

Byroads
Inspiring Escorted Journeys

MEXICO & THE YUCATAN

An enticing blend of Mesoamerican cultures & Spanish traditions

15 DAYS - STARTING MEXICO CITY 5 MARCH 2021





MEXICO & THE YUCATAN

Trip Outline

Long before the Spanish Conquistador Hernan Cortes stepped foot in Mexico in 1519, the region was populated by complex indigenous civilisations including the Olmec, Maya, Teotihuacan, Toltec and Aztec Empires. These Mesoamerican civilisations had developed a form of writing so that Mexico's written history stretches back hundreds of years before the Spanish arrived. Following the conquest of the Aztec Empire in 1521 the area was incorporated into the Empire of Spain, with Mexico City the centre of colonial rule.

Mexico today is a wonderful blend of these ancient pre-Colombian cultures with the more recent Spanish traditions. As you travel this fascinating country you will encounter stunning colonial cities adorned with churches as well as spectacular archaeological sites and their enormous pyramids. There is a rich indigenous culture waiting to be discovered with a lively music, festival and arts scene, a sophisticated cuisine and stunning natural beauty from the dry deserts in the north to deep forested jungles and palm lined beaches in the south.

Starting in Mexico City we tour the colonial sites of this ancient Mexica (Aztec) capital before heading to the giant pyramids at nearby Teotihuacan. On our way to Taxco we stop at a museum dedicated to the artist Frida Kahlo and take a boat ride through the narrow canals at Xochimilco. Taxco and Puebla are two of Mexico's best preserved colonial towns whilst colourful Oaxaca is well known for its handicrafts and the ancient ceremonial Zapotec site of Monte Alban. Flying to Tuxtla we then visit the impressive Sumidero Canyon and continue to San Cristobal de las Casas where we enjoy the rich indigenous culture of the city and its nearby villages.

Next come the great Mayan archaeological sites of Palenque and Uxmal and following a visit to Campeche and Merida we arrive to explore the world famous Mayan archaeological complex at Chichen Itza.

Finally we arrive at the stunning beaches at Playa del Carmen where, having seen the Mayan cliff top ruins at Tulum our holiday in Mexico and the Yucatan Peninsula comes to an end



Tour Highlights

- Zocala & Mexico City Cathedral
- National Palace & Templo Mayor
- Anthropology Museum
- Frida Kahlo House & Gallery
- Teotihuacan Archaeological Site
- Virgin of Guadalupe Shrine
- Xochimilco & Taxco Silver Town
- Puebla City Walk
- Sierra Madre Mountains
- Monte Alban Zapotec Site
- Oaxaca
- Sumidero Canyon
- San Cristobal de Las Casas
- Indian Church of San Juan
- Agua Azul Waterfalls
- Palenque Mayan Site
- Uxmal Mayan Pyramids
- Celestun Biosphere Reserve
- Lunch with a Local Family
- Chichen Itza Mayan Complex
- Cenote & Tulum Mayan Site
- Playa del Carmen

Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



Steve Mortimer heads up Byroads and will be your host on this tour. Steve has more than 30 years in the travel industry and has travelled to well over 100 countries. He started work in travel as an expedition leader, taking travellers overland across Africa, Asia and South America. He has also worked with a number of well-known Australian

travel companies designing and operating holidays to some of the world's most fascinating destinations.

Steve likes nothing better than getting out and about with like-minded travellers, sharing his knowledge and introducing his guests to some of the world's most interesting places. With Byroads you can be confident you'll visit all the 'must see' attractions, however there is still time to wander and make your own discoveries. Throughout the tour a local guide provides a wealth of information and shares their extensive local knowledge.

2021 ITINERARY STARTS IN MEXICO CITY

FRI 5 MAR: MEXICO CITY – Upon arrival you are transferred to your hotel and in the evening we will have a short meeting. Pre-tour accommodation is available (see back page for details).

SAT 6 MAR: MEXICO CITY – Today we explore the Zocalo, the largest city square in the Americas which includes the Palacio Nacional, the Cathedral and the Templo Mayor, the outer ruins of the ceremonial centre of the Mexica (Aztec) capital. Following a visit to the Anthropology Museum we end the day with a visit to the museum devoted to Frida Kahlo, Mexico's most celebrated artist. (B)

SUN 7 MAR: TEOTIHUACAN, MEXICO CITY – We travel to the outskirts of the city firstly to visit the Basilica de Guadalupe, the spiritual home to Mexico's patroness, the Virgin of Guadalupe. Next to the magnificent site of Teotihuacan where we walk along the Avenue of the Dead to admire the enormous Pyramids of the Sun and Moon. This was once a city of 220,000 inhabitants. (B)

MON 8 MAR: TAXCO – This morning we visit Xochimilco known as the 'Venice of Mexico' where we take colourful 'trajineras' on the small canals before driving on to Taxco for our overnight stay. Taxco village is beautifully draped over a mountain side at 1800 metres. The narrow, winding, streets with their colourful houses make it a great place to stroll. We explore the town and its fabulous silver shops. (B)

TUE 9 MAR: TONANTZINLA, PUEBLA – We drive on to Puebla passing by the magnificent Popocatepetl Volcano. Along the way we stop off at the 18th century Templo de Santa Prisca, a beautiful 'churrigueresque' style church. Puebla is known as the 'city of angels'. In the afternoon we tour the city with its huge churches and convents and many colonial mansions and you will want to sample some of the city's great gastronomy such as 'mole poblano' a rich dark-red sauce made with dried chillies and chocolate and normally served with poultry. (B)

WED 10 MAR: PUEBLA-MONTE ALBAN-OAXACA – Today we drive through the beautiful Sierra Madre Mountains to Oaxaca, 4 hours away. In the afternoon we visit the Zapotec ruins at nearby Monte Alban where there are wonderful views and then return to Oaxaca for the evening. (B)

THU 11 MAR: OAXACA – Nowadays Oaxaca is a huge open-air museum, with colourful colonial mansions and impressive churches. It's famous for its 'artesanía' and we enjoy its wonderful markets and visit workshops specialising in 'barro negro' pottery and woodcarvings (B)

FRI 12 MAR: SUMIDERO CANYON, SAN CRISTOBAL – To avoid a long drive we fly to Tuxtla Gutierrez where we visit the stunning Sumidero Canyon and take a 2 hours boat ride on the Grijalva River with the canyon walls towering over 750 metres above us. It's a breath-taking sight. We then continue onto the village of San Cristobal de las Casas known for its strong indigenous flavour. (B)

SAT 13 MAR: SAN CRISTOBAL – Today we visit the fascinating indian village of San Juan Chamula where we witness in the local church old Mayan rituals mixed with catholic observances. Returning to San Cristobal we take in the local scene and you can shop for beautiful textiles and handicrafts. We also try out hand at chocolate making at the 'from bean to mouth' Kakaw workshop. (B)

SUN 14 MAR: AGUA AZUL, PALENQUE – Today is an easy travel day stopping en route at the beautiful Agua Azul and Misol-Ha waterfalls before reaching Palenque in the mid-afternoon. (B)

MON 15 MAR: PALENQUE, CAMPECHE – To avoid the heat we start early with our guide to explore the incredible jungle-swathed Mayan ruins of Palenque which flourished in the 7th Century. We then continue our drive to Campeche where we take a short tour of the city's fortified walls. (B)

TUE 16 MAR: UXMAL, CELESTUN, MERIDA – It's a busy day with our first stop at the Mayan ruins of Uxmal to see the Pyramid of the Magician. For lunch we visit a local family in the village of Abala whose specialty is tortillas whilst at the fishing village of Celestun we go by boat to view the greater pink flamingo. Our stop this night is in the city of Merida 1 ½ hours away from Celestun. (BL)

WED 17 MAR: CHICHEN ITZA, PLAYA DEL CARMEN – Chichen Itza is our highlight for today. This was one of the great Mayan-Toltec centres of the Yucatan peninsula. We also visit the ceremonial pool at Cenote Ik Kil where we can enjoy a swim before arriving at beautiful Playa del Carmen. (B)

THU 18 MAR: TULUM, PLAYA DEL CARMEN – Today is an easy day with a visit to the nearby cliff top Mayan ruins of Tulum. We enjoy this beautiful setting before returning to Playa del Carmen. (B)

FRI 19 MAR: PLAYA DEL CARMEN – Our tour ends today. Taxis can be easily arranged at the hotel to take you out to the airport. Extra nights are also available (see back page for details). (B)

This trip combines perfectly with our 14 Days 'Rhythms of Cuba' trip.



Prices & Inclusions

15 Days Mexico & the Yucatan

Price in US Dollars: USD 4160 (p/p twin-share)

Single Supplement: USD 800

Price includes: Steve Mortimer as Tour Escort, local tour guide, arrival transfer, all local transportation, flight Oaxaca to Tuxtla, 14 nights accommodation and meals as indicated.

Not Included: Visa fees, travel insurance (compulsory), international flights, additional meals, drinks, departure transfer, optional tours, spending of a personal nature, laundry and tips.

Transportation: Transport by comfortable air-conditioned minibus or coach. Flight from Oaxaca to Tuxtla Gutierrez.

Accommodation: We have selected some great hotels for this trip. Mostly they are charming 3 and 4 star colonial style hotels in great locations. In Mexico City we stay right next to the Zocalo Square whilst in San Cristobal our hotel is in the historical centre close to the main church. Many of our hotels have a swimming pool to cool off in at the end of the day and our hotel in Playa del Carmen is only a 3 minute walk to the beach.



Colonial 4* hotel in Mexico City



Charming rooms in San Cristobal



Hotel terrace in Taxco



Historical hotel in Campeche



Hacienda Real – Playa del Carmen



Comfortable rooms in Merida

Food and drink: Breakfast is included each day. Elsewhere, we enjoy the great variety of local food on offer. Beer, wine, spirits, soft drinks, tea, coffee and bottled water is all widely available.

Group size: Maximum 16

Additional Expenses: Food can be expensive in Mexico depending on where and what you eat. As a guideline allow US\$7-\$10 for a light lunch and between US\$15-\$25 for dinner. In addition you should budget for any personal shopping you may want. Please also allow extra funds to tip your local tour guide, driver and porters (full details will be provided in the pre-trip Field Guide).

Bookings: Travel on Q (Sydney) is the sole booking agent for this tour. Please register your interest ASAP in order to secure your place and note there are a limited number of single rooms available. A non-refundable deposit of AUD 750 per person is required with final payment due 60 days prior to tour commencement.

Travel on Q (Carole Grassby and Tina Briggs)

Tel: (02) 9357 6800

Email: travel@travelonq.com.au

Currency: Due to the volatility of global currencies the tour price has been quoted in United States Dollars (USD) however you will pay for your tour in Australian dollars based on the buying rate set by Westpac Banking Corporation on the due date of your final balance.

Flights and Transfers: Most flights to Mexico travel via the USA. Qantas, United, American and Delta all fly from Australia. Both Mexico City and Cancun are gateway airports. An arrival transfer is included; however the departure transfer is not and can be arranged on request. Travel on Q will be able to assist you with your flights and advise you on your best options.

Extra Nights in Mexico City & Playa del Carmen: Extra nights can be booked pre and post tour but you must advise Travel on Q well in advance to ensure availability.

Visas: Mexican visas are not required by Australian citizens however if transiting through the USA they must apply on-line for a US Travel Authorisation (ESTA).

Documentation: Upon receipt of final payment, a comprehensive field guide will be mailed and you will be sent the relevant tour and accommodation vouchers prior to departure.

What Next? Contact Travel on Q to discuss your travel plans and to make your booking. Further information is also available at www.byroads.com.au.

Byroads

Travel on Q
Independent travel specialists

Byroads Pty Ltd, Trading as Byroads Travel (ABN 88615738746)

BOOKING FORM



Tour information

Tour: _____

Starting Date: _____ Starting City: _____

Roomtype: Twin Double Single

Client information (as per passport) - Please attach passport copy

Surname: _____			Given Names: _____			Date of Birth: _____		
Nationality: _____		Passport No: _____		Issue date: _____		Issued At: _____		Expiry Date: _____
Contact Number Home: _____			Mobile: _____			Email: _____		
Postal Address: _____								
Any medical, dietary or special requests: _____						Emergency Contact: _____		

Travel insurance

Comprehensive Insurance is compulsory when travelling with Byroads.

- Purchased from Travel on Q. Policy number: _____
- Have own insurance. Policy number: _____ Provider: _____
- Advise later

Payment details

A. Paying by direct deposit:

Travel Client Trust BSB: 062 033 Account: 10383350 Reference: Byroads TOQ *your name*

B. Paying by credit card:

Select Card: American Express MasterCard Visa Diners Club

Name on card _____

Number: Expiry date: CVV:

Declaration

I confirm that I am authorised to sign this form on behalf of all persons named above. I/we have read and understand all the information in the respective Byroads tour brochure and agree to abide by the terms, conditions and responsibilities attached. All persons named on this form are fit to travel.

Signature: _____ Name (please print) _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Date: _____

In compliance with the government Privacy Act, we advise that we may use your personal details to send information about future tours.

Please indicate if you wish to remain on our mailing list: Yes No

BOOKING FORM

Byroads Travel is the operator of your tour. Byroads Travel (henceforth referred to as Byroads) is a registered trading name of Byroads Pty Ltd (ABN 88 615 738 746).

Travel on Q (Bonard Pty Ltd, ABN 40 059 566 184) acts as the sole booking agent for Byroads.

RESERVATION AND DEPOSIT

A deposit is payable on all tours. The amount payable is stated in the Byroads brochure. This deposit must be paid to Travel on Q and accompanied by a signed booking form. When paying a deposit for your tour and signing the Booking Form you accept these conditions.

Your Byroads tour will only be confirmed once the deposit and signed booking form have been received. This Booking Form forms the basis of your contract between you and Byroads.

Travel on Q is an agent of Byroads.

PAYMENT

Payments may be made to Travel on Q by direct deposit or by credit card. If paying by credit card the following surcharges will be applied to the cost of your tour arrangements: 1.65% for Visa and MasterCard, 2.26% for American Express, and 3.85 % for Diners Club.

FINAL BALANCE

The balance of your tour payment is due 60 days prior to the start of your tour. If, for any reason, the balance payment is not received by the due date, Byroads reserves the right to treat such failure to pay the balance as a cancellation and to apply the appropriate cancellation charges.

CANCELLATION BY YOU

If, for any reason, you cancel your tour booking, Byroads shall apply the following cancellation penalties. Charges are per person:

- *Cancellation up to 60 days prior to departure, forfeiture of the total deposit
- *from 59 to 45 days prior to departure, 30% of the tour price shall be retained
- * from 44 to 15 days prior to departure, 50% of the tour price shall be retained
- *within 14 days prior to departure, no refund will be made.

In addition to the above charges, cancellation fees may also apply to any domestic airfare component of your tour. No refund will be made after your tour has commenced or in respect of lost or unused tickets, hotel coupons, meals or any other services not utilised.

AMENDMENTS

Up to 60 days prior to the departure of your tour, any amendment to a confirmed reservation will incur a fee of \$50 per change per file, in addition to any change fees levied by Travel on Q, airlines, or any other service provider. From 59 to 30 days prior to departure, any amendment to confirmed travel arrangements will incur a fee, of \$100 per change per file. Once documents have been dispatched,

any amendment will incur a fee of \$150 per change per file.

TOUR PRICES

Byroads tour prices and provisional tour prices are based on tariffs and prevailing rates of exchange when tours were costed. Prices are subject to change without prior notice. In the event of fluctuations in currency exchange rates, service providers' tariffs, fuel prices or any other cost that affects the price of your tour, Byroads reserves the right to adjust tour prices at any time up to the day of departure.

TOUR OPERATION

Although Byroads will endeavour to ensure that tours are operated as advertised, an express condition of making a reservation is the acceptance by you that the tour itineraries, schedules, advertised accommodation, sightseeing and mode of transportation as outlined in the Byroads brochure and/or supplied in the pre-departure information are subject to change without prior notice. If for any reason Byroads is forced to cancel a tour before it commences, all monies paid in respect of the tour will be refunded in full less any credit card fees collected.

Unforeseeable circumstances such as force majeure, adverse weather conditions such as floods or earthquakes, airline flight rescheduling, technical faults with transportation and road conditions may also have a consequential effect on the content of your tour after it has commenced. Any decision made in respect of tour services provided by Byroads to reroute or amend the itinerary due to the above or similar circumstances shall be at the sole discretion of Byroads. Byroads and Travel on Q shall not be liable for any claim whatsoever arising from such events that affect the schedule and content of your tour

HEALTH AND FITNESS

Byroads operates soft adventure tours. All participants are required to be fit and healthy. Some of the hotels used by Byroads may not have lifts or porters so you must be prepared at times to carry your own suitcase. Before travelling with Byroads, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with any health requirements applicable to areas through which you will be travelling.

ACCEPTANCE OF RISK

You acknowledge that the nature of the trip is adventurous and participation involves a degree of personal risk. You will be visiting places where the political, cultural and geographical attributes present dangers and physical challenges greater than those present in our daily lives. We use information from government foreign departments and reports from our own contacts in assessing whether the itinerary should operate. However it is also your own responsibility to acquaint yourself with all relevant travel information and the nature of your itinerary. You acknowledge that your decision to travel is made in light of consideration of this information and you accept that you are aware of the personal risks attendant upon such travel.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Australian passport holders must have at least 6 months validity on their passport after the date of return to Australia. Visas are

required for a number of our tours and it is your responsibility to obtain them. Travel on Q can assist with this process. Non Australian passport holders are asked to check passport and visa requirements at the time of booking.

ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR COST

The cost of your Byroads tour includes hotel accommodation, transportation, transfers as specified, sightseeing and meals as indicated in the tour brochure. It does not include international airfares, airport departure taxes, unspecified meals, optional sightseeing, additional transfers, gratuities for hotel staff, guides and tour leaders, items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls etc. or any other incidental expenses.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is an express condition of travelling with Byroads that you have comprehensive travel insurance including full cover for repatriation. It is highly recommended that you take out travel insurance at the time you pay the deposit to guard against any unforeseen circumstances. If on the first day of your tour you cannot provide evidence that you have purchased comprehensive travel insurance you will be required to purchase a policy before proceeding with your tour.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

We contract with a network of companies, government agencies and individuals to assist in the running of our trips as agent for these third parties. We are not responsible for the acts and omissions of these third parties. To the fullest extent permitted by law:

- (i) any liability for any loss, death, injury or damage which you may suffer (directly or indirectly) in connection with or arising out of your participation in a trip, or any breach of the Booking Conditions, is excluded;
- (ii) Travel on Q acts only as agent for Byroads and accepts no responsibility for the acts and omissions of Byroads or any of its associated service providers for any inaccuracies in information provided, negligence, loss, damage, omission, accident, detention, diversion or theft in regard to luggage or any personal belongings whatsoever.
- (iii) you release Byroads and its officers, employees, agents and representatives from any liability and expressly waive any claims you may have against us arising out of or in connection with your participation in a trip; and
- (iv) any condition or warranty which would otherwise be implied by law into these Booking Conditions (Implied Warranty), is excluded

To the extent an Implied Warranty cannot be excluded, our liability in respect of the Implied Warranty is limited to (in our absolute discretion): (a) the provision of a similar trip to an equivalent value; or (b) a refund of the total amount received by us from you in connection with your booking.

Any claim by you is excluded to the extent that it is for indirect or consequential loss, loss of profits or economic loss, however it arises, or for indirect, special, punitive or exemplary damages.

APPLICABLE LAW

The laws of Victoria, Australia govern these Booking Conditions to the fullest extent allowable. Any disputes in connection with a trip or these Booking Conditions must be initiated in the courts Victoria, Australia.