

15 DAY BEST OF MEXICO

DESTINATIONS

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MEXICO CITY

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

Destination	Mexico City
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Arrive at Mexico City's Benito Juarez International Airport and be transferred to your hotel. A complimentary transfer is included with your trip. Please ensure you provide your flight details to your booking agent at least 14 days prior to travel so the transfer can be organised. Settle in and, if you have time, take a stroll to get a feel for this vibrant and rapidly growing capital where the ancient and modern collide. You'll meet your leader and other members of your group this evening for a welcome meeting at 6 pm; the place of the meeting can be found at the hotel reception. This meeting will be followed by an optional group dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Complimentary Airport Arrival Transfer Optional Activities Mexico City - Palace of Fine Arts (Palacio de Bellas Artes) (Entrance fee) (Closed Mondays) - MXN70

Meals Included There are no meals included on this day.

Special Information It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as we will be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this time. If you are going to be late please let your travel agent or hotel reception know. Ask reception or look for a note in the lobby for more information on where the meeting will take place. Please note that this trip can be partnered with other adventures into a 'combo', which means that some of your fellow travellers may have begun their journey before today, and some may carry on to further destinations at the end of this tour. If you'd like to spend more time in Central America, have a look at the combos that include this trip's itinerary: Best of Mexico & Cuba

The arrival transfer is only valid if arriving on Day 1 or if you have booked pre-trip accommodation through Intrepid. Please provide your flight details at the time of booking, or at a minimum 14 days prior to travel, as we may not be able to confirm a request made within 14 days of travel.

DAY 2

Destination	Mexico City
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Enjoy a guided city tour of Mexico City. You'll visit the Metropolitan Cathedral, Zocalo, National Palace and Museum of Anthropology. After that, the day is yours to spend as you please. The Leon Trotsky and Frida Kahlo (La Casa Azul) museums are two popular sights worth checking as an optional activity. Trotsky, having come off second-best to Stalin in the race to the helm during the Soviet era, was expelled and found refuge in Mexico City where he was eventually murdered, while Frida Kahlo is perhaps the most renowned Mexican artist in history. Both of which can be reached by Uber. Otherwise, just outside of the city, the colourful Xochimilco gardens and canals are especially fun on weekends.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Mexico City - National Museum of Anthropology (Entrance fee) (Closed Mondays) Mexico City - Leader-led City Tour of Historic Center Mexico City - Diego Rivera Murals in the National Palace (Entrance Fee) Mexico City - Metropolitan Cathedral (Entrance)

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Optional Activities Mexico City - Frida Kahlo Museum (Entrance Fee) - MXN270 Mexico City - Leon Trotsky Museum - MXN40 Mexico City - Boat ride through Floating Gardens of Xochimilco (Approx. per boat per hour) - MXN350

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 3

Destination	Mexico City 🚗 Teotihuacan 🚗 Mexico City
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Leaving the hotel at 8 am, today you'll visit the Teotihuacan ruins, about 50 kilometres northeast of Mexico City (1.5 hour drive). Discover the amazing ruins known as the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon which dominate the skyline. This was once one of the biggest cities in the world. Stroll down 'The Avenue of the Dead' and see the clues to what life was like here nearly 2000 years ago. Continue to Oaxaca (5 hours) learning some Spanish phrases from your leader on the way. This beautiful colonial city is known for its cuisine and lively art scene, but it's also a great place to browse for traditional Mexican handicrafts, with descendants of the Zapotec and Mixtec selling an array of bright woven blankets and shawls. Upon arrival, your leader will take you on a short walk around the hotel to help orientate you, and to point out useful services such as bus stops or ATMs.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Teotihuacan - Archaeological site (Entrance fee, Guide & Transport) Leader-led Informal Spanish Lesson Oaxaca - Leader-led Orientation Walk

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 4

Destination	Mexico City 🚗 Oaxaca
Meals included	Breakfast, Lunch
Accommodation	N/A

Recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Oaxaca has much to offer travellers so today you'll take a full day tour of the city and its surrounds, including lunch at a local family's home. Be ready at 8 am for your local guide will take you to the Mitla ruins, which were once the religious centre for the Zapotec. Sip on the famous, tequila-like local liquor, mezcal, at a mezcal factory and visit the Tule Tree, a 1500-year-old tree that's over 11 metres in girth. Returning to the hotel about 8 pm, if you still have the energy, the evening is free for you to soak up the atmosphere and enjoy Oaxaca's nightlife. Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Mitla - Archaeological site (Entrance fee, Guide & Transport) Oaxaca - Guided full-day tour including the Tule Tree, a Mezcal distillery, and lunch in a Zapoteca family home

Meals Included Breakfast Lunch

DAY 5

Destination	Oaxaca
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

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Today is a free day to explore Oaxaca at your own pace, with a range of optional activities to consider. Perhaps pay a visit to the archaeological site of Monte Alban. The Zapotec civilisation began construction of this city around 200 BC, and Olmecs and Mixtecs have inhabited it at different times. Have your camera ready to go, because up here you can get an amazing view across the three legs of the valley of Oaxaca. Or check out Hierve el Agua: a group of stunning natural rock formations and mineral pools perched high in the hills overlooking the surrounding countryside. Hierve el Agua is known for its 'petrified' waterfalls, where many years ago the water calcified over the rock faces and now, they resemble frozen waterfalls. Otherwise, enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the streets and take the opportunity to feast on some regional delicacies. Season depending, a folkloric ballet performance is an also a great optional activity. The Santo Domingo Cultural Centre is also worth a visit.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities Oaxaca - Folkloric ballet (seasonal) - MXN130 Oaxaca - Cooking Class - MXN1130 Monte Alban - Archaeological Site (Entrance Fee) - MXN70 Oaxaca - Santo Domingo Cultural Centre (Entrance Fee) - MXN80 Hierve el Agua - Petrified waterfalls (Entrance fee, Guide & Transport) - MXN630

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 6

Destination	Oaxaca ✈️ Tuxtla Gutierrez 🚗 San Cristobal de las Casas
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Depart Oaxaca for the airport at approximately 5.30 am, then take the 8 am flight to Tuxtla airport (1.5 hours), before driving to the charming city of San Cristobal de las Casas (approximately 1 hour). Once in 'San Cris', as it's known, take a walk and soak up the strong old-world atmosphere of this town, which is due in no small part to the grand Spanish colonial architecture, prominent indigenous cultures and winding cobblestone streets. Your leader will help orientate you with a walk around the hotel, then you are free to venture further into the city.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities San Cristobal de las Casas - Leader-led orientation walk

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 7

Destination	San Cristobal de las Casas 🚗 San Juan Chemula 🚗 San Cristobal de las Casas
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

This morning, your leader will take you on a walking tour of the city, passing impressive cathedrals, green plazas and countless museums. Next, head to the nearby Maya village of San Juan Chamula (30 minutes' drive). Nestled in the highlands, this village serves as marketplaces and religious ceremonial centres for the indigenous folk who live in the surrounding hills. The local people have retained their traditional way of life and can often be seen wearing their own distinctive, colourful clothes. Journey another 15 minutes to visit the next town of Zicantán. As you explore with your leader, we'll learn more about these mostly Maya communities. Later, during free time back in San Cris, perhaps rent a bike to explore the town further.

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Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities San Cristobal de Las Casas - Leader-led City Tour San Juan Chamula - Maya Church (Entrance Fee)
Zinacantan - Maya Church (Entrance Fee)

Optional Activities San Cristobal de las casas - Bicycle rental (per hour) - MXN400

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 8

Destination	San Cristobal de las Casas
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

The rest of your time in San Cristobal de las Casas is free for you to explore on your own. You may want to pay a visit to the Na Bolom Museum: a small museum and research centre which was the home of anthropologist and photographer Gertrude Duby-Blom and her archaeologist husband Frans Blom. While Frans explored Mayan sites all over Chiapas, Trudy studied, photographed and fought to protect the scattered Lacandon people. Today, as well as being a hotel and a museum, the house provides free accommodation to Lacandon people who make their way to San Cristobal for work, studies or medical reasons. Alternatively, you may want to visit the amber (jade) museum, which displays and sells beautifully carved items and insect- embedded pieces or venture to the Sumidero Canyon to get a dose of nature.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities San Cristobal de las Casas - Na Bolom Museum - MXN50 San Cristobal de las Casas - Jade Museum - MXN65 Sumidero Canyon - Boat Excursion (Entrance & Transport) - MXN565

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 9

Destination	San Cristobal de las Casas 🚗 Palenque
Meals included	Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation	N/A

Say goodbye to San Cristobal de Las Casas as you head for Palenque and its surrounding jungle. It will be an early start to minimise the chance of hitting road closures common in the area. There will be a stop or two to stretch your legs, before arriving (4-5 hours) at the low and wide Agua Azul Waterfalls, which flow slowly over limestone rocks. There's time for lunch and a quick dip, so remember to pack your swimsuit! Otherwise, enjoy a scenic stroll around the beautiful surroundings, before continuing to Palenque (1.5-2 hours). A group dinner is included tonight.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Agua Azul - Waterfall Visit (entrance fee included)

Meals Included Breakfast Dinner

Special Information The local Zapatista movement in the region around Palenque has been quite active in recent

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months, occasionally holding protests or blocking roads. Our local operations team is constantly monitoring this situation to ensure the safety of our passengers and leaders. In some cases, we might need to use a longer alternative route from San Cristobal to Palenque to avoid this activity - more so to bypass what can turn into extensive traffic delays, rather than any real danger. It's also possible that the Agua Azul waterfall will not be accessible at the time we are scheduled to visit.

DAY 10

Destination	Palenque 🚗 Merida
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

At 8 am this morning you'll drive 30 minutes to visit the archaeological site of Palenque. Located on a hilltop in an area of hot jungle, these are some of the most astounding Maya ruins in the region, dating back as far as AD600. Some of the ruins remain unexcavated and are hidden in the surrounding forest. Enjoy a 2-hour guided tour of the site and keep an ear out for the strange calls of howler monkeys as you explore this lost city. At about 11 am, take a 3-hour drive to the lunch stop. Enjoy the chance to stretch your legs as there is another 4-5 hours' drive before reaching Merida about 8 pm, the capital of the Yucatan region.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Merida - Leader-led Orientation Walk Palenque - Archaeological site (Guide, Transport & Entrance fee)

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 11

Destination	Merida
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Today is a free day to explore the many sights of Merida. Perhaps visit some of the museums, including the impressive Regional Anthropology Museum of the Yucatan, and stroll the city streets which are alive with art and culture. Hang out in the green and shady Plaza Grande, with the 16th-century cathedral on one side and City Hall, State Government Palace and Casa Mantejo on the other. The outdoor market is another essential visit, with an array of hammocks and Mayan replicas for sale, plus a selection of enticing local cuisine, including the dish cochinita pibil ('little pig') or the incredibly spicy El Yucateco hot sauce. If you can't visit enough Maya sites, you may want to head for the ancient ruins of Uxmal. Here you'll visit the amazing Palace of the Governors, considered by many to be the best example of classic Maya architecture. You may choose to travel west out to the coast to take a boat ride and visit the Celestun Bird Sanctuary and Biosphere Reserve. Here, near extensive beaches lined with coconut trees, you'll see a variety of coastal birds. Depending on the season (usually November to March), you may be able to witness the magnificent sight of thousands of flamingos painting a pink streak across the landscape.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities Merida - Uxmal Ruins tour (inc. shared transport and guide) - MXN810 Merida - Fernando Garcia Ponce-Macay Contemporary Art Museum (Entrance Fee) - Free Merida - Celestun Bird Sanctuary (Entrance and Transport) - MXN1035

Meals Included Breakfast

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DAY 12

Destination	Merida 🚗 Izmal
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

In the afternoon, transfer by private vehicle to Izamal, a small city 1 hour's drive from Merida. Izamal is an important pre-Columbian Maya site and your leader will take you for a guided walking tour of the city including a visit to the Convento de San Antonio de Padua, a Spanish monastery built on the site of a destroyed Maya temple in 1561. Take the opportunity to spend a lazy afternoon people-watching and soaking it all in.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Izamal - Convento de San Antonio de Padua (Entrance) Izamal - Leader-led walking tour

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 13

Destination	Izmal 🚗 Chichen Itza 🚗 Playa del Carmen
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Departing early, our first stop today is Chichen Itza, an hour's drive from Izamal. This is possibly the most famous Maya site in Mexico. You'll see the marvellous Temple of Kukulcan standing over the ruins and not far from the temple is the 'ball court', where many disputes are known to have been settled by way of a ball game that employed only the elbows, hips and wrists. Stone carvings depicting violence suggest it was not such a casual sport. Following a guided tour of the site, we'll continue to the resort town of Playa del Carmen (2 hours).

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities Chichen Itza - Archaeological site (Entrance fee, Guide & Transport)

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 14

Destination	Playa del Carmen
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

Take today to enjoy Playa del Carmen as you see fit. Kick back with a book, stroll along the white sands or snorkel in crystal-clear waters. Blessed with azure waters, powdery beaches and an almost European feel, Playa del Carmen is a popular resort town famed for its coral reefs. For adventures further afield, take a ferry across the turquoise seas to Cozumel, an island famous for its reef diving, or perhaps check out the Tulum ruins, an ancient Maya city protected against invaders by a high wall and situated on a cliff overlooking a white sandy beach. In the evening, settle in beachside and watch the world go by with a margarita in your hand or take advantage of the famous nightlife and let your salty hair down.

Accommodation Hotel (1 night)

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Optional Activities Tulum - Archaeological Site (Entrance fee) - MXN75 Dos Ojos Cenote - Fresh Water Rock Pool (Entrance Fee with snorkelling gear & life jacket included) - MXN350 Playa del Carmen - Bicycle Rental (per day) - MXN250 Playa del Carmen - Ferry to Cozumel (Round-trip Ticket) - MXN300

Meals Included Breakfast

DAY 15

Destination	Playa del Carmen
Meals included	Breakfast
Accommodation	N/A

With no activities planned for today, you are free to leave the accommodation at any time. If you wish to spend more time in Playa del Carmen, we'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability).

Meals Included Breakfast

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Inclusions

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Small, personal group experience – no more than 12 people
Experienced Tour Leader throughout
Meals: 14 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner
Accommodation: Comfortable Hotel (14 nights)
Transport: Arrival transfer, Private vehicle, Plane
Explore Mexico City and the nearby Teotihuacan archaeological site,
Discover Oaxaca's food scene and soak in San Cristobal's colonial
character. Witness Maya's culture in San Juan Chamula and visit
Palenque and Chichen Itza

Fine Print

EXCLUSIONS

Airfares
Personal Expenses
Travel Insurance
Optional activities
Anything not mentioned in the itinerary or optional

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OPTIONAL TOURS

Mexico City - Palace of Fine Arts (Palacio de Bellas Artes) (Entrance fee) (Closed Mondays) (Day 1) - MXN70
Mexico City - Frida Kahlo Museum (Entrance Fee) (Day 2) - MXN270
Mexico City - Leon Trotsky Museum (Day 2) - MXN40
Mexico City - Boat ride through Floating Gardens of Xochimilco (Approx. per boat per hour) (Day 2) - MXN350
Oaxaca - Folkloric ballet (seasonal) (Day 5) - MXN130
Oaxaca - Cooking Class (Day 5) - MXN1130
Monte Alban - Archaeological Site (Entrance Fee) (Day 5) - MXN70
Oaxaca - Santo Domingo Cultural Centre (Entrance Fee) (Day 5) - MXN80
Herve el Agua - Petrified waterfalls (Entrance fee, Guide & Transport) (Day 5) - MXN630
San Cristobal de las casas - Bicycle rental (per hour) (Day 7)- MXN400
San Cristobal de las Casas - Na Bolom Museum (Day 8) - MXN50
San Cristobal de las Casas - Jade Museum (Day 8)- MXN65
Sumidero Canyon - Boat Excursion (Entrance & Transport) (Day 8) - MXN565
Merida - Uxmal Ruins tour (inc. shared transport and guide) (Day 11) - MXN810
Merida - Fernando Garcia Ponce-Macay Contemporary Art Museum (Entrance Fee) (Day 11) - Free
Merida - Celestun Bird Sanctuary (Entrance and Transport) (Day 11) - MXN1035
Tulum - Archaeological Site (Entrance fee) (Day 14) - MXN75
Dos Ojos Cenote - Fresh Water Rock Pool (Entrance Fee with snorkelling gear & life jacket included) (Day 14) - MXN350
Playa del Carmen - Bicycle Rental (per day) (Day 14) - MXN250
Playa del Carmen - Ferry to Cozumel (Round-trip Ticket) (Day 14) - MXN300

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Accommodation

The accommodation listed is subject to change. Any changes will be of an equal or higher standard. Bedding configurations (double or twin) are requests only. All efforts will be made to meet your preferences, however, any changes are beyond our control.

Single Travellers

This trip is designed for shared accommodation and doesn't involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender in accommodation ranging from twin to multishare. This only applies to accommodation during the tour - pre-trip and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

Single Supplement

A single supplement is available on all nights of this trip from an extra AUD \$825 subject to availability.

Triple Share

Not available.

Children

Children must be 15 years old or over and share a room with parents at all times. Children are charged the same price as adults.

Tour Documentation

Final documentation will be provided approximately 30 days prior to travel.

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HOW TO BOOK & PAYMENTS

Deposit & Payments

Book now and secure your package with only a AUD \$200 deposit per person.

Pay a 2nd instalment of AUD \$990 per person within 28 days.

You will then be invoiced for final payment 90 days prior to departure.

Booking Process

Select the purple 'Reserve Your Seat' tab to begin your booking (you must 'Sign Up' first by entering your email and creating a password)

Then select the purple 'Book now' tab of the tour you have selected

Select your Departure Date, Departure City, Number of Passengers, Room Configuration, any Upgrade Options, and enter any Special Requests

Click the purple 'Proceed to Secure Checkout' tab

Enter your credit card or PayPal details to secure your deposit/payment. You may also pay via BPAY (not available within 70 days of departure)

Once your order is complete, you will be prompted to complete a Booking Form so that we can fulfil your booking

Your booking is confirmed once your Booking Form is submitted and you can begin the countdown to your Inspiring Vacation!