



MEXICO'S GULF OF CAMPECHE

 Educational
Tours

 Discover the Global Classroom

9 or 11 DAYS

Mexico's Gulf of Campeche

Mexico



Number of overnight stays in parentheses. This tour may also be reversed.



Learn about Mexican history firsthand when you visit the Palacio Nacional in Mexico City.

Program Fee includes:

- Round-trip airfare
- 8 overnight stays in hotels with private bathrooms (10 with extension)
- Breakfast and dinner daily
- Full-time bilingual EF Tour Director
- 7 sightseeing tours led by licensed local guides: Mexico City • Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Teotihuacán Pyramids • Puebla • Palenque Mérida • Uxmal • Chichén Itzá
- 1 EF walking tour: Mexico City
- 8 visits to special attractions: Templo Mayor • Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe Teotihuacán Pyramids • Cholula Pyramid • Palenque Uxmal • Chichén Itzá • Cenote X-Keken

OPTIONAL:

Xel-Ha and Tulum

Day 1 Mexico City

Flight to Mexico • Relax as you jet south to Mexico's capital, the world's fastest-growing city!

Arrival in Mexico City • After clearing customs, you are greeted by your bilingual EF Tour Director, who will remain with you throughout your stay. A private motorcoach then takes you to your comfortable hotel for check-in.

EF walking tour • On our EF walking tour of Mexico City, stroll down Paseo de la Reforma, pass a monument to Christobal Colón (Christopher Columbus), and see where Mexico's first saint was born.

Day 2 Mexico City

Guided sightseeing of Mexico City • Your guided tour takes you to the Zócalo, Mexico City's main square. This was the heart of the Aztec empire before Cortés and his *conquistadore* leveled the area. Picking up the leftover pieces (including stones from the temples of Tenochtitlán and Montezuma's residence), the Spanish built the cathedral and royal palace (dating back to 1523). Enter the patio of the Palacio Nacional, where viceroys were once entertained by bullfights. Here you can admire Diego Rivera's renowned murals—painted over the course of 22 years and covering 850 square feet, the murals chart Mexico's history throughout the ages. Upon exiting, look for the Bell of Dolores, once rung to inspire the Mexican people to fight for their independence. Then cross the square to North America's largest cathedral—step inside for a look at

the Altar of the Kings. Back outside, see the Templo Mayor, a remarkable example of Aztec ruins.

Visit to the Templo Mayor Archaeological Site and Museum • Explore this fascinating museum, which was founded in 1978 when a man accidentally dug up the Aztec stone of the moon goddess, Coyolxauhqui, while working on the adjacent Catedral Metropolitana. His discovery was followed by an even more impressive one: the interior remains of the Templo Mayor (the Great Temple), the most important structure for the Aztecs. In addition to the pyramid ruins, you'll see masks, jewelry, tools and other uncovered artifacts.

Guided visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe • The first stop on this afternoon's excursion is the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose construction was spurred by a miracle. According to legend, a peasant named Juan Diego had a vision of the Virgin on the same site where the shrine now stands in the Virgin's honor.

Guided visit to the Teotihuacán Pyramids • Continue on to the awe-inspiring pyramids at Teotihuacán, mysteriously abandoned over a millennium ago. Built more than 2,000 years ago by a people we know very little about, the complex was later appropriated by the Aztecs, who gave the area its name (meaning "Place of the Gods"). Traverse the Avenue of the Dead and climb the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon, architectural feats complemented by the surrounding mountains. You will also visit an obsidian shop and watch a demonstration of how the volcanic glass, formed when lava freezes and



Learn before you go
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then cools before crystals have a chance to grow, is used to make decorative art and jewelry.

Day 3 Mexico City • Puebla

Transfer to Puebla • Today, journey to Puebla, where Popocatepetl and Ixtaccíhuatl, the second and third largest mountains in the country, are situated.

Photo stop at the Santa Maria Tonanzintla Church • You will definitely want a picture of this incredible church! The baroque Indian-style Tonanzintla Church is one of the most vividly colored churches in Mexico, and a wonderful example of colonial art. Nearly every surface of the church is covered with painted stucco flowers and angels.

Visit to Cholula Pyramid • Towering 181 feet high, this pyramid is much larger by volume than the great pyramids in Egypt. Learn how the structure is actually five different pyramids, one built on top of another. Climb to the top, and take in panoramic views of the town from the Nuestra Señora de las Remedias Church high on its perch.

Guided sightseeing of Puebla • This colonial city was the first Mexican town to be founded by the Spanish Crown. It features a delightful mix of modern and pre-18th-century architecture. See a few of the more than 100 churches built in Gothic, Classical and Baroque styles, including the Monastery of Santa Clara.

Day 4 Puebla • Palenque

Transfer to Palenque • Continue to Palenque, an important ancient Mayan archaeological site near the Usumacinta River.

Day 5 Palenque • Campeche

Guided sightseeing of Palenque • View the magnificent Mayan ruins of Palenque during your guided tour. Civilizations in centuries past considered this location—surrounded by jungles, rainforests and waterfalls—to have mystical energy. Learn about the religious observances that once took place here; the Maya first settled in Palenque in the 3rd century!

Transfer to Campeche • Continue to Campeche, where you'll spend the night. Campeche was a prosperous seaport in the 17th century, and therefore a target of pirates. You can still see the imposing stone ramparts that Spanish colonists built around the city in the 18th century to protect themselves from seaborne attacks.

Day 6 Campeche • Mérida

Guided visit to Uxmal • Journey to the Mayan city of Uxmal (pronounced "ooshmah"). To this day scientists are still debating why the Maya periodically abandoned their great cities. Although Uxmal means "thrice built," it was actually constructed at least five times, with many parts dating from the 6th century. Your tour shows you the most

interesting features of this mysterious site. See the Magician's Pyramid, allegedly built overnight by a dwarf-magician, and the Governor's Palace, a stunning testament to Mayan architectural sophistication. You'll also see the fascinating Nunnery Quadrangle and learn more about the handprints often attributed to Itzamná, god of the sky and sun.

Arrival in Mérida • Transfer to Mérida, capital of the Yucatán state.

Guided sightseeing of Mérida • An expert local guide introduces you to the sights of Mérida, once the ancient Mayan capital of T'ho. Recall the colonial era as you pass by the local architecture. Visit the Government Palace and the adjacent lemon-colored cathedral (partially built from the stones of Mayan temples destroyed by the conquistadors).

Day 7 Mérida • Cancún

Guided sightseeing of Chichén Itzá • Journey through the Yucatán to the sacred Mayan city of Chichén Itzá, mysteriously abandoned in the 7th century. One of antiquity's most spectacular ceremonial centers was built here, dedicated to Chac, god of rain. Gaze up at the 365 steps of the mighty pyramid of El Castillo, which once served as a giant calendar more accurate than our own. On your guided tour, also learn about a perilous ballcourt game the Maya played here—players could not touch the ball with their hands as all round objects were considered holy. (Some scientists believe this explains why the wheel was never developed in the area.)

Visit to Cenote X-Keken • You'll also stop at Cenote X-Keken, a natural well found deep inside a subterranean cave (rivers in the Yucatán flow underground).

Transfer to Cancún • Journey to the tropical resort of Cancún, home to sandy white beaches neighboring the crystal blue waters of the Caribbean. Aided by computer technology, the Mexican government actually selected Cancún as the perfect spot for a resort in 1967. Building began in Cancún in 1970—and the rest is history.

Day 8 Cancún

Optional full-day excursion to Xel-Há and Tulum • Opt to join us for a daylong excursion to Xel-Há and Tulum. In Xel-Há, take advantage of its clear waters, tropical fish and underwater Mayan shrines. Then continue on to Tulum, a walled Mayan city that managed to fend off attacks by the Spaniards until the 16th century. Within the city walls, you'll find a host of Mayan ruins looming above the

Mexican artisans are heirs to a rich tradition passed down from their Indian and Spanish ancestors.



Caribbean Sea, including the Temple of the Frescoes and El Castillo (the castle).

Free day in Cancún • Alternatively, you can relax on the sandy beaches of this warm aquatic resort, named after a Mayan word for “pot of gold.”

Day 9 Home

Return home • Your tour director assists with the transfer to the airport, where you’ll check in for your return flight home.

EXTENSION

Day 9 Cancún

Free time in Cancún • Enjoy free time today; perhaps you would like to stroll through town, or relax on the gorgeous beaches.

Day 10 Cancún

Free time in Cancún • Experience true tranquility on the beach, or shop for souvenirs in the lively town.

Day 11 Home

Return home • Your tour director assists with the transfer to the airport, where you’ll check in for your return flight home.

For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions.

