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OF AMERICA TOURS

Maximum  
of just  
12 participants  
per departure



## JUNGLE KINGDOMS OF THE ANCIENT MAYA

January 27-February 9, 2018 (14 days) with Dr. Jeff Karl Kowalski

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## PYRAMIDS & TEMPLES OF YUCATAN

February 17-25, 2018 (9 days) with Dr. Virginia Miller



*"The ruins were spectacular. I also enjoyed the experience of the jungle, with its many exotic plants, animals and birds!"*

- Elizabeth, BC, Canada

# JUNGLE KINGDOMS OF THE ANCIENT MAYA

This tropical adventure provides the best-paced itinerary available to thoroughly explore ancient Maya sites in the lush jungles of Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. Maya art and architecture will “come alive” as you encounter enormous stelae (carved monoliths), painted frescoes, stucco friezes, carved lintels, and huge temple-pyramids that soar above the rainforest. Explore, in-depth, the sites of Palenque, Bonampak, Yaxchilán, Tikal, Yaxhá, Copán, and Quiriguá (four are UNESCO World Heritage sites); with free time to go bird watching or simply relax, reflect, and enjoy our comfortable hotels and remote jungle lodges. Limited to 12 participants.



## ITINERARY

(B)= Breakfast, (L)= Lunch, (D)= Dinner

### Saturday, January 27, 2018 - HOME | VILLAHERMOSA, Mexico

Depart home for Villahermosa where, if traveling on the suggested group flight, you will be met upon arrival at the airport and transferred to our hotel. For those arriving independently, a taxi can be hired for the short drive into town. *Overnight at the Hyatt Villahermosa for two nights.*

### Sunday, January 28 - VILLAHERMOSA | COMALCALCO | VILLAHERMOSA

Set out for Comalcalco, the westernmost known Maya site, and the only Maya city built with bricks of baked clay instead of stone. The site comprises the North Square, Great Acropolis, and Acropolis of the East, and it thrived as an agricultural center specializing in cacao (the seeds from which cocoa, cocoa butter, and chocolate are made). After lunch we visit a hacienda to learn about modern cacao production, returning to our hotel late in the afternoon for a few hours at leisure before our welcome dinner. (B,L,D)

*“I thought the trip was EXTREMELY WELL-ORGANIZED in terms of connecting the dots on the map, with minimal time spent en-route.”* - Karen, Kentucky

### Monday, January 29 - VILLAHERMOSA | LA VENTA PARK | PALENQUE

Visit La Venta Park to see a magnificent outdoor collection of stone sculpture that originally came from the Olmec site of La Venta. The Olmec were one of the earliest cultures developed in Mesoamerica, preceding the Maya by centuries. Their monumental stone carvings and strange mythological beings puzzle archaeologists to this day. After lunch, drive to Palenque, a World Heritage site and one of the great western capitals of classic Maya civilization that some have called “the Paris of the Maya.” We will check into our charming hotel and have time for relaxation, exploring the surrounding lush forest, and swimming in the unusual pool. *Overnight at Chan Kah Resort Village for two nights.* (B,L,D)

### Tuesday, January 30 - PALENQUE

Explore Palenque’s many exquisite examples of 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-century Maya architecture, including the Temple of the Inscriptions, Palace, Temples of the Cross Group, recently uncovered Temples XIX and XXI, and much more. We finish the morning walking a beautiful downhill jungle trail, across waterfalls and hidden ruins, to get a true sense of the rainforest and all its beauty. After lunch at an outdoor, palm thatch restaurant, visit the Palenque site museum, with many world famous pieces of Maya ceramics, jades, and stone carving. (B,L,D)



Above, aerial view of Palenque at the western edge of the rainforest. Below, AIA travelers at the Courtyard of the Warrior Chiefs at Palenque. Bottom, Bonampak.



### Wednesday, January 31 - PALENQUE | BONAMPAK | FRONTERA COROZAL

Enjoy some time at leisure, perhaps to stroll around the resort grounds, do some hiking, take a swim, or relax on our bungalows' individual verandas, before departing for Bonampak. Lunch today will be in a rustic jungle restaurant. The discovery of the painted murals at Bonampak in the 1950s changed the way the world saw the Maya. Although the murals are faded and difficult to view, they remain a sight to see. The site is run by Lacandon Maya, and we may get a chance to interact with them during our visit. Continue on to Frontera Corozal, a Chol Maya community on the banks of the Usumacinta River, the famous "river of ruins." Along its banks, classic Maya civilization built some of its grandest cities. We are now traveling deep into the heart of Maya country, and we will stay at a remote, rustic jungle lodge. *Overnight at the Escudo Jaguar Lodge for two nights.* (B,L,D)

*"I enjoyed this trip and learned more than any other archaeological experience I have had. Our tour manager was excellent with every detail of the tour executed perfectly."* - Dee, Florida

### Thursday, February 1 - FRONTERA COROZAL | YAXCHILÁN | FRONTERA COROZAL

After breakfast, travel by motor launch down the Usumacinta River to the great classic Maya site of Yaxchilán, whose high-crested temples and palaces climb the steep hills above a large plaza upon a terrace by the river. We will spend all day at this fantastic site, including a boxed lunch. Beautiful monolithic stelae (standing stone monuments) and lintels spanning the temple doorways display intricate reliefs. Howler and spider monkeys and many tropical birds may accompany us as we explore the steep jungle trails, climbing to the higher elevations overlooking the ancient Maya landscape. We return by boat to our lodge late this afternoon. (B,L,D)

### Friday, February 2 - FRONTERA COROZAL | TIKAL, Guatemala

Journey upriver and cross over into the heart of Guatemala, to the World Heritage site of Tikal. As with most Maya sites, Classic Period constructions cover those from earlier times, and ancient structures are scattered for miles in every direction from its center. *Overnight at the Jungle Lodge for three nights.* (B,L,D)

### Saturday, February 3 - TIKAL

Spend a full day at Tikal, which contains thousands of ancient structures, the majority of which remain unexcavated. This vast site has spectacular pyramids, numerous plazas, a sprawling main palace and several lesser royal residences, multiple ball courts, causeways, dozens of stelae, and much more. It is estimated that more than 50,000 people lived at Tikal in its heyday, and the story of the city and its rise and fall mirrors the larger story of Maya civilization itself. Following the glories of the Classic Period, the site was largely abandoned by A.D. 900. (B,L,D)

### Sunday, February 4 - TIKAL | YAXHÁ | TIKAL

Weather permitting, there will be an optional, pre-dawn hike for breathtaking views at sunrise from Tikal's Temple IV—the site's tallest pyramid at 230 feet, and the largest Maya shrine built in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. After breakfast, we will visit the Tikal site museum. The remainder of the day is free for you to revisit Tikal, relax, or join our study leader on a 1.5 hour drive to Yaxhá, a large and important ancient Maya site that is infrequently visited. Located in dense jungle on a ridge overlooking turquoise Lake Yaxhá, still known by its ancient name, the vast site includes numerous altars and stelae, nine temple pyramids, and two ball courts. Boxed lunches will be enjoyed at the site. (B,L,D)

### Monday, February 5 - TIKAL | RIO DULCE

Depart Tikal for the Rio Dulce, where we enjoy lunch and get an overview of the area, including viewing a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish fortress, the Castle of San Felipe de Lara, located where the river meets Lake Izabal. Also visit the Southeastern Petén Regional Museum, in the town of Dolores, with a significant collection of Classic Maya artifacts. Late this afternoon, we check in to our waterside hotel. *Overnight at the Hotel Catamaran.* (B,L,D)



Above, tropical birds such as the toucan, plus howler and spider monkeys, may be spotted as we explore the jungle trails at sites. Below, AIA travelers on a river boat ride down the Usumacinta River to Yaxchilán.



Above, the Yaxchilán Plaza. Below, the magnificent Temple I at Tikal rises 154 feet.



**Tuesday, February 6 - RIO DULCE | QUIRIGUÁ | COPÁN, Honduras**

After a short boat ride, continue to Quiriguá, home to the tallest Maya stela—one weighs 65 tons and is 35 feet above ground and eight feet underground. Sculpture here is like no other place, with spectacular cosmograms in the likeness of divine crocodiles and jaguars carved in the round from huge boulders. Here we also find a rare description of mythical events which took place at the origin of the calendar Great Cycle that ended in 2012. After leaving Quiriguá, we have lunch in the Motagua Valley, the primary jade source for all of Mesoamerica; and stop in Estanzuela to visit the small Roberto Wookfolk Saravia Paleontology and Archeology Museum. Continue on, crossing the border into Honduras, and check in to our hotel. *Overnight at the Hotel Marina Copán for two nights.* (B,L,D)

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*“I liked the experience of being in these places, at the sites. Walking through them, feeling them, the ambiance, the air, the scenery.”* - Randi, Washington, DC

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**Wednesday, February 7 - COPÁN**

A short drive brings us to the archaeological site of Copán, known as Hux Wintik (translation uncertain). If Palenque was the “Paris of the Maya,” then Copán was the “Athens of the Maya.” The magnificent acropolis, plazas, courtyards, and standing sculptures are the hallmarks of this southernmost Maya capital. Enjoy a picnic lunch at the site and then visit the excellent site museum, which has a full-scale replica of the funeral shrine of the founder of the Copán dynasty and many fabulous pieces of Maya sculpture. (B,L,D)

**Thursday, February 8 - COPÁN | SAN PEDRO SULA**

Tour the Sepulturas Group, located a few miles from the site of Copán, which also housed a residential area for non-Maya (perhaps foreign merchants) around A.D. 800. Also visit recently-opened Rastrojón, a defensive site with panoramic views of the valley that is the latest Harvard University-sponsored archaeological project at Copán. We have now traveled from the western capital of Palenque, through the heartland at Tikal, and on to the southern capital of Copán, giving us a sense of the enormity of ancient Maya civilization in its heyday. After lunch at a local restaurant, drive to San Pedro Sula, where we check in to our hotel, get settled, and then gather for a farewell dinner. *Overnight at the InterContinental Real San Pedro Sula.* (B,L,D)

**Friday, February 9 - SAN PEDRO SULA | HOME**

Transfer to the airport in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, for flights home. (B)

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

**LECTURER & HOST**



**Dr. Jeff Karl Kowalski** is an expert on Maya art and architecture. He is Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus at Northern Illinois University, where he taught from 1982 to 2015, and now teaches at Temple University. Professor Kowalski has worked for many years in the Maya region, with an emphasis on the majestic site of Uxmal, Yucatán, as well as two seasons spent assisting with work at Copán, Honduras. Uxmal’s impressive Nunnery Quadrangle palace group is the focus of his current research. Professor Kowalski has published extensively on the archaeology, art, and epigraphy of the Maya and their Mesoamerican neighbors, including his book *The House of the Governor; A Maya Palace at Uxmal, Yucatan, Mexico* (U. of Oklahoma Press, 1987) and *Mesoamerican Architecture as a Cultural Symbol* (Oxford U., 1999). He has periodically led study tours of the Maya region, including the AIA’s Yucatan tour in 2016, and has given many public lectures.



Above, infrequently visited Yaxhá is a vast site with numerous altars and stelae, nine temple pyramids, and two ball courts.



Above, AIA traveler admiring a stela (intricately carved monolith). Below, a ball court at Copán.



© S. Morse

# PYRAMIDS & TEMPLES OF YUCATAN

This luxurious, nine-day holiday provides the best-paced itinerary available to see the sun-drenched Yucatan peninsula's ancient sites, traditional Maya villages, and colonial architecture. Maya art and architecture abound, with visits to Chichén Itzá, Ek Balam, Uxmal, Dzibilchaltun, and more: iconic as well as off-the-beaten path sites with soaring pyramids, distinctive temple complexes, and wonderful sculpture. There is free time to bird watch, shop for crafts, or relax, reflect, and enjoy our excellent accommodations. Enjoy two luxurious nights at the *Mayaland Hotel* (next to Chichén Itzá) and three at the *Hacienda Uxmal* (next to Uxmal). Limited to 12 participants.



## ITINERARY

(B)= Breakfast, (L)= Lunch, (D)= Dinner

### Saturday, February 17, 2018 - HOME | MERIDA, Mexico

Arrive in Merida and transfer to our hotel. *Overnight at the Presidente InterContinental Villa Mercedes Merida for two nights.*

### Sunday, February 18 - MERIDA

Today we will take a city tour and then visit Merida's anthropology museum, The Great Museum of the Maya World, housing artifacts from many of the sites we shall visit. After lunch and an introductory lecture, the afternoon is at leisure to shop for handicrafts, visit the marketplace, or relax. Gather tonight for a welcome dinner. (B,L,D)

### Monday, February 19 - MERIDA | CHICHÉN ITZÁ

Depart Merida for Chichén Itzá, a drive of about an hour and a half. A short walk to the site from our hotel takes us back 1,000 years as we gaze at spectacular 9<sup>th</sup>-century temples and pyramids. We will see all the site's highlights, including the Sacred Well, Ballcourt, Castillo, Observatory, High Priest's Grave, and Nunnery. After lunch, visit out-of-the-way parts of the site, or enjoy free time to visit the bookstores and gift shops, or spend a relaxing afternoon on the hotel grounds. *Overnight at the Mayaland Hotel for two nights.* (B,L,D)

*"The trip was perfect. This and last year's AIA Tour are two of the best travel experiences I have ever had. Thanks!"* - James, Ohio

### Tuesday, February 20 - CHICHÉN ITZÁ | EK BALAM | CHICHÉN ITZÁ

Drive to Ek Balam, a small site with spectacular, mythological creatures sculpted in the full round and then hidden 1,200 years ago by the Maya themselves, only to be re-discovered recently by archaeologists. There will be an opportunity to visit the cenote and take a swim. Caves and cenotes (sinkholes with groundwater) were (and are) very important openings to the Maya underworld, the abode of the rain gods and places of worship. After lunch, return to Chichén Itzá for more time exploring the site, or to our hotel for time at leisure. (B,L,D)

### Wednesday, February 21 - CHICHÉN ITZÁ | IZAMAL | UXMAL

Drive to Uxmal, stopping along the way for lunch and to visit Izamal and its Convent. In Izamal, the Spanish conquistadors built their church atop a Maya pyramid. This was the home of the infamous Diego de Landa, who burned all the Maya books that he could gather. Climb to the top of Kinich Kakmo, the largest pyramid (in volume) in all Maya land. Continue on to Uxmal and check in to our hotel. *Overnight at the Hacienda Uxmal for three nights.* (B,L,D)



Above, the Governor's Palace in colonial Merida. Below, the famous Castillo at Chichén Itzá and (bottom) a view of the Temple of the Warriors from atop the Castillo.



### Thursday, February 22 - UXMAL

Uxmal is the capital of the Puuc region, on the western side of the Peninsula—a unique sub-area within the greater Maya zone with its own brand of architecture and mosaic-stone decoration. Uxmal's "Governor's Palace" was one of Frank Lloyd Wright's favorite buildings. Spend a full day exploring the site, and there will be an optional light and sound show after dark. (B,L,D)

### Friday, February 23 - UXMAL | LABNA | KAXIL KIUIC | UXMAL

We spend today in the Puuc region, visiting two sites that are remote and little-visited: Labna, with its famous arch; and Kaxil Kiuic, which was a Maya city of 5,000-8,000 people whose ruins comprise the oldest known settlement in the region. The Puuc area was first settled by the Maya in approximately 500 B.C. and became home to a series of impressive city-states. The Labna-Kiuic Regional Archaeological Project is a joint Mexican-U.S. research program being carried out in the Puuc region under the co-direction of Millsaps College, Mexico's National Institute of Archaeology and History, and Davidson College. In 2013, the AIA bestowed its Best Practices in Site Preservation Award upon project co-director George Bey for his work at Kaxil Kiuic. Return to our hotel for a relaxing evening and dinner. (B,L,D)

### Saturday, February 24 - UXMAL | DZIBILCHALTUN | MERIDA

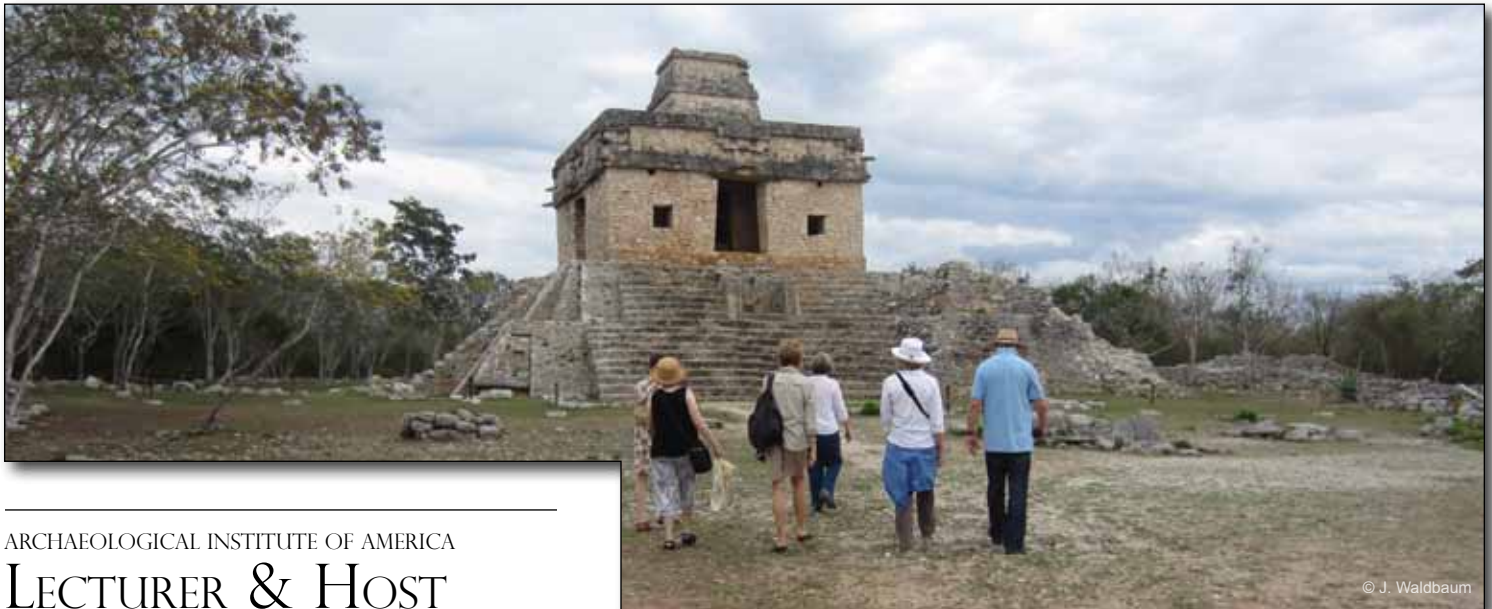
Depart Uxmal for a visit to Dzibilchaltun, a 2,000-year-old site with a famous astronomical alignment. Highlights include the Temple of the Seven Dolls and a cenote. Enjoy a seafood lunch on the beach in the port city of Progreso, with the sea breeze blowing through the open-air restaurant. Return to Merida, where we will have some free time to explore independently, do some last-minute shopping, or relax before our farewell dinner. *Overnight at the Presidente InterContinental Villa Mercedes Merida.* (B,L,D)

### Sunday, February 25 - MERIDA | HOME

Transfer to the Merida airport early this morning for flights direct to Houston (United) or to other destinations via Mexico City or Miami.



Above, you may swim at a cenote near Chichén Itzá. The Pyramid of the Sorcerer (below) is an unusual, oval-shaped pyramid, one of many splendid buildings at Uxmal. Bottom, AIA travelers at the Temple of the Seven Dolls at Dzibilchaltun.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA  
**LECTURER & HOST**



**Virginia E. Miller** is an expert on Maya art and architecture who has led three previous AIA Tours to acclaim, including this one in 2016. She recently retired from the University of Illinois-Chicago, where she chaired the Department of Art History for several years. Professor Miller has lived in Spain, Mexico, and Central America and is fluent in Spanish. She earned her M.A. in Latin American Studies and Ph.D. in Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the recipient of several major fellowships, including one from the National Endowment for the Humanities and two Fulbrights to teach and conduct research in Guatemala and Mexico. Professor Miller is the author of numerous articles on Maya art and architecture and has lectured on Mesoamerican art throughout the U.S., Europe, and Latin America, including the AIA's national lecture circuit.



## What to Expect

These programs involve extensive walking, often on uneven terrain or up and down stairs that may be steep and without handrails. All participants are expected to be physically active and not be an impediment to others on excursions, to enjoy traveling as part of a group, and to be ready to experience cultural differences. Participants who are not able to walk unassisted for extended periods are kindly advised not to join these tours unless accompanied by a companion who will be available to assist you at all times. If you have any questions about your ability to participate, we suggest that you visit your personal physician with this brochure in hand, and discuss whether or not the program is appropriate for you. At the time of year that we visit this region the weather is generally sunny and dry, with temperatures in the upper 70s and 80s during the day and in the 50s and 60s at night. There is always a chance of light to moderate rain showers. *Complete pre-departure details and what to pack will be sent to participants.*

## Air Arrangements

Airfare is not included. Group arrival and departure transfers are provided in conjunction with the suggested flights (details will be sent to participants upon confirmation of reservation). Once you have received your final payment invoice you should book your flights. If you are considering booking your flights before this time, please contact our office first. *We do not accept liability for cancellation penalties related to domestic or international airline tickets.*

## The AIA and the AIA Tours Program

The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) is the oldest and largest archaeological organization in North America. The AIA seeks to educate people of all ages about the significance of archaeological discovery. For more than a century the AIA has been dedicated to the encouragement and support of archaeological research and publication, and to the protection of the world's archaeological resources and cultural heritage. By traveling on an AIA Tour you directly support the AIA while personally gaining the benefit of the AIA's network of scholars and worldwide contacts.

**For questions, and reservations, please contact us:**



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## Tour Prices (Per Person)

### Jungle Kingdoms of the Ancient Maya

Double Occupancy (10-12 participants) .....	\$8,345
Double Occupancy (7-9 participants) .....	\$8,845
Single Supplement.....	\$1,095

### Pyramids & Temples of Yucatan

Double Occupancy (11-12 participants) .....	\$4,945
Double Occupancy (7-10 participants).....	\$5,245
Single Supplement.....	\$665

*Single room supplement will be charged when requested or required (limited availability).  
With fewer than 7 participants, a small group surcharge may be added.*

#### RATES INCLUDE:

- Leadership of the Lecturer/Host, plus an experienced tour manager/guide and/or local guides, and drivers
- Group arrival and departure airport transfers for those taking the suggested flights (schedule to be provided upon confirmation of reservation)
- All ground and riverboat transportation as indicated in the itinerary
- All accommodations as indicated in the itinerary
- All meals except dinner on the day of arrival, including welcome and farewell dinners with cocktails
- A soft drink or beer with lunches and dinners
- Bottled water during excursions
- All entrance fees to all sites listed in the itinerary
- All tips for the tour manager, guides, drivers, maids, bell boys, and porters at airports for those on suggested flights
- Comprehensive pre-departure information, including what to pack and a suggested reading guide

RATES DO NOT INCLUDE: Any airfare; passport and visa fees; all airport fees and departure taxes; meals on day of arrival; alcoholic beverages (except as indicated above); excess baggage charges; personal and baggage insurance; any activities not specified in the itinerary; all items of a personal nature such as laundry, medical expenses, and room service.

PASSENGER CANCELLATION FEES: All requests by passengers for cancellations must be received in writing by AIA Tours. Cancellations received at least ninety (90) days prior to departure are fully refunded less an administrative fee of five hundred dollars (\$500) per person. Cancellations received between sixty (60) and ninety (90) days prior to departure are subject to 50% of the tour cost. Cancellations received sixty (60) days or less before departure are subject to 100% of the tour cost. Trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. (An application will be sent with confirmation of receipt of your deposit.)

Prices, itineraries and leaders are subject to change. Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate. It is understood that refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the tour for whatever reason.

PAYMENTS: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour and is payable by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or check made payable to EOS-Passenger Account-AIA Maya2018. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure and must be by personal check only; credit cards are not accepted for final payment. By submitting your deposit you are bound by the terms and conditions delineated throughout this brochure or elsewhere published.

**Due to space limitations, this is abbreviated information. Complete terms and conditions will be sent upon confirmation or upon request, and can be viewed online at [www.aiatours.org](http://www.aiatours.org).**