



Lakin Trail ~ The easternmost trail (lakin is a Mayan word for east) tours the residential domain of El Pilar, winding up and down between household groups, most of which are still buried beneath the forest growth; only mounds are visible. Beginning at the southern entrance off the Pilar Road by the parking area on the east side, this gentle trail meanders approximately 1/2 km (1/3 miles) and takes about 45 minutes. It could take longer if you choose to spend time at the Tzunu'un, the Maya House and Forest Garden, the highlight of this tour. At Tzunu'un (Mayan for "hummingbird"), you will find ancient platforms and walls, examples of the relics of houses built over one thousands years ago. Exploring Tzunu'un, you can begin to get a sense of how a Maya family lived. Surrounding this house group is a Maya Forest Garden, a carefully tended native home garden that represents the subsistence horticulture utilized by the ancient Maya. Plants within this garden exemplify those used for construction, food, medicine, and a variety of other purposes.

After the Maya house of Tzunu'un, the Lakin Trail meanders through low bush, a characteristic of the forest succession process after slash-and-burn agricultural fields associated with milpafarming are left to natural processes. The path then courses across housing compounds, part of the Lakin neighborhood or barrio. The spacing of these compounds helps one envision houses among their forest gardens of the past.

The trail is generally an easy one. The hardest part of the Lakin is the final rustic stairway up to Plaza Rosa where the trail reaches its apex. Since this short trail is mostly through secondary growth, it can be quite hot under the midday sun. Take this into account as you embark on your journey. Bring water and wear a hat! At the end of the trail you will be below the eastern edge of the main plazas of El Pilar.

