



Classical Mexico

Mexico City • Puebla • Oaxaca • Veracruz



Day 1 • Mexico City

Our journey begins as we board our flight to Mexico City, the oldest capital in the New World. Our tour leader and motor coach are waiting when we arrive. Mexico City is a huge metropolis where the past and present meet in a most dynamic way. We begin our exploration with a city tour that includes the **Zócalo**, the **Presidential Palace**, and the **Metropolitan Cathedral**. *[If time does not allow, some may be toured tomorrow.]* **D**

Day 2 • Mexico City

We learn more today about this unique and richly diverse city, whose origin dates back to 1325 when Aztecs chose to settle here. Legend says their gods ordered them to settle where they saw an eagle perched on a cactus devouring a serpent. Today we visit the **Museum of Anthropology**, the **Shrine of Guadalupe**, and **Teotihuacan**. The sacred city and ceremonial center of Teotihuacan was once populated by 100,000 people. The immense **Pyramid of the Sun**, 206 feet high, is one of the best preserved archeological sites in the country. **B/D**

Day 3 • Puebla

Today's journey takes us to the city of Puebla where we see the influence of Spanish conquistadors and French soldiers, particularly on the architecture. From the breathtaking **Rosary Chapel** with its intricate gold leaf ceiling to the **Casa del Alfeñique**, Puebla is a fascinating city. In nearby **Cholula** we marvel at the church built on top of a massive pyramid. Inside a tunnel we view many of its pre-conquest murals. Next we visit the exquisite chapels of **Santa María Tonantzintla** and **San Francisco Ecatepec**, whose interiors brim with brilliantly colored figures. **B/D**

Day 4 • Oaxaca

Spectacular mountain scenery awaits us as we drive to Oaxaca, situated in a gorgeous valley where several mountain ranges converge. Removed from the populated center of Mexico, Oaxaca has retained its provincial charm and delicate beauty. We first visit **Mitla**, a Mixtec city ornately decorated with carefully fashioned geometric patterns. Nearby **El Tule**, the great cypress tree, stands 135 feet tall and is said to be the oldest living thing in Mexico...already over 2,000 years old. We also visit **Santo Domingo**, a beautiful church and great art treasure. This afternoon we see **Monte Albán**, ancient city of the Zapotecs and Mixtecs. Huge platforms and buildings are evidence of a powerful ruling class. These people were skilled in the production of fine pottery, jewelry and codices. We also visit the **Central Market** of

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Oaxaca, where we find stalls heaped with baskets, pottery, rugs, chiles...almost anything imaginable! **B/D**

Day 5 • Oaxaca

The pre-colombian ceramics, masks, and carvings at the **Rufino Tamayo Museum** are a highlight today. We also visit the village of **San Bartolo Coyotepec**, well known for its beautiful black clay pots. At the pottery village of **Atzompa** we are delighted by the humorous clay figures for which local craftsmen are known. There is free time this afternoon for further exploration. The color, folklore, native markets, and colonial center make this a memorable destination. **B/D**

Day 6 • Veracruz

The last leg of our journey takes us across yet more beautiful terrain to the coastland. Our destination, Veracruz, was founded by Hernán Cortés in 1519. Veracruz was the first European city on the American continent and the starting point on the quest for treasure, land and souls. Though the city became rich and powerful, it still could not ward off recurrent pirate raids. We arrive in Veracruz with time to enjoy a few hours of sun-drenched beaches and palm trees. **B/D**

Day 7 • Veracruz

A tour of this intriguing city includes a visit to the **Fort of San Juan Ulua** (*if open*). This mighty fortress evokes the spirit of excitement and adventure that marked the swashbuckling era of sword fights and stowaways, explorers and conquistadors. The fort shows the importance of Veracruz, which served as the main entrance to Mexico from the time of its founding until the advent of air travel in the twentieth century. The remainder of the day is free to relax and enjoy the warm sunshine and beaches of the Gulf of Mexico. **B/D**

Day 8 • Return

We transfer to the airport in Veracruz and board our homebound flight. *Hasta la vista!* **B**

Abbreviations for Meals: B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner

Cost of tour: \$1,249*

Land portion only

**Based on 24 paying participants*

<u>Included</u>	<u>Not included</u>
Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private deluxe air-conditioned motor coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roundtrip air transportation• Meals not indicated in the itinerary• Beverages, except with breakfast• End of tour tip for driver• Items of a personal nature such as passport fees <p><i>Passport must be valid for 6 months beyond return date</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel Insurance <p>This tour can be customized to your specifications.</p>
Accommodations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-bedded tourist class hotels	
Meals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As indicated in itinerary	
Sightseeing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admission to all activities as indicated in itinerary	
Tour Guides <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher serves as tour leader(Professional tour director can be added upon request)• Local guides for major attractions	
Taxes and Tips <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All taxes and tips for provided services except end of tour tip for driver	
Complementary Tours <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One tour per 8 paying participants	

Tour Code: SPMC10

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