

MEXICO CITY



TOURS

CAPITAL OF AN EMPIRE

“The fame and glory of Mexico-Tenochtitlan will endure for as long as the world exists”. Taken from the Mexicayotl Chronicle.

MEXICO CITY

CAPITAL OF AN EMPIRE

There is a passionate history behind the megalopolis we see today. Then everything makes sense. The trajectory can be divided in 3 periods: the era from the foundation on a small island of an immense lake (actually, a system of 5 interconnected lakes) in 1325 by the migrant Mexica people (Aztecs), until the destruction by the Spanish Conquistadors in 1521; three centuries of colonial domination until the consummation of Independence in 1821 and, finally, the couple of centuries that have given shape to the current modern capital of Mexico.

FULL DAY 1.

DOWNTOWN.



The architectural treasures that we see in the downtown of Mexico City were built on top of the ruins of Mexico Tenochtitlan and, in many cases, by recycling the stones taken from the palaces, shrines and temples of the Mexica people. There are evidences of this all around. However and fortunately, nowadays we are able to take a look to some of the prehispanic buildings, or parts of them, in some sections of the city primarily in the downtown. The island where the ancestral city was founded doesn't exist anymore since the whole lake lies now under square kilometers of asphalt, constructions of our colonial heritage and modern skyscrapers.

Some of the must-see points of the downtown are the Zocalo (Constitution Square), surrounded by the Metropolitan Cathedral and its impressive King's altar, the National Palace and Diego Rivera's murals, the ruins of the Templo Mayor (Main Temple of the Aztec Empire), the Old Town Hall and the Federal District Municipality.

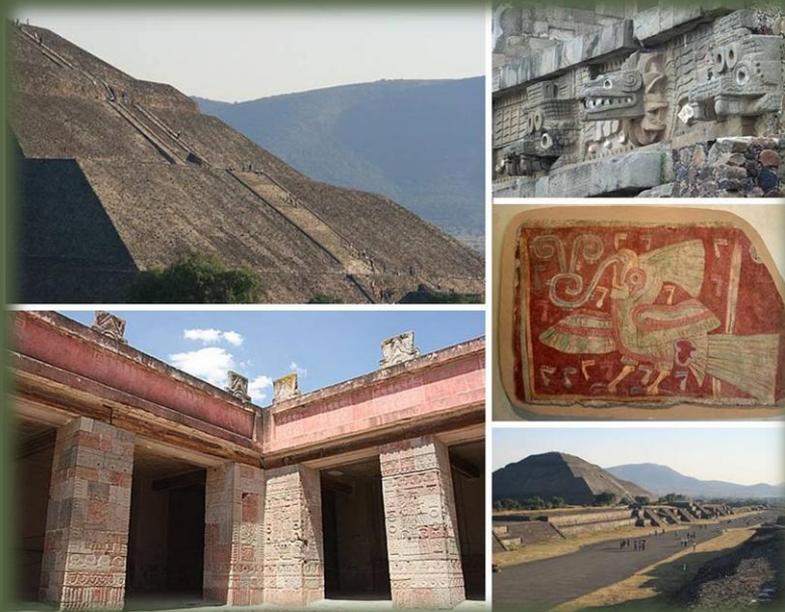


Important and attractive buildings in the nearby are the Fine Arts Palace, the National Art Museum, the Central Post Office Building, the Old House of Blue Tiles and the Latin American Tower, among many others.

FULL DAY 2.

TEOTIHUACAN

Undoubtedly, "the city of gods" is one of those places to see before you die. During the classical period, Teotihuacan was the largest city in the Americas, with an estimate population of more than 200,000 inhabitants and also the most influential culture throughout Mesoamerica.



The Pyramid of the sun, the most spectacular structure of the site, was completed by the first century a.C. The Citadel, the Temple of the Feathered Serpent, the Palace of Quetzal-Papalotl and the Pyramid of the Moon are the most important buildings. The collapse may have taken place before the end of the first millennium.

LA VILLA AND TLATTELCO.

La Villa is a series of churches among which the most important are the Old and Modern Basilicas of Our Lady of Guadalupe, one of the most important pilgrimage sites of Catholicism and certainly, the most visited of Mexico.

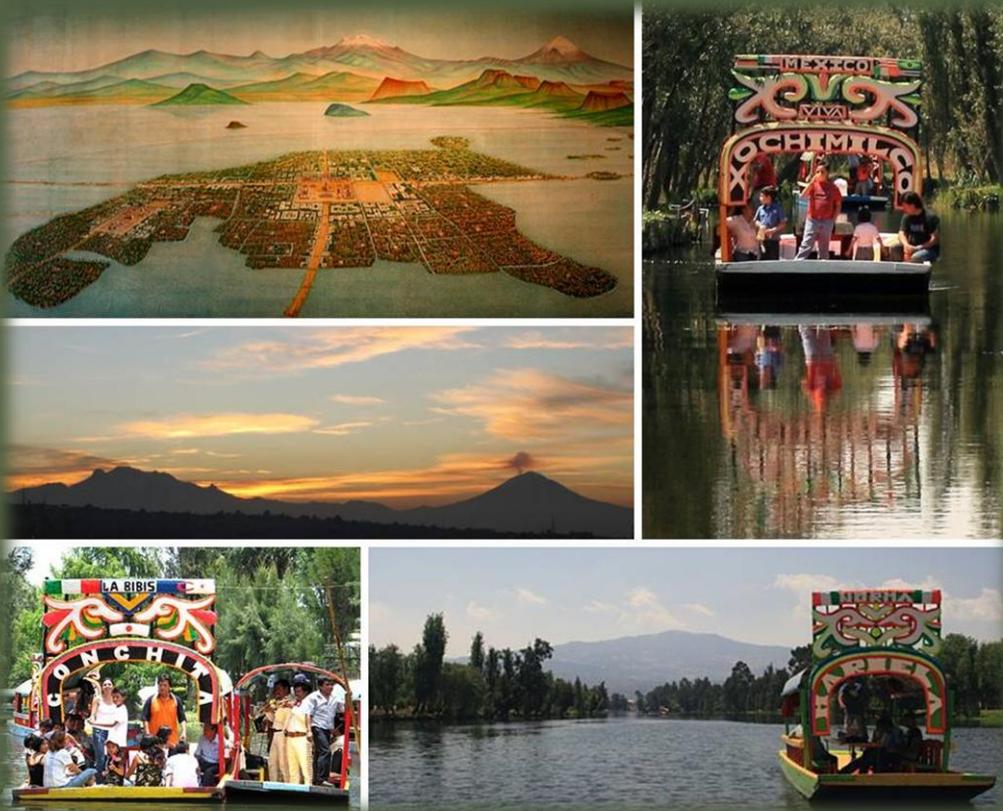


Tlatelolco is an area of Mexico City, site of many historical events. Everything started when it was founded as a twin city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan in a small island next to it. The similarities of its Main Temple with the one in Tenochtitlan is an evidence of its power. The most important market of the region was here. Today, Tlatelolco is an enormous neighborhood with a main plaza called Square of the 3 cultures, where the ruins of the prehispanic site, the colonial temple and ex monastery of Santiago as well as modern buildings are lying next to each other.

FULL DAY 3.

XOCHIMILCO

The floating gardens of Xochimilco, is an excellent window to the past. It's the remains of what the Valley of Mexico used to be before the arrival of the Spaniards. The prehispanic city of what Xochimilco is today, was located in the south rim of the lacustrine system and it was connected with other settlements by means of a canal system. These canals along with artificial extensions of land that our ancestors used to create in order to maximize agricultural production, called *chinampas*, can be admired on board a colorful traditional boat or *trajinera*. Xochimilco is a popular spot for the local families and groups of friends who enjoy the boat ride with food and music.



It could be hard to believe, but the wetlands of Xochimilco, located within one of the largest cities of the world, host numerous species of migratory birds that use the area for nesting, in addition to the year round resident species.

COYOACAN, SAN ANGEL & THE UNIVERSITY.

The Federal District is divided in 16 boroughs being Coyoacan one of them. Its historic center, or Villa Coyoacan, is one of the oldest neighborhoods of Mexico City and as such, is very rich in tradition.

An authentic bohemian atmosphere is clearly visible and restaurants, cafes, bars, galleries, museums and cultural activities, complete the offer to local and foreign visitors. A few blocks away from the main plaza of Coyoacan, The Frida Kalho Museum (The Blue House), where the mexican artist spent her last years of life, is a must-visit.



San Angel is another charming neighborhood, associated with cultural activities in a relaxed and elegant atmosphere. Some decades ago, it was still a town out of the city. Romantic plazas, narrow cobblestone streets, beautiful colonial buildings, churches and houses, many of them recently converted into galleries, restaurants and more welcome you.

Not far from these neighborhoods, The University City, main campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, was recently declared World Heritage site by UNESCO. Impressive murals are seen on the main buildings of the campus, made by some of the most important artist of Mexican modern history like Diego Rivera, Juan O’Gorman and David Alfaro Siqueiros.

The Mexico ’68 Olympic Stadium is another highlight of the visit. It resembles a volcano and was built using big amounts of volcanic material found all over the area, as a result of lava flows from past eruptions of the surrounding volcanoes. It also shows an interesting mural by Diego Rivera that he couldn’t complete before his death.

FULL DAY 4.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The greatest collection of pre Columbian art and modern Mexican ethnography is displayed in the 23 halls of this, with no question, one of the best museums of the world. One could easily spend a week watching in detail the whole exhibition. The most impressive treasures inherited from the pre Hispanic cultures spread through Mesoamerica are here.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY

The exhibition occupies the Chapultepec Castle, located on top the homonymous hill, in the first section of the largest park of the city. The current building, built on a hill that was sacred for the Aztecs, have had different purposes throughout history like Military Academy, Imperial residence, Observatory and Presidential house.



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