

finca. Called the Dios Mundo Shrine, it draws shamans from different parts of Guatemala to perform the same types of rituals we have seen. We'll include a short visit to a couple of archeological sites located here, such as La Democracia with its giant Olmec-type heads, and Finca El Baul with its collection of sculptures. After lunch, continue to Antigua, overnight for the last two relaxing days here. Hotel Posada del Don Rodrigo. BLD

Day 13. All day at leisure in Antigua to visit some of the Colonial-era churches and convents. Antigua is a central marketplace for communities all around Lago Atitlán, and this is an excellent opportunity to purchase hand-woven *huipiles*, jade, books and souvenirs. BLD

Day 14. Transfer to International Airport for departure. B

For many years, Middle America Travel has been bringing travelers to the hidden treasures of Guatemala, from Maya ruins and Highland Mayan culture to the diverse fauna and flora. Guide Marco Antonio Tello has led tours for some of the top scholars including Linda Schele, Nick Hopkins and Kathryn Josserand. Tello, a native of Santa Cruz Barillas, speaks Kanjobal and other Mayan languages as well as English. He is very knowledgeable about Maya shamanism and esoteric medicine.

For information about this special tour, contact Middle America Travel in Guatemala City at (502) 472-3397 or by e-mail at: matravel@gua.net



Middle America Travel
Calzado San Juan 7-90, zona 7
Edificio Acuario, Oficina 9
Guatemala City 01901
Tel. (502) 472-3397 Fax (502) 471-0189
matravel@gua.net

On the Trail of the Maya Shamans

A Two-Week Tour of Ancient and Modern Maya Ritual Sites in Guatemala



For thousands of years, Mayan shamans in Guatemala have practiced rituals, healing and celebratory ceremonies. Rarely does the casual tourist have a chance to witness these stirring invocations. But Middle America Travel has arranged an extraordinary tour that will take you deep into the heart of the Mayan World. You will visit the

magnificent temples of ancient ruins such as Copán, Quiriguá and Kumarká'aj and see where ancient rituals were held by royal kings, and then will witness present-day ceremonies whose roots go back almost two millennia.

For information, contact:

Middle America Travel

Calzado San Juan 7-90, zona 7

Edificio Acuario, Oficina 9

Guatemala City 01901



Itinerary

Day 1. Arrive San Pedro Sula, and transfer to Copán Hotel Marina, Copán. D

Day 2. All day visit at the site of Copán, accompanied by our local guide. We will visit the Main Plaza and its stelae, the Hieroglyphic Stairway, Temple 11, Southern Acropolis, Temple of Venus, the new sculpture museum and the tunnels section open to visitors. Overnight Hotel Marina. BLD

Day 3. Today we will have the first opportunity to witness a Maya ritual at the top of a hill where one of the outlying stelae is located. A Maya Chorti shaman will perform a ritual for the group, asking the gods to protect us during our all trip. Afterwards we will resume our visit to Copán with a walk to the Sepulturas site and the small museum in town. BLD

Day 4. Depart for Guatemala City via Quiriguá, a very important archeological site first seen by John Lloyd Stevens, later excavated by Sylvanus Morley and, more recently, by Dr. Robert Sharer and his crew headed by David Sedat. Quiriguá is famous for having the tallest monument, Stela E and for the creation story carved in the monuments., as well as for the Zoomorphic altars or thrones. Continue to Guatemala City, overnight Hotel Pan American. BLD

Day 5. Early departure to the ancient capital of the Maya K'iché, Utatlan (Kumarka'aj) where we will witness a ritual held in front of the Tohil Temple by a local shaman, and the rituals inside the giant caves of the underworld that run beneath the main plaza. Return to Chichi for overnight and meals at the Mayan Inn. BLD

Day 6. Today is a Market Day in Chichi. We will have also the opportunity to witness the Maya



K'iché rituals held on the front steps of the Santo Tomás church as well as mixed Maya / Catholic devo-

tions inside the church. After lunch we will depart for Huehuetenango, overnight at Hotel Del Prado. BLD

Day 7. Very early departure for Santa Eulalia, a remote Kanjobal town located on the northern side of the Cuchumatanes Mountains, a place to visit the very seldom seen Jolomconop deity. Our guide, Kanjobal by birth, will take us to witness a ritual that few outsiders have witnessed. We will overnight at a small but clean Posada in San Pedro Soloma. BLD

Day 8. We return to Huehuetenango, saying good-bye to the Kanjobal Confederacy with a visit to the Church in San Juan Ixcoy. With good luck, we may witness a ritual here too. Overnight in Huehue. Hotel Del Prado. BLD

Day 9. Our activities today include a visit to a couple of Mam-speaking towns located in the southern side of the Cuchumatanes Mountains, San Sebastian and Colotenango, searching for a Maya ritual in one of the several *Quemaderos* they have around. Afterwards, depart for Quetzaltenango for lunch, and then we visit the K'iché town of Zunil. We'll have ample time to visit the Maximon Shrine to witness the Maya rituals held by different shamans who offer their services to clients who come seeking spiritual healing for their illnesses. BLD

Day 10. Today we will visit the very sacred shamans' shrine, Chicabal Lake, located on top of a volcano. This place is also visited by *curanderos* from all over the K'iché, Mam and Kackchikel areas, and is a place to get a good impression of the ancient rites that have survived the thousands of years of the Maya civilization into the post-Conquest era. Hotel Pension Bonifaz in Quetzaltenango. BLD

Day 11. An early departure for Lake Atitlán to arrive in time to take a boat across and visit the village of Santiago Atitlán. Here we will visit the second Maximon Shrine, this one no doubt second in importance after the Zunil shrine. Visit one of the local *cofradias* led by its own shaman who will demonstrate some of the rituals he practices for clients that seek good luck in business and good health. The church here is another point of interest. The Atitecos believe that the umbilicus to the underworld is centered here in the church, before the main altar. The beautiful hand-carved wood *retablo* carries the iconography of this Tzutuhil-speaking community. Over-

night in the Posada de Santiago. BLD



Day 12. Depart for Antigua via the Pacific lowlands in order to visit the last but very important shrine (*quemadero*) located in the middle of the San Francisco sugar cane