

## Visiting Mexico City

### Things to See:

1. **In Coyoacán** (where the Casa de California is located)
  - **Frida Kahlo's house**— La Casa Azul.
  - **Trotsky's house**—Nearby Frida's.
2. **Turibus/Capital Bus:** Overview of the city, historic and iconic highlights, key neighborhoods. You can get on and off all day. Only costs about \$12. Actually there is a new Pink Tour Bus (On its side is painted CDMX) that is better than the regular Turibus as it takes you through Polanco also. It's called the Capital Bus. It seems to stop at the same places as the red Turibus. If you see the Pink one, jump on. If not, take the red. If you stay in the Centro Historico, there is a bus stop in front of the Museum of Tolerance on Juarez, and a major stop by the side of the Cathedral (this one is always more crowded.)
3. **Chapultepec Park—Museum of Anthropology** (*if you see only one thing in Mexico City, this should be it; kind of like going to Paris and not seeing the Louvre*); Contemporary Art Museum, Natural History Museum, Caracol History of Mexico Museum, Rufino Tamayo. Especially for children: Children's museum, Boats on the lake, Amusement park, Maximilian and Carlotta's castle
4. **Bellas Artes** – Exhibits; large and small concerts. Famous Tiffany curtain, made in Paris. At Juarez and Lázaro Cárdenas. Right next door to the Alameda Central.
5. **Correos:** Historic post office, beautiful building, Lázaro Cardenas and Tacuba
6. **Casa de Azulejos:** Currently owned by Sanborns, beautiful dining room, on Madero. Worth a stop even if just for a coffee and pan dulce. On Madero, the walking street.
7. **Alameda Central** – Oldest public park in the Western Hemisphere. The fountains are stunning! And strolling . . . a must! Between Bellas Artes and Balderas, along Juarez.
8. **San Juan Market**—most incredible selection of foods from all over the world in any one place; everything you can imagine and many things you cannot imagine; great for a **bocadillo** (Spanish baguette sandwich, glass of wine and light dessert – very fun!) On Pugibet Street about 3 blocks from Lázaro Cárdenas – anyone will be able to direct you there.

9. **La Ciudadela**—Best place to buy Mexican artesanía. Reasonable prices, high quality merchandise. Mexican arts and crafts, jewelry, clothing, etc., Library across the street (with literary exhibits), Park with dancing—everyone dances, Saturdays! On Balderas St. Again, anyone can point you to it. Just say “Mercado—Ciudadela”
10. **Panteón de San Francisco:** Burial place of Benito Juárez and other famous personages, “hombres ilustres,” Isadora Duncan (?)
11. **Museum of Tolerance:** Dedicated to human rights. Changing exhibits; children’s room; worth the trip. Nice lunch room. On Juarez, across from the Alameda.
12. **Secretaria de Educación Pública**—Diego Rivera murals. Republica de Argentina, 28. This whole neighborhood, which is behind the Cathedral and includes the area of Plaza de Santo Domingo. Really nice, historic area to walk around.
13. **Museum of Popular Art:** Finest examples of Mexican artesanía from all over the country. Incredible things! Great shop of artesanías (but pricey), art rooms for children. **Really a must-see.** On Independencia, right behind the Hilton Hotel.
14. **National Palace** –more Diego Rivera murals, the offices of Benito Juarez. Very historic. In the Zócalo.
15. **The Cathedral;** built beginning in the late 1500s. One side of the Zócalo.
16. **Zócalo** – just see what’s happening! Always something.
17. **Templo Mayor**—Tenochtitlán, the ancient Aztec city. *Cannot miss this.* It is on one side of the Cathedral. You can see the Cathedral, the Templo Mayor and the National Palace all on one trip around the zócalo.
18. **Other notable museums in the Centro:**
  - **San Carlos** (Spanish and some 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Century Mexican art, first Mexican art school; lovely setting for a cappuccino on the patio)
  - **MUNAL** (beautiful building and historic Mexican art, plus changing exhibits. Tacuba St. Only about two blocks from Bellas Artes.
  - **Casa de Iturbide (Banamex):** gorgeous building, beautiful changing exhibits. In the middle of everything on Madero walkway. Almost certain to have a beautiful (Christmas) exhibit.
  - **Museum of Mexico City** (very interesting exhibits of the founding of the city)
  - **Estanquillo,** Bolívar St. Changing exhibits

- **Franz Meyer** (historical artifacts; changing exhibits)
- **Litografía** (both located across the Alameda between the two ancient churches that date to the late 1500s.)
- **Museum of the FAMOUS Mural of Diego Rivera: Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda** (Alameda)—tells the whole history of Mexico from a decided point of view! *Should not be missed.*
- **San Ildefonso** (former site of the Jesuit University; gorgeous building, grounds, always has some interesting changing exhibit). In the area behind the Cathedral.
- **Convent of Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz**, located on Izasaga
- **Church of San Francisco** (the oldest; right on Madero, near the Iturbide Museum)

19. In **Polanco**: upscale neighborhood where all the Gucci stuff is, but lovely parks, nice boutiques, fun to stroll around, nice restaurants. Turibus stops here at **Soumaya**: Carlos Slim's art collection museum. Impressive architecture.

### Places to eat!

1. **Centro** – walking distance from the Alameda-Zócalo corridor. Remember that the major meal is between 2 and 4. Some places close after that and I have indicated below where it will be lunchtime only. While in Mexico, if you can, it's best to plan to have your main meal at mid-day and then go for tacos or lighter fare in the evening. Cantinas can be very fun. There are many traditional cantinas around the Centro, have a beer and some tacos . . .
- **Café Tacuba** – Historic house, typical Mexican, Wed- Sun wonderful musical entertainment. Lovely place for an evening with friends, birthday party. On Tacuba St. two blocks down from the Art Museum (MUNAL).
  - **El Cardenal**: Delicious food traditional Mexican, unparalleled service. Lunch time is best. There are several, but the one in the Hilton Hotel on Juarez is the one we go to (it's across the street from our condo). This is a MUST.
  - **El Danubio** – A tradition in Mexico City, Seafood, Spanish (every president and great Latin American artist visits here). It's like a museum of mementos written by famous people on napkins, framed on the walls. Best at lunch time. Calle Uruguay near Lázaro Cárdenas.
  - **Zéfiro** (at San Jerónimo & Isabella la Católica; Culinary school, it's the Cordon Bleu of Mexico City. It's amazing!) Don't miss it. ONLY at lunch time.

- **El Mayor Terrace** – fusion; **great** view of the Templo Mayor, you are practically ON TOP of the Templo Mayor. Worth it for the atmosphere, the view of the ruins. On Republica de Argentina.
  - **Los Girasoles** – Mexican Haute cuisine; Tamarindo margaritas to die for; next door to the art museum (MUNAL)
  - **Casino Español**—Beautiful site, exhibits, cantina, Spanish. Seafood. On Isabel la Católica st.
  - **Azul Centro:** Great moles, beautiful patio, very famous chef. Isabel la Católica, across the street from Casino Español.
  - **Café de La Gran Ciudad:** Beautiful setting from the Porfiriato, on the zócalo
  - **Majestic or Holiday Inn Terraces:** Overlook the zócalo
  - **Bellas Artes:** Great setting, OK food, but very recommended before or after a concert. Elegant setting.
  - **El Moro** –Chocolate con churros, been there almost 100 years; very traditional. *Must do!* On Lázaro Cárdenas just before Uruguay, coming from Bellas Artes.
  - **Al Andalucía-** Mesones 171 (near Pino Suarez exit of the metro) in the centro. Excellent Lebanese food. Pita fresh from the stone oven
  - **Sears Café:** On the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the Sears building (across from Bellas Artes) is a café, just coffees, pastries, it is a long balcony outdoors that overlooks the whole Alameda-Bellas Artes plaza. It's an amazing view, fun to have a coffee here.
- . **Roma-Condessa Neighborhood** (15- 20 minute taxi ride, a neighborhood you really should get to know; actually there are tons of great places here)
- **Lampuga:** La Condessa, hip, good food, Italian inspired fusion & fish
  - **Mercado Roma** on Querétero between Monterrey and Medellín: an amazing display of high-end foods; a food court with some of best restaurants in the city represented. Really a fun treat!
  - **El Parnita,** Yucatán 84. Great place for authentic Mexican tacos, tortas, etc.with a gourmet twist. Must arrive early (1:30) or it can be impossible to get a table.
  - **Mónica Patiño's:** Roma neighborhood. Delicious international cuisine, great breads, salads, pastries etc. all made in house.

### 3. Coyocan neighborhood: get list from Atala

#### Places to stay in Mexico City:

You can stay at any price in Mexico City and the biggest difference between a place that costs \$60 and one that costs \$360 will be how modern and hip it is. The \$60 places are clean, with all basic amenities and well located. The \$360 are elegant, with great restaurants and in expensive parts of town. But here are some thoughts.

- **The Hilton Reforma**—across from the Alameda; houses El Cardenal, the phenomenal restaurant. If you want to be very centrally located and in an upscale, all amenities place
- If you want to be in an elegant, but not so hip, hotel on the Zócalo—**Gran Hotel de la Ciudad**. It's gorgeous. Furnishings are old, but bed is good.
- Also on the Zócalo is the **Zócalo Central**. (It's a Holiday Inn, but it's nice. I like it and it's very reasonable).
- Also the **Majestic**, a block away is old and faded, but large rooms, clean, perfect location, and very traditionally Mexican.)
- **Hampton Inn**, in the same neighborhood is in a beautiful colonial building. Haven't been in the rooms, but friends have been happy there, and it too is very reasonable and perfectly located.
- **Hotel Plaza Revolución** is new and boutique, near the Revolution Monument and VERY reasonable. Though it looks a little down, the area is safe, but it is half a block off Reforma.
- On Reforma on one side of Plaza de la Revolución is **Hotel Krystal Grand**. Very nice, large, more expensive. (Plaza de la Revolución is about half dozen blocks from the Alameda in the direction going to Chapultepec Park, so it puts you about in the middle between Zócalo and Chapultepec.)
- If you check out **Air BnB**, you will find a couple places on Bolívar Street that are quite wonderful and very reasonable. One is an old colonial building with individual small apartments; the other is a colonial home that rents out rooms (with bath). Either would be terrific.

#### Places to Visit Outside of Mexico City:

1. **Tepoztlán** is an hour in the mountains above Mexico City. I am sure you would love it. Artsy craftsy, beautiful mountainous area.
2. **Cuernavaca** is an hour away. City of eternal spring. Many people from Mexico City have second homes there. There are the Borda gardens, lunch at Las Mañanitas or La India Bonita, the cathedral and museum. Cortes had a home here. There have been some disturbances in Cuernavaca, but it seems to be limited to the narcos and in their areas, not in the town itself.

3. **Tepozotlán, State of Mexico**-- 45 minutes to an hour away; has the amazingly gorgeous Temple of San Francisco Javier and the Museum of the Virreinato. Tepozotlán is a "Pueblo Mágico" and has beautiful museum and church in a particular 18th Century style that is gorgeous -- with many treasures
4. **Xochimilco**-- I think it's technically in the Ciudad de Mexico, but takes about an hour to get there. The floating gardens, chinampas, the trajineras, boats that float through the canals. Should be experienced with a group. Xochimilco is a series of canals with chinampas-- the traditional way of growing flowers and other things on the water, and venetian like boats -- trinajeras-- take you through the canals and there are musicians and people selling food, etc. from the boats. It's very fun for a group-- to hire a couple songs from the musicians, share some beers and some food.
5. The famous pyramids are at **Teotihuacán**. Of course, if you haven't been to the pyramids you almost must go. *The largest pyramid is larger than Egypt's, the whole area is astounding.* About an hour also. Anybody knows how to get there and there are many bus services to take you there, with or without guides.
6. I would just say that 2 1/2 hours up the road is **Querétaro**. It's a small city with beautiful colonial buildings, beautiful parks, lots of nice places to eat, to shop and stroll. It's many people's favorite Mexican city. It is extremely safe. They tell me there they don't even lock their doors. So it's a little farther but well worth it.

All are easily reachable by bus and nice buses are very reasonably priced. Actually one just needs to Google any of these things and you will find all the information that is relevant about them.