



# Mexico



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PARROQUIA DE SAN MIGUEL  
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## Plan Your Trip

# Itineraries



1  
MONTH

## Beaches, Cities and Temples of Mexico's South

This classic journey leads south from Mexico's central heartland to its glorious Caribbean beaches, and gives a superb sampling of the ruins, jungle, cities and beaches that make the country so fascinating.

Start by exploring the exciting megalopolis of **Mexico City**, key to any understanding of the country. Take a side trip to the awesome pyramids at **Teotihuacán**, capital of ancient Mexico's biggest empire. Then head east to the lively port city of **Veracruz**, before crossing the mountains south-

ward to **Oaxaca**. This cultured colonial city, with Mexico's finest handicrafts, sits at the heart of a beautiful region with a large indigenous population. Give yourself a day to explore the ancient Zapotec capital, **Monte Albán**, nearby.

Head to one of the relaxed beach spots on the Oaxaca coast, such as **Puerto Escondido**, **Mazunte** or **Zipolite**, for a few days' sun, surf and sand, before continuing east to **San Cristóbal de las Casas**, a beautiful highland town surrounded by intriguing indigenous villages. Move on to **Palenque**, perhaps the most stunning of



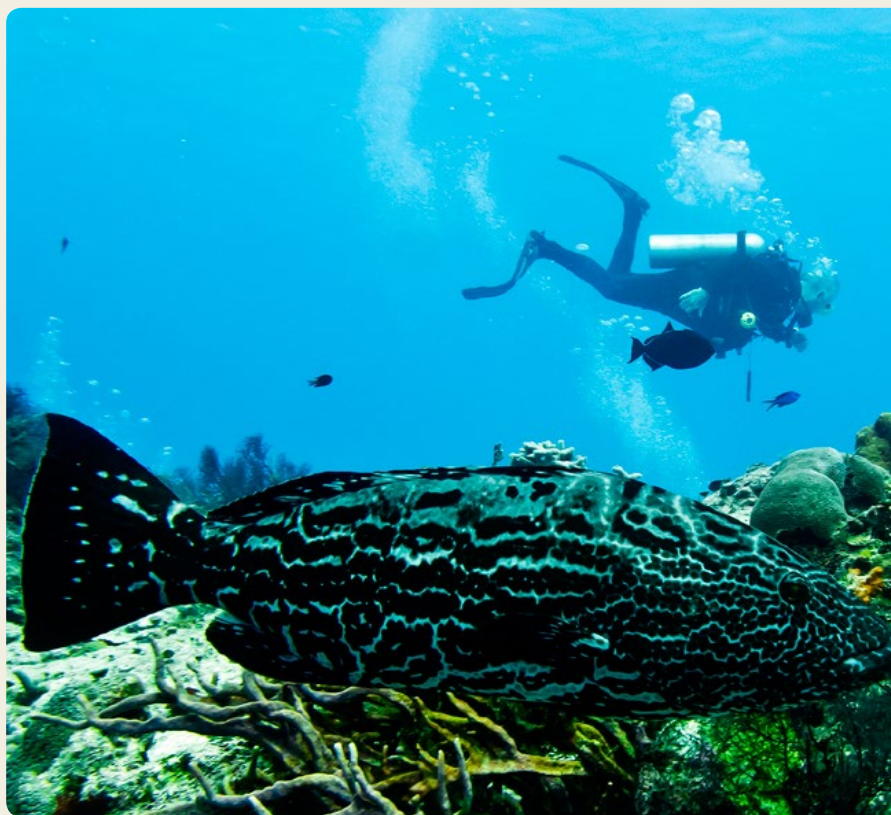


Pirámide del Sol (Pyramid of the Sun; p149), Teotihuacán

all ancient Maya cities, with its backdrop of emerald-green jungle, and **Yaxchilán**, another marvelous Maya city, accessible only by river.

Head northeast to **Campeche**, an attractive mix of colonial city and bustling modern town, detouring to the remote and ancient Maya city of **Calakmul** en route. Calakmul will take three days of your time – a day to get there, a day to explore and a day to get back, but it's worth every kilometer, we promise. Move on to colonial **Mérida**, the Yucatán Peninsula's lively cultural capital and the base for visiting the superb ruins of **Uxmal** and the **Ruta**

**Puuc**. Next stop: **Chichén Itzá**, the most celebrated of all the Yucatán's Maya sites. From here it's on to **Tulum** on the Caribbean coast, another spectacular Maya site set beside a glorious beach. If it's too busy for you, opt for the quiet, laid-back vibe of **Laguna Bacalar**, or if you want to go diving, head to the coast and stay in **Mahahual** or remote **Xcalak**. Finally, make your way northward along the Riviera Maya to the resort town of **Playa del Carmen**, with a side trip to **Isla Cozumel** for excellent snorkeling and diving. End at Mexico's most popular and unabashed coastal resort, **Cancún**.





12  
DAYS

## Riviera Maya and Costa Maya Getaway

This journey showcases the best of Mexico's Caribbean coast, from the bustling beaches and frenetic nightlife of the Riviera Maya to the soporific charm of seaside villages along the Costa Maya. Some wonderfully scenic Maya ruins and terrific diving and snorkeling add some action to a beach vacation.

Fly into Cancún and head straight for relaxed **Isla Mujeres** for beaches and snorkeling, taking a side trip to **Isla Contoy**, a national park with superlative bird-watching and, from June to September, the chance to swim with whale sharks that congregate nearby.

Alternatively, opt for hip **Playa del Carmen** with its own fine beaches, underwater activities and lively nightlife. 'Playa' is also the jumping-off point for the dive sites of **Isla Cozumel**. If you have kids, spend a day at the turtle farm on Isla Mujeres, one of the nearby 'eco-parks' such as **Selvática** with its 12 jungle zip-lines, or **Crococun** in Puerto Morelos, an interactive zoo with crocodiles and monkeys. Next stop: **Tulum**, with one of Mexico's most perfect beaches and its most spectacularly located Maya site. Nearby are the pyramids and temples of **Cobá**, as well as the wildlife-rich Reserva de la Biosfera Sian Ka'an. South of Tulum the Costa Maya is less developed and less touristed than the Riviera Maya. Head to **Mahahual**, a laid-back village with snorkeling and diving at the coral atoll **Banco Chinchorro**, or the tiny fishing town of **Xcalak**, another excellent water-sports base.

After three nights chilling in these towns, backtrack to the northern end of Chetumal Bay before heading south to the laid-back **Laguna Bacalar**, where you can bask in the sun and bathe in the cenote-clear water that is painted unreal shades of blue, turquoise and green. For a diversion, head into the jungle and find yourself exploring the ruins of **Kohunlich** and **Dzibanché**, where you're likely to have the places to yourself.

Finish your trip in the relaxed, low-key city of **Chetumal**, where you can either travel onwards to Belize or turn around and, if you're worried that you missed out on **Cancún's** nightlife, spend your last night there and paint the town red.

LEONARDO GONZALEZ / SHUTTERSTOCK ©



EMMA SHAW / LONELY PLANET ©



Top: Diver off Isla Cozumel (p282)

Bottom: Sea turtle

18  
DAYS

## Baja from Tip to Toe

PLAN YOUR TRIP ITINERARIES

The world's second-longest peninsula seems tailor-made for road tripping, with 1200km of road snaking through picturesque villages, along dramatic coastline and past otherworldly rock canyons. Baja's charms are further enhanced by its appealing colonial towns, world-class diving and some of the best fish tacos you'll ever taste.

Enjoy a full-on day of Mexican life-on-the-streets in **Tijuana** before heading south via the **Valle de Guadalupe** winery route, stopping for a day or two to tour the vineyards and taste the terrific tipples. Then make a stop in **Ensenada** for great fish tacos and a stroll through the shopping streets before heading south via the Carretera Transpeninsular's spectacular desert scenery. If it's migration season (December to April), book a whale-watching tour at **Guerro Negro**. Alternatively, continue south and detour to **Sierra de San Francisco** to view ancient petroglyphs in the local caves.

Further south, pass through San Ignacio to have a look at the most beautiful colonial church in Baja (pictured), and stop in **Mulegé** for a tranquil paddle in the cerulean **Sea of Cortez**. The highway then hugs the coast en route to **Loreto**, where you can spend a day or two discovering the artisan shops, great restaurants, historic architecture and 17th-century mission. Heading south again, the road passes several stunning beaches before ducking inland. Detour to **Puerto San Carlos** for a glimpse of sea-dwelling leviathans during whale-watching season, then make for the unspoiled charms of **La Paz**. Spend a day kayaking and snorkeling off the island of **Espíritu Santo**, or go swimming with whale sharks (October to March).

Next, stop at **Todos Santos**, a gorgeous little town with galleries, sea-turtle nesting grounds and beautiful historical buildings, before you hit wild **Cabo San Lucas**. Indulge in banana-boating, parasailing and other beach activities before hitting the bars, and don't forget to take a boat to **Land's End** for a glimpse of the magical stone arch. If you need a respite, head for **San José del Cabo**, Cabo's tamer twin, with its appealing colonial church, art galleries and a clutch of good restaurants. Or, go underwater for a closer glimpse of the reef at **Cabo Pulmo** – the only living reef in the Sea of Cortez.

ROTH PETERNA / SHUTTERSTOCK ©



ANDREA IZZOTTI / SHUTTERSTOCK ©



Top: El Arco (the Arch) at Land's End (p740)  
Bottom: Misión San Ignacio de Kadakaamán  
(p722), San Ignacio



## Off the Beaten Track: Mexico

PLAN YOUR TRIP OFF THE BEATEN TRACK



### URIQUE

The journey to this idyllic Copper Canyon riverside village is one of the most dramatic in Mexico, descending via endless switchbacks down the side of a canyon. (p756)

### PLAYA MARUATA

Kick back in a rustic cabaña, pitch your tent and hang out with other beach bums and hippies on the prettiest stretch of the Michoacán coast. (p546)

### VOLCÁN PARÍCUTÍN

Climb this volcano near Uruapan, which, exploding out of a farmer's field back in the 1940s, buried villages under tons of volcanic rock, but left a church's steeple unscathed. (p638)

PACIFIC  
OCEAN



### SIERRA GORDA

This remote Querétaro biosphere reserve encompasses high-altitude cloud forests, semideserts, lowland tropical forests, historic Jesuit missions, isolated villages, waterfalls, caves and exotic wildlife. Explore with local guides from community-run ecolodges. (p651)

### MINERAL DEL CHICO

You'll hold your breath round many a steep curve on the road up, but this charming old mining village, with moody mountain views, tumbling mists and good hiking, is well worth the trip. (p151)

### RUTA PUUC

While the tour groups are shuffling from one site to another further north, check out these fascinating Maya ruins south of Mérida: there's a good chance you'll have them all to yourself. (p319)

### LACHATAO

This tiny, remote mountain village has a certain intangible magic – which is perhaps why the ancient Zapotecs created a mysterious ceremonial site here. There's an excellent village ecotourism program with good cabañas and meals. (p455)

### LAGUNA MIRAMAR

Via pockmarked dirt road or river boat, a day-long journey through the Lacandón Jungle takes you to this perfect clear blue lake with ancient petroglyphs and the haunting roars of howler monkeys. (p400)



# Behind the Scenes

## SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK

We love to hear from travelers – your comments keep us on our toes and help make our books better. Our well-traveled team reads every word on what you loved or loathed about this book. Although we cannot reply individually to your submissions, we always guarantee that your feedback goes straight to the appropriate authors, in time for the next edition. Each person who sends us information is thanked in the next edition – the most useful submissions are rewarded with a selection of digital PDF chapters.

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## OUR READERS

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## THIS BOOK

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# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Body surfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/Subte station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



**Stuart Butler**

**Chiapas & Tabasco** Stuart has been writing for Lonely Planet for a decade and during this time he's come eye to eye with gorillas in the Congolese jungles, huffed and puffed over snowbound Himalayan mountain passes, interviewed a king who could turn into a tree, and had his fortune told by a parrot. Oh, and he's met more than his fair share of self-proclaimed Gods. When not on the road for Lonely Planet he lives on the beautiful beaches of Southwest France with his wife and two young children.



**Steve Fallon**

**Western Central Highlands** A native of Boston, Massachusetts, Steve graduated from Georgetown University with a Bachelor of Science in modern languages. After working for several years for an American daily newspaper and earning a master's degree in journalism, his fascination with the 'new' Asia led him to Hong Kong, where he lived for over a dozen years, working for a variety of media and running his own travel bookshop. Steve lived in Budapest for three years before moving to London in 1994. He has written or contributed to more than 100 Lonely Planet titles.



**John Hecht**

**Central Pacific Coast** Los Angeles native John Hecht has contributed to more than a dozen Lonely Planet guidebooks and trade publications, mostly focused on Mexico and Central America. He is also a published food and entertainment writer and wrote a screenplay for a short film shot in Mexico City, his adopted home where he enjoys merrymaking in cantinas and chowing down greasy-good street eats.



**Anna Kaminski**

**Veracruz** Originally from the Soviet Union, Anna grew up in Cambridge, UK. She graduated from the University of Warwick with a degree in Comparative American Studies, a background in the history, culture and literature of the Americas and the Caribbean, and an enduring love of Latin America. Her restless wanderings led her to settle briefly in Oaxaca and Bangkok and her flirtation with criminal law saw her volunteering as a lawyer's assistant in the courts, ghettos and prisons of Kingston, Jamaica. Anna has contributed to almost 30 Lonely Planet titles. When not on the road, Anna calls London home.



**Tom Masters**

**Northern Central Highlands** Dreaming since he could walk of going to the most obscure places on earth, Tom has always had a taste for the unknown. This has led to a writing career that has taken him all over the world, including North Korea, the Arctic, Congo and Siberia. Despite a childhood spent in the English countryside, as an adult Tom has always called London, Paris and Berlin home.



**Liza Prado**

**Copper Canyon & Northern Mexico** Liza Prado has been a travel writer since 2003, when she made a move from corporate lawyering to travel writing (and never looked back). She's written dozens of guidebooks and articles as well as apps and blogs to destinations throughout the Americas. She takes decent photos too. Liza is a graduate of Brown University and Stanford Law School. She lives very happily in Denver, Colorado, with her husband and fellow LP writer, Gary Chandler, and their two kids.



**Phillip Tang**

**Mexico City; Around Mexico City** Phillip Tang grew up on a typically Australian diet of pho and fish 'n' chips before moving to Mexico City. A degree in Chinese- and Latin-American cultures launched him into travel and then writing about it for Lonely Planet's *Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Peru* and *Vietnam* guides.



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Brendan Sainsbury

**Oaxaca** Born and raised in the UK in a town that never merits a mention in any guidebook (Andover, Hampshire), Brendan spent the holidays of his youth caravanning in the English Lake District and didn't leave Blighty until he was 19. He's since squeezed 70 countries into a sometimes precarious existence as a writer and professional vagabond. In the last 11 years, he has written more 40 books for Lonely Planet from Castro's Cuba to the canyons of Peru.



### Kate Armstrong

**Yucatán Peninsula** Kate Armstrong has spent much of her adult life traveling and living around the world. A full-time freelance travel journalist, she has contributed to more than 50 Lonely Planet guides and trade publications and is regularly published in Australian and worldwide publications. She is the author of several books and children's educational titles.



### Ray Bartlett

**Yucatán Peninsula** Ray has been travel writing for nearly two decades, bringing Japan, Korea, Mexico, and many parts of the United States to life in rich detail for top-industry publishers, newspapers, and magazines. His acclaimed debut novel, *Sunsets of Tulum*, is set in Yucatán and was a Midwest Book Review 2016 Fiction pick. Among other pursuits, Ray surfs regularly and is an accomplished Argentine tango dancer. Follow him on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or contact him via his website [www.kaisora.com](http://www.kaisora.com).



### Celeste Brash

**Baja California** Like many California natives, Celeste now lives in Portland, Oregon. She arrived, however, after 15 years in French Polynesia, a year and a half in Southeast Asia and a stint teaching English as a second language in Brighton, England – among other things. She's been writing guidebooks for Lonely Planet since 2005 and her travel articles have appeared in publications from *BBC Travel* to *National Geographic*. She's currently writing a book about her five years on a remote pearl farm in the Tuamotu Atolls and is represented by the Donald Maass Agency, New York.

OVER MORE  
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