

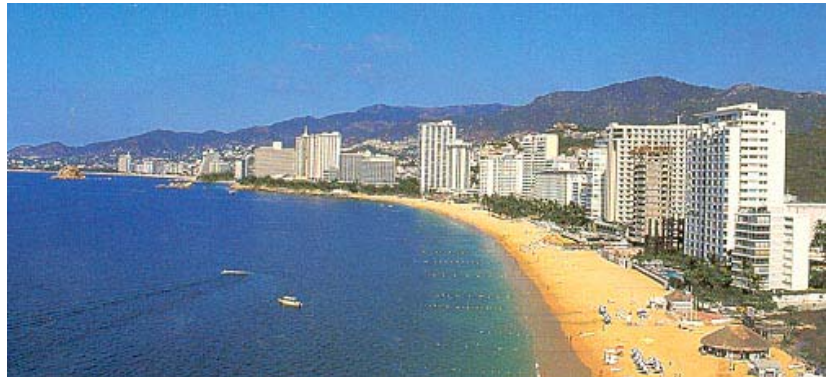
TWO DAYS (WEEKEND) EXCURSIONS



I. Acapulco *****

Acapulco attracts visitors to Mexico with warm beaches, sparkling waters, dramatic cliffs and entertaining nightlife.

Acapulco is one of Mexico's most famous Pacific Coast resorts, a bustling bay with the beautiful Sierra Madre mountain range as a backdrop. Enjoy Acapulco's dazzling collection of sun-drenched



beaches, luxurious hotels, exciting water sports, sizzling nightlife -- and those legendary cliff divers, who entertain visitors with their death-defying plunges into the ocean. You can stay at one of Acapulco's beachfront high-rise hotels, including the Hyatt Regency Acapulco and El Presidente Acapulco. For more exclusive lodgings while in Mexico, try Las Brisas Acapulco, nestled in the hills on the edge of Santa Maria Bay, or the dazzling Fairmont Acapulco Princess, a 1,017-room hotel shaped like an Aztec Pyramid.

With nearly year-round sunshine, there's almost never a bad time to visit Acapulco..

Zona Dorada - The Golden Zone



The real heartbeat of Acapulco is also the main street, Avenida Costera Miguel Alemán, known locally as just "The Costera". If you are going almost anywhere in Acapulco (beaches, shopping, dining or drinking) you will come in contact with the Costera. Most of Acapulco's major attractions are either on or very close to this busy street. The Costera begins at the airport as Carretera Escénica (Scenic Highway) and changes its name as it winds out of the hills to the south

of the bay and enters Acapulco proper. The action along The Costera is varied, and constant, making many sections of this strip a perfect spot to have lunch or dinner and do some serious people watching..

The zócalo or town square is a peaceful area, shaded by giant rubber and mango trees, near the hectic center of Acapulco. The zócalo is lined with ice cream stands and sidewalk cafes. Here you can mingle with the locals as they go about their daily business. The daily routine around the zócalo is pretty much the same as it has been for years. One end of the zócalo is dominated by the cathedral which was built in 1930 originally for use as a movie set. When the film crews moved out they left the building, which was later altered into its present state.

Beaches

Acapulco is a city that gives you many choices when it comes to beaches. During the day most of the focus in Acapulco is on the beach. The theme in Acapulco seems to be Party All Night and Play on the Beach All Day. The whole bay is lined with beaches, we will cover a few of them; you can check them all, time permitting, when you visit. Many of the beachfront restaurants will put umbrellas, chairs and tables in the sand so you can enjoy your food or drink right at the water's edge. Beach vendors work almost every beach and will offer you everything from fresh fruit to cooked fish or shrimp and temporary tattoos. You can also have your hair braided – Bo Derek style on almost any beach in Acapulco.

Things to Do...



Water Sports: Water sports are a way of life in Acapulco. The bay is alive with waverunners, parasailing, peddle boats, banana rides and even a beachfront water park. Sailboards and small sail boats are readily available as well as numerous glass bottom boats that pull right up on the beach to pick up their passengers. You usually do not have to go very far to partake in your favorite water sport, almost everything is offered directly from the beaches. Most of the

scuba and snorkeling operations are located along the docks near the zócalo. The beaches of Acapulco are always busy and weekends can even get hectic, just remember

to be careful and look in all directions before going for a swim or leaving the beach on a wave runner.

Sportfishing in Acapulco is as good as it is in most other Mexican resorts. Acapulco is just not promoted as a sportfishing resort anymore. In the not so distant past sportfishing was heavily promoted here and the good news is that - the fish are still here. So, if a day on the water and the sound of a reel going off is your thing, go for it. You will most likely not be disappointed. Look for the sportfishing fleet on the docks near the zócalo and near the marina.

Out of the Water

If you do get tired of the sea and sun there is still plenty to do in and around Acapulco. Everything from go karts to bull fights and much, much more. There are many air conditioned theatres, most open during the day, where you can take in the latest movies. Maybe a overnight trip to Taxco (side trips), the silver capital of the world. Or take the kids to Parque Papagayo, where they can keep themselves entertained while you do some shopping or have a snack. The bungee jump on The Costera is a fascinating way to pass a little time, whether as a participant, or just watching.

Golf and Tennis. Acapulco is one of those places in Mexico that can be a pleasant surprise to anyone who enjoys a round of golf or a game of tennis. Acapulco is home to four championship golf courses and another 9 hole course that is located right in the tourist zone.

Shopping

Shopping. Acapulco will not leave you wanting when it comes to shopping, in fact Acapulco might even surprise you. You can find everything from designer items for your home to original designer dresses. A little searching in Acapulco can uncover many unique items that would not be considered normal resort fare. The prices in this city seem to be lower than those of other Mexican resorts. With two modern air conditioned malls and many smaller shopping centers and an endless numbers of shops and open-air markets to choose from, you should be able to find whatever it is you are seeking along with surprising number of unique gift items

Restaurants



Acapulco has more restaurants than any other Mexican resort, just because of its size. With many specialized cuisines available you will find an amazing assortment of quality restaurants. Acapulco is home to some of the best restaurants in Mexico, with the quality reflected in the prices. Do not despair; there are many lovely spots to dine that offer a great setting and also reasonable prices. Many of the better restaurants are located on the hills and cliffs

around the bay, making for incredibly romantic settings.

II. Guanajuato *****

If you're going to Mexico to lose yourself, you'll have no problem doing so on the streets of Guanajuato (gwah-nah-whah-toh). They seem designed for just that purpose as they curl this way and that, becoming alleys or stairways, and intersecting each other at different angles. At times it can seem like the Twilight Zone; I've heard of people hurriedly passing by a curious-looking shop intending to return later, and then never being able to locate it again. To make matters worse, the streets are filled with things that can draw your attention away from the business of getting from one place to another. The town is so photogenic; everywhere you look is postcard material. Most buildings, like the streets, are irregular in shape, creating a jumble of walls, balconies, and rooftops meeting at anything but a right angle. The churches are the exception, having regular floor plans, but even they show asymmetry -- despite the best efforts of their builders, none has two matching towers, which only adds to their considerable charm.



Founded in 1559, Guanajuato soon became a fabulously rich town, with world-famous mines (such as La Valenciana, Mineral de Cata, and Mineral de Rayas) that earned their owners titles of nobility. Along with Zacatecas and San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato was one of Mexico's most important mining cities. From the 16th through the 18th centuries, the mines in these towns produced a third of all the silver in the world, and Guanajuato bloomed with elaborate churches and mansions. Floods plagued the city until the citizenry finally diverted the river, leaving a bed for what has become a subterranean highway with cantilevered houses jutting out high above the road. To improve traffic flow, the city has opened an impressive network of tunnels (it is, after all, a mining town).

Still, on the surface Guanajuato seems like an old Spanish city dumped into a Mexican highland valley. It's one of Mexico's hidden gems, explored by relatively few foreign tourists, but popular with Mexicans. Picturesque and laden with atmosphere, Guanajuato should be high on your list of places to visit.

Guanajuato is a city of incredible charm, as is almost immediately obvious on entering it by way of its subterranean main street. The street (right and below, left) follows the original course of the Guanajuato River, running beneath the city for almost 3 kilometers. The river used to flood the downtown area with alarming frequency until a dam was built in the 1960's to contain it. This is one of only two major streets in downtown Guanajuato - this one coming into town, the other going back out.

To navigate the city, you have to go on foot. It's criss-crossed by hundreds of callejones (alleyways), the most famous of which is, undoubtedly, Callejón del Beso (Alley of the



Kiss, right). The local romantic legend has it that this callejón is so narrow that lovers, each standing on a balcony of either side of the alley, can reach across the alley and exchange a kiss! The alleyway also is part of the route of the popular traditional callejoneadas of Guanajuato when student choral groups stroll the alleyways of Guanajuato at night, strumming their guitars and serenading the local populace.

Less romantic perhaps, but of greater historical significance is the callejón (left) by which Ignacio Allende and Padre Hidalgo entered the city with their army in 1810 to confront royalist troops for the first time.

After marching from Dolores Hidalgo to San Miguel de Allende, then on to Celaya and Salamanca, they entered Guanajuato through this portal with a force of 20,000 men to engage in their first real battle against the Spanish garrison, which was holed up in a granary (Alhóndiga de Granaditas) in the center of the city. The granary was almost impossible to assault, but the ragged rebel army prevailed when Juan José de los Reyes Martínez, "El Pipila", strapped a paving stone to his back to shield himself from the bullets of the Spanish guns, made his way to the front door of the granary and set it afire so the troops could gain entrance. A colossal statue of El Pipila stands high above the city.



Guanajuato is host each year to the International Cervantino Festival, named in honor of Miguel de Cervantes, author of "Don Quixote." Artists from around the world perform in recitals, concerts, plays, ballet, modern dance, opera and art exhibits. Events are held throughout the city and, indeed, throughout Mexico in other cities such as Mexico City, Guadalajara and San Miguel de Allende. But the real focus of activity for the festival is the Teatro Juárez (1903, above) which faces the main plaza of downtown Guanajuato, el Jardín de la Unión. Every inch of the interior of the theater is carved, painted, sculpted or embossed in a beautiful, truly awe-inspiring display of art of the period.



There are dozens of plazas and plazuelas in the center of Guanajuato, lending it even more of a distinctive European flavor unlike that of perhaps any other Mexican city. Exploring the city on foot offers something new to discover at each turn of a corner.

III. Mexico City ****



Mexico City is a feast of urban energy, culture, dining, and shopping. The city has sidewalk cafes and cantinas; bazaars and boutiques; pyramids, monuments, and museums; and a multitude of entertainment options. And when you've had your fill of the city, memorable towns and historic national landmarks are only a couple of hours away in any direction.

Mexico City is experiencing a well-deserved renaissance in interest. For the past several years, travelers have dismissed Mexico's capital because of this grand city's problems with crime, pollution, and out-of-control growth. Now that these unsavory trends have been reversed, the culturally curious are rediscovering what originally led so many to this magnificent place. We love Mexico City, with all of its urban energy and historic and cultural treasures.

Located 2,239m (7,347 ft.) high, on an enormous dry lakebed in a highland valley surrounded by mountains, this was the center of power of pre-Hispanic America, and it remains one of the most dynamic, fascinating, and charismatic cities in the world today.

You only need to stand in the center of the Plaza of Three Cultures to visually comprehend the undisputed significance of this city. Here, the remains of an Aztec pyramid, a colonial church, and a towering modern office building face one another, a testament to the city's prominence in ancient and contemporary history. Located at the heart of the Americas, Mexico City has been a center of life and commerce for more than 2,000 years. The Teotihuacán, Toltec, Aztec, and European conquistadors all contributed to the city's fascinating evolution, art, and heritage. Although residents refer to their city as simply México (meh-hee-koh), its multitude of ancient ruins, colonial masterpieces, and modern architecture has prompted others to call it "The City of Palaces."



The central downtown area resembles a European city, dominated by ornate buildings and broad boulevards, and interspersed with public art, parks, and gardens. This sprawling city is thoroughly modern and, in places, unsightly and chaotic, but it never strays far from its historical roots. In the center are the partially excavated ruins of the main Aztec temple; pyramids rise just beyond the city.

Over the past several years, the city has achieved admirable progress in making visitors feel more secure, with special safety programs, a vastly increased police presence, and programs that are effectively combating corruption -- including hiring Rudy Giuliani as an anti-corruption consultant. By 2002, Mexico City had reduced crime rates to 50% of 1994 levels, with only 0.02% related to visitors to the city.



Technically, Mexico City is a "Federal District" (similar

to Washington, D.C.), called the Distrito Federal, or D.F. One finds here a microcosm of all that is happening in the rest of the country -- it's not only the seat of government, but in every way the dominant center of Mexican life.

Mexico City Attractions



The diverse attractions in Mexico City spring from its complex layers of history. From the simple pleasure of a stroll through a bustling mercado to museums filled with treasures of artistic and historic significance, Mexico City has much to explore.

Mexico City was built on the ruins of the ancient city of Tenochtitlán. A downtown portion of the city, comprising almost 700 blocks and 1,500 buildings, has been designated a Historical Zone (Centro Histórico). The area has surged in popularity, and once-neglected buildings are rapidly being converted into chic clubs and trendy restaurants, recalling its former colonial charm.

Mexico City boasts over 90 museums that celebrate its several thousand years as a hemispheric cultural center.

Restaurants

Mexico City restaurants open 7-11 AM for breakfast (desayuno) and 1-5 for lunch (comida); most locals start out at 9 PM for dinner (cena). Restaurants stay open till midnight during the week and a little later on weekends. At deluxe restaurants, dress is generally formal (jacket and tie), and reservations are almost always required; see reviews for details. (Even if a deluxe restaurant doesn't require a jacket and tie, men are likely to feel out-of-place if not well dressed.) If you're short on time, there are American-style coffee shops (VIPS, Denny's, Shirley's, and Sanborns) all over the city; some are open 24 hours.



Colonia Polanco is an attractive, upscale neighborhood on the edge of Chapultepec Park that has some of the best and most expensive dining in the city. Zona Rosa restaurants get filled pretty quickly on Saturday night, especially the Saturday coinciding with most local people's payday, which falls on the 1st and 15th of each month.

Nightlife

Mexico City is the cultural capital of Latin America and, with the exception of Río de Janeiro (or maybe São Paulo), has the liveliest nightlife of the region. There's something for every taste, from operas and symphonies to a renowned folklore ballet and a lively square where mariachi play. If you understand Spanish, you'll be able to enjoy a wide range of theatrical entertainment, including recent Broadway hits. You'll also find discos and offbeat places where salsa and danzón (elegant Cuban dance music) are headliners.

Good places to check for current events include the Friday edition of The News, a daily English-language newspaper, and Tiempo Libre, a weekly magazine listing activities and events in Spanish. All are available at newsstands. Citywide festivals with free music, dance, and theater performances by local groups take place all year long. Check with the Mexico City Tourist Office for dates and details.

Night is the key word to understanding the timing of going out in Mexico City. People generally have cocktails at 7 or 8, take in dinner and a show at 10 or 11, head to discos at midnight, then find a spot for a nightcap or tacos somewhere around 3 AM. The easiest way to do this if you don't speak Spanish is on a nightlife tour. If you set off on your own you should have no trouble getting around, but for personal safety only take official hotel taxis or call a sitio (stationed) taxi.



Niza and Florencia streets in the Zona Rosa are practically lined with nightclubs, bars, and discos. Outside the Zona Rosa, Paseo de la Reforma and Avenida Insurgentes Sur have the greatest concentration of nightspots. Nice bars to sit and have a few drinks in are hard to come by -- often they are either too noisy or too seedy. Locals head to the big hotels, many of which have both bars and dance clubs. To really experience the nightlife, it's imperative to visit a dance club. Dance emporiums run the gamut from cheek-to-cheek romantic to throbbing strobe lights and ear-splitting music. Most places have a reasonable cover charge. Bear in mind that the capital's high altitude makes liquor extremely potent.

S h o p p i n g

Native crafts and specialties from all over Mexico are available in the capital, as are designer clothes. You'll also find modern art by some of the best contemporary painters, many of whom are making a name for themselves in the United States. And of course Mexican goods are a far better deal here than in overseas outlets.

Department stores and malls are generally open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 10-7, and Wednesday and Saturday 10-8.



IV. San Miguel de Allende ****

Nestled high in the cool hills of the Mexican altiplano, San Miguel De Allende is one the hippest, busiest, most charming towns in Mexico. San Miguel de Allende mixes the best aspects of small-town life with the cosmopolitan pleasures of a big city. Most of the buildings in the central part of the town date from the colonial era or the 19th century; the law requires newer buildings to conform to existing architecture, and the town has gone to some lengths to retain its cobblestone streets.



A notable aspect of San Migueleña society is the number of festivals it celebrates. In a country that needs only the barest of excuses to hold a fiesta, it is known far and wide for them.

Founded in 1542 by Fray Juan de San Miguel, and home to the heroes of the Mexican Independence, San Miguel is a perfectly preserved Colonial city of 130,000 people. With clean-swept cobblestone streets, brightly painted haciendas urbanos, a shady and peaceful Jardín, gorgeous churches, and a fiesta every week (it seems), it is reminiscent of old Mexico - graceful, gentile, and urbane.

There's a reason for this. In 1926, San Miguel was declared a National Monument, and no ugly modern development has intruded since: there are no traffic lights, billboards, flashing neon signs or fast-food chains within the city center. In the 1930's, the Instituto Allende, a national art school, was established and San Miguel De Allende became an artists' colony -- a mecca for aspiring painters and artisans from Mexico and beyond. Those aesthetic sensibilities helped preserve and develop the towns' character and appeal.



Today, the number of artists and artisans has grown along with other art schools, workshops, boutiques, galleries, and markets. The expat population has also grown (numbering between 2-5,000, depending upon the season), and with it came the largest bilingual library in Mexico (Biblióteca Publico), English language papers, theatre, concerts, lectures and restaurants.

Combine all these things - throw in cool, sunny, dry weather most of the year, reasonable accommodations, an astounding number of happenings and goings-on for a small town, and the ability to walk anywhere -- and you have a near perfect destination for alternative travel.

Make sure to spend at least a few minutes a day relaxing in the shade of the Jardín listening to the strolling estudiantinas (student musicians) or walking through the tropical gardens (with resident snowy egrets) in the Parque Juarez or the Botanical Gardens. Take the Sunday morning House and Garden Tour to get a peak at some of the treasures hidden behind the brightly painted walls of the town. Attend a bullfight at the Plaza del Toros Oriente (don't miss the Pamplonada- Running of the Bulls-- in September), or dance the night away at one of the local (and almost weekly) fiestas.

V. Oaxaca & Monte Alban ***

Oaxaca and Chiapas have larger Indian populations than the other states in Mexico. These Indians don't just keep to their own little villages; you see them everywhere. Over the centuries, their practices, beliefs, and customs have shaped the local culture, making these two states fascinating places to visit.



What you see today when you walk through the historic district of Oaxaca (wah-hah-kah) is largely the product of 3 centuries of colonial society. The city is famous for its green building stone and for its own particular style of colonial architecture -- an adaptation to the frequent earthquakes that plagued the city in colonial times. Building walls and facades are thick and broad with heavy buttressing, colonnades are low and spaced closely, and bell towers are squat with relatively

wide bases. The cumulative impression of this architectural style is one of mass and substantiality.

Before the arrival of the Spanish, the central valley of Oaxaca was an important and populous region. Olmec influence reached the area around 1200 B.C.; by 800 B.C., in the early pre-Classic period, the Zapotec (the original builders of Monte Albán) occupied the valley. Their civilization flourished about the same time as Teotihuacán in central Mexico. Trade between this valley and the valleys of Cholula and Mexico intensified and remained important until the Conquest. There was also trade with the Maya to the east. In early postclassic times, the Mixtec appeared in the region and, most likely through war and conquest, gained ascendancy over much of the Zapotec homeland before both peoples were humbled by the Aztec and later the Spaniards. To this day, the two principal ethnic groups in Oaxaca remain the Zapotec and Mixtec, whose tonal languages are closely related to each other but far different from the Aztec language Náhuatl.

The city of Oaxaca, originally called Antequera, was founded just a few years after the Spanish vanquished the Aztec. Most of Oaxaca's central valley was granted to Hernán Cortez for his services to the crown. Three centuries of colonial rule followed, during which the region remained calm.

In the years following independence, there was more or less continuous upheaval. From the 1830s to the 1860s, the Liberals and Conservatives fought for control of Mexico's destiny, with the French eventually intervening on the side of the Conservatives. One man, a Zapotec Indian from Oaxaca, led the resistance against the French and played the key role in shaping Mexico's future. He was Benito Juárez, and his handiwork is known to history as La Reforma.



Born in the village of Guelatao, north of Oaxaca City, Juárez was adopted by a wealthy Oaxacan family who clothed and educated him in return for his services as a houseboy. He fell in love with the daughter of his benefactor and promised he would become rich

and famous and return to marry her. He did all three and became president of the Republic in 1861. Juárez is revered throughout Mexico.

Monte Alban ruins

Five miles to the west of Oaxaca City lie the spectacular Monte Alban ruins, perched on a mountaintop high above the surrounding valleys. Leaving Oaxaca below and to the east, the access road winds steeply up a hillside, bringing you shortly to a parking area near the site entrance and it's museum.



The ruins extend over the peaks of 3 mountain ranges that converge in Oaxaca's central valley, at an altitude of 1,600 meters (about 5200 ft.) above sea level.

From about 500 B.C. through 800 A.D., Monte Alban flourished as the capital of the Zapotecs. Its great structures, formed of irregular stones and mud faced with cut stone and sometimes stucco, many decorated with elaborate reliefs, overlook the surrounding valleys.

VI. Puebla **

Puebla, a city located just east of Mexico City, has played an important role in the nation's history: The only Mexican victory over foreign invaders took place there when Maximilian's French Foreign Legion was defeated on 5 May 1862 (now celebrated as Cinco de Mayo throughout Mexico).

At an elevation of over 2121m (7,000 ft.) in a broad plane between mountain ranges and snow-capped volcanoes, Puebla is blessed with the year-round spring-like climate of the highlands. It's considered the cradle of Mexican cuisine, having produced some of the country's classic dishes -- the intricate mole poblano and chiles en nogada, as well as tinga (pork or chicken stewed in chiles) and mixiotes (spiced rabbit, lamb, or chicken wrapped and steamed in a sauce).



Puebla has a larger colonial center than any other city in Mexico. It's home to so many mansions, convents, and churches that it has been named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This is colonial architecture of grand proportions, different from that of the rest of Mexico in its heavy use of painted tiles, gold leaf, and molded plaster. Facades and walls are commonly surfaced with clay and Talavera tiles. Early in the city's history, artisans from the Spanish town of Talavera settled here and established their craft of making hand-painted tiles -- a tradition the Moors originally brought to Spain in the 8th century. These tiles, along with dishes, pots, and other objects made in the same tradition, are referred to as Talavera.

Puebla is a very Catholic city, even for Mexico; there are so many churches and former convents that most Poblanos can't keep them all straight. Churches not to be missed include the Cathedral, one of the largest in Mexico, and the Capilla del Rosario, with its overpowering baroque design and lavish use of gold leaf. Modern Puebla surrounds the historic district.



Start your visit at the Amparo Museum, which covers 30 centuries of Mexican history and has a modern audiovisual system that allows visitors to listen to explanations in a number of languages (be selective -- there are 18 hours of narration). Museo Bello contains an impressive collection of colonial-era art, and Santa Rosa Convent is fascinating for its enormous tiled kitchen and museum of local crafts. Just strolling the city's streets is a treat: Many buildings are covered in gorgeous tiles, and shops display an irresistible array of Puebla's famous hand-painted talavera pottery. The well-designed Africam Safari, 20 minutes out of town, features 250 species of wild animals from every part of the world.

Puebla is often used as a base for visiting nearby Cholula, the site of Tepanapa Pyramid, once the world's largest pyramid. Today, it is not much more than a big mound, but extensive tunnels give visitors a good view of its interior. On top of the ruins sits a Spanish church.

The principal industry of the city is a large Volkswagen plant on the outskirts. It produces most of the Volkswagens sold in the United States.

VII. Querétaro **

During the colonial era, Querétaro played a central role in the conquest and evangelization of northern Mexico. In later times, it was at the center of events in the three wars that forged the Mexican nation: La Independencia, La Reforma, and La Revolución. Downtown Querétaro is lively, pedestrian-friendly, and filled with eye-opening colonial splendor. The local government has spruced up the city, keeps it neat with impressive round-the-clock cleaning crews, and provides street vendors with attractive stands, closely regulating them so that they don't obstruct public streets and walkways. In the evenings, the downtown area fills with people who stroll about the plazas and andadores (pedestrian walkways), eat at one of the outdoor restaurants or at one of the stands, and perhaps listen to the municipal band play in the Jardín Zenea or one of the other plazas. The next morning you won't find a scrap of paper on the ground. Since the city is only an hour by bus from San Miguel, it makes an easy day trip, and you can stay into the evening. But once you do, you'll be tempted to stay longer to further your acquaintance with this lovely city.



The Spanish founded Querétaro (1531) in their first serious expedition into the vast northern stretches of present-day Mexico. In time, the city became the base of operations for all expeditions headed north. The founding of Querétaro occurred after a battle with the Chichimeca in which Santiago (St. James), now the patron saint of the city, appeared in the clouds. Santiago is the patron saint of Spain and of La Reconquista, the seven-century struggle to expel the

Moors from Spain, which had ended barely 40 years earlier. It is no wonder that the Spanish hoped he would again lend a hand in this new struggle for territory. (When you visit the Jardín Zenea at the center of town, look up at the facade of the church of San Francisco, and you will see a forceful depiction of Santiago in battle, lopping off the turbaned head of a Moor.)

While the conquistadors were setting out to conquer lands for the crown, the religious orders were setting out to convert souls for Christ. The Franciscans established a large community in Querétaro and eventually a college for the propagation of the faith, the first such institution in the New World. From here, the Franciscans set out (always on foot, as the Franciscan Rule forbade riding on horseback or in carriages) to evangelize and establish missions as far away as Texas and California.



Centuries later, Mexican independence began in Querétaro with the conspiracy of 1810 (of which Father Hidalgo was a member). A little more than 50 years after that, Querétaro was again in the thick of it when Emperor Maximilian made his last stand against the Liberal army (and was executed here). Another 50 years passed, and the city became the site of the laborious constitutional convention during the Mexican Revolution. The document that it produced, the Constitution of 1917, remains the law of the land.

Recommended hotels

CITY	PRICE RANGE	STYLE	CONTACT
Acapulco			
Hyatt	USD 70 - 120	Modern	Call travel agency for packages
Playa Suite	USD 60 - 120	Modern	Call travel agency for packages
Roma Palace	USD 40 - 80	Mid 70-style	Call travel agency for packages
Guanajuato			
El Mesón d/I Poetas	USD 40 –80	Colonial	Centro Tel: 01 (473) 732 6657 Tel: 01 (473) 732 0705
Hotel Luna	USD 40 – 80	Colonial	Zocalo, Centro Tel: 01 (473) 732 9725
San Miguel			
Misión de los Ángeles	USD 50 - 100	Colonial	Km. 2 Carr. Sn Miguel - Celaya Toll-Free: 01 800 470 7000 Toll-Free: 01 800 849 9754
Oaxaca			
Best Western Centro	USD 120 - 150	Colonial	Pino Suarez 410, Centro Toll-Free: 01 800 712 7374 Tel: 01 (951) 513 1812
Marqués del Valle	USD 75 – 100	Colonial	Zocalo Toll-Free: 01 800 849 9936 Tel: 01 (951) 514 0688 Tel: 01 (951) 516 9961
Puebla			
Holiday Inn Centro	USD 65 – 100	Colonial	2 Oriente 211 Toll-Free: 01 800 990 9999 Tel: 01 (222) 223 6600
Mexico City			
Hotel Milán	USD 35 - 70	Modern	Avaro Obregon 38, Col. Roma, Tel: 01 (55) 5584 0222
Holiday Inn Centro	USD 70 –130	Colonial	Av 5 De Mayo 61 , Col Centro Toll-Free: 01 800 990 9999 Tel: 01 (55) 5521 2121
Best Western Centro	USD 70 –130	Colonial	Avenida Hidalgo 85, Col Centro Toll-Free: 800-712-7374 Tel: 01 (55) 5518 2181
Marriott Polanco	USD 180 – 250	Modern	Campos Eliseos, Polanco Toll-Free: 01 800 900 8800 Tel: 01 (55) 9138 1800
W-Hotel Mexico	USD 250 – 300	Very Modern	Campos Eliseos, Polanco Tel: 01 (55) 9138 1800
Habita	USD 190 – 300	Very Modern	Masaryk 201, Polanco Tel: 01 (55) 5282 3100

Prices USD (approx.) & travel distances

	Acapulco	Puebla	Oaxaca	México	SAL	Guanajuato	Querétaro
Transp. bus:	\$ 20	\$ 20	\$ 40	\$ 5	\$ 30	\$ 35	\$ 25
Transp. taxi:	\$ 270	\$ 200	\$ 370	\$ 95	\$ 270	\$ 320	\$ 220
Travel time:	3 hrs	3 hrs	6 hrs	1,5 hr	4 hrs	5 hrs	3 hrs
Travel dist.*:	178-111	178-111	456-283	89-55	393-244	454-282	304-189

*kms/miles