

transportation, entry and guide fees, breakfast, one lunch, and one gala dinner.

The Temples of Maya Calendar Inscriptions tour (5 nights, Dec. 18–23, US\$1,475 per person based on double occupancy) is based out of Villahermosa. Guests ring in the next 13 *b'aktuns* with tours of Palenque, Yaxchilán, Bonampak, and La Venta Olmec Museum.

Sacred Earth Journeys

Sacred Earth Journeys (tel. 604/874-7922 or 877/874-7922, info@sacredearthjourneys.ca, www.sacredearthjourneys.ca), based in Vancouver, British Columbia, offers a 10-day **Maya Sacred Path to 2012** tour (Nov. 29–Dec. 8), beginning and ending in Villahermosa, Mexico. One of the trip leaders is Don Miguel Angel Vergara Calleros, who has been “studying, teaching, and living the Maya wisdom for over 25 years.” In addition to visiting important Maya and Olmec sites, this trip explores “the lost cultures of Lemuria and Atlantis” and provides a chance to meet local Olmec elders, Maya shaman, priests, priestesses, and teachers.

Tia Stephanie Tours

Tia Stephanie Tours (tel. 734/769-7839, info@tiastephanietours.com, www.tiastephanietours.com) is a U.S.-based tour operator that specializes in cultural and educational travel programs throughout Mexico. There are two special tours offered in 2012.

The **Maya Calendar and Glyph Workshop** (8 days, Jan. 5–13, US\$1,875 per person, double occupancy) will be led by Dr. Gabrielle Vail, PhD, adjunct assistant professor of anthropology at New College of Florida. Dr. Vail specializes in Maya iconography and hieroglyphic texts. The fundamentals of Maya writing (epigraphy) and the Maya calendar will be explained in classroom-style settings. Participants are then led into the field for further learning at Palenque, Bonampak, Yaxchilán, and Tonina. Visits include the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas and the highland Maya communities of Chamula and Zinacantan.

Tia Stephanie is also offering **Maya and 2012: The End of Time?** (8 days, Aug. 11–18,

US\$1,785 per person, double occupancy), developed by Dr. David S. Anderson, PhD, from Tulane University. Dr. Anderson is an archaeologist currently researching the Preclassic period of the northern lowland Maya. This tour provides an introduction to the Maya calendar, writing, astronomy, politics, divine kingship, and royal succession, and includes class work and archaeological visits throughout the Yucatán.

Chocolate Tours

In Mérida, chocolate maker **Ki' Xocolatl** (www.ki-xocolatl.com) has a four-day culinary adventure they call The Great Cacao Expedition. This unique chocolate-intensive tour includes chocolate cooking workshops in a colonial mansion, visits to Maya ceremonial cities, and a day at a cacao and spice plantation. You'll stay in Casa San Ángel, a boutique hotel on the Paseo de Montejo, and dine at fancy remodeled haciendas. Ki' Xocolatl runs a chocolate museum full of artifacts and tools used in cacao preparation and chocolate-making.

Also in Mérida, **Casa Frederick Catherwood** (tel. 999/165-4986, info@casacatherwood.com, www.casa-catherwood.com) offers the Great Chocolate Expedition, an intensive five-day trip that includes cooking classes and trips to Maya sites and the Tikul cacao plantation, also in conjunction with Ki' Xocolatl.

MexicaChica Getaways (tel. 999/901-5430, U.S. tel. 214/329-9754, www.mexicachica.com) is offering several five-day 2012 Chocolate Expeditions (Oct. 8–12, 2011 and Feb. 18–22, 2012, US\$1,200 per person based on double occupancy). It includes visits to archaeological sites and tours of a cacao plantation and a museum.

HOTEL PACKAGES Riviera Maya

The Maya of the Yucatán once undertook ritual canoe voyages to the island of Cutzamán (now Cozumel) to honor Ixhcel, the goddess of the moon. On the third weekend in May, 2012, **Xcaret** (toll-free Mex. tel. 800/212-