Abercrombie & Kent



MEXICO: CITIES OF THE SUN

Uncover Mexico’s captivating cities, old and new.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

Latin America, Mexico

13 days from AU$15,040 pp

Private

Journey Overview

Uncover Mexico’s captivating cities, old and new. Walk in the footsteps of legends, from the all-conquering Aztecs of Teotihuacán to the revered artists of Mexico City. Discover Mayan myths hidden deep in the jungle of Palenque. Wander through the laneways of dynamic Oaxaca, where vivid art, remarkable cuisine and cultural tradition wait at every turn. Mexico’s cities of the sun will leave you spellbound.

Journey Highlights

- Uncover Mayan secrets in ancient jungle-swathed cities
- Drift down the Grijalva River to the geological wonder, Sumidero Canyon
- Witness the cultural traditions of San Cristóbal de las Casas
- Delve into fascinating Teotihuacán, a UNESCO World Heritage Site



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Mexico City

Welcome to Mexico City. Meet your A&K representative and transfer privately to your boutique accommodation. Settle into your beautiful hotel to rest and refresh before your journey begins. Or step out and explore the Polanco district full of galleries dining options.

Las Alcobas

Day 2: Mexico City

Rise early and dive into the buzzing metropolis this morning to explore the historic area around the Zócalo. Admire the the Cathedral Metropolitana, Templo Mayor and Palacio Nacional, which houses the offices of the President of Mexico, Federal Treasury, National Archives, and more. Then, uncover the story of Mexico's great civilizations at the remarkable National Museum of Anthropology and History, considered one of the world's best museums. This masterpiece holds artefacts that tell the story of Mexico's great civilizations.

Las Alcobas | Meals: B

Day 3: Mexico City

Journey to the former archaeological workshop of Atetelco and the Palace of Tetitla, where you'll enjoy exclusive access of both sites closed to the general public with a private archaeologist. Admire ancient mural paintings, view original blueprints and newspapers from the 1950s all brought to life through their passion and knowledge. Then, delve into the Mesoamerican site, Teotihuacán, which in local language means 'the birth place of the gods' with your expert guide. Unravel the mysteries of the city that once housed 250,000 people, before being abandoned. Walk along the Avenue of the Dead, so called for the sacrificial victims who walked the route to the pyramid to be offered up to the gods. Climb up the Pyramid of the Sun and Pyramid of the Moon to drink in unforgettable views across the city and valley. Return to Mexico City and an enjoy an evening at leisure. Or seek out the famed Arena Mexico to witness a raucous lucha libre – a Mexican wrestling phenomenon. Enjoy the riotous entertainment as your guide explains the storylines played out by masked luchadores inside the ring.

Las Alcobas | Meals: BL

Day 4: Mexico City – Puebla

Spend the day exploring Mexico City's southern neighbourhoods, which feel like small villages in the big city. Wander the tree-lined streets of San Angel and Coyoacán with your personal guide. Walk in the footsteps of some of Mexico's most revered artists and writers, including Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Visit the Frida Kahlo Museum, Casa Azul, where the celebrated magical realist artist was born, grew up and later lived with muralist husband Diego Rivera. If time allows, stroll through the Museum of Dolores Olmedo, a 16th-century building filled with fine arts from the couple, as well as hundreds of pre-Hispanic figurines and sculptures. When hunger calls, enjoy a flavour-packed lunch at bustling Mercado Coyoacán followed by a dessert of *churros* – moreish fried dough covered with sugar or cinnamon. Later, journey south to the UNESCO World Heritage City of Puebla at the foot of the Popocatepetl volcano. Settle into your chic accommodation in the City of Angels, so named after an ancient legend.

Banyan Tree Puebla | Meals: BL

Day 5: Puebla

Set out on foot to explore Mexico's fourth largest city, and one of its oldest, this morning. Stroll with your personal guide amongst the beautifully preserved colonial architecture. Admire the Patio de los Azulejos where colonial buildings are crowned with shimmering glazed talavera tile work. See the former Convent of Santa Rosa, now the Museum of Folk Art. Meander down *La Calle de los Dulces* (the wonderfully named "candy street") and visit the National Palace, Palafoxiana Library, Barrio de Los Sapos, and Cathedral, which boasts two of the tallest bell towers in Mexico.

Later, appreciate a guided visit to the Museo Amparo, International Barroco Museum and Los Fuertes. Museo Amparo houses one of the finest collections of Mexican art in Latin America, and a rooftop terrace for enchanting city views. The Museo Internacional del Barroco showcases a world of Baroque and contemporary Neo-Baroque.

Banyan Tree Puebla | Meals: B

Day 6: Puebla – Oaxaca

Begin your day with your journey to Cholula, home of the Aztec's Great Pyramid. The Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, built in the 16th century by the Spanish and made of domes covered with tiles, was placed right over the top of the Great Pyramid. Step back in time as you explore the town and, on a clear day, bask in sweeping views of the Popocatepetl Volcano. Continue to Oaxaca, another of Mexico's UNESCO World Heritage cities. This cultural treasure will quickly captivate you with its beautiful colonial architecture, shady tree-lined streets and plazas, show-stopping cuisine and creative vibe. Admire the important sites around the Zócalo (main square), including the ancient Cathedral and the vast Convento de Santo Domingo. Retire to your boutique hotel.

Casa Oaxaca | Meals: B

Day 7: Oaxaca

This day is yours to enjoy at leisure. Spend time reclining in your boutique accommodation, soak in the city vibe on your own. Discover why Oaxaca is unofficially dubbed the gastronomic capital of Mexico on a guided tour of the best street food in the city. Or treat your tastebuds to a culinary adventure led by world-renowned chef and meet their favourite merchants in the local market, before joining in the kitchen to prepare your feast. Alternatively, unpeel the layers of Oaxaca's fascinating culture with your personal bilingual guide on a half-day tour of markets, museums and art galleries.

Casa Oaxaca | Meals: B

Day 8: Oaxaca

Journey just a few kilometres west to Monte Albán, a UNESCO World Heritage site, one of the oldest cities of Mesoamerica. Perched on a hill with stunning views over the valley below, Monte Albán is still considered a sacred site by shamans today. At its peak from 100 BC to 200 AD, this vast city dominated much of the Oaxacan highlands and it was thought to be home to between 15,000 and 20,000 Zapotecans. Marvel at the main plaza, home to many buildings and carved stone formations including the Galería de los Danzantes, or the Dancers' Gallery, so named for the elaborately carved stone figures that once covered the building and are thought to represent tortured sacrificed prisoners of war. Continue to the small weaving town of Teotitlán del Valle known for its colourful, hand-woven rugs. Following lunch at a local restaurant, recharge at a local mezcal distillery far from the tourist hotspots. Sip a variety of mezcals as you learn the art behind this traditional liquor, referred to by locals as the elixir of the gods.

Casa Oaxaca | Meals: BL

Day 9: Oaxaca – Tuxtla Gutierrez – San Cristóbal de las Casas.

Take your private transfer to the airport and board your flight to Tuxtla Gutierrez. Take a short drive to Sumidero Canyon. Towering cliffs, dense jungle, mysterious caves and deep waterfalls offer a hint of what awaits you downstream. Drift down the Grijalva River to one of the most impressive geological wonders of Chiapas. Continue overland to San Cristóbal de las Casas, a town of cobblestone streets and red-tile roofs set amid pine-filled forests in the rugged Chiapan highlands.

Hotel Bo | Meals: B

Day 10: San Cristóbal de las Casas

Take a morning stroll through the city's narrow winding streets and beautiful colonial buildings, visiting the churches and craft-filled markets of the city. Then, embark on your private tour to rural Maya villages nearby. Witness the extraordinary blend of Catholicism and local Tzotzil practices in the famous church of San Juan Chamula. Then, onwards to San Lorenzo Zinacantán where women use centuries-old techniques to transform a whirlwind of colours into rich textiles.

Hotel Bo | Meals: BL

Day 11: San Cristóbal de las Casas – Tonina – Palenque

Your private driver will meet you this morning, ready to travel north towards Palenque. Stop en route to explore the Tonina archaeological site, an ancient Maya city that archaeologists now believe has the largest pyramid in Mesoamerica. Join your expert guide on a discovery of the site, once known to be an aggressive city, engaging in warfare with neighbouring towns. Visit the large ball-court, see over 100 carved monuments dating from the 6th century, and learn about the latest findings. Continue to your charming hotel in Palenque.

Boutique Hotel Quinta Chanabnal | Meals: B

Day 12: Palenque

Rise early for your day exploration of UNESCO World Heritage listed Palenque. Jungle clad and mystical, this Maya site is one of the most important destinations in Chiapas. The city is believed to have been abandoned in 799CE and the jungle grew thick and strong over it, making the rediscovery of Palenque a great archaeological feat. Spend time wandering around the extraordinarily well-preserved ruins, which date from 226 BC to 799 AD, with your guide illuminating on the religion, cosmology and everyday life of the Maya of Palenque. Take the chance to climb many of the structures to take in the interior relief work and inscriptions. Look out from the top of many temples across the lush green jungle, as the sound of howler monkeys' roars from high in the trees. Later, take a short drive to the Misol Há waterfall. Hidden deep in the jungle, this waterfall powers down a 35-metre drop, made famous by Arnold Schwarzenegger in the 1987 film, *Predator*. Return to your accommodation where the remainder of the day is at leisure.

Boutique Hotel Quinta Chanabnal | Meals: B

Day 13: Depart Palenque

Soak up the very last of your visit in Palenque before transferring to Villahermosa Airport for your onward journey.

Meals: B

Extend Your Journey — Chichén Itzá

Why not extend your tailor-made Mexico journey with a visit to the famed Chichén Itzá, the best restored and most famous complex of Mayan ruins. The stepped pyramids, temples, columned arcades, and other stone structures of Chichén Itzá were sacred to the Maya and a sophisticated urban center of their empire from A.D. 750 to 1200.

Map


GULF OF MEXICO
MEXICO
Mexico City
Puebla
Oaxaca
Tuxtla Gutierrez
Palenque
San Cristóbal de las Casas
ARRIVE/DEPART
AIR
ROAD
PACIFIC OCEAN

Accommodation

Casa Oaxaca



An oasis of calm in the heart of Oaxaca, Casa Oaxaca is in a fully restored 18th century colonial house. Rooms, set around the gardens, patios and pool area, have been designed to retain the original character of the property - most feature huge beams, stucco walls, native Oaxacan handicrafts and bathrooms with beautiful Mexican tiles. The hotel also has one of the city's finest restaurants - a temple to the inventive cuisine of Oaxaca.

Hotel Bo, San Cristobal



A new concept in the city, this is the hotel for those looking for something modern and architecturally unique.
The neutral colour scheme is offset by the contemporary Mexican bed covers that add a bright wash of colour. Each bathroom is set apart from the bedroom by a sliding wood door and offers a modern design with Etro amenities. The suites all have private gardens. We like the Garden Suite boasting a bath overlooking the garden and the Bo suite, set across two floors, complete with its own private terrace and sundeck for a tranquil breakfast or an afternoon drink.

The Hotel's garden is as carefully designed as the rooms, with a large tree in the centre that is surrounded by colourful blooms. There are little sundecks and water features that offer a quiet respite from the city. There is also a small gym to enjoy during your stay or a chic-looking loft, which is perfect for working or enjoying a good book.

Why we like it

- A boutique hotel in the heart of San Cristobal
- Scandinavian style meets Mexican colour
- Architecturally unique, this is a hotel far away from an international brand
- Dine in LUM, food is created with an impressive fusion of flavours with only the freshest of local ingredients
- After exploring the city, Hotel Bo is a welcome retreat.

Las Alcobas, Mexico City



Las Alcobas is an aesthetic marvel designed by the renowned interior design studio, Yabu Pushelberg. Formerly a private residence, it has been transformed into a wonderfully upscale boutique hotel, where every detail has been considered - from the premier in-room spa amenities to the personalised guest services.

The sheer beauty of this hotel is apparent from the moment you enter the super-stylish marble and glass lobby with its cascading water fountain. The 35 rooms continue the theme, with chic furnishings standing alongside local hand-knotted rugs, contemporary Mexican artwork and amenities inspired by ancient Maya traditions. In addition, every room is replete with state-of-the-art technology, whilst lavish marble bathrooms with whirlpool tubs and personal 'Bath Butlers' complete the sense of luxurious escape.

Why we like it

- Penthouse suites with wraparound terraces are available
- Las Alcobas is México City's newest and most stylish small luxury hotel, located in the fashionable neighbourhood of Polanco
- Dining options include the Barroco and Dulce Patria restaurants, where traditional Mexican favourites are transformed into modern taste sensations
- The Aurora Spa uses indigenous plants and minerals to create therapeutic and relaxing treatments with a local touch

Boutique Hotel Quinta Chanabnal



The Boutique Hotel Quinta Chanabnal is only three kilometres from the archaeological site of Palenque. This luxury resort is surrounded by lush tropical flora so clients can enjoy the privacy and unique service offered by the hotel.

The seven luxury suites recreate the classic period of the Mayan, with two Junior Suites, four Deluxe Suites and one Presidential Suite on offer. The hotel boasts a selection of delicious dining options, including a restaurant serving delicious Maya cuisine, along with a variety of international, Italian and regional dishes.

Guests looking to unwind can relax in the on-site spa, featuring the Temazcal, the traditional Mayan steam bath, and a range of massages and treatments. Take a dip in the multi-tiered swimming pool, stretch out by the lagoon or picnic by the creek, the choice is yours.

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