

FREE DESTINATION GUIDE

# MEXICO

Mexico (Country Guide)



*One country, a dozen trips: capital cities, colonial towns, ruins, and two coasts.*

**SAFETY:** US State Dept: varies by state

**Travelling with ActorTonyB & Nala The Shih Tzu**

Powered by Expedia.com

# Top Sights

- **Zocalo and Templo Mayor, Mexico City.** The Aztec great temple beside the cathedral, in the heart of the capital. Start here.
- **National Museum of Anthropology.** One of the world's great museums: the Aztec Sun Stone and treasures from every era of Mexico.
- **Chapultepec Castle and Park.** A hilltop castle, lakes, and museums; Mexico City's green lung and a perfect slow morning.
- **Frida Kahlo Museum, Coyoacan.** The Blue House where Frida lived and painted; book tickets online, they sell out daily.
- **Teotihuacan Pyramids.** Walk the Avenue of the Dead between two giant pyramids; go at opening time, an hour from the capital.
- **Xochimilco Canals.** Bright trajinera boats, floating gardens, and mariachi on the water, a floating fiesta.
- **Tulum and the Riviera Maya.** Clifftop ruins, cenotes, and beach towns south of Cancun; see the Cancun guide for the full playbook.
- **Guanajuato or San Miguel de Allende.** Colonial color, tunnels, and plazas in the highlands; Mexico's most photogenic small cities.

# Local Tips

- Check the State Department advisory for the specific state you are visiting; Mexico is rated state by state, not as one blanket level.
- Mexico City sits at 7,350 feet. Take the first day easy, hydrate, and go light on the mezcal until you adjust.
- Use Uber or DiDi in big cities; they are cheap, tracked, and avoid fare haggling.
- ADO and ETN first class buses are clean, safe, and air conditioned for intercity trips; domestic flights are often cheap too.
- Pay in pesos when you can. Choosing dollars on card machines usually costs you a worse rate.
- Markets are for grazing: follow the busiest stall, point, smile, and try the agua fresca of the day.
- Beat the airport gauntlet at Mexico's resort airports (Cancun, Los Cabos, Puerto Vallarta): timeshare sellers staff desks that look official right after customs. Nothing there is required. Decline politely, keep walking, and never sign anything on arrival day when you are tired and rushed.
- Book airport transfers before you land and screenshot the meeting point; the curbside haggle always costs more than the prebooked ride.

# Customs & Etiquette

## Do

- Greet people warmly: buenos dias, a handshake, and a smile open every door in Mexico.
- Learn the lunch rhythm: comida, the main meal, runs 2 to 4 pm and restaurants fill with locals.
- Tip 10 to 15 percent in restaurants, and a small tip for baggers and parking helpers.
- Bargain in markets with good humor; walking away smiling is part of the dance.

## Please Don't

- Do not drink tap water anywhere in Mexico; bottled and purified water is universal.
- Do not photograph people, especially in indigenous communities, without asking permission.
- Do not call Mexico City's Metro at rush hour with luggage; it is crush loaded at peak times.
- Do not expect places to open early; much of Mexico starts at 9 or 10 am and eats dinner at 8 or later.

# Things to Know Before You Go

**Currency.** Mexican peso (MXN). Cards work in cities and resorts; cash rules in small towns and markets.

**Language.** Spanish. English is common in tourist areas and big hotels; a phrasebook earns smiles everywhere else.

**Best time to visit.** November to April is the dry season across most of the country. Mexico City is mild nearly year round.

**Getting around.** Domestic flights and first class buses link regions. Inside cities, ride apps beat street taxis on price and safety.

## Five phrases that open doors

|                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Buenos dias          | Good morning           |
| Muchas gracias       | Thank you very much    |
| La cuenta, por favor | The check, please      |
| Habla ingles?        | Do you speak English?  |
| Donde esta el bano?  | Where is the restroom? |

## What to Bring

- Layers for altitude: Mexico City mornings and evenings are cool year round, even when afternoons are warm.
- Sunscreen and a hat; the sun at 7,000 plus feet burns faster than at the beach.
- Pesos in small bills from an ATM on arrival; markets and small towns run on cash.
- A refillable bottle: hotels and restaurants provide purified water (agua purificada) everywhere.
- Comfortable shoes for big museum days and pyramid sites.
- A light rain jacket in the June to September rainy season; storms are short and mostly late afternoon.

## What to Expect

Weather: it depends on the map. The capital is springlike most of the year, the coasts are tropical, and the highlands get cold nights in winter.

Pace: generous and social. Lunch is the main event, shops open late, and festivals can close a town's streets with zero warning and total charm.

Costs in practice: Mexico is one of the great value destinations on Earth. Street food and market meals are world class for a few dollars; resort zones charge resort prices.

How tourists are received: Mexico is famously warm to visitors. Greet people, try the food, and you will be treated like a guest, not a customer.

## What NOT to Bring

- Vapes and e-cigarettes: importing them is banned in Mexico and customs confiscates them.
- Drones without permits: Mexico requires registration and restricts foreign operators; leave it home unless you have paperwork sorted.
- Any firearms or ammunition, ever; penalties are severe and immediate, including for a single stray round.
- The habit of drinking tap water; it does not travel with you here.
- Big wads of cash or an itinerary into states with Level 3 or 4 advisories without serious research first.

# Safety Rating

## US State Dept advisory level: Rated state by state (Mexico City and Quintana Roo: Level 2)

Mexico is the one country on this list with no single advisory level: the US State Department rates each state separately. Mexico City and Quintana Roo (Cancun, Tulum, Playa del Carmen) are Level 2, Exercise Increased Caution. Yucatan and Campeche are Level 1. Several states carry Level 3, and six states (Colima, Guerrero, Michoacan, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas) are Level 4, Do Not Travel. The tourist routes in this guide sit in the Level 1 and 2 states; check your exact state before you book and again before you go.

## Three practical safety moves

- Look up your destination state on [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov); the level for your state is the one that counts.
- Use app based rides and prebooked transfers, especially at night and at airports.
- Enroll in the free STEP program at [step.state.gov](https://step.state.gov) and keep the embassy number saved in your phone.

Advisory levels change. Check the current rating for your destination at [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) before you book and again before you fly. Summary reflects the advisory in effect in October 2026.

## Budget Snapshot

Rough per person daily ranges in US dollars, including lodging, food, local transport, and activities. Airfare not included. Treat these as planning estimates, not quotes.

| Tier            | Per day (USD)          | What it looks like                                                                         |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Budget traveler | \$55 to \$85 per day   | Boutique hostels and family hotels, market meals, first class buses, free museum Sundays.  |
| Mid range       | \$110 to \$170 per day | Well located hotels, sit down dinners, guided day trips, a domestic flight or two.         |
| Comfort         | \$220 plus per day     | Design hotels, private guides, fine dining in Polanco or Roma, resort nights on the coast. |

Planning the beach leg? Download our free Cancun guide too: it covers the Hotel Zone, Isla Mujeres, Chichen Itza, and the cenotes in full detail.

## Ready to Go?

You have the sights, the tips, the customs, and the budget. Now put dates on it. Compare flights, stays, cars, and activities for Mexico in one place, with live prices and traveler reviews.

**BOOK THIS TRIP ON EXPEDIA**

[www.expedia.com](https://www.expedia.com)

Booking link: <https://www.expedia.com> (we may earn a commission when you book through links in this guide, at no extra cost to you).



JOIN R&R; WITH TONY B: the community where all of this lives.

Start FREE for 7 days, then \$49/month. Sign up at <https://rrwithtonyb.com>

Inside you get every course: 90 Days (Success, Wealth, Time), You, The Walking Brand, Home Buyer & Seller HQ, the agent success courses, Kids & Creators, and acting courses.

You also get the Actor & Creator Resource Library: 35 brand deals free on your trial; members unlock the full 100 plus 10 new brands every week.

Plus Hired From Home remote job listings, the DIY Help Desk (send in a repair and get a detailed fix-it PDF back), weekly brand drops, buyer programs, and member requests for state-specific resources.

Watch the videos, then come inside and put it to work. Your first 7 days are free.