. (B)
General Information

Program rates

Per person, sharing................................................................. $6,690
Single supplement................................................................... $1,990

Program rates include

All accommodations, meals, and excursions as specified in the itinerary, including 8 breakfasts, 7 lunches, and 6 dinners • Comprehensive program of briefings, lectures, and presentations • Airport transfers for all participants on group arrival and departure dates • All gratuities to porters, wait staff, guides, and drivers for all group activities • Entrance fees • House wine and beer with welcome and farewell dinners and receptions • Bottled water on motorcoaches • Comprehensive packet of pre-departure information • Professional tour manager throughout the program

Group size

This program can accommodate 24 participants and is exclusive to The Commonwealth Club.

Program rates do not include

U.S. domestic and international airfare • Passport/visa expenses • Medical expenses, immunizations, or COVID testing if required at time of travel • Travel and trip cancellation insurance • Private transfers or airport transfers outside of group arrival and departure dates • Excursions that deviate from the scheduled tour options • Airline baggage charges • Meals not specified in the itinerary; dishes and beverages not part of the included meals; liquor or soft drinks except as noted • Laundry or dry cleaning • Telephone, fax, internet, and email charges • Room service • Other items of a personal nature

Air arrangements

U.S. domestic and international airfare is not included in the program rates. Valerie Wilson Travel, Inc., can help with airline arrangements for this trip and can be reached at 877-376-1754. You are also welcome to book your air transportation through your local travel agent, an online travel site, or the airline of your choice. Further information about making flight arrangements will be sent to confirmed participants.

What to expect

Our daily program will be active. Much of the time each day will be spent outdoors, often in the sun, exploring archaeological sites where walking will range from easy walks on level paths to more strenuous walks on hilly, uneven terrain. While we maintain a moderate pace throughout the program, you should be in good overall health and able to walk and stand for several hours at the archaeological sites (although there are resting spots along the way). There is a fair amount of traveling during the program, which will be by modern, air-conditioned motor coach on roads that range from modern superhighways to narrower, winding roads. Daily drives generally range from one to two hours, with two longer drives of about five to six hours with some stops and site visits along the way. Temperatures should reach into the mid to high 80s (°F) during the day, dropping into the 60s in the early mornings and evening, and with the high humidity it can feel hotter. All participants and tour staff will be required to be fully vaccinated for SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19), plus follow safety/sanitization protocols set forth by the tour operator, local staff, and host country laws.

Study Leaders

Archaeologist William Saturno has received numerous National Geographic grants to support his excavation of ancient Maya murals and artifacts. His breakthrough discovery at San Bartolo of the oldest intact Maya murals yet found became the focus of the January 2006 National Geographic magazine article “The Dawn of Maya Gods and Kings,” and the June 2012 issue described his recent unearthing of murals at Xultún. Bill has also served as Field Director of the Rio Amarillo Archaeological Project in Western Honduras, examining the relationships of Maya cities around Copán.

A native Yucatecan, Tour Manager Margaret “Wiggie” Andrews is the daughter of the late well-known archaeologist E. Wyllys Andrews. She is a graduate of Tulane University with a degree in art history, and has studied in France, Italy, and Egypt. Wiggie has worked extensively at Chichen Itza helping to interpret and record Maya glyphs and stone carvings and has coauthored two papers on this subject. She is fluent in French, Spanish and English. Wiggie’s husband, Chris Holder, is assisting her on this trip.

San Cristóbal de las Casas

Traditional Tortilla Baking
To reserve space, please call (415) 597-6720 (preferred method) or complete the reservation form and mail it with your check or credit card information to: The Commonwealth Club, 110 The Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA 94105. You may also fax the form to (415) 597-6729 and your reservation will be held pending receipt of your check or credit card information. If you have questions, please call (415) 597-6720 or email travel@commonwealthclub.org.

NAME #1  BIRTHDATE

NAME #2  BIRTHDATE

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP / POSTAL CODE

HOME PHONE  MOBILE PHONE

E-MAIL(S)

MEMBERSHIP
We require membership in the Commonwealth Club to travel with us. Please check one of the following options:

I am a current member of the Commonwealth Club

Please renew my membership with the credit card information provided here

I will visit commonwealthclub.org/membership to sign up for a membership

PAYMENT

Please charge the deposit to my credit card (circle one):

VISA  MC  DISCOVER

AMEX

NAME ON CREDIT CARD

CARD #  EXP. DATE  SECURITY CODE

SIGNATURE AS IT APPEARS ON CREDIT CARD

DATE

Enclosed is my check for $_________ ($1,000 per person, payable to Criterion Travel) to reserve _______ place(s) on The Maya

SINGLE TRAVELERS

If this is a reservation for one person, please indicate:

I prefer to have single accommodations.

I plan to share accommodations with:

or

I’d like to know about roommates

I understand that if a roommate cannot be found by the final payment deadline of September 5, 2022, I will pay the single rate.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Cabin category preference:

1st Choice  2nd Choice

Bed Preference (not guaranteed):

One bed  Two beds

Sign here if the above is as stated here:

SIGNATURE

DATE

SIGNATURE

DATE
The Maya

With Archaeologist William Saturno • December 4–12, 2022

Enjoy a full day at World Heritage Site Palenque, one of the most impressive Maya sites.

Visit the superb yet lesser-known sites of Yaxchilan and Tonina.

Immerse yourself in the cultural treasures of San Cristobal de las Casas.

Meet with expert local naturalists, artisans, and archaeologists.