

Bringing the deep Amazon to Miami

A canoe, a car, three flights, and a full 24 hours: That's how long it takes to get from deep in the Amazon to Miami.

The Yawanawá Tribe of the Brazilian Amazon is making that journey for the world premiere of their first ever performance "Journey to Mutum: A Cultural Encounter with the Yawanawá Tribe of the Brazilian Amazon."



Many members of the tribe have never been out of the Amazon, let alone on an airplane.

"Some didn't have passports, they weren't even documented in Brazil. We had to transport the crew from the Amazon jungle back and forth and it took many months of coordination, but here we are," said Anne Marie Miller, co-founder and CEO of Indigenous Celebration, the nonprofit bringing the tribe to Miami.

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There are 800 Yawanawá left living in eight villages on the banks of the Gregorio River. But, younger members of the tribe are losing their connection to the culture, opting to speak Portuguese instead of the traditional Yawanawá language.



Maintaining the tribe's 10,000 year-old-culture is important to preserving the longevity of the Amazon rainforest — indigenous people have long been the primary guardians of the 2 million square mile rainforest, according to Miller. That's why proceeds of the tour will go towards building a school in the village that teaches the younger members of the tribe the Yawanawá language, legends, spiritual practices, and plant knowledge.

The performance lasts a little more than an hour, showcasing songs, dances, games, and rituals that are part of Mariri, an annual celebration of Yawanawá culture. Through the Mariri, the tribe is thanking the

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forest spirits for all the good and happiness they've received that year. The Yawanawá will also be having a community dinner and festival at The Kampong in Coconut Grove throughout the weekend.

"The intention was to share what the experience is like with as many people as possible, because of course we can't bring everyone to the jungle," Miller said. "We hope more people will be touched to explore the indigenous lifestyle and culture."

It will take place at the Miami Theater Center Thursday, Sept. 29; Friday, Sept. 30; and Saturday, Oct. 1 before going on to complete a five-city North American tour. The tribe will go on to Austin, New York, Marlboro (VT) and Los Angeles.



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Here's a full list of events:

What: "Journey to Mutum: A Cultural Encounter with the Yawanawá Tribe of the Brazilian Amazon" // 75 minutes of sacred music and dance

Where: Miami Theater Center, 9806 NE 2nd Ave, Miami Shores, FL 33138

When: Thursday Sept. 29, 10 a.m.; Friday Sept. 30, 10 a.m.; Saturday, Oct. 1, 8 p.m.

What: Community Dinner with the Yawanawá

Where: The Kampong, 4013 Douglas Road, Coconut Grove, FL 33133

When: Friday, Sept. 30, 7 p.m.

What: Family Day Festival with the Yawanawá

Where: The Kampong, 4013 Douglas Road, Coconut Grove, FL 33133

When: Saturday, Oct. 1, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

You can [get tickets here.](#)

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