

Supporting traditional Mayan artisanry in Mexico: TUI Care Foundation launches new TUI Colourful Cultures project

- *TUI Care Foundation and local partner Donia Way launch new three-year project to empower rural Maya artisans and promote cultural heritage*
- *Initiative addresses challenges faced by indigenous communities through dignified cultural representation, fair trade opportunities, and sustainable tourism*
- *Project will directly benefit 50 women artisans and create five new tourism experiences celebrating Maya culture*

Berlin, 30 October 2025. *Renowned for its rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes, the Yucatán Peninsula faces significant challenges regarding the representation and economic participation of its rural Maya communities. Despite the region's tourism popularity, Maya communities are often portrayed merely as 'attractions' rather than recognised for their profound cultural richness. Many artisans face barriers to market access, unfavourable commercial relationships, and lack training opportunities, putting their traditions at risk. To address these challenges, the TUI Care Foundation is continuing its partnership with Donia Way through a new TUI Colourful Cultures project that promotes local craftsmanship and creates a dignified ecosystem for Maya artisans.*

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The Yucatán Peninsula is one of Mexico's most visited regions, with significant development expected over the next six years as part of the government's strategy. However, local Maya communities do not always benefit from such development due to their superficial representation in the tourism industry, which undermines their identity and often diminishes the value of their heritage in the eyes of visitors. Promotion of local heritage is also hindered because the Mayan artisans have limited market knowledge, as well as lack of supporting mechanisms, like proper training, or access to digital and other platforms to promote their work.

To tackle these challenges and promote local heritage in the tourism industry in a sustainable way, the TUI Care Foundation has initiated a new project in partnership with Donia Way, a Merida-based and family-owned business, working with artisans from rural communities and specialising in creating graphic and artistic projects.

The project centres around Way Tun and Donia Way, two characters designed to represent and promote Maya and Yucatecan culture in a meaningful and respectful way. Special focus is given to the Way Tun character, which serves as a storytelling medium to highlight the richness of Maya traditions, the value of artisanal crafts, and the vibrant life of rural communities. Through this character, the project aims to create a bridge between traditional heritage and contemporary tourism markets.

The initiative brings together a range of complementary approaches, including mapping and customised training for women artisans, development of exclusive product lines combining traditional techniques with market trends, and organisation of an intensive bootcamp focused on personal, economic and professional growth. The project will also

create digital content featuring Way Tun to promote craftsmanship and tourist destinations, develop artisan-led tourism experiences and establish partnerships with tourism businesses and agencies. In addition, by partnering with rural tourism schools, the project will involve students in the design and management of artisan-led tourism experiences, providing them with practical training and enhancing their employment opportunities.

The project will directly benefit 50 women artisans from rural communities across Yucatán, Campeche, and Quintana Roo, as well as five rural experience creators and 20 students aged 18-25 from rural areas. It will also support the development of at least five meaningful and sustainable artisan-led tourism experiences. A new Donia Way and Way Tun space will open in Valladolid which will incorporate a sales area to promote local artisanal products to visitors, along with an interactive space, a mural about Maya culture, and areas to receive groups and offer tourism workshops and local experiences.

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The project is part of the international TUI Colourful Cultures Programme which protects cultural heritage and empowers creatives in tourism destinations around the world.

About the TUI Care Foundation

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands. Website: www.tuicarefoundation.com

About Donia Way

Donia Way's mission is to create and develop tourism and cultural promotion projects that share and promote the reach and conservation of cultural elements (human, ecological, artisanal, historical, gastronomic and others). Its main project Donia Way is the ambassador brand of Yucatán and the organisation focuses on promoting Yucatecan culture through digital content and artisanal products.

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