Off the Beaten Track: Mexico

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.

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.

VOLCÁN PARICUTÍN
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.

LACHATAO
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.

LAGUNA MIRAMAR
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.

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.

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.

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.