

HOTEL DEALS

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INTRODUCING MEXICO

Marvelling at a 1300-year-old Maya palace at Palenque as parrots screech and howler monkeys growl in the sweaty emerald jungle around you. This is Mexico. Sliding from a palm-fringed sandy beach into the warm, turquoise waves of the Pacific at Puerto Vallarta. This, too, is Mexico. Dining on salmon enchiladas and chrysanthemum salad at a Mexico City fusion restaurant, dancing through the night at a high-energy Guadalajara nightclub, kayaking at dawn past a colony of Baja California sea lions – all these are unique Mexican experiences. Every visitor goes home with their own unforgettable images. Such a large country, straddling temperate and tropical zones, reaching 5km into the sky and stretching 10,000km along its coasts, with a city of 19 million people at its center and countless tiny pueblos everywhere, can hardly fail to provide a huge variety of options for human adventure.

Mexico is what you make of it. Its multi-billion-dollar tourism industry is adept at satisfying those who like their travel easy. But adventure is what you'll undoubtedly have if you take a just a few steps off the pre-packaged path. Activity-based tourism, community tourism and genuine ecotourism – the type that actually helps conserve local environments – are developing fast in rural areas. The opportunities for getting out to Mexico's spectacular wild places and interacting with local communities are greater than ever – from world-class canyoneering near Monterrey

BEACHES

FROM

CITIES

FROM

Puerto Vallarta
Cancun
Acapulco
Riviera Maya
Los Cabos

\$29
\$31
\$32
\$40
\$58

Morelia
Puebla
Guadalajara
Mexico City
Monterrey

\$19
\$26
\$27
\$35
\$43

Rates in USD. 3-stars hotels and up..

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or cooking lessons in the Veracruz countryside to hiking the Oaxaca cloud forests and snorkeling the coral reefs of the Yucatán.

Planning your first trip to Mexico? Be ready for more crowds, noise, bustle and poverty than you're accustomed to, especially if it's your first trip outside the developed world. But don't worry – most Mexicans will be only too happy to help you feel at home in their country. Invest a little time before your trip in learning even just a few phrases of Spanish – every word you know will make your trip that little bit easier and more enjoyable.



HISTORY



Mexico's story is always extraordinary and at times barely credible. How could a 2700-year-long tradition of ancient civilization, involving the Olmecs, the Maya and the Aztecs – all intellectually sophisticated and aesthetically gifted, yet at times astoundingly bloodthirsty – crumble in two short years at the hands of a few hundred adventurers from Spain? How could Mexico's 11-year War for Independence from Spain lead to three decades of dictatorship by Porfirio Díaz? How could the people's Revolution that ended that dictatorship yield 80 years of one-party rule? And how was it that, after so many years of turbulent upheavals, one-party rule just laid down and died in Mexico's first-ever peaceful regime change in 2000?

Travel in Mexico is a fascinating encounter with this unique story and the modern country that it has produced. From the awesome ancient cities to the gorgeous colonial palaces, through the superb museums and the deep-rooted traditions and beliefs of the Mexicans themselves, Mexico's ever-present past will never fail to enrich your journey. When to go
No time is a bad time to visit Mexico, though the coastal and low-lying regions, especially in the southern half of the country, are fairly hot and humid from May to September (these are the months of highest rainfall and highest temperatures almost everywhere). The interior of the country has a more temperate climate than the coasts. In fact, it's sometimes decidedly chilly in the north and the center from November to February.