Travel with The Met

The Yucatán: From the Ancient Maya to Contemporary Art
with Joanne Pillsbury
Andrall E. Pearson Curator of Ancient American Art

February 18–25, 2020
Dear Members and Friends of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

Please join me next February in the Yucatán, where ancient Maya culture flourishes amidst balmy beaches and inventive contemporary art. From the capital Mérida’s cobblestoned streets to the world-famous ruins and natural wonders outside its city limits, you’ll discover a fascinating blend of cultures that reveal the staggering complexity of this region.

We will begin in Mérida, a charming ancient city that features colorful colonial architecture. Highlights of our visit will be the Paseo de Montejo, an elegant boulevard lined with 19th-century mansions, and a glimpse into the oldest cathedral in the Americas, which was built with stones from Maya ruins. Next, at sunset, we will explore the UNESCO-listed Maya ruins of Uxmal, a collection of awe-inspiring pre-Columbian structures in a complex layout designed to view astronomical events. We will stay in beautifully restored haciendas, redolent of the rise of great wealth in the 19th century from henequen production.

We will peer into the area’s cenotes, water-filled sinkholes that the ancient Maya deemed sacred. The most famous of these is at Chichén Itzá, the archaeological site featuring the Castillo, the pyramid recently named one of the Seven New Wonders of the World. We will also experience the ancient Maya site of Ek’ Balam, a walled city where recent research has revealed exciting discoveries.

International artists are flocking to the Yucatán, creating spectacular works that merge modern and ancient worlds. We will receive exclusive access to U.S. artist James Turrell’s lighting installations that transform ancient Maya sites into canvases that challenge human perception. We will also enjoy a private visit to Cuban-American artist Jorge Pardo’s sprawling complex of buildings, pools, and gardens built on the ruins of a 17th-century hacienda.

I hope to meet you in the Yucatán for an unmissable tour you will discuss for years.

Sincerely,

Joanne Pillsbury

Andrall E. Pearson Curator of Ancient American Art
Department of Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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**Traveling with You**
Joanne Pillsbury

A specialist in the arts of the ancient Americas, Joanne Pillsbury is Andrall E. Pearson Curator of Ancient American Art. She is the author, editor, or co-editor of numerous publications, including the three-volume Guide to Documentary Sources for Andean Studies, 1530–1900, and Past Presented: Archaeological Illustration and the Ancient Americas and the Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Award-winning Ancient Maya Art at Dumbarton Oaks. Her 2017 exhibition catalogue, Golden Kingdoms: Luxury Arts in the Ancient Americas (prepared with Timothy Potts and Kim Richter), was the winner of a PROSE Award for Excellence.

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**Trip Highlights**

- Marvel at the way light becomes art at two private and exclusive visits of acclaimed artist James Turrell’s brilliant installations amidst Maya ruins
- Take a dip in the sacred waters of a cenote
- Savor a private lunch served in the chapel ruins of a historic hacienda
- Enjoy special access to the mesmerizing world created by Cuban-American artist Jorge Pardo, built on the ruins of a 17th-century hacienda
- Dine in a 19th-century mansion that brings together the Yucatán’s best designers and artisans
- Experience a special sunset viewing of Uxmal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring the most beautiful collection of pre-Columbian architecture
- Explore the little-known yet spectacular Ek’ Balam, a recently uncovered walled city and active archaeological site where dramatic discoveries continue to emerge

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*Cenote, Yucatán Peninsula*
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Mérida / Uxmal / Temozón Sur
Thursday, February 20
Start today with a visit to the MACAY, a museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art of the Yucatán. Then depart Mérida for the countryside, where Maya culture is thriving. Stop en route for lunch and drive to a 17th-century sisal hacienda, Ochil, to discover Arbol de Luz by innovative American artist, James Turrell. In this site-specific work, a symphony of lights reflects upon the ancient amphitheater and mysterious cenote, a naturally occurring well commonly found in the Yucatán that the Maya found sacred. Dinner tonight is at the Hacienda Ochil. Drive to Hacienda Temozón, where we will spend two nights. B, L, D

Temozón Sur / Puuc Route
Friday, February 21
Leave on a road trip to explore the enigmatic sites found along the Puuc Route, where the spirit and poignancy of the ancient Maya culture is found on an intimate scale. Stop at three of these impressive sites: Kabah, whose extraordinary palace is covered in masks of the hook-nosed rain god, Chac; the impressive three-tiered palace at Sayil; and Labná, whose beautiful, V-shaped corbelled arch is a highlight. Afterward, enjoy a lunch at the private Hacienda Xocnaceh, served in the chapel ruins. Then enter this ancient world with a late afternoon visit to the most haunting of all these sites–Uxmal. Considered the most beautiful collection of pre-Columbian architecture in existence, its Pyramid of the Magician and the tranquil Quadrangle of the Nuns make this UNESCO Heritage Site especially compelling when visited at sunset. Drive to Hacienda Temozón for dinner and overnight. B, L, D

Tecoh / Izamal / Tixkokob
Saturday, February 22
A morning drive to Tecoh brings us to Jorge Pardo’s complex built on the ruins of a 17th-century hacienda. Here the series of buildings, pools, and gardens combine ancient and modern design, local craftsmanship and technology, natural landscapes, and fantastical interiors to achieve a united and dynamic experience. Enjoy lunch before driving to Izamal, an ancient Maya town and artist’s community, whose blend of Maya, Spanish, and modern cultures create an intriguing atmosphere. Visit the brilliantly stuccoed Convent of St. Anthony of Padua, a Baroque monastery built on top of a Maya pyramid. Stop by the workshops of local artisans and view their unique creations. Dinner is in the area. Afterwards, drive to Hacienda San José in Tixkokob, where we will spend two nights. B, L, D

Chichén Itzá / Tixkokob
Sunday, February 23
Awake early this morning for a visit of the pre-Hispanic world’s most celebrated archaeological site, Chichén Itzá. See the famous Castillo, a pyramid recently declared

Departure
Tuesday, February 18
Depart by air to Mérida. Arrive in this charming city and transfer to the hotel, where we will enjoy a welcome reception. R

Mérida, Mexico
Wednesday, February 19
This morning, explore the colonial heritage of this fascinating town. Stroll along the Paseo de Montejo, a broad and elegant boulevard lined with grand 19th-century mansions, among which is the Palacio Cantón, whose architecture is a combination of European neoclassical and French Baroque styles. Stop at the lively Plaza Grande, Mérida’s main square, and visit its cathedral, which is among the oldest in the Americas, built with stones from a Maya temple. Admire the elaborate façade of triumphal conquistadors on the 16th-century Casa de Montejo. Enjoy lunch in the area before heading to the new, world-class Gran Museo del Mundo Maya, whose contemporary architecture houses a permanent collection of more than 1,100 remarkably well-preserved artifacts. Dine tonight at the innovative Casa T’Hō Concept House, a 19th-century mansion and showcase for the best Yucatán designers and artisans. B, L, D

More Travels with The Met
Bermuda: Exclusive Collections & Historic Homes December 5–10, 2019
A Journey into Antiquity: Egypt & the Nile Dec 29, 2019–Jan 9, 2020
Temple Arts of Southern India Jan 23–Feb 7, 2020
Met Classics Rome March 16–22, 2020

For details and more trip information, please go to metmuseum.org/travel
one of the Seven New Wonders of the World, and the Sacred Cenote. A private visit to the crystalline waters of the Xocempich cenote provides a lush and serene setting that is perfect for a swim among hanging vines and tropical plants. Then, dine beneath the magnificent old trees for lunch. Drive back to Hacienda San José, where dinner will be served. B, L, D

**Tixkokob / Agua de Luz / Valladolid**

**Monday, February 24**
Enjoy a morning at leisure before checking out for a private visit to James Turrell’s Agua de Luz. This American artist combines light and space with a Maya pyramid to create an artwork that challenges the limits of human perception. Upon arrival, refreshments will be served before dinner and a visit to the site at sunset, when the light is most magical. Afterwards, drive to the colonial town of Valladolid, where we will spend the night. B, D

**Valladolid / Ek’ Balam / Return**

**Tuesday, February 25**
Check out early to explore the archaeological site of Ek’ Balam, a magnificent city, enclosed in walls, with richly carved, well-preserved sculptures and a great pyramid that you can climb for views of the Riviera Maya. Then, drive to Cancun International Airport for flights home. B

This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Arrangements Abroad. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms.

**Accommodations**

Rosas & Xocolate Design Hotel, Mérida
Created by combining two historic haciendas, Rosas & Xocolate is a chic boutique hotel with a terrific restaurant and a spa specializing in coco-based treatments.

Hacienda Temozón, Temozón Sur
Enjoy 17th-century style and the most invigorating massage therapy the region has to offer at this former sisa estate.

Hacienda San José, Tixkokob
Perched amidst beautiful tropical flora, Hacienda San José is an historic plantation house that offers modern comforts in an atmosphere of the past.

Casa Marlene & Casa Tía Micha, Valladolid
Sister properties Casa Marlene & Casa Tía Micha are small boutique hotels located on the same block in the historical center of this colonial town.

**Program Rate**

$8,999 per person, double rate
$10,999 single rate

**Rate Includes**

— Seven nights accommodations as per itinerary
— Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner); bottled water and coffee/tea with all meals; house wine at included dinners
— Enrichment program of lectures and talks
— Escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits
— Airport/hotel/airport group transfers for all participants on suggested flights
— Gratuities to local guides and drivers
— Taxes, service, and porterage charges

**Not included in rate**
International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; alcoholic beverages other than as noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; airport transfers other than for those on suggested flights; baggage in excess of one suitcase; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

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**Reservation Form**
To secure your reservation, please call Arrangements Abroad at 844-TRVLMET (844-878-5638), or complete this form and return it with your deposit of $1,000 per person (of which $500 is non-refundable for administrative fees), to be paid by debit card, credit card, wire transfer, or check payable to Arrangements Abroad. Mail to: Arrangements Abroad, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10018-3721.

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**Accommodations**

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**Form of payment**

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Each participant must sign below. I/We have read, understand and agree to the Terms & Conditions at www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms and detailed in program documents. I/We agree to full payment 120 days prior to departure.

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For additional information, please call 844-TRVLMET (844-878-5638) or to opt out from receiving mail, email travelwiththemet@metmuseum.org.
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