CAU in Yucatan
A Family Friendly Program
Haciendas, Pyramids and Flamingos

DECEMBER 26, 2013 - JANUARY 2, 2014
Explore this land of legends, history and eternal magic of hospitable people and traditions. The Yucatan is a perfect family destination offering impressive archeological sites, stately colonial cities, beaches, bird filled mangroves, Mayan communities, music and gastronomy. Upon arrival, we will enter through the great oak doors of Hacienda Misné, surrounded by the walls that have protected it for over 200 years and enter into its lovely tropical gardens. The hacienda will be our base for adventures to see flamingos and other tropical birdlife, the colonial cities of Mérida and Izamal, Maya ruins of Uxmal and Chichén Itzá and the working Hacienda Sotuta de Peon and a day at the beach. Unpack once and have a wonderful family vacation full of fun, learning and adventure with **Cornell faculty leaders Dan and Krista Capps**!

### Highlights

- Enter into the lush gardens of 18\textsuperscript{th} century Hacienda Misné, home for the next 7 nights.

- Learn to make tortillas by hand.

- Enjoy a demonstration by a floreador (Mexican cowboy) who will show you tricks with his lasso.

- Enjoy a traditional asado (barbecue festival).

- Meet Mexican children at our Hacienda and have a fiesta with a piñata and a soccer game.

- Explore the ancient Maya ruins of Uxmal, a UNESCO world heritage site and the famous pyramids of Chichén Itzá.

- Embark on a boat ride through the mangroves to see vast colonies of flamingos.

- Tour the beautiful colonial cities of Mérida and Izamal.

- Swim off the sandy white beaches and snorkel in a cenoté.
**Itinerary**

**Day 1 – Thursday, December 26**
**ARRIVAL TO MERIDA**
Fly from the U.S. to Merida. Upon arrival in Merida, transfer to the Hacienda Misné. Light dinner and refreshments at the Hacienda. *Hacienda Misné* (meals aloft)

**DAY 2 – Friday, December 27**
**MERIDA**
Welcome orientation this morning at the Hacienda. After lunch, depart for a city tour of Merida. Known as “The White City” because of the color of the stone used to construct many of the buildings, Mérida is the capital city of the state of Yucatán and has a unique feel with its mixture of colonial architecture and ancient Maya heritage. Highlights include the Anthropology Museum, Merida’s Cathedral and a carriage ride on the famous Paseo de Montejo Avenue, lined with majestic residences that today are the pride of Merida. Return to the Hacienda for some time at leisure before the afternoon activity “make your own mask”. For those who want, there will be the opportunity to make their own mask using inspiration from the Mayan masks seen at the Anthropology Museum. Dinner at the Hacienda. *Hacienda Misné* (B, L, D)

**DAY 3 – Saturday, December 28**
**SOTUTA DE PEON HACIENDA**
Haciendas are to the Yucatan what ranches are to Texans, plantations to New Orleans and estates to the English Countryside. In the early 1900’s these magnificent land holdings were the source of the green gold of the Yucatan – sisal – that made many a millionaire in Merida. Today the group will get a chance to go back in time to see how the sisal haciendas operated and processed this fiber which made the Yucatan so rich. Visit and tour the Hacienda Sotuta de Peon, a restored and working hacienda to see how the sisal is processed. Included is a visit to a traditional Mayan house and an opportunity to swim in a crystal clear *cenote* (fresh water pool). Yucatan’s underground is abundant in *cenotes*. These subterranean rivers once sustained the Mayan life and now offer a breath taking experience. Lunch is at the Hacienda Sotuta de Peon with time to enjoy the hacienda’s pool. *Hacienda Misné* (B, L, D)
DAY 4 – Sunday, December 29  
CHICHÉN ITZÁ / IZAMAL

Explore the Yucatán’s best restored ruin—Chichén Itzá. Established around 550AD, this remarkable site was home to Maya and Toltec civilizations. The architecture of the massive El Castillo is actually a symbolic representation of the Maya calendar. On July 7\textsuperscript{th} 2007, Chichén Itzá was declared one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. Chichén Itzá is also home to the largest known Maya ball court and the sacred cenote, a vast natural well believed to have been the site of human and material sacrifices. Of particular interest is the structure known as El Caracol or the Observatory as it bears a striking resemblance to modern astronomical observatories. Lunch is at a local restaurant with an opportunity to swim in a beautiful cenote. On the return to Merida, stop at Izamal to visit the Franciscan Convent and Popular Arts Museum. Izamal is known as the "City of the Hills" because of the archaeological remains located in the town centre, including the pyramid of Kinich-Kakmo, the pyramids of Itzamatul, Kabul and Hucpintok, among others. \textit{Hacienda Misné (B, L, D)}

DAY 5 – Monday, December 30  
CELESTÚN

After breakfast depart for the small fishing port of Celestún. Located southwest of Merida, Celestún is a quaint fishing village famous not only for its seafood restaurants, but also for its river with beautiful flamingo bird colonies. Take a boat ride up the estuary to see the Pink Flamingo in its natural habitat, along with other bird species. Lunch is at a seafood restaurant located right on the beach. “Meet the People” event at the Hacienda this afternoon to get to know
some local people and learn about their daily lives and traditions. “Piñata” party and dinner with marimba music.  *Hacienda Misné* (B, L, D)

**DAY 6 – Tuesday, December 31**  
**UXMAL**

This morning is at leisure to relax and enjoy the Hacienda. After lunch visit the ancient and impressive city of Uxmal with its graceful architecture, its symmetry and grandeur. It represents some of the best examples of classic Mayan art and architecture, namely the Puuc style. In the Late Classic period, 600-900 AD, it was the most important city in the Puuc Hills region which included the smaller towns of Sayil, Kabah, Xlapak and Labna. Dinner is at a local restaurant. After dinner, return to Uxmal to experience the famous Light and Sound Show, acclaimed to be one of the finest in the world. See the archeological site colorfully lit up to the accompaniment of drum and flute music, while a speaker recounts the history of Uxmal. For those passengers who do not wish to stay for the Light and Sound Show, there will be transportation back to the Hacienda. *Hacienda Misné* (B, L, D)

**DAY 7 – Wednesday, January 1**  
**DZIBILCHALTUN & BEACH DAY**

One of the oldest sites on the Peninsula, Dzibilchaltún was continuously occupied from 800 BC to 1590 AD. At the Temple of the Dolls, 7 clay figurines were buried beneath the floor. A tube through the floor was designed for communication with the spirits. Divers explored the Cenote Xlacah, a 140 foot deep natural well, and discovered many cultural artifacts and human bones. The site also has an excellent museum. Continue to a private home located on the beach for a festive farewell lunch with time to enjoy the beach and swim in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Return to the Hacienda in the late afternoon. *Hacienda Misné* (B, L, D)

**DAY 8 – Thursday, January 2**  
**MERIDA/U.S.**

Transfer to the airport this morning for flights back to the U.S. (B)
HACIENDA MISNÉ

At the historical Hacienda Misné you will submerge yourself into the great history and culture of Yucatan, while enjoying the luxury and first class service. Its 42 spacious rooms and 8 majestic suites were designed to take guests back to the colonial era, while the high hospitality standards and comfort bring them back to modern days. Enjoy the morning, sunbathing or swimming at both open air swimming pools. Relax with a massage at the Mayan Spa. The restaurant, located inside the main house, features exquisite local dishes and international options, along with the chef’s specialties combining Mayan and European flavors.