



MEXICO

DAY 1:

Daytime: urban adventure #1

Beyond Mexico City: Hidden Teotihuacan & Family Dinner.

Head out of Mexico City by public transit, experiencing how locals move about this crowded city. Hop off at the archaeological area of the Teotihuacan pyramids, where you'll learn about the people who once lived here and all the mysteries that still surround this site. As you tour the grounds, you'll see the Moon Pyramid, the Calzada de los Muertos (Dead Pass), and the Sun Pyramid, which is the tallest and most spectacular in the area — it's 63 metres to the top (and yes, we're going up).

After exploring the pyramids, we'll continue the afternoon walking through the streets of a nearby town. Our first stop will take us into a family-run business where you will learn about 'obsidian' — the material that the Teotihuacan people use as a main element to make their tools, idols, and decorations. As well, you'll get to sip an ancient sacred drink called 'pulque,' which is extracted from the heart of the maguey (another kind of cactus) — considered by some to be the great-grandfather of tequila.

Next up on this Mexico tour, pay a visit to the cactus product factory, where you'll find jams, candies, spicy lollies, alcoholic creams, and more products made by the local people from the endemic vegetation such as nopal, xoconostle, and tuna (a cactus fruit, not tuna fish!). Not only will you be able to see all the cactus varieties at this family-run factory, but you'll also get to try some samples and, if you like them, you can pick up some of these exotic products as a souvenir.

To finish our journey, we'll visit a local family for dinner. Their business is catering, so you'll be in good hands to try some traditional dishes. Their menu is always changing based on whatever they've cooked for the day — but there's always delicious options for every palate. You'll be welcomed into their home and experience traditional dinner customs. Plus, you'll be able practice all those Spanish words you've learned along your trip as you enjoy some real local flavours of typical Mexican kitchens. Delicious!

After dinner, we'll head back to Mexico City, happy, full, and relaxed from our wonderful day exploring life outside the hustle and bustle of the big city.

Night time: Urban adventure #2

Mexican Night Out: Cantinas, Mariachi & Lucha Libre

Our unique Mexico City tour (say that ten times fast!) starts at a typical Mexican pub called *acantina*. There, you'll enjoy a couple drinks (at your own expense) and get to know the rest of the travellers on your tour. Most importantly, though, your local Urban Adventures guide will give you a briefing of what's in store for the rest of the evening, including the basic rules of the eccentric *lucha libre*.

To keep the excitement of the night going, we'll head to another cantina by the Mexican musician's square of Garibaldi, where we will experience Mexican Mariachi music and many other Mexican music bands (go ahead, practice your Spanish singing skills and dance moves!). We'll enjoy the atmosphere of the square for about an hour before heading out to the arena to support the best "Luchadores" of the country.

Lucha libre (aka Mexican wrestling), is the second-most watched sport in Mexico, and hands down one of the most exciting things you can do while visiting Mexico City. For a truly local experience, we'll hop on the subway to the Arena Mexico to catch the fight. We'll get you good seats in the arena so you can truly live the experience and see the best matches of the night.

Immerse yourself in the crazy, exciting, energetic atmosphere of the arena and really get into it - scream and whistle whatever you want, while you experience unique and dramatic *lucha libre* moves like *La Quebradora*, *El Martineta*, *La Segadora*, and many others. You'll watch some of the best wrestlers in the country in an experience that will leave you awestruck for the two hours you spend at the *lucha libre*.

At the end of this unreal experience, you will have time to buy some souvenirs, like the mask of the best wrestler you saw in the show, so you can take some fun photos with your masks on.

After all the dancing, singing, drinking, and cheering, we'll be ready to go back to where it all began, our meeting point, where your guide will offer suggestions for where to continue the party. If you prefer to hit the hay, you can take a cab back to your hotel with the help of your local tour guide.

Intrepid tours- Best of Mexico



DAYS 2-4:

Mexico City

On arrival in Mexico, head to the heart of the downtown area to settle in. Meet the team and grab a delicious dinner of spicy tacos, cheesy quesadillas and traditional *arroz con frijoles negro* (black beans and rice). Check out the must-see archaeological ruins of Teotihuacan, home to the two giant pyramids – Pyramid of the Sun and Pyramid of the Moon. Stroll down the Avenue of the Dead with a local guide to uncover the site's many wonders and to better understand the way life was lived nearly 2000 years ago. Then visit

the major religious landmark Virgen de Guadalupe before spending some free time feeling the rhythm of Mexico City's streets.

DAY 5:

Puebla

Travel by minibus to Puebla and explore a city that has successfully combined modern developments with its colonial past. Take the time to intimately explore this Mexican township. Head to the market and bargain for local arts and crafts, or take an optional hike to a nearby volcano. If the food of Mexico has already seduced you, why not learn a few new cooking skills at a traditional cooking class and try to master the local dish mole poblano, which originated in Puebla and is famous all over Mexico.

DAYS 6-7:

Oaxaca

Explore the colourful markets, exciting architecture and flavoursome cuisine of Oaxaca. Bargain with the Zapotec and Mixtec Indians, who sell colourful woven blankets and shawls, or wander the streets, dazed by the range of architectural delights. Otherwise, relax like a local with a mezcal or tequila in hand while sitting in the shady central square, El Zovaló. Be sure to visit Monte Alban, a mountain home that was inhabited for 1,500 years by a succession of cultures (Olmecs, Zapotecs and Mixtecs).

DAY 8:

Tehuantepec

See the widest tree in the world - the Tule Tree - and stop by a mezcal factory to see how this famed spirit is made and then at the Mitla ruins on the way to Tehuantepec.

DAYS 9-10:

San Cristobal de las Casas

Discover the old-world charm of San Cristobal de las Casas on this journey into a more traditional part of Mexico. Explore cobbled streets dotted with local shop fronts, which are run by friendly indigenous locals. Be introduced to this colonial city on a village walking tour, passing impressive cathedrals, green plazas and countless museums and cafes. Learn more about the tradition, culture and history of these mainly Maya communities and, during free time, perhaps rent a bike to explore the town further or venture to the Sumidero Canyon to get among nature.

DAYS 11-12:

Palenque

Head out on a waterfall excursion like no other. See Misol-ha – a fast-moving waterfall, where water plunges 35 metres and crashes into the pool below. Later, make tracks to the low and wide Agua Azul, which flows slowly over limestone rocks. Remember to pack your swimsuit for a quick dip in the afternoon. Otherwise, hike around the beautiful surrounding area. The next day, visit some impressive Maya ruins in the jungled hilltops of Palenque. Dating back to AD600, many of the ruins are still hidden within the surrounding forest and, due to a low number of visiting tourists, the sites are often empty.

Day 13:

Campeche

Take a dip in the Gulf of Mexico before continuing on to the fortified colonial town of Campeche.

Day 14:

Merida

Spend the day exploring Merida's well-preserved Old Town. As well as being the capital of Yucatan State, Merida is the cultural capital of the entire peninsula. Today is free to choose your own adventure: relax in a sunny central cafe, meander museums or walk around the plaza Grande checking out cathedrals, 16th-century houses and its municipal cultural centre. There is a lot to see and do, but be sure to stop, take a breather and try some unique Yucatecan food. Influenced by the Maya culture, this cheesy, spicy and meaty cuisine is some of the best in Mexico.

DAYS 15-16:

Playa del Carmen

Explore Chichen Itza, arguably the most famous, and by far the most visited, Maya site in Mexico. With a local guide, see the El Castillo pyramid, where human sacrifices were made to appease the Mayan rain god Chac, and learn about the ball courts, where disputes were settled during a sporting game (combatants were only allowed to hit the ball using their elbows, hips and wrists, and the losing players lost their heads). In Playa del Carmen, spend time at the beach, exploring the blue waters with a snorkel while the Caribbean rays falls from the sky. This laidback coastal town has some of the best international food in the area, which makes it the perfect spot to cheers a margarita glass to the success of an in-depth Mexican adventure.

Intrepid tours Yucatan Explorer



DAY 17:

Playa del Carmen

Acclimatise to the Mexican way of life in beautiful Playa del Carmen and let the aqua water, white sand and Caribbean sunshine wash away the jetlag. Take a ferry to Cozumel for a dive, or stay on solid, sandy land with a margarita in hand.

DAYS 18-19:

Caye Caulker

Venture to the island of Caye Caulker and partake in an exciting snorkelling trip. Jump into the ocean and swim with the fishes... and sharks, turtles and rays of the area. For enthusiastic divers, take an optional excursion to the incredible Blue Hole or stay on dry land to meet the island's celebrated Cake Lady and Tamale Seller. Afterwards, savour the amazing variety of seafood – be sure to try buttered lobster and a mojito or two. The locals are right, this is a place to relax and unwind.

DAY 20:

San Ignacio

Head to San Ignacio and choose to explore Xunantunich, an impressive Mayan ceremonial center or journey to Mountain Pine Ridge. For adventure seekers, hit the water and go on a tubing adventure into the heart of this natural beauty.

DAY 21:

Tikal

Towering above the jungle of Tikal National Park, the granite temples of Tikal are an awesome sight and one of the most magnificent Maya ruins. Explore a maze of smaller structures hidden in the jungle growth. If you're feeling energetic, climb to the top of the ruins for spectacular views over the canopy. You may even spot toucans, macaws and other colourful birds.

DAY 22:

Flores

Enjoy an early morning meander around the Tikal ruins before driving to the quaint township of Flores. Be inspired by the enduring culture and traditions practised in this region. Stroll through the cobbled streets and if you're game, jump in Lake Peten Itza for a swim.

DAYS 23-25:

Antigua

Fly to Guatemala and head to Antigua. In the old colonial capital, walk along cobbled streets to find colourful markets and dance to indigenous marimba music. Visit a women's cooperative, which aims to assist community development, health, education, income generation and access to clean water for women in the area. See the ladies demonstrate their skills in traditional crafts, before enjoying some of their delicious cooking. At the end of this Mexico and Guatemala exploration, relax and cheers a cerveza to a fabulous trip.