

# Treasures of Mexico

**Tour Pace** - This comprehensive journey of discovery features relaxed, two-night stays in lively Mexico City and in the colonial gems of Guanajuato, Morelia and Puebla, while comfortable, single-night stays are enjoyed in historical Queretaro and Taxco.

**Hotels** - The hotels in this program play an essential role in experiencing the areas visited. Revel in the luxury of the award-winning JW Marriott in Mexico City. Experience authentic 16th century haciendas in Queretaro and Guanajuato and a former convent in Puebla, renovated in viceroys-era style.

**Fellow Passengers** - This itinerary appeals to aficionados of history, architecture, arts & crafts and cuisine. With no less than five UNESCO World Heritage sites and two cities listed as National Monuments, you'll gain a better understanding of Mexico's incredibly rich culture and artistic heritage.

**Highlights** - Bring home memories of ten magical colonial towns, each with its own character, five spectacular pre-Columbian archeological sites representing different native cultures, wonderful architecture, and not forgetting the rich Mexican folklore and a mouthwatering cuisine!



Guanajuato Cathedral

**DAY 1 – ARRIVE MEXICO CITY.** Welcome to Mexico! On arrival at the airport you are *met and transferred* to your hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure. Your Tour Director is at the hotel this afternoon to welcome you and answer your questions. Please join us at 6 p.m. for a **Welcome Reception** and meet your fellow travelers. **Hotel: JW Marriott Hotel**

**DAY 2 – MEXICO CITY SIGHTSEEING.** Start the day with a *visit to the world renowned National Museum of Anthropology, and explore the superb Maya and Aztec exhibits.* One of the highlights of your visit is a *presentation by your Tour Director on the amazing Aztec Calendar, often referred to as the Sun Stone.* Next visit the *Historic Center of Mexico City, a UNESCO World Heritage site.* After **lunch** explore Mexico City's imposing *central square*, the third largest in the world. *The "Zocalo," as it is known colloquially, is flanked by some of the city's most impressive sites including the National Palace, Metropolitan Cathedral and Templo Mayor.* First admire the *frescoes* and learn about *Diego Rivera* and the *Mexican Muralist Movement* at the *National Palace.* Next visit the *Metropolitan Cathedral, the largest church in Latin America.* Finally visit the *Templo Mayor, or Great Pyramid, the most important temple* in the Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlan. Then enjoy Mexico's *world-famous cuisine* at a *welcome dinner of tasty signature dishes at one of Mexico City's fine restaurants.* Enjoy *traditional live Mariachis and learn about the history and importance of Mariachis in Mexican culture.* After dinner, there is the option to experience one of Mexico's most acclaimed artistic treasures – the *Ballet Folklórico de Mexico, a world-class performance celebrating colourful ethnic traditions from pre-Columbian to modern days.* (B,L,HD)

**DAY 3 – MEXICO CITY – QUERETARO.** *Explore the UNESCO World Heritage site of Teotihuacan, one of the most famous archeological sites in Mexico and one of the ancient world's most impressive cities.* Under the expert guidance of your Tour Director, discover a vast complex of monuments, including the *Temple of Quetzalcoatl* and the *Pyramids of the Sun and Moon.* Learn of the Teotihuacanos' accomplishments and their far-reaching cultural and artistic influence. Then journey to another *UNESCO World Heritage Site, Queretaro.* *A private cocktail reception awaits you in one of the city's oldest and most beautiful colonial mansions; meet the owner, tour the mansion and learn more about this outstanding architectural jewel.* Later *explore the sights* of this little-visited colonial gem with special attention given to the *Historic Monuments Zone* and its wealth of *outstanding buildings.* Later check-in for an overnight stay at a *sprawling 16th century hacienda* with time to enjoy the grounds and pool before dinner. **Hotel: Hacienda Jurica** (B,L,D)

**DAY 4 – QUERETARO – GUANAJUATO.** Arrive in *San Miguel de Allende, a colonial architectural jewel with beautiful mansions, flower-filled patios, luxuriant gardens and cobblestone streets.* The town was declared a *National Monument* in 1926 and is considered one of the loveliest of Mexico's colonial cities. Enjoy a stroll through the *city center* under the guidance of your Tour Director to see the famous *Parroquia de San Miguel Arcangel* and the beautiful *Casa de Allende.* *Visit one of the spectacular private gardens the city is famous for,* then wander on your own and browse the many interesting shops, museums and galleries, or simply relax in "*El Jardín*," the central square. Then continue to the UNESCO World Heritage city of *Guanajuato.* Check-in at your hotel, located on the site of one of Guanajuato's most *beautiful haciendas* where metals from local mines were once processed. The building has been proclaimed part of a *World Heritage site* and is protected by Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History. *Dinner tonight is served at one of Guanajuato's finest restaurants, situated in an old colonial hacienda with glorious gardens.* *Meet the Chef and learn about tonight's menu and ingredients.* **Hotel: Camino Real Guanajuato** (B,L,HD)

**DAY 5 – GUANAJUATO SIGHTSEEING.** Set out with your Tour Director on an *exploration of this captivating city, built at the center of the world's leading silver mining area of the 18th century.* Guanajuato's history, culture and monuments are as rich as its silver mines were during the Colonial era. Explore the winding *streets, subterranean passages* and lively *downtown.* View the most interesting sites including the *Juarez Theatre, Alley of the Kiss, La Alhondiga* - site of the first rebel victory in the War of Independence, *Hidalgo Market* - designed by famous engineer Gustave Eiffel, La

## 11 DAYS ~ MEXICO



**Key**

- PREMIUM HIGHLIGHTS
- DINE AROUND & HIGHLIGHT DINNERS
- PERSONAL INSIGHTS
- HERITAGE HOTELS & NIGHTS
- CENTRAL HOTELS & NIGHTS
- SCENIC HOTELS & NIGHTS

Full hotel descriptions on page 47-49

### Enjoy Your Included Tour Features

#### Premium Highlights

- Visit the National Museum of Anthropology and its superb Maya and Aztec collections
- Visit Mexico City's National Palace, Metropolitan Cathedral and Templo Mayor
- Explore the UNESCO-listed pre-Hispanic and holy city of Teotihuacan
- Visit one of San Miguel de Allende's most beautiful private gardens
- See the Mummies of Guanajuato and learn about this most unusual display
- Explore the Purepecha archeological site of Tzintzuntzan
- Discover the UNESCO-listed site of Xochicalco and visit the museum
- Visit Hernan Cortes' spectacular hacienda and enjoy lunch on the beautiful grounds
- Board an open-air tram for a locally guided tour of UNESCO-listed Puebla
- Visit the Great Pyramid of Cholula, the world's largest pyramid

#### Personal Insights

- Find out about the amazing sacred Aztec Calendar and its use to the Aztec people
- Enjoy Mariachi bands and learn about their history and significance to Mexican culture
- Tour one of Queretaro's outstanding colonial mansions with the owner
- Learn all about tequila, Mexico's national drink, and enjoy tequila tasting
- View copper artisans at work in Santa Clara del Cobre and try your hand at copperworking
- Enjoy silversmith demonstrations in Taxco and learn about William Spratling
- Learn about the unique art of Talavera ceramic production on a guided workshop tour
- Meet Chefs in Guanajuato and Puebla and learn about cooking techniques and ingredients

#### Additional Excursions & Sights

- Discover the UNESCO World Heritage Historic Monuments Zone of Querétaro
- Walk with your Tour Director through San Miguel de Allende, a National Monument
- Walk through the UNESCO World Heritage site of Guanajuato with your Tour Director
- Explore UNESCO-listed Morelia and browse the stalls at El Carmen
- Tour Purepecha country and visit Patzcuaro • Stroll the plaza in Ixtapan de la Sal
- Explore Taxco on foot, a National Monument and world-class silver jewelry center
- Visit Puebla's Rosary Chapel, an outstanding example of Mexican Baroque architecture
- Take an orientation tour of the colonial town of Cholula, home to 365 churches

#### Insight's First Class Services

- Airport arrival and departure transfers on the first and last day of your tour
- Meet & Greet Service on arrival at Mexico City International Airport
- Escorted by a professional federally-licensed bilingual Tour Director
- Maximum group size of 40 people
- Luxury air-conditioned coach with extra legroom and restroom facilities
- First-class and best-available hotels with all service charges, taxes and portage

#### Quality Dining

10 Full Breakfasts, 9 Lunches, 3 Hotel Dinners, 4 Highlight Dinners in Mexico City, Guanajuato and Puebla, and 1 Dine-Around in Morelia (see page 6 for meal codes)

Enjoy a delightful lunch at the stunning 16th century hacienda of Hernan Cortes



### 11 days from R1782 per day

Starts	Ends	Price	Aug 08 - Aug 18	R19600	2010
PD Feb 14 - Feb 24	R19600	Aug 29 - Sep 08	R19600	Jan 30 - Feb 09	R19600
Mar 14 - Mar 24	R19600	Sep 19 - Sep 29	R19600	Feb 13 - Feb 23	R19600
Jun 27 - Jul 07	R19600	PD Oct 03 - Oct 13	R19600	Feb 27 - Mar 09	R19600
PD Jul 11 - Jul 21	R19600	Nov 07 - Nov 17	R19600	Mar 13 - Mar 23	R19600

#### Supplements

Single room: R6550

#### Pre & post tour accommodation

**JW Marriot Hotel** Single Twin Triple  
 Monday to Thursday: R3855 R1930 R1285  
 Friday to Sunday: R2170 R1085 R725

Accommodation prices are per person, per night, room & tax only. Airport transfers are not included with additional accommodation - see page 50.

#### Reductions (See page 50)

Share a triple room SAVE R1335 p.p.  
 Young traveller 5-17 yrs SAVE up to R1960  
 Roommate matching is not available on this tour. Refer to page 50 for full details.

#### Notes

Ref: ACMX. Prices are per person twin share.  
 PD Preferred Departures - details page 50.  
 Tours depart Saturdays and return Tuesdays.

Included are worth approximately R4527

Visit the silver city of Taxco



🕒 watch silversmiths at work, and learn about American architect William Spratling who moved to Taxco in the 1920's and brought Mexican silversmith to sophisticated international standards. Dinner is at the hotel this evening with superb views of the colourful city center. **Hotel: Hotel Posada de la Mision** (B,L,D)

**DAY 9 – TAXCO – PUEBLA.** Rise early for breakfast before setting out to one of Mexico's most important and exceptionally well-preserved archeological sites - *Xochicalco*. A *UNESCO World Heritage site*, Xochicalco's *ritual centers, temples and plazas* cover almost 2500 acres. Xochicalco was a meeting place for a wide variety of cultures including Toltec, Olmec, Zapotec, Mixtec and Aztec.

👑 After a visit to the interesting museum, explore the site and view the marvelous Pyramid of the Plumed Serpent. Next find yourself transported back in time to the era of the Spanish conquistadors at the stunning 16th century hacienda of Hernan Cortes, conqueror of Mexico. Explore the majestic buildings and luxuriant grounds before enjoying a delightful lunch in this well-protected refuge.

👑 Heading east, journey to Puebla and check in at your remarkable hotel, a former convent built in the 16th century in pure Viceroyship-era style for a wealthy religious order. Discover why Puebla is considered Mexico's *gastronomic capital* as you enjoy dinner at a local restaurant featuring "Cocina Poblana" - Puebla's signature dishes, including two of the country's most popular recipes: mole and chiles en nogada (seasonal)! **Hotel: Camino Real Puebla** (B,L,HD)

**DAY 10– PUEBLA SIGHTSEEING.** Step aboard a private open air tram for a guided tour of the Historic Center of Puebla, a UNESCO World Heritage site, rich in architectural treasures, traditions and cuisine. The bucolic central square is impressive with its colonial style Cathedral and host of buildings decorated with the ubiquitous azulejos (tiles.) Navigate the most interesting neighborhoods with stops at the *Rosary Chapel* to admire the dazzling interior, and at one of the finest Talavera Ceramic workshops in the city. Learn the age old tradition of Talavera craftsmanship that has evolved

🕒 from pre-Columbian roots and assimilated techniques, materials and process from Spain and the modern era. Enjoy lunch in a shaded courtyard before setting off to wander the city's picturesque streets on your own. Perhaps visit a museum, explore the shops, join a Mexican cooking lesson or relax at a sidewalk café and soak in the atmosphere. Tonight's farewell dinner is a privately catered event in one of the lovely courtyards of your hotel. Meet the Chef and learn more about the ingredients

🕒 and techniques involved in tonight's tasty local dishes! (B,L,D)

**DAY 11 – PUEBLA – MEXICO CITY – DEPARTURE.** This morning discover Cholula, one of the most important pre-Columbian religious and educational centers, and the oldest continually inhabited city in the northern hemisphere. Cholula is home to 365 churches and the Great Pyramid, the largest monument and the largest pyramid by volume ever constructed in the world. After a visit to the Great Pyramid, return to Mexico City where the tour ends with a complimentary transfer to Mexico City International Airport and the Insight hotel for passengers extending their stay. Please do not schedule flights before 4 p.m. (B)

Please note: In selected locations, the tour requires walking on uneven surfaces and climbing some stairs.

👑 Valencia Mine, and visit the Mummies of Guanajuato – the city's most unusual attraction. Lunch is served at a lively café along the shaded Union Garden. The afternoon is yours to enjoy at your leisure in the city center, or relax by the hotel swimming pool. This evening dinner is served at a restaurant situated on top of a hill, high above the city, with breathtaking panoramic views over this colonial jewel. After dinner join your Tour Director for an informal presentation and tasting of Mexico's national drink – tequila, at the hotel's amazing glass-floored bar with surprising views into one of the thousands of mine shafts that crisscross this fascinating city. (B,L,HD)

**DAY 6 – GUANAJUATO – MORELIA.** Traveling back in time from the Colonial era to pre-Columbian times, you arrive in the state of Michoacan and the impressive colonial city of Morelia. The exquisite colonial architecture has made the Historic Center of Morelia a UNESCO World Heritage site. Stop at El Carmen, where a wonderful display of regional handicrafts can be found, then view the beautiful Conservatory of the Roses, Clajivero Palace and Palace of Justice. At the outstanding central square, visit the Cathedral and Government Palace with its beautiful murals. Check into the delightful Villa Montaña Hotel, designed as a rambling village on a hill with superb views over the historic center. This evening enjoy a Dine-Around program at a choice of restaurants that capture the essence of Morelia's finest dining. **Hotel: Villa Montaña Hotel & Spa** (B,L,DA)

**DAY 7 – PATZCUARO EXCURSION.** Explore the Purepecha highlands and discover the subtler aspects of this little known corner of Mexico. Your first stop is in Santa Clara del Cobre, where you enjoy an exclusive visit to one of the local copper craft shops. Observe local artisans at work, learn about the copperworking techniques that produce some of Mexico's most unique and coveted works, and perhaps try your hand at copperworking! Next visit the small, tranquil colonial village of Patzcuaro, the center of Purepechan culture, situated on the shores of Lake Patzcuaro. On the way back to Morelia, stop at the Purepecha archeological site of Tzintzuntzan for a brief but interesting visit. Back at the hotel, enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Relax with a drink on the terrace overlooking the city or take a dip in the inviting pool. (B,L)

**DAY 8 – MORELIA – TAXCO.** Heading for the legendary silver mining town of Taxco, cross into the state of Mexico and stop in the delightful whitewashed village of Ixtapan de la Sal. Back on the road, enter the state of Guerrero and drop down into the perennial spring time climate of Taxco, one of Mexico's most beloved colonial towns. From the hotel, marvel at the impossibly situated village wedged into the mountain which was home to the very first and largest Spanish silver mine in the Americas. This boom and bust town has been declared a National Monument to preserve the original character displayed in the cobbled stone streets, red tiled roofs and white adobe buildings. Explore the winding streets lined with cafés and shops, the Plaza Borda (central square) with its ornate church - the Parroquia de Santa Prisca, and Casa Borda. Taxco is famous for its hundreds of silver workshops and has become the most prolific silver jewelry center in all of Mexico. Visit one of the renowned silver mines,

Pyramid of the Sun, Teotihuacan

