JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

DISCOVER MEXICO: OAXACA'S CULTURE AND COASTLINE

13 days from **£3,500pp**

MEXICO / MEXICO CITY / COLONIAL AND SILVER TOWNS / OAXACA / SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

The selection of Mexico's most fascinating historical places and archaeological sites includes culturally rich Oaxaca, combined with a Pacific beach wind down.

DAY 1	**Arrive in Mexico City and transfer to hotel in the historic centre.**
DAY 2	**Full day guided excursion to Teotihuacán pyramids and Guadalupe shrine.**
DAY 3	**Guided visit to Xochimilco, Coyoacán and the Frida Kahlo Museum.**
DAY 4	**Full day guided tour to Puebla, Tonantzintla and Cholula, overnight in Puebla.**
DAY 5	**At leisure in Puebla.**
DAY 6	**By road to Oaxaca, southwest Mexico, guided tour of city and market.**
DAY 7	**Half day guided excursion to the ruins of ancient city Monte Albán.**
DAY 8	**At leisure in Oaxaca.**
DAY 9	**Transfer to your beach hotel at Huatulco, on the Pacific coast.**
DAY 10-12	**At leisure on the beach; optional water-sports and activities.**
DAY 13	**Transfer to Huatulco airport**

ITINERARY

On this varied cultural holiday, based in elegant and evocative accommodation, you'll visit the multi-layered capital, Mexico City, where the Aztec and Spanish heritage blends or co-exists; and the culturally magnificent gems Puebla and Oaxaca.

Then move on to stroll through the cobbled streets and soak up the colonial atmosphere in the Spanish planned city of Puebla; followed by the isolated, rugged southern highlands, dotted with small weaving and craft villages, which compose the region around Oaxaca, which has its own distinctive identity.

Known as Mexico's artistic centre, Oaxaca has both indigenous and colonial features: the markets, artisan workshops, rituals and multiple fiestas reflecting the native culture while the baroque architecture, plazas and museums display the Spanish influence.

Mexico is one of Latin America's most vibrant and entertaining destinations, with a huge diversity of historical, cultural and natural attractions. Having had your eyes opened to all that, round off your holiday lounging on the white sand beaches that fringe the bays, smothered in tropical foliage, on the Pacific beach at Huatulco.

DAY 1

Arrive in Mexico City and transfer to hotel in the historic centre.



You'll be met at the airport by one of our local representatives and accompanied to your hotel. Mexico City has evolved over the centuries into a modern day metropolis from its founding as the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán in the 14th century. A history of agricultural cultivation, religious ritual, and warring tribes took a seismic turn with the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores and the development of the city was fuelled by silver mining.

Your hotel is right on the zócalo, Mexico City's gigantic main square in the historic core of the city which is crammed with important colonial edifices. You might stroll along the pedestrianised streets in the evenings, when Mexicans take their traditional promenade, stopping off for a coffee or beer in one of the numerous bars, or window-shopping.

DAY 2

Full day guided excursion to Teotihuacán pyramids and Guadalupe shrine.



Guided tour of Teotihuacán and the Guadalupe shrine. Passing through the northern suburbs of the capital, you head into the countryside towards the megalithic archaeological site of Teotihuacán. Teotihuacán dates from the time of Christ and was once one of the largest cities in the world. It is hugely influential in the historic narrative of modern Mexico and, although it had already been abandoned by the time of the Aztecs, even this great empire held it in awe.

Stroll along the imposing Avenue of the Dead, leading to the vast Pyramid of the Sun, and take the opportunity to climb its vertiginous, ancient steps for a panorama of the ruins and the lush surrounding countryside.

Visit also the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadelupe, the most venerated shrine and pilgrimage destination in Mexico. Here, the Virgin Mary, disguised as an indian princess, appeared to indigenous Mexican Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, leaving her image impressed on his cloak. It is not certain that he ever existed but he was canonised by the Roman Catholic church in 2002 as the continent's first indigenous saint.

You can explore the historic centre on foot from your hotel. Don't miss the cathedral and national palace. If you have time we suggest you visit the world-class Museum of Anthropology, a short taxi or public bus ride away. The museum exhibits remarkable, well displayed expositions of Aztec artefacts alongside items from other ancient civilisations. It's a fantastic introduction to the superb and sometimes grisly artistic achievements of Mexico's early inhabitants.

DAY 3

Guided visit to Xochimilco, Coyoacán and the Frida Kahlo Museum.



Today you have a guided day trip out to the fringes of the city and its most prestigious artist quarter. Visit Coyoacán, which, before the city expanded to absorb it, was a colonial village. This neighbourhood still has its own identity, with narrow streets, plazas, cafés and a lively arty atmosphere.

Walk through the main plaza, churches and beautiful old buildings, including the house of conqueror Hernán Cortés. Visit Frida Kahlo's home, where the great artist was born, lived much of her life, and eventually died. The house is a treasure trove, not only of her paintings, but also of innumerable artefacts associated with her and her husband, famous muralist Diego Rivera.

Continue to the floating gardens of Xochimilco, which were once connected to the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) by a causeway, and where the Aztecs grew much of their food. Navigate the tranquil tree-lined canals on board a traditional 'trajinera', a flower-decked wooden punt, and will discover a little of how Aztec life was before the conquest.

DAY 4

Full day guided tour to Puebla, Tonantzintla and Cholula, overnight in Puebla.



En route to the World Heritage Site of Puebla, a 3hr drive from Mexico City, you'll stop in Tonantzintla to visit the unique Santa María church renowned for its elaborate and unique stucco interior – a beautiful example of indigenous artisan work combining Mexican and European Christian elements.

Then you'll continue on to Cholula to visit the remains of the Great Pyramid of Cholula, which measure 450m along each side of the base and is an impressive 65m high, making it larger in volume than Egypt's Cheops pyramid.

You'll arrive in Puebla in time for lunch at the traditional La Fonda de Santa Clara restaurant where you'll be encouraged to taste mole poblano – Mexico's national dish – that fuses a flavoursome array of chillies in a thick, rich, chocolate-tinged sauce. Finally, you'll explore Puebla's colonial centre that is lined with churches and provincial mansions, adorned with the delicately hand-painted talavera tiles – Puebla's finest attraction.

DAY 5

At leisure in Puebla.

At leisure in Puebla.



DAY 6

By road to Oaxaca, southwest Mexico, guided tour of city and market.



Leave Puebla and head by road to the city of Oaxaca, set among arid mountains. The capital of the region, it has airy patios and graceful arcades and is famed for its colourful market, serapes, crafts and dances. The city's historical centre, was declared a UNESCO world historic site in 1987.

The population in this area is still dominated by Zapotec and Mixtec indians, but the town has many examples of well-preserved Spanish colonial architecture, some fine museums and a thriving artistic community, as well as a wonderful climate. The peace and quiet of the cobbled streets is a welcome contrast to the busy capital.

You can easily explore the city on foot with the main square, the Zócalo, and the boulevard of Calle Alcalá being free of traffic. Visit the city's government palace, cathedral and Santa Domingo church, as well as its colourful food market. Oaxaca is a centre for Mexican art, so there are also opportunities to purchase arts and crafts in its gift shops.

DAY 7

Half day guided excursion to the ruins of ancient city Monte Albán.

Head out of town to nearby Monte Albán, the grand Zapotec ceremonial centre. Strategically located on an artificially levelled hill where three valleys meet, the site has superb views over the surrounding area. There is time to explore the pyramids, steep staircases, walls covered with strange carvings, burial chambers and temples. Although there is a theory that the main plaza was a religious ceremonial site, most of the imagery all over the place is decidedly militaristic, featuring tortured captives and devastated conquered settlements.



DAY 8

At leisure in Oaxaca.

At leisure in Oaxaca.



DAY 9

Transfer to your beach hotel at Huatulco, on the Pacific coast.

Since its completion in early 2024, the new federal highway between Oaxaca city and the Pacific coastline of Oaxaca state has cut journey times in half. The route twists and turns its way through the mountains towards the sparkling white sands at Huatulco in around 5 hours.

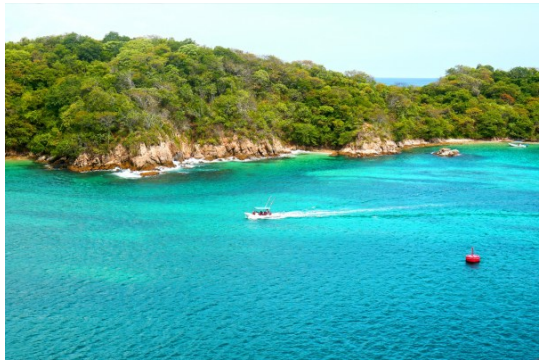
Huatulco was an unassuming crossroads town on the Pacific coast until the 1980s, when it was earmarked as the centre of an ambitious tourism project designed around its series of bays and served by an international airport. Originally intended to rival Cancún on the Riviera Maya, it remained markedly more low-key and laid-back than its Caribbean counterpart. It is especially popular with holidaymakers from Mexico and Canada. Huatulco's location is certainly impressive, set around nine stunning bays and surrounded by lush tropical forest bubbling with wildlife. Your Mediterranean-style hotel is located on a pretty bay.



DAY 10-12

At leisure on the beach; optional water-sports and activities.

Relax in the hotel's tropical gardens or around the immense free-form pool. The beaches are exquisite and there are loads of water-sports, activities and excursions at the property or easily booked.



DAY 13

Transfer to Huatulco airport

Transfer to Huatulco international airport for your onward flight (not included).

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Full day guided excursion to Teotihuacan pyramids and Guadalupe shrine in Mexico City
- Guided tour of Xochimilco, Coyoacán and Frida Kahlo Museum
- Guided tour of Puebla, Cholula and Tlaxcala
- Guided tour of Oaxaca market and city
- Half day guided excursion to the ruins of ancient city Monte Albán, Oaxaca

ESSENTIALS

All transport on this holiday is by road, allowing you to appreciate the diverse landscapes of south-west Mexico, from the Sierra Madre mountains to the tropical Pacific coast. The 3 principal road journeys are: Mexico City to Puebla (3 hours), Puebla to Oaxaca (5 hours) and Oaxaca to the Pacific coast at Huatulco (5 hours). If you prefer, there's also the option to fly between Oaxaca City and Huatulco with a small local airline. Please ask for details.

At all levels, we prefer smaller hotels with some local character; whether one of a local chain or independent. On the odd occasion where we use an international chain, we choose properties with some historic or unique features.

For this trip we have selected high class, historically evocative, romantic and nostalgic hotels, while on the beach the property has a Mediterranean style which nevertheless fits in well with the natural environment. Of course all have, well-equipped rooms, private bathroom and air-conditioning.

Breakfast daily.

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by the latter on their return.

13 days, 12 nights: Mexico City 3; Puebla 2, Oaxaca 3; Huatulco 4.

The unit of currency in Mexico is the Mexican peso.

Cash machines are available in all major cities and towns, and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds.

We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency, and possibly some travellers' cheques (American Express are the most widely accepted), though these are gradually falling out of use. Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US$50 per person per day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants and you will pay considerably more.

Tips are welcomed and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

Travel insurance is essential.

Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in

the ticket.

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Generally this top-of-the-range holiday is suitable for most visitors, including families. Should you have a disability, please contact us.

CLIMATE

In Mexico City and the mountains towns the climate is temperate all year round and, because of the altitude it never gets too hot.

The wet/rainy season lasts through June to August, which usually means a couple of hours of rain in the afternoon. Don't be discouraged from visiting the mountains during rainy season, when you'll see lush, green landscape, as opposed to the dry season's parched, brown landscape – and it often only rains in the late afternoons and evenings. During the rest of the year there is little or no rain.

Temperatures can drop to freezing in Mexico City and Oaxaca over the winter months.

On the Pacific coast, temperatures typically vary between 21°C and 33°C over the year, with a peak season of hot weather in April and May. The coolest weather occurs between December and February. There are 300 sunny days per year, with rain falling between June and September, the wettest month.

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

For day-to-day wear in the highlands you should go prepared to encounter all seasons – a light fleece jacket and a Gore-Tex outer shell makes a good combination. Trousers, skirt or shorts made from light, quick-drying synthetic materials work well. If you plan to eat in smart restaurants, although clothing is not formal (no need for jacket and tie), something quite smart would be appropriate.

Strong, comfortable footwear is essential and you should bring insect repellent, sun block and sun glasses. You should take swimwear for the beach and pools.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts.

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following; typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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