

welcome to Mexico



An Outdoor Life

From the southern jungles to the smoking, snowcapped volcanoes and the cactus-dotted northern deserts, all surrounded by 10,000km of coast strung with sandy beaches and wildlife-rich lagoons, Mexico is an endless adventure for the senses. A climate that ranges from temperate to hot almost everywhere makes for a life spent largely in the open air. Take it easy by lying on a beach, dining alfresco or strolling the streets of some pretty town, or get out and snorkel warm Caribbean reefs, hike mountain cloud forests or take a boat in search of dolphins or whales.

Soul Food

Mexico is packed with history and culture. Its pre-Hispanic civilizations built some of the world's great archaeological monuments, from Teotihuacán's towering pyramids to the exquisitely decorated temples of the Maya. The Spanish colonial era left beautiful towns full of gorgeous, tree-shaded plazas and elaborately carved stone churches and mansions. Modern Mexico has seen a surge of great art from the likes of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. Top-class museums and galleries around the country document Mexico's long and fascinating history and its endless creative verve. Popular culture is just as vibrant, from the underground dance clubs of Mexico City to the sentimental crooning of *ranchera* singers.

Jungles, deserts; teeming cities, one-street pueblos; fiesta fireworks, Frida's angst: Mexico conjures up so many contradictory images. One thing's for sure: no preconceptions will ever live up to the reality.

(left) Church in Mexico's northern deserts
(below) Colorful ceramic skulls



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Travel for All

Travel in Mexico is what you make it and the country caters to all types of voyager. Stay in pampered resorts, budget beach huts or colonial mansions. Eat cutting-edge fusion food in chic gourmet restaurants or *abuela's* (grandmother's) recipes at a busy market *comedor* (food stall). Getting from A to B is easy thanks to comfortable buses that run almost anywhere and an extensive domestic flight network. Or try renting a car: Mexico has some excellent roads, and outside the cities traffic is mostly light.

Los Mexicanos

At the heart of your Mexican experience will be the Mexican people. A superdiverse

crew from city hipsters to shy indigenous villagers, they're justly renowned for their love of color and frequent fiestas but are also philosophical folk, to whom time-tables (while worthy of respect) are less important than *simpatía* (empathy). You will rarely find Mexicans less than courteous; they're often positively charming, and they know how to please their guests. They may despair of ever being well governed, but they are fiercely proud of Mexico, their one-of-a-kind homeland with all its variety, tight-knit family networks, beautiful-ugly cities, deep-rooted traditions, unique agave-based liquors and sensationally tasty, chili-laden food. It doesn't take long to understand why.