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MUST-VISIT DESTINATIONS
IN MEXICO

Let your interests guide you to a whole new side of this diverse and welcoming country

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Photo Courtesy of Simola State Tourism

FOR SCENIC BEAUTY AND NATURAL ATTRACTIONS, TRY COPPER CANYON

Massive walls, deep gorges, rugged 10,000-foot peaks and Mexico's tallest waterfall, Cascada de Basaseachi, make up Mexico's great rift, the Copper Canyon (Barranca del Cobre). The day-long "El Chepe" train ride via 86 tunnels and 37 bridges between Los Mochis on the Pacific Coast and Chihuahua, reveals some of Mexico's most awe-inspiring scenery and is one of the best ways to experience the canyon. It's cool, literally, with altitudes of 2,300 metres. Stops include Divisadero, for a dramatic view and ziplines over the canyon, and Creel, a small town for hiking, biking and learning more about the indigenous Tarahumara tribe, of long-distance running fame.

Some travellers are fascinated by history. Others go for the food. Take one look at a map of the entire country of Mexico—almost twice as vast as Ontario—and you might guess that options for curious travellers are endless. Yet, many go to the same place every year, along the same coastline, or wherever non-stop flights take them. That can be just fine. But if you're craving somewhere you haven't yet been, consider these six spots. Who knows? One may become your next go-to destination.

FOR ARCHITECTURE AND CENOTES, MEET IN MÉRIDA

Fashioned after Paris' Champs-Élysées, Paseo de Montejo in Mérida is lined with colonial homes and colourful historic buildings. Some buildings, such as the Catedral de San Ildefonso, are almost 500 years old and were stone-built from pyramids torn down by the Spanish conquistadors. The city's laid-back vibe and daily cultural events attract long-time expats and those looking for a base to explore Chichen Itza and the pink flamingos of Celestún. Head to Cuzamá for a horse-drawn rail cart ride to learn about the silal trade that made Mérida and its millionaires in the early 1900s. Climb down into three cenotes along the trail to experience the clear, subterranean waters.

Photo Courtesy of Simola State Tourism





Hiking in Riviera Nayarit

FOR BIRDS AND BEACHES, RECHARGE IN RIVIERA NAYARIT

Riviera Nayarit is the area north of Puerto Vallarta running all the way north to Mexcaltitan, the Venice of Mexico, and beyond. Villages like Sayulita and Bucerías have a boho-chic vibe with small inns, shops and restaurants, and get even quieter as you move north. In San Blas, which has a dozen birding routes, you can take a serene panga boat cruise at La Tovar National Park, the most popular birdwatching destination in Mexico. Spot white ibises, herons and some of more than 400 species that nest or migrate through the area. For a break from birding, seek beaches lining the coastline or hike to see expansive views over La de Marcos.



Luxury Villas Riviera Maya

FOR REST AND RELAXATION, RESET IN RIVIERA MAYA

You're stressed and have no time for research. You want a luxury resort with fantastic restaurants and sublime pool or beach spot to claim ocean-side. Nightlife optional. Riviera Maya, a 120-kilometre stretch along the Yucatan Peninsula all the way from Puerto Morelos, just south of Cancun, includes Playa Del Carmen and extends to south of Tulum.

Turquoise seas are flanked by beaches so unbelievably white they hurt your eyes. It is proven by millions to be the perfect place to lie about, alternating between your digital rectangle and your snorkel. Yet, if you need to move (or someone is making you), easily bookable excursions are available from shopping to visits to Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve. Choose your resort and done.



Oaxaca Santa Ana del Valle

FOR MUSEUMS AND FOOD, MINGLE IN MEXICO CITY

Take the time to figure out the frenetic pace of the city and you'll reap rich rewards. It may take a minute to get your bearings, but holding steady is worth it. Major sights are centrally located along a stretch from the Zocalo to Chapultepec Park, home of the Museo Nacional de Antropología, one of the greatest archaeological museums in the Americas and a must for any fans of pre-Hispanic culture. Amid the busy streets you'll find quiet neighbourhoods, intriguing museums and excellent cuisine.

FOR ART AND CULTURE, WHILE AWAY IN OAXACA (WA-HA-KAH)

In Southern Mexico, inland Oaxaca promises Indigenous culture, arts and crafts, starting in beautiful Oaxaca City, a UNESCO World Heritage site. For volume and quality of galleries, Mexico City can't be beat, but the size and density of Oaxaca make workshops, shops and diverse art accessible and really easy to find and explore. The Magic Route of Handicrafts takes one through six communities, from Santa María Atzompa to Ocotlán de Morelos, each known for a different craft, from silk textiles to black clay pieces to forged cutlery. Saints and miracles are celebrated in festivities specific to each place.



Museo Nacional de Antropología