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***MAYA: HIDDEN WORLDS REVEALED* MAKES ITS WEST COAST DEBUT AT
theNAT THIS FRIDAY**

Visitors will experience ancient Maya through authentic artifacts, interactive exhibits, multimedia displays, and more

SAN DIEGO—June 10, 2015—This Friday, June 12, the San Diego Natural History Museum (theNAT) will host the West Coast debut of [*Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed*](#), a limited-engagement exhibition that sheds light on this mysterious and majestic culture and its remarkable achievements. On view at the Museum through January 3, 2016, the exhibition tells the story of this ancient civilization through the eyes of Maya rulers and their loyal subjects. At 10,000 square feet, *Maya* is the largest exhibition of its kind to ever be displayed in the United States.

The ruined cities of the ancient Maya have captured our imaginations since news of their discovery in the jungles of Central America was published in the 1840s. Extensive research has uncovered a culture with a sophisticated worldview that, during its Classic period (250-900 AD), rivaled any civilization in Europe. During this period, the Maya built elaborate cities without the use of the wheel, communicated using a sophisticated written language, measured time accurately with detailed calendar systems, and had an advanced understanding of astronomy and agriculture.

“Bringing *Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed* to theNAT reinforces our dedication to offering content-rich exhibitions to San Diegans and visitors,” said Dr. Michael Hager, president and CEO of the San Diego Natural History Museum. “The artifacts and interactive exhibits are extraordinary and portray how advanced this ancient civilization was. Their sophistication with respect to math, astronomy, and architecture, to name a few, was way ahead of their time.”

Exhibition highlights include:

- More than 200 authentic artifacts, including spectacular examples of Maya artistry made by masters of their craft, along with objects from everyday life. One example is an inkpot made out of a seashell from Cahal Pech, a Maya site in Belize, which still retains the dried pigment colors hundreds of years after active use.
- Dozens of hands-on activities that dig into Maya life during the Classic period. Visitors will have a chance to decipher glyphs, build corbeled arches, explore tombs, investigate the Maya understanding of math and astronomy, and more.
- Several replica large-scale carved monuments, or stelae, that were erected in the great plazas of Maya cities. Their inscriptions have given scholars valuable insight into ancient Maya history—from royal succession to political conflicts and great battles.
- An exploration of Maya architecture—from its awe-inspiring temples to the simple homes of the common people. Visitors will see a huge recreated portion of a famous frieze, or richly ornamented exterior wall portion, from the El Castillo pyramid in Xunantunich, a Maya civic ceremonial center.
- A recreation of the elaborate royal tomb of the Great Scrolled Skull in Santa Rita Corozal, a Maya site in Belize. Visitors will see the full tomb assemblage, which features jade, jewels, pottery and more, and explore the fascinating story that the artifacts tell us about the politics and economics of this Maya city.

- An examination of the concepts of ritual and human sacrifice that allowed the Maya to transcend the earthly world and speak with the gods of the underworld. Visitors will see the concepts of death and rebirth—concepts that were essential to the Maya—arise again and again throughout the exhibition.

Throughout *Maya*, which is presented in both English and Spanish, immersive environments offer visitors the opportunity to decipher ancient symbols, explore tombs, and investigate the Maya approach to math and astronomy. Visitors will experience jaw-dropping architecture and distinctive art through a series of exhibits and artifacts. The exhibition investigates questions surrounding the Maya and offers a glimpse into the daily life of the Maya people.

Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed was created by the Science Museum of Minnesota, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, and the Museum of Science, Boston. For additional information about the exhibition or to purchase tickets, visit sdnat.org/maya or call 877.946.7797.

Exhibition Hours

The exhibition and Museum will be open from 10 AM to 5 PM daily (closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day). Due to the expected popularity of the exhibition, purchasing tickets in advance is recommended.

About the San Diego Natural History Museum

The San Diego Natural History Museum (theNAT) is the second oldest scientific institution in California and the third oldest west of the Mississippi. Founded in 1874 by a small group of citizen scientists, the Museum's mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California, Mexico; and to inspire in all people respect for the environment. The Museum is located at 1788 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101 in Balboa Park.

For more information, call 877.946.7797 or visit sdnat.org. Follow theNAT on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and join the discussion on [Facebook](#). Hashtags for this exhibition are #theNAT and #MayaSD.

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