

May 17, 2019

Note to editors:

- Photos available at:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/36463010@N05/albums/72157707683426715>
- Backgrounder follows release.

## ***Maya: The Great Jaguar Rises* premieres at Royal BC Museum**

VICTORIA, BC—*Maya: The Great Jaguar Rises*—a remarkable exhibition highlighting Maya civilization past and present—makes its global debut on May 17, 2019 at the Royal BC Museum.

On the heels of last year’s record-breaking *Egypt: The Time of Pharaohs*, this exciting new feature spotlights the mystery, legacy and resilience of another of the world’s great civilizations: the Maya of Central America.

The exhibition boasts the world’s largest and most impressive display of Maya objects—many recently discovered and never before seen outside of Guatemala—and features more than 300 precious jade, ceramic, gold, stone and textile artifacts reflecting classic and contemporary Maya culture.

Through dramatic displays and inspired interactives, visitors will discover a powerful culture that rose in the tropical rainforests of Guatemala thousands of years ago, and learn how science and belief shaped the Maya identity from ancient times to present day.

This exhibition coincides with UNESCO’s Year of Indigenous Languages and will highlight the 30 Maya languages that are still spoken today by almost half the population of Guatemala.

“We know this theme of language resilience resonates strongly here in British Columbia,” says Prof. Jack Lohman, CEO of the Royal BC Museum. “The enduring success of the Royal BC Museum’s *Our Living Languages* exhibition, which celebrates the resilience of First Nations languages in our province, speaks to growing public interest in—and enthusiastic support for—the revitalization of Indigenous languages in the Americas.”

*Maya: The Great Jaguar Rises* is a joint venture between MuseumsPartner and the Royal BC Museum. Principal lending partners include La Ruta Maya Foundation and the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología (MUNAE), with support from the Guatemala Ministry of Culture. Destination Greater Victoria is the Lead Marketing Partner, and Paladin Security is a Community Partner.

To purchase tickets, visit: [www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/maya](http://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/maya). Stay updated on exhibition news with the Royal BC Museum [blog](#), or via social media: #RBCMMaya



### **About the Royal BC Museum**

The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

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*Backgrounder follows below.*

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

*Maya: The Great Jaguar Rises*  
*A Royal BC Museum feature exhibition*  
May 17–December 31, 2019

***The Royal BC Museum presents the world premiere of  
Maya: The Great Jaguar Rises—a remarkable exhibition highlighting  
Maya civilization past and present.***

### **Exhibition details:**

- Maya: The Great Jaguar Rises, open May 17-Dec. 31, 2019
- The Royal BC Museum is open daily from 10 am to 5 pm with extended summer hours 10 am to 10 pm Fridays and Saturdays (starting May 17 through October 5).
- Admission: \$26.95 adults; \$18.95 seniors/students; \$16.95 youth; free with membership
- On social: #RBCMAYYA

### **Overview:**

- On the heels of last year’s record-breaking *Egypt: The Time of Pharaohs*, *Maya: The Great Jaguar Rises* spotlights the mystery, legacy and resilience of another of the world’s great civilizations: the Maya of Central America. The exhibition details how science and belief shaped the Maya identity from ancient times to present day.
- The exhibition boasts the world’s largest and most impressive display of Maya objects from Guatemala, and features more than 300 precious jade, ceramic, gold, stone and textile artifacts reflecting classic and contemporary Maya culture—many never before seen outside of Guatemala. Notable artifacts include the recently excavated La Corona steps and Altar 5—their ancient hieroglyphs tell a story of an entire new dynasty within Mayan culture that rivals *Game of Thrones*. The principal lenders are:
  - La Ruta Maya Foundation: a private organization that recovers illegally obtained artifacts and repatriates them to Guatemala.
  - Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología (MUNAE): a national museum of Guatemala, dedicated to the conservation of archaeological and ethnological artifacts, and research into Guatemala's history and cultural heritage.
- The exhibition coincides with UNESCO’s Year of Indigenous Languages and highlights the 30 Maya languages still spoken today by almost half the population of Guatemala. This element complements the museum’s permanent *Our Living Languages* exhibition, which highlights the revitalization of Indigenous languages in BC.
- The exhibition includes a number of interactive stations to engage all ages, such as:
  - The Maya Birthday Machine
  - Make a Mayan sentence (using glyphs)
  - Dress a Maya King
  - Two narrated films: *A Day in Uxul* and *The Gift of the Maize God*
  - Games: true-false test-your-knowledge about Classic Maya people; help Ixchel make drinking chocolate
  - Please Touch: 13 hands-on 3D printed replicas of artifacts on display in the exhibition. The replicas are displayed at an accessible level with braille text interpretation for each object. Highlights include:
    - Jaguar Man
    - incense burner with real incense to smell (resin from the copal tree)
    - models of pyramids from the city of Tikal
    - figurines and masks
    - rough and polished Jade (aka, Maya green gold)
- The exhibition is a joint venture between MuseumsPartner and the Royal BC Museum, with lending partners that include the most relevant museums and

collections of Guatemala, and support from the Guatemala Ministry of Culture and Sports. Destination Greater Victoria is the Lead Marketing Partner.

**Will the IMAX theatre be showing a movie about Maya culture?**

No.

**Is there Maya-related merchandise in the gift shop?**

The pop-up second floor Royal Museum Shop, by the exhibition exit, will be filled with everything Maya-related including select textiles from Guatemala, and locally produced chocolate (Sirene) and coffee (Fernwood). MuseumsPartner has created a small companion publication for this exhibition.

**Will the Royal BC Museum feature any programs or special lectures related to Maya?**

Yes, there will be many learning activities, family events and special programs for visitors of all ages. For more information, see: [royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/events/calendar](http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/events/calendar).

**Where is the exhibition going next?**

The Royal BC Museum is the first venue in the world to host this exhibition. It will move to the Cincinnati Museum Center from March 13–Sept 7, 2020 and the Royal Alberta Museum from Oct 3, 2020-April 18, 2021.

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