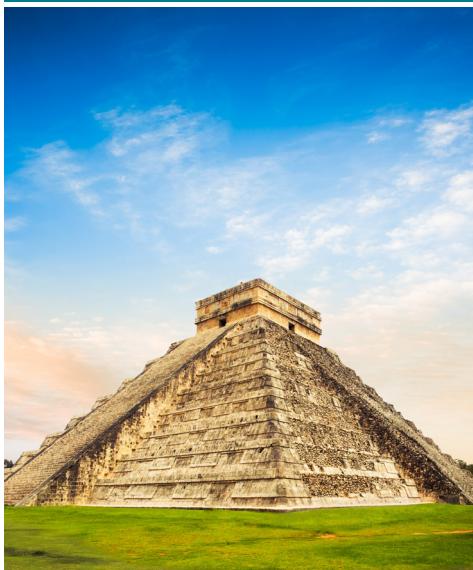


# GRAND TOUR OF MEXICO



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Mayan and Aztec ruins sit within view of snow-capped volcanoes, tropical rainforests and dramatic mountain canyons. Approach the coast and pretty colonial towns give way to desert coastlines and breath-taking beaches.

## ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Mexico. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

#### DAY 1: UK to Cancun D

Depart London on your scheduled flight to Cancun. Upon arrival, meet your guides, transfer to your hotel and enjoy tonight's welcome dinner.

#### DAY 2: Cancun to Mexico City B

Spend a morning at leisure in Cancun before a late morning flight to Mexico City. Upon arrival, admire the world's largest collection of Mexican art, and be led along a journey through the country's ancient history at the Museum of National Anthropology, before continuing to the idyllic lakes and sculpture garden of Chapultepec Park - a green oasis amidst the bustling capital. Above this impressive park looms Chapultepec Castle.

#### DAY 3: Mexico City B

Flanked by the twin volcanoes Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl, embark on a city tour of Mexico City with a visit to the Presidential Palace, Central Plaza and Cathedral, before making a visit to the Teotihuacan Pyramids, crowned by the 3rd largest Pyramid in the world – the Pyramid of the Sun. Later discover the Roman Catholic pilgrimage site where both an old and new national shrine majestically stand side by side; catch a glimpse of the symbolic cloak enshrined within the modern Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, before taking a leisurely stroll through the World Peace Rose Gardens at the rear of the Basilicas.

#### DAY 4: Mexico City to Puebla B

This morning, embark on a guided tour of the colonial city of Puebla, passing by some of the seventy churches located in its historic centre, including the Cathedral and the Plaza de la Constitución.

#### DAY 5: Puebla to Oaxaca B

Travel to Oaxaca, which, situated 1500 metres above sea-level and surrounded by green hills and mountains, is one of Mexico's most beautiful colonial towns. On the way, discover the Jardín Botánico in Zapotitlán Salinas, an unspoiled landscape dotted with tall cacti, palms and elephant foot trees.

#### DAY 6: Oaxaca B

Step back in time with a visit to the world of the Zapotec who ruled Oaxaca from Monte Albán in around 500AD. Surrounded by a circle of temples and tombs on the slopes of a flattened hilltop, explore its magnificent ruins before visiting the beautiful 16th century Museo Cultural de Oaxaca, located in a former Dominican monastery. Continue through the old cobble streets of Oaxaca, visiting the grand Church of Sant Domingo de Guzman.

#### DAY 7: Oaxaca to San Cristobal de las Casas B

Set in a luscious highland valley and located 2,133 metres above sea level,

journey into the heart of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Following the narrow cobblestone streets surrounding the Zocalo, arrive at the city's emblematic mustard coloured cathedral before heading to the Iglesia de Convento Santo Domingo, whose ornated façade is considered one of the best examples of colonial baroque architecture.

#### DAY 8: San Cristobal de las Casas B

Head to the Mayan Medicine Museum for a unique glimpse into Mayan spiritual healing rituals and herbal medicines which are still exchanged in indigenous villages today. Later, cruise through the magnificent Sumidero Canyon, where waterfalls plunge from the imposing canyon walls. End the day uncovering worship practices in Chamula's local church. Following a visit to the colonial Church of San Lorenzo in neighbouring Zinacantan, prepare to be welcomed into the weaving mill of the three sisters to observe the process of this skilful art.

#### DAY 9: San Cristobal de las Casas to Palenque B

After breakfast, travel towards the mystical town of Palenque. Concealed amidst a subtropical jungle, experience a cascade of turquoise water at the Roberto Barrios waterfalls and immerse yourself in the serenity of the natural spas.

#### DAY 10: Palenque B

Enveloped in an early morning mist, listen to an echoing chorus of tropical birds and uncover a treasure trove of architectural wonders at the mystical ruins of Palenque. Astonishingly dating from 226BC to 799AD, begin at the largest pyramid of the collection, admiring the hieroglyphic engravings on the Temple of Inscriptions' richly adorned façade, before marvelling at a monumental staircase at the Grand Palace and exploring the 7th century Temple of the Sun. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

#### DAY 11: Palenque to Campeche B

Travel to Isla Aguada and embark on a cruise from the fishing port of Terminos Lagoon, looking out for dolphins en route to the Isla de Pájaros. After gliding along the Estero Sabancuy, admire the towering twin steeples of the baroque Cathedral of La Concepción during a guided tour of Campeche's historic centre.

#### DAY 12: Campeche to Merida B

Once considered the best defence in Latin America, witness the impressive hillside fortress of San Miguel, where an archaeological museum now exhibits a wealth of glistening jewellery and symbolic Jade masks of Calakmul. Later, wander amongst the historic ruins of Kabah. Embellished with over 300 masks of Chaac, this fierce devotion to the God of Rain is overwhelmingly evident at the Palace of the Masks. Arriving at Uxmal, gaze-in-awe at the unravelled terraces, columns and archways at the best-preserved archaeological collection in Puuc, before transferring to Mérida later this evening.

#### DAY 13: Merida B

In a local home in the heart of Mérida, learn about the production and enjoy a fiery tasting of the famous Salsa Picante Dzemul, which uses some of the spiciest chilies in the world. Later, enjoy a captivating tour of Yucatan's cultural

capital commencing at one of Latin America's oldest Cathedrals, before catching a glimpse of the Palacio Municipal's distinctive pink exterior and admiring the sculptured façade of the Casa de Montejo.

#### DAY 14: Merida to Valladolid B/D

This morning, admire the brightly painted monastic church in the 'Yellow City of Izamal' before witnessing a collection of swaying tree roots which are suspended 18 metres above the incredible emerald waters of Cenote Yokdzonot. Continue onwards to experience a spectacle of architectural glory at Chichen Itza, declared one of the new seven wonders of the world. Spanning a staggering 6.5 kilometres, witness the impressive Mayan ruins including the 'snail shell' El

Caracol observatory and most famously El Castillo. Dedicated to the feathered serpent God, this colossal 79-ft high pyramid welcomes its namesake during the spring and autumn equinoxes, where shadows create the illusion of a snake sliding down its megalithic steps. Continue to Valladolid.

#### DAY 15: Valladolid to Cancun to the UK B

Enjoy a walking tour of the picturesque colonial town of Valladolid, passing by Can Gervasio Cathedral and the Convent of San Bernardino before heading to the vibrant local market at Mercado Municipal for an authentic taste of daily life. Transfer to Cancun Airport for your flight home.

## ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

### Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Mexico. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed. Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

**Please note the hotels listed on our website and brochure are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.**

### Meals

Breakfast is served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



## ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Cancun you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Native Trails**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays **Native Trails** representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries, however if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

### Native Trails

Contact number: 0049 6041 969 00 112  
E-mail: info@nativetrails.de

### Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **Native Trails in Mexico**  
24 hour telephone: 0052 1 55 29224882

## WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

### Visas

A visa is not required for your trip to Mexico as long as you come from the UK or Europe. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity.

### Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24-hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking

### Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk), [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk), your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

### Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival in Cancun by our transfer personal and in Mexico City by your national guide who will remain

with you for the duration of your trip until day 15.

### Physical Accessibility

All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. Our tour paces are marked with dots out of 3, with the differences being as follows:

- 1 Dot the tour is Easy-Going
- 2 Dots the tour is Intermediate
- 3 Dots the tour is Advanced

Grand Tour of Mexico is rates as 3 Dots meaning that the tour pace is Advanced. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spend at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home.

Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

### Tipping

It is at your discretion to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately USD2 per person per day. This is a total of USD60 per person to budget for tips on your trip. As tipping is at your discretion, please tip as and when you feel appropriate too. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

### Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 20, and the maximum will be 37. If in the unlikely event there are less than 20 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate

your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

#### Currency Exchange

The currency in Mexico is MXN, Mexican Pesos. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in bigger cities in order to withdraw money in Mexican Pesos.

#### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks; Approximately £350 - £400 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

#### Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at

the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

#### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

#### Passport Information

Your Passport Information is required for this tour. This information is required at least 90 days prior to your departure. Failure to provide this information on time may result in your booking being cancelled with loss of deposit. – Your Passport must be valid for at least 6 months after entry in the Country.

## WHAT TO PACK

- Sunglasses, sunscreen and hat
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- A plug adaptor - the voltage in Mexico is 127V
- Antibacterial hand gel
- Binoculars

- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, personal medication
- Small day pack for excursions
- Waterproof, lightweight jacket
- Lightweight clothing
- Sweater and jacket for the cooler months

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your initial flight is to [Cancun Airport](#) with [British Airways](#), departing from [London Gatwick South Terminal](#).

**IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.**

#### Baggage Allowance

Each passenger is entitled to 23KG of hold luggage plus 1 item of hand luggage not exceeding (Max 23kg - 56cm/45cm/25cm) in size and 1 personal item such as a handbag, briefcase or laptop case. Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check – in. Check-In should be at least 3 hours before departure.

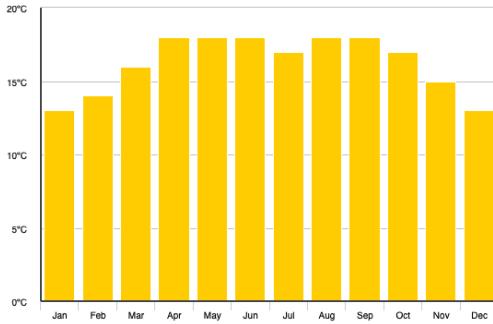
#### Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.

Average temperature: **Mexico City**



# CANCUN BEACH STAY

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Mayan and Aztec ruins sit within view of snow-capped volcanoes, tropical rainforests and dramatic mountain canyons. Approach the coast and pretty colonial towns give way to desert coastlines and breath-taking beaches.

## ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Cancun.

### Hotel Information:

Your 3 night stay in Cancun will take place at one of the following hotels:

#### 4★ Beachscape Kin Ha Villas & Suites on Bed and Breakfast

Address: Blvd. Kukulcan Km. 8.5, Punta Cancun, Zona Hotelera, 77500 Cancun, Q.R., Mexico  
Contact number: 0052 998 891 5400

OR

#### 4★ Sunscape Akumal Beach Resort & Spa on All-Inclusive

Address: Carr. Chetumal-Puerto Juárez Km. 252, 77780 Akumal, Q.R. Mexico  
Contact number: 0052 984 875 7300

OR

#### 5★ Dreams Tulum Resort & Spa on All-Inclusive

Address: Carretera Chetumal-Puerto Juarez Km. 236.7, No. 1, 77780 Tulum, Q.R., Mexico  
Contact number: 0052 984 8713333

OR

#### 5★ Dreams Playa Mujeres on All-Inclusive

Address: Prolongacion Bonampak, s/n, Punta Can, 77400 Playa Mujeres, Q.R., Mexico  
Contact number: 0052 998 283 3600

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking.  
Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any lunches and dinners for your stay at Beachscape Kin Ha Villas and Suites, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.

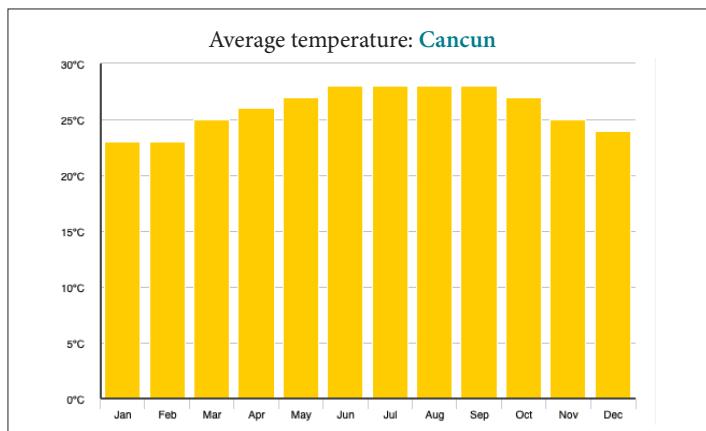
### Tour Guides

Your stay in Cancun is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are included.

### Please note

This extension takes place after your main tour.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE



## FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0843 224 0723**