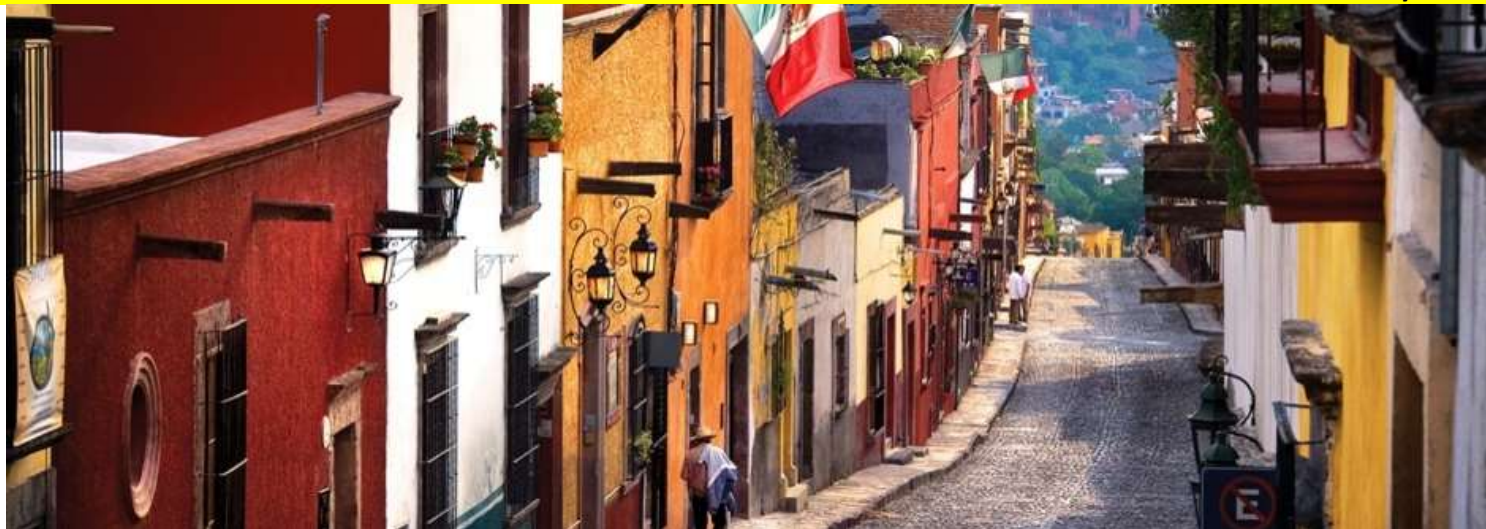


MEXICO

Newsletter

January 2019



Revealing Mexico

Around half a million British Nationals travel to Mexico each year and the Foreign Office reports that most visits are trouble free. So please don't let the widely reported Mexican Drug Wars put you off travelling to this friendly, interesting and immensely varied country.

Indeed, the Foreign Office stresses that the major tourist destination such as the Riviera Maya, Baja California and Puerto Vallarta are generally unaffected by drug-related violence and crime and for nearly a decade Revealed Travel passengers have been travelling to Mexico without difficulty.

A two-week itinerary from Mexico City to the Riviera Maya, taking in Oaxaca, Palenque and Chichen Itza remains one of our most popular routes, both for tailor-made tours and for group travel and provides a great introduction to the ancient civilisations of the Aztecs, Toltecs, Zapotecs and Mayas. Others prefer to concentrate on the Yucatan Peninsula and the Caribbean coast or to combine Mexico with Belize. The Copper Canyon railway journey has great and enduring appeal and can easily be combined with a visit to Baja California. Another appealing itinerary combines the well-preserved historic colonial cities with a few days on the Pacific coast.

If you are interested in tradition and festivals, Mexico's Day of the Dead is one of the most important and impressive in the whole of Latin America. If food is your thing we would be more than happy to put together a culinary tour for you, taking in cooking lessons, chocolate and various types of traditional *moles* (sauces).

Getting there

British Airways has a direct flight between Heathrow and Mexico City five times a week (Mondays, Wednesday, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays) and a direct flight between Gatwick and Cancun on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Delta, American Airlines and United Airlines offer flights to a range of destinations throughout the country via their various hubs in the United States. Airlines such as Iberia, KLM, Air France and Lufthansa operate flights to Mexico City via their European bases.

Domestic and Regional Flights

There is a good network of reliable domestic flights within Mexico which is ideal for combining different parts of the country. Please contact us to discuss regional flights to combine Mexico with Central American destinations and other countries such as Cuba.





Mexico City

Mexico City is one of the oldest inhabited cities in the Americas, built on the site of the ancient Aztec capital. We strongly recommend a guided tour of the Museum of National Anthropology as well as the Templo Mayor in the Zocalo main square and to the National Palace which has murals by Diego Rivera.

The Aztec ruins of Teotihuacan can be easily visited in a half-day tour. Teotihuacan was inhabited from around 200BC and is thought to have had a population of around 125,000 people at its peak around 650AD while Britain was still in the Dark Ages.



Oaxaca

Oaxaca is a graceful combination of the modern, the colonial and the ancient. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. We recommend a visit to the Monte Alban archaeological site, the capital of the Zapotecs, on a nearby hilltop with commanding views of the surrounding valley.



San Cristobal de las Casas

Beautifully set in a lush valley and surrounded by mountains, San Cristobal de las Casas is an attractive colonial gem, with cobblestone streets, classical architecture with clay tiled roofs and wrought iron balconies. A few miles outside the city there are caves with impressive stalagmites.

The spectacular Sumidero Canyon (*photo*) can also be reached from here. During the Spanish conquest it is known that Indian warriors threw themselves into the canyon rather than yield to the invaders.



Entry Requirements:

British Nationals do not currently require a visa for entry to Mexico. In general terms, travellers should make sure their passports are valid for at least 6 months from the date of arrival into all Latin American countries.

Time Zones

There are four time zones in Mexico. Cancun and the Riviera Maya are 5 hours behind GMT, most of the country is 6 hours behind but the Copper Canyon is GMT -7 and the northern part of Baja California is -8.

Vaccinations

It is advisable that you check you are covered against Tetanus and Hepatitis A and Typhus. Mexico is not a Yellow Fever zone. The following NHS website has further information: <https://bit.ly/2S3aPkx>

Insurance

A policy to cover cancellation, curtailment, theft, and medical issues (including repatriation) is recommended.

Ground Arrangements:

We book airport-hotel transfers, city tours, excursions and internal flights, buses or trains according to your needs together with all hotels and ground arrangements.

Hotels

Our team of travel specialists will provide first-hand expertise and advice on the range of hotels from mid-range four star hotels to old colonial houses with a touch of charm to luxurious hideaways.

Palenque

The complex of Palenque is one of the most beautiful pre-Colombian structures in Latin America and we thoroughly recommend a tour of the site with a specialist guide.

It is thought that the asymmetrical Palace at the centre was used as an astronomical observatory as well as a watchtower.

The Temple of the Inscriptions derives its name from the hieroglyphic tablets on the inner walls but it was only in 1952 that this pyramid was discovered to contain a burial chamber to Pacal the Great, founder of the ruling Maya dynasty.



Chichen Itza

Chichen Itza was built by the Maya in the late Classic period between 600 and 900 AD. The main pyramid (El Castillo) dominates the complex which includes a number of temples, a ball court and the Plaza of a Thousand Columns, covering an area of 2.5 sq. miles.

You can easily visit Chichen Itza from Merida or from the Riviera Maya. It is best to get there early in the day before the sun gets too hot.

Riviera Maya

Mexico's Riviera Maya stretches along the Caribbean coast from Puerto Morelos just south of Cancun, to Punta Allen in the Sian Ka'an biosphere reserve south of Tulum.

Playa del Carmen, little more than a fishing village 30 years ago, is now a busy tourist resort with accommodation ranging from luxury boutique hotels to rustic thatched cabanas. The Xel-Ha Park has a huge diversity of marine life in its coves, lagoons and cenotes.

Colonial Cities

Mexico's 16th century colonial towns and cities thrived from the production of silver, gold and precious stones but were places of discontent which eventually led to independence and revolution. Today the well-preserved centres of Queretaro, San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi and Morelia with cobblestone streets, courtyards, attractive colonial architecture, churches, museums, plazas and gardens are a delight to visit.

The Pacific Coast

The well-established beach resorts of Puerto Vallarta, Acapulco and Ixtapa have long been a magnet for holiday makers seeking sunshine, golden sand and Mexican hospitality. Manzanillo and Puerto Escondido have grown considerably since the 1980s whilst back-packers have long headed for Puerto Angel and the nearby beaches of Zipolite and San Agustinillo. Up-and-coming destinations on the Pacific coast include Costalegre and Riviera Nayarit.

Costs:

Prices will vary according to £/\$ exchange rates, the season of travel, the standard of hotel and whether we are booking travel arrangements for you on a private basis or as part of a group tour.

Our Service:

Revealed Travel have considerable expertise in putting together tailor-made holidays to Latin America and beyond. We have a dedicated team of travel specialists and a track record of creating safe, reliable trouble-free tours combining quality of service with value for money.

Money

The local currency is the Mexican Peso but it is best to take funds in sterling, US dollars or euros. The exchange rates are fairly flat across all the banks but the hotel rates are considerably poorer.

You can withdraw cash at most ATM machines linked to the cirrus, maestro and plus networks but you may need to alert your bank/credit card company to the fact that you will be using your card in Mexico as sometimes cards will be automatically blocked to avoid credit/debit card fraud. We always recommend you take a supply of small notes (e.g. US\$1 and \$5) for tips.

MasterCard and Visa are commonly accepted in hotels, restaurants and many shops, but do check first. Charges may apply.

Brexit

Travel companies are always affected by world events. In recent years the banking crisis, the ash cloud from the unpronounceable Icelandic volcano, the Arab Spring and the Zika virus have all had an impact on travel. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 atrocities there was a global downturn in travel.

At the time of publication, there is uncertainty over Brexit. There are currently no aviation agreements in place between Britain and the European Union in the event of No Deal by 29 March 2019. Department of Transport guidance (published Sept 2018) expressed hope that a 'bare bones' agreement with the EU may be possible. On 19 December 2018 the European Commission proposed short term measures to ensure 'basic connectivity.'

Links: UK: <https://bit.ly/2xMBJEr>
EU: <https://bit.ly/2rMY56o>

Baja California

Baja California stretches 1300km from the Tijuana border with the United States to Cabo San Lucas on the tip of the peninsula. Most travellers will head for the beaches at Todos Santos or the all-inclusive resorts of San Lucas. Playa Costa Azul, near San Jose del Cabo, is probably the best for surfing. To reach Playa del Amor at El Arco you can take a water taxi or hire a glass-bottomed boats, kayak or jet-ski.



The Copper Canyon

The Chihuahua to Los Mochis railway is an extraordinary feat of engineering with 87 tunnels and 38 bridges through a series of spectacular interlocking canyons. While the railway journey can be completed (in either direction) in a single day, we recommend stopping en route at Divisadero and at Creel. The region is home to the Tarahumara Indians, renowned for their endurance in long-distance running.



Since the referendum the pound has dropped against the US dollar, upon which most of our costs in Latin America are based. The upshot has been slightly more expensive holidays and perhaps fewer passengers travelling long-haul.

Latin America has always been a challenging region in which to specialise and at Revealed Travel we take uncertainty in our stride. Against the absence of clarity over Brexit, volatile stock markets, pressure on sterling, a general lack of confidence and potential recession, not to mention drones at airports, Revealed Travel will continue to look ahead and to promote travel to some of the world's most exciting destinations, including Mexico, Central and South America, the Falkland Islands and Antarctica. We may not be able to take on new staff and expand quite as fast as we had hoped in 2019 but right now our readers could probably do with a really good holiday.

Tailor-Made Itinerary: Introduction to Mexico

A classic introduction to the variety that Mexico has to offer on this suggested two-week trip from Mexico City to the Caribbean Coast.

Highlights: Mexico City – Oaxaca – San Cristobal de las Casas – Sumidero Canyon - Palenque – Uxmal – Chichen Itza – Riviera Maya

- Day 1: **Fly to Mexico City:** You will be met on arrival and driven to your hotel.
- Day 2: **City Tour of Mexico City** including a visit to the Anthropology Museum. Afternoon tour to the Aztec site of Teotihuacan.
- Day 3: **Free Day in Mexico City:** please discuss optional excursions and activities with us such as cooking lessons.
- Day 4: **Transfer to the airport and fly to Oaxaca,** a UNESCO World Heritage Site and lovely combination of ancient, colonial and modern.
- Day 5: **Excursion to the Monte Alban archaeological site and to the ruins at Mitla.**
- Day 6: **Fly to Tuxtla Gutierrez** where you will be met and driven to San Cristobal de las Casas.
- Day 7: **Tour of San Cristobal de Las Casas.**
- Day 8: **Travel via the spectacular Sumidero Canyon to Palenque,** one of the most important pre-Colombian sites in Latin America.
- Day 9: **A guided tour of Palenque** will give you a great insight into the Maya World.
- Day 10: **Fly to Merida,** an appealing colonial city in Mexico's Yucatan.
- Day 11: **City Tour of Merida and an excursion to the nearby pyramid of Uxmal**
- Day 12: **Depart from Merida and visit Chichen Itza** before continuing the journey to your hotel on Mexico's Riviera Maya.
- Day 13: **Riviera Maya:** we offer a range of hotels from standard four-star properties to fabulous, secluded and sophisticated hideaways.
- Day 14: **Riviera Maya:**
- Day 15: **Transfer to the airport at Cancun** in time to check-in for your flight home.

Notes:

Best time of the year: December to May (Dry season)

Costs: from £3500 per person including flights and mid-range accommodation, based on two people travelling together.

Options:

Please contact us to extend the journey to include the Copper Canyon railway journey between Los Mochis and Chihuahua.

Group Tours:

Although we specialise in building tailor-made itineraries for independent travellers, some people prefer to travel as part of a small group accompanied by a Tour Leader.

We offer a range of group tours from 14 days to 3 weeks or more at comfort levels to suit most budgets and age ranges.

<https://mexicorevealed.co.uk/escorted-tours/>

Meet the Team:

Destinations Manchester: 17-20 Jan
Event City

Destinations London: 31 Jan – 3 Feb
Olympia

Please contact us to book appointments and to secure free entry tickets.

Cruises:

Revealed Travel also book a range of cruise ships which include either the Riviera Maya in Mexico's Caribbean or the Pacific Coastline.

For an introduction to some of the cruises we offer, please click the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2R8xAGF>

