

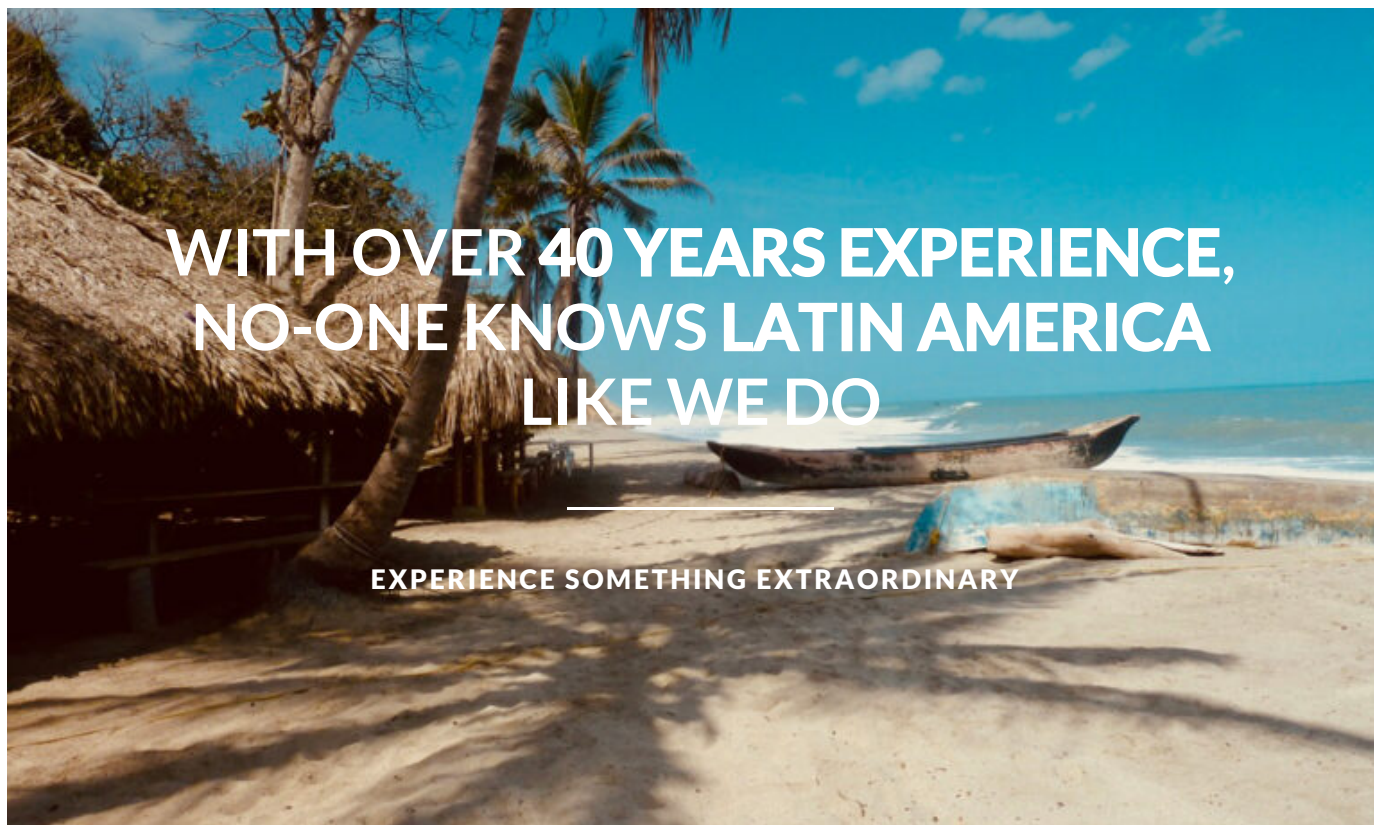


PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

LUXURY MEXICO: YUCATAN IN STYLE

11 days from **£5,850pp**

**MEXICO / MEXICO CITY / MÉRIDA, CHICHÉN ITZÁ AND THE YUCATAN / CARIBBEAN
COAST: RIVIERA MAYA AND HOLBOX**



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

A passion for the region runs through all we do

All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America

Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Fully bonded and licensed

ATOL-protected

On your side when it matters

Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks

We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions

Let us show you the Latin America we know and love



OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This luxurious holiday visits Mexico's historic highlights and Caribbean beaches from sumptuous, unique and original accommodation.

- DAY 1** Arrive in Mexico City. Transfer to central hotel.
- DAY 2** Guided tour of Mexico City and the Teotihuacan pyramids.
- DAY 3** Visit Coyoacan neighbourhood and museum of Frida Kahlo
- DAY 4** Fly to Mérida, transfer to hotel.
- DAY 5** Visit Hacienda Yaxcopoil and the Mayan temples and ballcourt at Uxmal
- DAY 6** A free day to explore Merida at your leisure
- DAY 7** Travel to Chichén Itzá archaeological site, guided tour of the ruins. Overnight nearby.
- DAYS 8-10** Relax at a luxury resort on Mayan Riviera, Caribbean coast.
- DAY 11** Transfer to Cancún airport for international flight home.

ITINERARY

This luxurious private holiday showcases Mexico's unmissable capital city and the storied archaeological sites of the Yucatán peninsula in the south-east of this culturally magnetic country. We feature a carefully selected range of prestigious Mexican properties, combining an urban boutique hotel in Mexico City's trendy Polanco neighbourhood with boutique hotels and haciendas which perfectly capture the Yucatan's slow-paced tropical charm.

Mexico is one of Latin America's most vibrant and entertaining destinations, with a huge diversity of historical, cultural and natural attractions. On private guided excursions, you'll discover the superb museums and teeming plazas of the megalopolis that is Mexico City, where the Aztec and Spanish heritages sit side by side. Moving south, explore the evocative ancient monuments, testament to bygone Maya empires, which lay hidden and silent for centuries amid the deep valleys and jungles of the south. Round off your holiday by pampering yourself at one of one of the country's most prestigious, discreet and top-quality hotels on the white sand beaches of the Mayan Riviera.

DAY 1

Arrive in Mexico City. Transfer to central hotel.

You'll be met at the airport by one of our local representatives and accompanied to your luxury hotel. Mexico City, known by the local people simply as 'DF' (Distrito Federal), was built on the site of Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec Empire, and it lies at 2,250m above sea level. Vast, chaotic and vibrant, this sprawling megalopolis of more than 20 million people has a multitude of attractions.

DAY 2

Guided tour of Mexico City and the Teotihuacan pyramids.

The arrival of the Spanish conquistadores was seismic event in the story of the Aztec people. Their magnificent causeway city was razed, and the invading Spaniards rebuilt it in their own tradition – the development fuelled by silver mining. This is all reflected in the cultural vestiges apparent all over the modern-day city which you'll see during your guided tour. Visit thezócalo, or main square, with its monumental Metropolitan Cathedral and the remains of the original Aztec city upon which the modern-day capital was superimposed. Stroll down elegant boulevards, or browse at a handicraft market.

Passing through the northern suburbs of the capital, you head into the countryside towards the megalithic archaeological site of Teotihuacán. Teotihuacan dates from the time of Christ and was once one of the largest cities in the world. It is hugely influential in the historic narrative of modern Mexico and, although it had already been abandoned by the time of the Aztecs, even this great empire held it in awe. Soak up the history as you stroll along the imposing Avenue of the Dead, leading to the vast Pyramid of the Sun, and take the opportunity to climb its vertiginous, ancient steps for a panorama of the ruins and the surrounding countryside.

If you have time after or before the tour we suggest you visit the world-class Museum of Anthropology, exhibiting remarkable, well displayed expositions of Aztec artefacts alongside items from other ancient civilisations. It's a fantastic introduction to the superb and sometimes grisly artistic achievements of Mexico's early inhabitants.

DAY 3

Visit Coyoacan neighbourhood and museum of Frida Kahlo

Visit the lively and bustling colonial neighbourhood of Coyoacán, located in the south of Mexico City. There's a palpable feeling of old Mexico here: Coyoacán was the first capital of New Spain and as a result, still proudly maintains its own identity, with narrow streets recalling a bygone era, plazas, cafes and a vibrant Bohemian atmosphere. The occasional strolling musician only adds to the atmosphere. You will explore Coyoacán's main square, an array of churches and beautiful old buildings, then you'll visit the home of surrealist artist Frida Kahlo. The house has been converted into a museum and gives an authentic representation of the lives and characters of both Frida Kahlo and her muralist husband, Diego Rivera – it highlights the political strains under which both passionate artists lived and constantly fought. Afterwards, visit the Leon Trotsky Museum, the former house where the Russian revolutionist lived during his exile in Mexico, having had a close friendship with Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.

DAY 4

Fly to Mérida, transfer to hotel.

Mérida is the capital of the state of Yucatán. The city was founded by the Maya. In 1542 it was conquered by the Spanish conquistadores who dismantled the pyramids and used the stones as foundations for the cathedral. Mérida then became an immensely wealthy city, described as the Paris of the New World. Its money came mainly from the production of sisal, cactus fibres that are used to make rope, and it was culturally and geographically isolated from the rest of the country until transport infrastructure reached it in the 1950s.

DAY 5

Visit Hacienda Yaxcopoil and the Mayan temples and ballcourt at Uxmal

Today's full-day excursion begins with a drive to Yaxcopoil, a 17th century hacienda just outside Mérida that was typical of the many large, aristocratic estates which peppered the peninsula during the sisal boom. Yaxcopoil has been only partly restored, leaving some evocative vestiges of the old hacienda, and now also accommodates a museum narrating the history of sisal production in the region.

Continue to the ruins of Mayan Uxmal, (30mins) an important Unesco World Heritage Site considered the finest and most extensively excavated example of Puuc architecture, embracing such details as ornate stone mosaics and soaring vaulted arches. Whilst Chichén Itzá often steals the limelight for its sheer scale, Uxmal for many is a favourite for its ornate beauty and setting. The ruins are surrounded by forest and birds and bats flit around the broken walls, adding to the ambiance of mystery. After this you may be ready for a dip in the cool turquoise waters of a limestone cenote – hundreds of them punctuate the Yucatán landscape. To the Mayans, these represented the entrance to the underworld, and many valuable artefacts and even human skeletons have been found in them.

DAY 6

A free day to explore Merida at your leisure

Unique due to its geographical isolation, strong Mayan presence and rich cultural heritage, Mérida is filled with striking white-stone Spanish colonial architecture and is known as 'the white city'. Mérida retains a lovely historic centre, with a mix of opulent and crumbling buildings but it is a modern, bustling, thriving city, with lots of local character, some excellent places to eat and good shops and markets. The inhabitants, descendants of the Maya and the colonists, love a good fiesta, and there are plenty throughout the year, with live music and market stalls.

Your hotel is in the middle of the city's elegant central axis, close to the Paseo Montejo. Merida's stately boulevard, modelled on Paris's Champs Elysées, is lined with mansions built by the wealthy plantation owners during the boom era of the city's sisal trade at the turn of the 20th century. You can either plan to visit under your own steam or let us pre-book a guided walking tour of this joyous city, taking in its cathedral on the plaza grande (the oldest in Latin America) as well as its leafy, elegant plazas filled with pavement cafés and musicians. There's a festive atmosphere, especially in the evenings after the heat of the day has passed.

DAY 7

Travel to Chichén Itzá archaeological site, guided tour of the ruins. Overnight nearby.

From Mérida drive to Chichén Itzá (3 hrs), the grandest of all the Mayan sites, dominated by the huge, symmetrical, stepped El Castillo pyramid. The origins of the site are mysterious, and appear to have Toltec as well as Mayan influences. It has the largest and best-preserved ball court in the Americas: the venue for an ancient ritual game that was played throughout the continent, but which is still not fully understood.

Archaeologists have not been able to determine whether the losers or winners were decapitated, but judging from the gory carvings along the base of the court's walls, someone certainly came to an unpleasant end. There is also a huge cenote sacred well. Accommodation is a short walk away, and in the evening there is the option to return to the site for the Sound and Light Show.

DAYS 8-10

Relax at a luxury resort on Mayan Riviera, Caribbean coast.

Time to head for the Riviera Maya for 3 nights of utter relaxation. It's a 3-hour drive to the white sands at Playa Maroma.

Relax on the sands or luxuriate in your jungle pool villa, enjoying your spacious terrace or private plunge pool. Take a kayak or paddleboard out on the Caribbean sea or sign up for a spa treatment before settling down for sundowners.

DAY 11

Transfer to Cancún airport for international flight home.

Transfer to Cancun airport.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Services of our team of experts in our London office
Services of Journey Latin America local representatives and guides
All land and air transport within Latin America
Accommodation as specified
Meals as specified
Excursions as specified, including entrance fees

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

Tour of Mexico City and Teotihuacan Pyramids
City tour of Merida and visit to a historic hacienda
Guided tour of Chichen Itza

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Tips and gratuities
Meals other than specified
International flights to Latin America
Airport taxes, when not included in the ticket
Optional excursions

ESSENTIALS

TRANSPORT

One jet flight, 2 road journeys.

ACCOMMODATION

This trip combines a first class boutique hotel in Mexico City, a first class boutique hotel in Mérida and a first-class beach resort on the Caribbean coast. Expect top-notch service and excellent facilities each of them. Whilst not luxurious, our hotel at Chichén Itzá is the best available and brims with rustic charm and jungle ambiance.

MEALS

Breakfast daily

GUIDES

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

11 days, 10 nights: Mexico City 3; Mérida 3; Chichén Itzá 1; Mayan Riviera 3.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Mexico is the Mexican peso.

HOW TO TAKE IT

Cash machines are available in all major cities and towns, and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds. We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency. Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

DAILY SPEND

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but an average daily budget of around US\$75-100 per person day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, taking into account the grade of the hotels you're staying at. You should budget further for drinks, tips and personal purchases.

TIPPING

Tips are welcomed and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

VISAS

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

TRIP SUITABILITY

Generally this exciting yet well paced holiday is suitable for most visitors, including families with older children. Should you have a disability, please contact us.

CLIMATE

In Mexico City the climate is temperate all year round and, because of the altitude it never gets too hot (low to high 20s°C). However, temperatures can drop to freezing in the winter months. Most rain falls from June to October.

In the Yucatán and on the Caribbean coast, it's hot and fairly humid all year round, with a risk of tropical storms and hurricanes August to November. On the coast, the rainiest months are June, October and November.

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

For day-to-day wear in winter you should be prepared to encounter all seasons – for Mexico City a light fleece jacket and a breathable/waterproof outer shell makes a good combination. In summer a light jacket should suffice. Trousers, skirt or shorts made from light, quick-drying synthetic materials work well. If you plan to eat in smart restaurants, although clothing is not formal (no need for jacket and tie), something quite smart would be appropriate.

Strong, comfortable footwear is essential and you should bring insect repellent, hat, sun block and sun glasses. You should take swimwear for the beach, and for hotel pools.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts.

VACCINATIONS

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

TRIP SUITABILITY

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

GIVE US A CALL

We'd love to chat

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

tours@journeylatinamerica.com