

Palenque

Bonampak Archaeological Zone

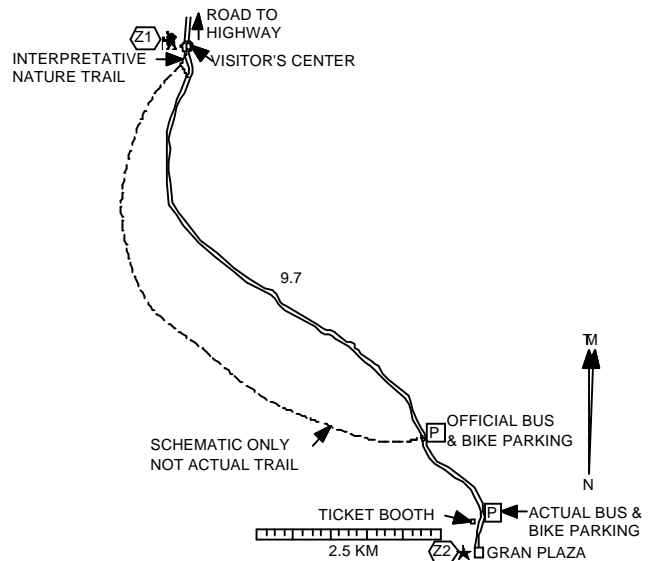
Trail Data Length each way = 9.7 km. Exertion index = 160 going, 160 returning. Maximum elevation = 467 m.



Mountain bikes are okay on the road, but not on the jungle trail because of the thick brush in some places.

Bonampak is a little jewel of an archaeological site, and it's famous for murals painted on the inside walls of one of the buildings. The jungle trail goes through a Green Mansions kind of wonderland.

The trailhead is easy enough to find, though it is a bit of a drive. From Palenque, go toward Ocosingo, but in about 5 miles (8 km), at Km 36.7, go left toward Frontera Corozal. Then drive for 122 Km to the San Javier intersection. Bear right there and in 2.5 miles reach the Centro de Interpretación (visitor's center). You can't drive the rest of the way because the land is owned by locals, so that's our trailhead.



Choices abound for reaching the ruins.

Option 1: you can ride an officially-sanctioned bus. You can ride one way and walk the other, too.

Option 2: you can take the jungle trail. The surveyor followed it okay, but it's unmarked and basically unmaintained, so it could be hard to follow. The route shown on the map is schematic; the gps receiver couldn't take readings through the dense jungle cover and the trail has many more curves than the map shows. Even if it's dry you have to cross a few streams and clamber down and up muddy banks. If you reach a dead end it's probably because of an obstacle so back up a few meters until you find the detour. In the worst case you could totally lose the trail. If that happens use your always-present compass to work your way east to the road.

Option 3: if there are several of you, hiring a guide at the visitor's center is probably worthwhile because he'll point out things you'd otherwise miss.

Option 4: you can hike along the road. The vegetation is different because the plants next to the road get more sun than those under the jungle canopy. As a compromise, take the nature loop and continue on the road.

Option 5: you can rent bikes at the visitor's center.