



Mexico & the Yucatan





MEXICO & THE YUCATAN

VIBRANT CULTURE, RICH HISTORY,
MESMERIZING LANDSCAPES.

15 DAYS

VIVA LA MEXICO

 DEPARTS FROM: **MEXICO CITY**  MAX GROUP SIZE: **14 PEOPLE**  PHYSICAL LEVEL: **MODERATE**

This immersive Byroads trip takes you into the heart of Mexico where Maya and Aztec Empires thrived, and where today modern cities and quaint colonial towns offer a vibrant and captivating blend of the past and present. Mexico's marvels and beauty will leave you in awe and wonder.



HIGHLIGHTS

- Zocalo & Mexico City Cathedral
- National Palace & Templo Mayor
- Anthropology Museum
- Frida Kahlo House and Gallery
- Teotihuacan Archaeological Site
- Virgin of Guadalupe Shrine
- Xochimilco canal tour
- Taxco 'Silver City'
- Puebla City Walk
- Sierra Madre Mountains
- Monte Alban Zapotec Site
- Oaxaca
- Sumidero Canyon
- Grijalva River Cruise
- San Cristobal de Las Casas
- Indian Church of San Juan
- Agua Azul Waterfalls
- Palenque Mayan Site
- Uxmal Mayan Pyramids
- Celestun Biosphere Reserve
- Chichen Itza
- Cenote Swim
- Tulum Mayan Site
- Playa del Carmen

MEET YOUR HOST



Every Byroads tour is supported by an experienced Byroads Escort – a true travel professional with a genuine passion for travel and people. They take care of all the nitty-gritty details to ensure your trip runs smoothly – and you can focus on enjoying the moment.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: FRI 14 MAR 25 - MEXICO CITY

Arrive at Mexico City Airport and transfer to your hotel. Settle in and take some time to relax after your journey. This evening, meet up with your group and Byroads Escort and prepare for an exciting journey through Mexico and the Yucatan.

DAY 2: SAT 23 OCT 2027 - MEXICO CITY

Mexico City's fascinating history comes to life today with a guided tour of the Zocalo, the largest square in the Americas. A gathering place since Aztec times, it remains at the heart of the city and reflects the rich tapestry of Mexico's history, culture and contemporary life. Around the square, view the Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral, the National Palace and the old city hall.

Later, visit the Anthropology Museum, home to an extraordinary collection that reveals the story of Mexico's ancient civilisations and indigenous cultures. The day concludes at the Frida Kahlo Museum, dedicated to Mexico's most celebrated artist. The museum offers a fascinating insight into Kahlo's distinctive life, art and enduring influence on Mexican culture. (B)

DAY 3: SUN 24 OCT 2027 - TEOTIHUACAN - MEXICO CITY

The morning begins with a visit to the Basilica of Guadalupe, the spiritual home of Mexico's patroness, the Virgin of Guadalupe. It is an important place of pilgrimage and provides an introduction to the deep religious traditions of the country.

Next, take time to slowly explore Teotihuacan, the extraordinary ancient ruins so named by the Aztecs for being 'a place where gods were created'. The city's origins remain mysterious, although it is believed its population peaked around 250–550 AD. Walk along the Avenue of the Dead and admire the immense Pyramid of the Sun, almost as large as the Great Pyramid of Egypt, and the Pyramid of the Moon, aligned with Cerro Gordo, a nearby mountain. The scale of the site and the surrounding landscape make this one of the most impressive archaeological experiences of the journey. Return to Mexico City for one last evening in the capital. (B)

DAY 4: MON 25 OCT 2027 - TAXCO

En route to Taxco, visit Xochimilco, the 'Venice of Mexico'. Here, colourful gondola-like trajineras carry us along the wonderful UNESCO-listed canals and floating gardens. The relaxed journey through this historic waterway offers a very different perspective on Mexico City and plenty of opportunities for photographs. Continue to the picturesque mountain town of Taxco, with its beautifully preserved colonial architecture and steep, winding streets. Known as Mexico's 'Silver City', it is situated in the mountains of the North Sierra and has long been associated with its extensive silver mines.

There is time to wander and explore the fabulous silver shops for which the town is famous worldwide. Jewellery, crafts and artefacts reflect a long tradition of silver working, making Taxco an especially enjoyable place to browse for something memorable to take home. (B)

DAY 5: TUE 26 OCT 2027 - TONANTZINTLA - PUEBLA

Before leaving Taxco, call in to the 18th-century Templo de Santa Prisca, known as an exquisite example of Mexican Baroque architecture. Its elaborate design and richly decorated interior provide a striking reminder of the wealth and artistic expression of colonial Mexico.

Next, stop in the small town of Tonantzintla and visit the Templo de Santa Maria, renowned for its unique blend of the Catholic faith brought by the Spanish with the indigenous beliefs and traditions of the local Nahuatl people. The result is a fascinating combination of cultures and religious traditions.

Continue to Puebla, passing the impressive Popocatepetl Volcano along the way. Upon arrival, a guided tour introduces us to Puebla, the 'City of Angels', famous for its gastronomy and distinctive Talavera pottery. Its combination of history, architecture and traditional crafts gives the city a character all its own. (B)

ITINERARY

DAY 6: WED 27 OCT 2027 – MONTE ALBAN – OAXACA

The journey this morning takes us through the beautiful Sierra Madre Mountains towards Oaxaca, a region known for its significant indigenous population, including Zapotec and Mixtec communities.

This afternoon, journey to UNESCO-listed Monte Alban and traverse the ruins of the ancient Zapotec capital. Spread across an impressive mountaintop setting, the site is characterised by large plazas, pyramids and temples. Take time to appreciate the scale and sophistication of this ancient city, while the elevated position provides panoramic views across the surrounding valleys and mountains. After exploring Monte Alban, return to Oaxaca, where the evening is free to relax and enjoy the atmosphere of this fascinating city. (B)

DAY 7: THU 28 OCT 2027 – OAXACA

Oaxaca's UNESCO-listed historic centre is a living open-air museum, with well-preserved colonial architecture, colourful buildings and cobblestone streets. A leisurely exploration reveals the distinctive character of this fascinating city and its strong connection to traditional Mexican culture.

Several local workshops provide an opportunity to see artisans specialising in barro negro, the distinctive black clay pottery, and Alebrijes woodcarvings. Both handicrafts commonly use age-old techniques passed down through generations. Alebrijes are the brightly coloured Mexican folk-art sculptures of fantastical creatures, each one seemingly more imaginative than the last.

After watching the artisans at work, lose yourself in the wonderful Oaxaca markets. Browse the colourful stalls and haggle for such treasures as may catch your eye, whether as a keepsake of Oaxaca or a reminder of your Mexican adventure. (B)

DAY 8: FRI 29 OCT 2027 – SUMIDERO CANYON – SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS

A short flight takes us to Tuxtla Gutierrez and one of Mexico's most amazing landscapes, the Sumidero Canyon. The canyon combines stunning natural beauty with remarkable ecological diversity and is an impressive change of scenery after the cultural experiences of Oaxaca.

Formed by a geological fault during the Pleistocene era, its towering walls rise as high as one thousand metres in some places. A two-hour cruise through the canyon on the Grijalva River provides the best way to appreciate its enormous scale, with the sheer cliffs rising dramatically on either side. There will be plenty of opportunities to take photographs as the landscape unfolds along the river. Later, continue to San Cristobal de las Casas, known for its indigenous cultures, including the Tzotzil and Tzeltal Maya peoples. Check in for our two-night stay and settle into this atmospheric mountain town. (B)

DAY 9: SAT 30 OCT 2027 – SAN JUAN CHAMULA – SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS

A visit to the Indian village of San Juan Chamula provides a fascinating insight into the traditions of the Tzotzil Maya. The town is known for its autonomous state and continues to use traditional laws and practices independent of the Mexican legal system. Its renowned San Juan Bautista church is particularly fascinating, revealing a distinctive blend of Christian and indigenous spiritual practices. Inside, candles, incense and locally brewed alcohol form part of traditional rituals, creating an experience quite unlike a conventional church visit.

Return to San Cristobal and spend time exploring the town and browsing its famous markets, where indigenous people sell traditional textiles and handicrafts. The colourful stalls provide a wonderful opportunity to see the craftsmanship and traditions of the surrounding communities.

Before the end of the day, try your hand at chocolate making at the 'bean to mouth' Kakaw workshop, discovering the process behind one of Mexico's most famous products. (B)

DAY 10: SUN 31 OCT 2027 – AGUA AZUL – PALENQUE

Enjoy an easier travel day and pack your bathing suit! En route, stop first to view Agua Azul, a beautiful series of cascading waterfalls famous for their brilliant turquoise colour. The falls create a succession of natural pools and limestone formations along the Xanil River, making this a particularly attractive and photogenic part of the journey. Close by, the Misol-Ha waterfall offers a different but equally impressive sight, with a single high waterfall falling into a large pool below. Both sites are popular for swimming, so there is an opportunity to cool off and enjoy the water.

ITINERARY

Continue to Palenque, surrounded by jungle and offering a distinctly different atmosphere from the highlands of Chiapas. The town is a hub of local culture, with time to discover the local cuisine and crafts of the region before tomorrow's exploration of the remarkable Maya ruins. (B)

DAY 11: MON 1 NOV 2027 – PALENQUE – CAMPECHE

An early breakfast precedes a wander through the incredible jungle-swathed Mayan ruins of Palenque. One of the most significant and fascinating archaeological sites of the Maya civilisation, Palenque is particularly renowned for its distinctive architectural style and beautiful jungle setting.

Witness the Temple of Inscriptions, an astonishing funerary pyramid, the Palace with its distinctive four-storey tower and intricate carvings, and the Temple of the Cross Complex. With ancient structures rising from the surrounding vegetation, the site has a wonderfully atmospheric quality.

Later, drive on to Campeche, set along the scenic Gulf of Mexico. Welcome to the Yucatan!

Upon arrival, take a tour of the city's fortified walls, built during the 16th and 17th centuries in response to frequent pirate attacks. The fortifications provide a fascinating reminder of the dangers faced by this important Gulf coast settlement during its colonial history. (B)

DAY 12: TUE 2 NOV 2027 – UXMAL – CELESTUN – MERIDA

Journey first to Uxmal, a UNESCO-listed site recognised for its significance in the study of the ancient Maya civilisation. Traverse the site and witness one of its most iconic structures, the Pyramid of the Magician. Its distinctive oval base sets it apart from many other Maya pyramids and gives the monument a rich mythology. See also the Governor's Palace and the Nunnery Quadrangle, appreciating the impressive architecture and intricate details of these ancient structures. The scale of Uxmal provides another fascinating glimpse into the achievements of the Maya.

Next, enjoy lunch with a local family in the village of Abala, providing an opportunity to experience Mexican hospitality in a more personal setting. Later, take a boat in Celestun to view the greater pink flamingos. Seeing these striking birds in their natural surroundings is one of the memorable experiences of the Yucatan.

Continue to Merida for the night. (B,L)

DAY 13: WED 3 NOV 2027 – CHICHEN ITZA – PLAYA DEL CARMEN

Spend time at another incredible UNESCO World Heritage site, Chichen Itza, where its principal landmark, El Castillo, has been named one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. The Kukulcan Pyramid is a remarkable step pyramid that demonstrates the precision and importance of Mayan astronomy. Traverse the Temple of Warriors and the Great Ball Court, before seeing the Sacred Cenote, an important feature of the ancient complex. The sheer scale of Chichen Itza and the sophistication of its architecture make it another extraordinary chapter in the story of the Maya.

Later, visit Cenote Ik Kil and enjoy a swim in its beautiful natural setting. After a day immersed in the ancient Maya world, continue to Playa del Carmen and check into your hotel for the final two nights. (B)

DAY 14: THU 4 NOV 2027 – TULUM – PLAYA DEL CARMEN

This morning, wander among the cliff-top Mayan ruins, overlooking the turquoise Caribbean Sea. These are among the most well-known and picturesque archaeological sites in the region and are unusual as the remains of one of the few Mayan cities built on the coast.

The combination of ancient ruins and brilliant Caribbean waters creates a particularly memorable setting. Take time to appreciate both the archaeological remains and the spectacular location before leaving Tulum. The remainder of the day is at leisure to enjoy the many sights and delights of Playa del Carmen. After two weeks of travelling through Mexico and the Yucatan, there is time to relax and enjoy your final evening. (B)

DAY 15: FRI 5 NOV 2027 – PLAYA DEL CARMEN

Breakfast concludes your tour. After a remarkable journey through Mexico and the Yucatan, it is time to say farewell to your fellow travellers and begin your onward journey. Taxis to the airport are available, or Byroads can organise a transfer on request. (B)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

GUIDES

- ✓ Byroads tour host and national and local guides

TRANSPORT

- ✓ Arrival transfer, private minibus, motorboat, domestic flight

ACCOMMODATION

- ✓ 14 nights (3 to 4-star hotel average)

MEALS

- ✓ 14 breakfasts, 1 lunch

TICKETS

- ✓ Entrance fees to indicated sites

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

We'd love to do it all for you. But there are a few things you'll need to arrange yourself. This includes you:

- Visa
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Departure transfer
- International flights
- Additional meals and drinks
- Cash for tipping kitty
- Optional tours
- Spending of a personal nature
- Laundry



GETTING THERE: FLIGHTS AND TRANSFERS

Most flights to Mexico travel via the USA. Qantas, United, American, Delta and JAL all fly from Australia. Both Mexico City and Cancun are gateway airports. You can book flights on-line through the respective airline's website or through your local travel agent.

Your arrival transfer is included – however, your departure transfer is not. But we can organise one upon request.

ACCOMMODATION

Byroads accommodation is a destination unto itself. We choose our hotels carefully to ensure a seamless transition from your day exploring to a night of relaxation. Think traditional architecture blended with modern comforts – and plenty of views.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:



Majestic Hotel

Situated in the historical centre of Mexico City, this colonial era 4-star hotel offers stunning views of the cathedral and the Zocalo, the city's main square.



Hotel Casantica

This wonderful, atmospheric hotel is set in a restored 16th-century building just a stone's throw from Oaxaca's main square.



Hotel Diego de Mazariegos

Just 150 metres from San Cristobal Church, this converted 18th century home features attractive courtyards and lovely rooms decorated with warm colours and classic furniture.

THE FINER DETAILS

DATES AND PRICES

DATE	TWIN SHARE	SINGLE SUPPLEMENT
22 Oct 2027	*6050 USD	*900 USD
Due to the volatility of international currencies, trip fees are calculated in US Dollars. However, you will be charged in Australian dollars. Currency conversion is based on Westpac Banking Corporation's buying rate on your balance due date.		

*Provisional 2027 Prices

Additional expenses

Tipping is customary, so please allow extra funds for the tipping kitty. This will pay your local and national guides, drivers and porters.

MEALS

Breakfast is included daily and enjoy lunch with a local family in Abala village. Elsewhere, you can enjoy the delicious variety of local food on offer. Meals typically cost between 10-15 USD for lunch and 20-30USD for dinner.

DOCUMENTATION

Once we've received your final payment, we'll post you a comprehensive field guide. It's a physical document you can keep handy to inform your travels. It also includes all relevant tour and accommodation information you need to book your visa.

VISAS

Australian and New Zealand passport holders do not require a visa for Mexico however if transiting through the USA they must apply on-line for a US Travel Authorisation (ESTA).

Other passport holders, please contact Byroads for the latest information.

READY TO PACK YOUR BAGS?



BOOK ONLINE NOW

(available 24/7)

Or visit: www.byroads.com.au/portfolio_page/byroads-booking-form/



Got questions? Contact us at travel@byroads.com.au