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## GEEO ITINERARY

Yucatan Peninsula 3/30/2024

### **Day 1: Playa del Carmen Arrive at any time.**

You may arrive in Playa del Carmen at any time today. The closest airport to Playa del Carmen and Tulum is Cancun International Airport, located just south of Cancún. Feel free to plan your flights to allow an extra night or two before or after the tour if you would like to spend some time in Cancun. We can also book extra hotel nights for you in Playa del Carmen. There are no planned activities, so check into our hotel and enjoy the city. We will have a group meeting in the evening around 6:00 p.m. There will be a note at the front desk to let you know the exact time and location of the meeting. The note will also tell you what time to meet in the lobby in the morning if you arrive too late for the meeting. If you miss this meeting, please don't worry; your tour leader will go over everything with you in the morning.

### **Day 2: Playa del Carmen to Isla Holbox (B) Travel by private bus and ferry to Isla Holbox, known for its beautiful beaches, clear blue waters, and abundance of wildlife.**

Start off with some relaxing beach time and sunshine on the tropical island of Isla Holbox. Travel by bus and ferry from Playa del Carmen to the island and get your bearings on an orientation walk with your tour leader. Wander past colorful murals featuring images of bright turquoise waters, follow unpaved sandy streets, and soak in the bohemian carefree atmosphere. Spend the rest of the afternoon exploring the island or hanging out at the beach. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by private vehicle, 30 mins by ferry

### **Day 3: Isla Holbox (B) Enjoy a free day on the island.**

Spend a free day enjoying the small, laid-back island of Isla Holbox. Take advantage of the beach and clear blue waters to go swimming, strike up a volleyball game, opt to try some snorkeling, or rent a kayak. You have all day to do as you please.

### **Day 4: Holbox/Izamal (B) Travel by ferry and bus to Chichén Itzá. Explore the Maya ruins and learn about the history, beliefs, and rituals of the ancient Maya civilization. Continue to the small town of Izamal for an orientation walk, and then try some regional dishes during an evening food experience.**

Travel by ferry back to the mainland and then by bus to Chichén Itzá. During your guided tour with a local expert, you'll see El Castillo (also known as the Temple of Kukulcán, the main Mayan ruin) and other important ruins, like the Observatory, the Temple of the Warriors, and the Mayan Ball Game. There are twenty-six total Mayan Ruins at this particular site. Learn about the history of Chichén Itzá and the beliefs and rituals that defined this ancient Mayan civilization. The 98 ft high pyramid temple is famous for its balustrade of 91 stairs up each of the four sides, a ball court with a grandstand, and towering walls. Next, travel by private bus to the small Mayan town of Izamal, known as the Yellow City. Set out on an orientation walk through the colorful colonial architecture and marvel at all of the yellow-painted homes and buildings. Take advantage of free time to check out more ancient ruins and mingle with friendly locals. In the evening, enjoy a Yucatecan food experience and sample some regional dishes. Learn about the traditional history of the cuisine while tasking the local specialties. Please keep in mind this is not a full meal. Approximate travel time: 30 mins by ferry, 3 hrs by private vehicle (Chiquila to Chichén Itzá), 1.5 hours by private vehicle (Chichén Itzá to Izamal)

### **Day 5: Izamal/Mérida (B, L) Travel to Mérida, the capital and largest city of the Yucatán state. Along the way, stop at 2-3 cenotes to go for a swim and see the cave formations up close.**

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Depart Izamal and travel by private bus to the town of Mérida, the capital city of the state of Yucatán. Along the way, visit Cenotes Cuzama, a group of natural sinkholes that were sacred to the ancient Maya. The large sinkholes in the limestone bedrock are all over the Yucatan Peninsula and full of fresh water. Explore the cave formations while going for a swim. The first, Tzapakal, is narrower and deeper than the others. Santa Cruz boasts a larger entrance and shallow pool. The final cenote, Chelentun, is deep and opens into a cavern with calm waters to swim in. Enjoy an included lunch near one of the cenotes before arriving in Mérida later in the afternoon. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by private vehicle

**Day 6: Mérida (B) Spend a free day in Mérida. Opt to visit the Maya ruins of Uxmal.**

Enjoy a free day in the area of Mérida. Explore the main square and historic buildings of Mérida, or opt to visit the ruins of Uxmal, a major center of the Maya civilization that was once home to as many as 25,000 people. The city is known for its well-preserved buildings, which were constructed between 600 and 1000 AD. Wander the site, see the Pyramid of the Magician, and visit nearby Kabah, one of three neighboring sites. Uxmal was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1996.

**Day 7: Mérida/Tulum (B) Travel to Tulum, a small town on the Caribbean coast. Tulum has some of the best-preserved coastal Maya ruins located on a cliff overlooking the Caribbean Sea with breathtaking views.**

After breakfast, depart Mérida and travel to Tulum. First, stop at the Tulum Maya ruins for a guided tour. The Maya built the ancient seaport of Tulum in the late 13th century. Located some 80 miles south of Cancun, the picturesque site features a number of limestone structures protected on three sides by a 23-ft-thick wall. Visit El Castillo, overlooking the Caribbean coast, and the Temple of Frescoes. Spend the rest of the day and evening wandering around town, or head down to the beach to dive into the warm aquamarine waters and imagine spotting ancient vessels laden with turquoise and jade. Approximate travel time: 3.5-4 hrs by private vehicle

**Day 8: Tulum (B) Depart at any time.**

Our program ends in Tulum this morning. The closest airport is Cancun International Airport. Feel free to plan your flights to allow an extra day or two in Cancun after the tour ends, if you wish. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose! We can also book extra hotel nights for you in Tulum.