



Highlights of Mexico

MEXICO - TRIP CODE MXS

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

A perfect introduction to Mexico starting off in the capital, journeying through the country's natural and archaeological highlights, and ending up at the beautiful beaches of Playa del Carmen. Along the way, explore the pyramids of Teotihuacan, the incredible Maya sites of Palenque and Chichen Itza, as well as the colonial market town of San Cristobal, before finishing at the coast for some well-earned relaxation time.

- **Chichen Itza** - Discover the infamous ancient ruins of one of the new Seven Wonders of the World
- **San Cristobal de las Casas** - Walk through the colourful markets of this well preserved colonial town
- **Roberto Barrios waterfalls** - Swim in the naturally formed pools and stunning series of falls near Palenque.



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 5



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
Boat



ACCOMMODATION
8 nights
comfortable hotel



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Mexico City

Arrive in Mexico City, the capital of Mexico and truly the heart and soul of the country. With so much rich history to discover, the city is filled with historic buildings, landmarks and the largest number of museums in the world.

Due to the number of evening flights into the international airport, your Leader plans to do the welcome meeting on the morning of day two, and will leave a message in reception with details on timings and everything else that you'll need for the day. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive into Mexico City at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Mexico City International Airport (MEX) which is approximately a 30 minute drive from the hotel.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to have a stroll around Alameda Central, Mexico City's oldest municipal park, or visit the Templo Mayor Museum, which is known for its exhibits relating to the Aztec civilization.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Fontan (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Visit the Teotihuacan Pyramids; city tour of Mexico City

On our first day in Mexico City we will drive out to the mysterious pyramids of Teotihuacan. Although abandoned thirteen centuries ago, they are still an unbelievable sight. Once the largest city in the Americas with perhaps 100,000 inhabitants, its influence continued through Middle America, and Maya craftsmen borrowed its decorative motifs and building designs. Centuries later the Aztecs revered Teotihuacan as 'the Place of the Gods'. Returning to the downtown area, we have time for a city tour of the huge Zocalo (main square) area, the cathedral and the National Palace with its murals of the famous Mexican artist Diego Rivera, depicting Mexican Independence. Many of these key sights were build on top of Tenochtitlan, the old Aztec capital.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Fontan (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Fly to Tuxtla Airport; boat trip through the Sumidero Canyon en route to San Cristobal

This morning we fly to Tuxtla airport, in the state of Chiapas, and set off for the spectacular Sumidero Canyon, a unique rift 41km long and up to 1000m deep, cut by the Rio Grijalva. This is the spot where, allegedly, in the 16th century, some 1000 Chiapa peoples committed suicide rather than submit to Spanish rule. We take a trip on a speed boat to fully appreciate the towering gorge, before driving up a scenic mountain road to San Cristobal de las Casas, the small colonial and indigenous town located high in the tree-lined Chiapas range. At 2210m above sea level, it can get quite cold at night!



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Arrecife (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 4 - Visit nearby indigenous villages; free afternoon to explore San Cristobal

Setting out northwest of San Cristobal, we drive to the traditional villages of San Juan Chamula and Zinacantan to discover a completely different side to Mexico. These two villages are strongly indigenous, and practice an interesting blend of Catholicism and traditional Maya beliefs', which is evident from a visit to the local churches. After exploring the villages we head back to San Cristobal for free time to spend wandering around the shops, squares and markets of the small town. Indigenous groups from the surrounding hills fill the town and marketplace with their colourful dress, including the distinctive Tzotzil people who still retain much of their Maya customs and language. They are noted for their bright textiles and weavings in bold designs, and this is the place to barter for some colourful souvenirs. This afternoon you may wish to visit the Na Bolom, the House of the Jaguar, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Lacandon tribe and displays many of their artefacts, or the Kakaw museum where you can learn about the history and production of chocolate in the area.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Arrecife (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Travel to Palenque via the Roberto Barrios waterfalls

Leaving the highlands, the road is slow and winding, but there are scenic views as we descend to the jungles of Palenque. We'll be driving via the town of Villahermosa, planning to bathe at the waterfalls of Roberto Barrios before driving onto our hotel. The river at Roberto Barrios tumbles over a series of limestone hills, forming a number of natural pools with overhangs, caves and numerous waterfalls to

swim under.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Maya Tulipanes (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Discover the important Maya site of Palenque; continue by bus to Campeche

One of the highlights of our trip is today's guided visit to the famous jungle ruins of Palenque, a fascinating and important Maya site. Once the choking forest was cleared, the ruins revealed the tomb of the high priest Pakal, his body adorned with a marvellous jade death mask - one of the most prized relics of the Maya culture, discovered only in 1952. The entire site, shrouded by the steamy rainforest, has an aura of deep mystery. After our visit we continue to the stunningly well-preserved colonial city of Campeche, which we explore on foot. This UNESCO Heritage city was constantly sieged by pirates and is thus the only walled city in Mexico. It is almost so well maintained that it feels like a storybook town, and we will wander the walled ramparts, narrow cobblestoned roads, boulevard and pastel coloured buildings this afternoon. Beyond the walls of the old city, there is a bustling coastal town, with frenetic market activity, an inviting waterfront and old fishing docks to walk around.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Mision Campeche (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 7 - Visit the ancient Maya city of Uxmal and drive to Merida

The next stop on our journey is the ancient site of Uxmal. Encircled by hills, Uxmal is expansive in its design with majestic palaces and pyramids. Long geometrical friezes rank among the most splendid examples of ancient American Art. The incredible Pyramid of the Magician and the beautiful Governor's Palace are two of the finest examples of Maya art anywhere. Later in the day we drive to Merida, famed for its beautiful Spanish-Moorish style architecture, where we have time to wander along the narrow streets watching the horse-drawn carriages rattle past. Alternatively there is an option to visit the Mundo Maya Museum, with its interesting displays and artefacts from the Maya culture.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Colonial (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Explore Chichen Itza and head to Playa del Carmen

This morning we drive to Chichen Itza. Founded in AD432, re-founded in 987 and conquered by the Toltecs in the 10th century, the culture of the Maya and the Toltec gradually fused. The pyramids, palaces, temples and ball court (where death was the penalty for defeat) are adorned with astonishing sculptures. Under the pressure of the civil war, the great monuments deteriorated and the Maya civilisation collapsed. Chichen Itza remains one of the most outstanding sites in the Americas. After a lengthy visit we drive to our final hotel in Playa del Carmen.





ACCOMMODATION:
Hacienda Del Caribe (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 9 - Trip ends in Playa del Carmen

The trip ends in the morning at our hotel in Playa del Carmen

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Playa del Carmen at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Cancun Airport (CUN), which is approximately a 60 minutes\ drive from the hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Mexico

Climate

Mexico is a vast country whose weather varies by season and region. The optimum time to travel is generally between December and April when rainfall is at a minimum. Temperatures are coolest between December and February and temperatures start to rise from March and the hottest months are May, June and July. The rainy season runs from May until October when humidity and temperatures are highest. The rains tend to be intense and short, clearing the humidity before building up again. The Caribbean coast can be affected by hurricane season between June and November. Please bear in mind that at altitude the temperatures can drop considerably at night and sudden changes can occur at any time.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion
-6	2 Pin Flat	Roman Catholic, Protestant

Language

Spanish is the official language, but around 50 languages/dialects are also spoken by the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Mexico City - Folkloric Ballet US\$80-120; Frida Kahlo Museum US\$14 (plus transport to Coyoacan)
San Cristobal - Na Bolom US\$5; Kakaw Museum US\$2 ; Kakaw Chocolate workshop US\$20
Merida - Mundo Maya Museum US\$20

Clothing

Warmer clothing is needed in the highlands (San Cristobal and Mexico City), which are mostly mild, but temperatures can drop dramatically at night. Pack a fleece and some long sleeved clothing for protection from sun and insects. Lightweight rainwear is essential. In general, winter is dry and summer wet. Casual clothes are acceptable. Shorts are acceptable everywhere except in churches.

Footwear

Bring walking boots if you have them, otherwise comfortable shoes/trainers with a good grip and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysack. Remember - you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

An umbrella is useful for tropical downpours. A torch and waterbottle are recommended. Bring insect repellent, sunscreen and a sunhat.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 40, approx. 760 pesos for group tipping

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

Mexico

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Breakfast price	Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£5	£7	£13	£2	£0.7

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Mexican New Peso (MXN)

Recommended Currency For Exchange

You can choose to either change your money in advance or on arrival at the airport. Here you will find both ATMs and Bureau de Change. The exchange rate with the MXN is approximately MXN 25 to the British Pound. Sterling can only be exchanged in Mexico City. We recommend you take some emergency cash in USD as the GBP exchange isn't very good. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they may not be accepted. Please check on line for up to date information. MX/Y - For those continuing to Guatemala we recommend you change approximately GBP 50-60 into Guatemalan Quetzals at Mexico city airport as there is no longer an exchange at the border crossing into Guatemala.

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

ATMs can be found in the major towns and cities for cash withdrawals in MXN. Always have some cash back up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit card are widely accepted in many shops and restaurants but some may be subject to a service charge

Travellers Cheques

We do not recommend Travellers Cheques

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information.Booking Conditions

Visa and Passport Information

Mexico: Citizens from UK, New Zealand, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada require a Mexican Tourist Card to enter. This is obtained on arrival, at some check-in desk of the airline you are travelling with or online in advance from the following website - <https://www.inm.gob.mx/fmme/publico/en/solicitud.html> . Please note that due to the requirements of the online system, the advance option is only possible if your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your intended date of entry to Mexico. You must take a printed copy with you which you will present on arrival with your passport. You will need to be kept this on you until you exit Mexico.

Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore' s USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information.(Not necessary if in transit)

For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications -

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Mexico

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information



Extend your trip with 7 nights in Cuba

Combine your trip

Why not combine your short trip to Mexico with 7 nights in Cuba? With an easy connecting flight from Cancun to Havana, booked by Explore, it's easy and stress-free to create yourself a two-week trip through two very diverse countries. Click [here](#) for more details.

Why book this trip

We have created this trip for travellers who want to discover the major Mexican highlights but are short of time. Including the archaeological sites of Teotihuacan, Palenque and, of course, Chichen Itza, as well as the natural beauty of the Sumidero Canyon, this nine-day adventure will not disappoint.

Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**