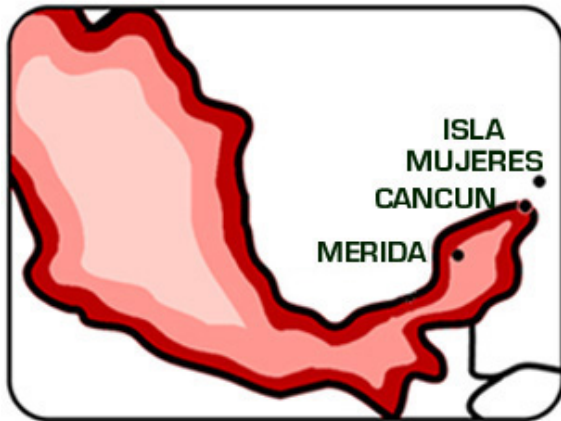


MAYA SUN

Merida Hotel or Homestay



DAY ONE - Merida

Arrive in the Merida or Cancun international airport. Merida is the cultural and artistic heart and soul of the Yucatan Peninsula, as well as the capital of Yucatan state. When the Spanish invaded Merida, the original Maya city was called Th'o. Though it is a large city, Merida retains a distinct small town charm in the centro historico where narrow streets are lined with colorful colonial facades. This historic city offers you insights into a rich culture, incredible cuisine, a variety of boutiques, an authentic souvenir bargaining experience and friendly people. Relax and enjoy the amenities of your centrally located hotel or meet your host families.

HOMESTAY GROUPS: Host families are interviewed, selected and monitored by the Institute of Modern Spanish, founded in 1955. The school serves as the central meeting point. On the initial excursion, a member of the host family accompanies the students. Most are within walking distance while a few might prefer public transportation or safe, private taxis. Host families live in middle to upper middle-class northern suburbs of Merida.

DAY TWO- Conozca Merida & Markets

Start your morning with a guided walking tour of Merida's Centro Historico from Santa Lucia Park to the Plaza Grande, which is lined with some of Merida's finest architectural treasures. Explore the 16th century San Ildefonso Cathedral, built on the site of a former Maya temple, the Casa de Montejo and Palacio Municipal. Following lunch, browse the souvenir stores and practice your Spanish while you hone your bargaining skills in the traditional market, widely recognized as the Mecca of Markets in the Yucatan.

DAY THREE - Uxmal / Choco-Story *InterAction*

Uxmal has a magical feel and deep spirit not found at other Yucatan sites. This archeological site is a wonderful balance of jungle, wide open spaces, and few visitors as you marvel over the classic Puuc architecture of the Maya. Following lunch, explore Choco-Story Uxmal, where you'll travel back in time to an era of splendor in a Maya pueblo setting. Learn about daily life, enter their homes, cornfields, and gardens, and learn how cacao is transformed into chocolate. Sample a natural cacao beverage, watch the live crafting of hand-made ceramics by regional artisans, and witness a Maya ceremony.

DAY FOUR – SOMOS / *InterAction*

Start your day with your exclusive SOMOS humanitarian *interAction*. After arrival, you'll receive a list of the most needed items and stop at a major mall, where you can purchase those items. Please budget a minimum of \$15. Continue to a local orphanage or school to interact in your assigned volunteer project. Afterwards, you'll have an opportunity to gather at the language school for a relaxing swim in their private pool.

DAY FIVE - Chichen & Cenotes/Isla Mujeres

Chichen Itza is a UNESCO World Heritage site and has been designated as one of the new 7 Wonders of the World. Following your exploration in the coolness of the jungle morning, you'll stop for lunch and have an opportunity for a refreshing swim in a cenote, a pristine subterranean lake. Continue your journey to Isla Mujeres, located a short ferry ride from the Cancun coast. This picturesque island is seven kilometers long and less than one kilometer wide, with lagoons, rocky coastline and wide sandy beaches. It is surrounded by the many stunning hues of blue of the gorgeous Caribbean Sea.

DAY SIX & DAY SEVEN - Isla Mujeres

Relax in your hotel pool, browse the souvenir markets or arrange an optional activity such as a snorkeling tour (approximately \$50 with lunch), or Dolphin Discovery (book online and pay direct; fees vary).

DAY EIGHT - Return to United States



8 DAYS



7 NIGHTS

Merida Hotel or Homestay
Isla Mujeres

4
3



MEALS

Hotel portion: Daily breakfast & either lunch or dinner.
Homestay portion includes all meals.