

SMALL-GROUP MEXICO CITY TOUR

FAQS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q1: Will I be met at the airport?

A: For those arriving by 5:30 PM: After landing, you will go through immigration and customs. Once you exit the arrival area, a tour leader will be there to greet you and arrange your transfer to the hotel. Your tour leader will be easy to recognize, holding a Casa Gonzalez sign and wearing a red polo shirt.

For those on flights arriving after 5:30 PM: you can book a taxi at one of the kiosks inside the terminal. You pay at the kiosk for a ticket and then go outside to the taxi stand's line to wait for the next taxi. The kiosks are controlled by the city, and the rate is set depending on which city zone you are traveling to. The cost for a sedan taxi to the tour Hotel in Zone 5 is \$300-350 Pesos (\$16-\$19 USD). There are various companies to choose from, including Yellow Cab and Sitio 300, among others, all of which are reputable and safe. **ADVISORY:** Be cautious of some vendors who may try to lure you to a much pricier executive van or luxury taxi. The tour will reimburse you for the cost of the sedan taxi. Tell them you want a sedan (SAY-DAN) at the time of purchase; if you do not, they may put you in a mid to large-sized executive van, which costs much more.

The booths accept credit cards or USD. If you pay in USD, they will give you change in Pesos. You will need to provide the person at the counter with the name and address of your destination for them to plug in the details to determine your zone and fare. Be sure to have the hotel address ready for the attendant.

HOTEL CASA GONZÁLEZ
Rio Sena #69, Colonia Cuauhtémoc
Ciudad de México 06500
Tel. +(52 55) 5514-3302

You will be given two receipts; one ticket is your receipt, and the other is to give to your taxi driver. We recommend tipping the driver a dollar US per bag.

Q2: What is the tour's COVID protocol?

A: We will follow current CDC and Mexico Ministry of Health guidelines.

Q3: What is the name of the Hotel the tour group will be staying at?

A: See above; Hotel Casa Gonzalez is well situated in the Cuauhtémoc neighborhood, with the British Embassy across the street, the US Embassy 2 blocks away, and the nearby Zona Rosa, known for its shopping, cafés and nightlife – the area is considered to be reasonably safe.

Q4: How much future validity do I need to have on my Passport to travel to Mexico? Do I need a visa? Should I make a copy of my passport?

A: US Passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay in Mexico. Visitors remaining in Mexico for less than 180 days are not required to have a Mexican visa. It is advisable to make a copy of your passport. You can make a digital copy to store on your smartphone. Alternatively, you can make two photocopies, one to keep with you and the second to keep in your luggage. A copy will facilitate obtaining an emergency replacement if you lose your passport.

Q5: What immunizations are recommended/required?

A: No immunizations are currently required for visiting Mexico. For the most current information, you may wish to consult your medical doctor and/or check out the [Center for Disease Control](#) website.

Q6: How much money should I bring?

A: You don't need to travel with much cash in the form of USD while in Mexico City. With ATMs and Casa's de Cambio (Exchange Houses) readily available at the airport and near the hotel, \$50-\$200 in USD cash should suffice. ATMs are convenient and a good alternative; you can easily get cash in Pesos before leaving the airport and easily replenish your funds at an ATM near the hotel. If you plan to convert USD to Pesos, we recommend you do so at one of the many

exchange kiosks at the airport. The rates can differ slightly, so compare before deciding which offers the better deal. Purchasing Pesos at a US bank may result in a lower exchange rate.

Q7: How can I get Mexican Pesos?

A: You will likely get a better exchange rate in Mexico City than in a US bank. If you plan to convert USD to Pesos, we recommend you do so at one of the many exchange kiosks at the airport. The rates can differ slightly, so compare before deciding which offers the better deal. Purchasing Pesos at a US bank may result in a lower exchange rate. Exchanging dollars for pesos at Mexican banks or money exchanges (Casas de Cambio) is easy, and both are close to our hotel. Using an ATM/Debit card is another very convenient alternative to withdraw money in Pesos (often limited to a few hundred dollars per withdrawal per day). ATMs are convenient, with several at the airport, and there is also one just a block from our hotel. ATMs tend to provide the best rate of exchange.

Q8: Are credit cards accepted?

A: Credit cards are accepted in most major stores, large shopping areas, and museum shops. It is important to notify the bank/credit card company of your foreign travel plans to alleviate the situation of having cards “suspended” until they can verify the legitimacy of the “suspicious” charges.

Q9: Should I notify my bank/credit card company of my foreign travel plans?

A: YES; if you plan to use your bank Debit Card or your Credit Card while in Mexico, you may wish to notify both the bank and/or your credit card company that you will be using the cards in Mexico. This will alleviate the situation of having cards “suspended” until they can verify the legitimacy of the “suspicious” charges.

Q10: Should I get travel insurance?

A: Travel insurance is highly recommended. US News and World Report's 11 Best List shows multiple companies to choose from, with each offering a variety of coverages. Coverages may include trip cancellation, interruption, medical evacuation, medical secondary, Covid-19 cancellation, Covid-19 medical, etc. Here's a US News and World Report link to compare policies, coverages, and costs. <https://travel.usnews.com/features/the-best-travel-insurance-companies>

Q11: What is Mexico City weather like in March?

A: The temperatures will be in the low to mid to mid to high-70s during the day and in the mid to high 40s in the evening. The evening temperatures are quite pleasant, and there are ceiling fans in each of the rooms. A lightweight pullover or jacket may be useful in the evenings. A hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen would be helpful for our outdoor excursions to the pyramids at Teotihuacán, exploring the Centro Histórico and the Sabado Bazaar. With Mexico City's rainy season starting in late May to early June with an average rainfall of 2.2 inches, you may wish to pack an umbrella for occasional late afternoon rain. It may also be a good idea to have a lightweight water bottle to carry around, which can be refilled at the hotel or at locations along the way.

Q12: What to Pack/What to Wear

Mexico City is much like the US. The general rule is to dress comfortably with a light jacket, windbreaker, or shawl for the morning or evening chill. For women, blouses, T-shirts, tanks, blouses, dresses, skirts, and long pants/jeans are all appropriate. For men, T-shirts, collared shirts, and polos paired with long pants are proper. Shorts are considered resort wear or for children. Sunglasses and/or a hat can be helpful. There may be light rain in the evening, so you should pack an umbrella. Shoes should be c-o-m-f-o-r-t-a-b-l-e and designed for walking.

Q13: What is the altitude in Mexico City?

A: You will be at an altitude of over 7,000 feet so the first few days will require some adjustment. You may feel dizzy if you do not keep hydrated. If you have an alcoholic beverage, you will notice the effect, particularly at the higher altitude. The hotel has bottled water in the rooms. You should fill up your water bottles every morning before departure.

Q14: Are there pharmacies and medical offices readily available near our hotel? A: Yes.

PHARMACY: Superama - Río Sena, Calle Río Sena 23, Cuauhtémoc, 06500 Ciudad de México, CDMX, a five-ten-minute walk from the hotel. Tel: (52) 55 5525-5420. Open 7 AM–11 PM.

MEDICAL CARE: Hotel Casa Gonzalez has a DOCTOR “ON CALL” 24 hours per day. He will come to the hotel to assist guests who have become ill. The guest would arrange payment with the nurse.

URGENT CARE CLINIC: Hospital General De Mexico Urgencias, Dr. Pasteur 96, Cuauhtémoc, 06720 Ciudad de México, CDMX, Mexico, 25 minutes by taxi from the hotel. Open 24 hours, Tel: (52) 55 2789-2000.

HOSPITAL: Hospital San Ángel Chapultepec, Av Chapultepec 489, Juárez, 06600 Ciudad de México, 15 minutes by taxi from the hotel. Tel: (52) 55 5241-1700. Open 24 hours.

Q15: What is Mexico's national emergency number?

A: Just like in the US, you can call 911 in Mexico and connect with an emergency operator.

Q16: Is internet service available at the hotel?

A: Our hotel does provide WiFi. Many restaurants and coffee shops also offer free WiFi.

Q17: Do I need a special plug or transformer to use or charge my smartphone, laptop etc?

A: The power plugs in Mexico City are the same as in the US. You will not need an adapter <https://www.power-plugs-sockets.com/mexico/>. Mexico operates on a 127V supply voltage and 60Hz, which is very similar to the US's 120V supply voltage and 60Hz. There should be no issues using electronic devices while traveling in Mexico

Q18: Can I use my cell phone in Mexico?

A: Many cell phone companies include Mexico in their plans. If yours does not, you may wish to look into purchasing a "travel pass" for Mexico for the duration of the trip.

Q19: How do I make an international call to the US?

A: For international mobile long-distance calls originating in Mexico, first dial + 1 (area code) and 7-digit number (on an Apple iPhone, touch and hold the number 0 on the keypad until the plus sign (+) appears).

Q20: Do I need an electrical adapter to use my laptop, iPad, charge my smartphone, etc.?

A: Electricity in Mexico is 110 volts, the same as in the US. Electrical outlets are the same as those in the US, with either two flat prongs or two flat prongs with an additional round grounding pin.

Q21: Does my hotel room have a security safe to secure travel documents, currency, valuables, etc?

A: Yes, each room is equipped with a security safe.

Q22: Is the hotel room equipped with a hairdryer and an iron?

A: Yes, each room is equipped with a hairdryer. No, the rooms are not equipped with irons. The hotel can press your clothes for \$20 MXN per kilo. You can drop them off at the front desk, and they will be ready in the afternoon. A "rush" pressing is \$30 MXN per kilo. They also provide laundry service for \$30 MXN per kilo.

Q23: Can I drink water from the tap?

A: No, tap water is generally not safe to drink in Mexico City and throughout Mexico. Bottled water is readily available at tourist sites, hotels, and restaurants. Do not forget to use bottled water when brushing your teeth as well!

Q24: Can I drink beverages served with ice in restaurants?

A: Generally, yes, all the good restaurants use purified water for their ice, but if you are concerned, drink refreshments without ice.

Q25: Is it safe to eat in the local restaurants?

A: Yes, but it is not recommended that you eat from street vendors or in the open markets.

Q26: Is tipping expected, and how much?

A: Yes, it is appropriate to tip servers, housekeepers, drivers, etc. The rate is similar to the US at 10-15%.

Q27: What is the pace and activity level of the Tour?

A: The itinerary calls for departing the hotel each morning between 8:30-9:00 am returning to the hotel between 5:00-6:00 PM. On the evening of day 4, the group will be departing the hotel at 7:30 PM to attend an evening performance of the Ballet Folklorico returning at approximately 11:00 PM. On our last night we will be departing the hotel at 7:00 PM for a farewell dinner at a nearby restaurant returning by 10:30 PM.

If we had to rate the tour's activity and pace levels, overall, on a scale of 1 to 10, the activity would be a level 5-6; travelers should be able to leisurely walk 1 to 2 miles, which includes climbing one or two flights of stairs and walking over uneven pavement, or cobblestones. In addition, standing up for up to one to two hours may be required at some of the sites. Regarding the pace, on a scale of 1 to 10, the tour is moderate or level 5-6, with our itinerary, typically including three sites daily, allowing for a 90-minute lunch/rest break. There are two evening outings planned on days 4 and 7. Most, if not all, the venues offer benches and seating should you need to rest for a few minutes or catch your breath. Throughout each day, there should be ample opportunities to purchase bottled water at tour sites, kiosks, or mini-marts, as well as restroom breaks at venues and restaurants.

Q28: Should I be concerned about safety in Mexico City?

A: Although other areas of Mexico are under U.S. travel advisories and warnings, Mexico City is not under any travel restrictions. According to Fodor's Travel website Mexico City is a destination on the rise, although it's one that often makes potential visitors (or, more accurately, the relatives of those visitors) fraught with unfounded fear. However, contrary to what many think, Mexico City is not an inherently dangerous place to be as a foreign tourist. Sure, as with any capital city—or city, period—there are spots you should probably avoid, especially as a tourist. However, in the tourist-traversed areas of the capital, the most prevalent danger is petty theft.

To avoid being a target of crime, tourists need to be cautious, keeping a low profile and watching out for pickpockets. When in Mexico City, you should not carry your passports with you while we are out during the day. We suggest a backpack or tote bag to put things in that is lightweight and easy to carry. Typically carrying a wallet for men is not recommended. Consider putting any necessary credit or debit cards or small amounts of pesos in an easily accessible place. Carrying these in your front pocket or possibly using a money belt.

The best thing is to use the same common sense you would use anywhere by taking reasonable precautions to keep yourself safe, being aware of your surroundings, dressing inconspicuously, and not carrying excessive amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry.

Q29: Should I enroll in the US State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)?

A: The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service that allows U.S. citizens traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Enrollment allows you to: 1.) Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country; 2.) Helps the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency, and 3.) Helps family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency. You can create an account and enroll at <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

Q30: What is the best way to get around Mexico City?

A: The best way for visitors to get around in Mexico City is by Uber, Taxi, bus, or metro in that order.

Uber: Is super easy to use in Mexico City and is often cheaper than taking a regular taxi. For example, a trip from the hotel to the Centro Histórico will cost about 60 Pesos (roughly \$3). Please consider downloading the UBER application (LYFT is not available) on your smartphone. UBER transportation is safe, secure, and comfortable. You do not need to negotiate a price or exchange money if you have it set up from the U.S. It is a global application, so it will automatically charge your credit card directly. You can calculate the fare generally by dividing the fare cited by 19 or 20 to get a general sense of the cost in dollars.

Taxi: Use sitio (stationed) taxis at stands or call for one. Do not hail taxis on the street under any circumstances. Two reliable radio taxi companies are Servitaxi and Taximex, which accepts credit cards. If you need a cab but do not speak the Spanish necessary to call one yourself, have a hotel concierge or waiter call you a sitio taxi.

Buses: Within Mexico City, buses are a cheap and convenient way to travel, particularly the city's modern bus rapid transit system, the Metrobus. The fleet's red buses travel along fixed routes in their own dedicated lanes and pick up passengers at designated stations, just like a metro. Transportation cards can be purchased with pesos at automated machines located at each station, then loaded up with credit that can also be used for the city's fast, cheap, and frequently sardine-packed subway. Metrobus rides cost 6 Pesos; the metro is 5 Pesos. Buses often take longer than the underground metro. It is always wise to be conscious of your surroundings and belongings.

Metro: On the upside, the metro in Mexico City is convenient, completely avoids the city's chaotic traffic, it is easy to use, and cheap 5 pesos or 25¢ paid by rechargeable card only. On the downside, it is by far the most crowded method of transportation in the city. If possible, avoid using the metro during rush hour between 6 am and 9:30 am and between 5 pm and 7 pm. During these times, the carriages can be jam-packed and overwhelming as you find yourself pressed against fellow passengers like sardines, likely with someone's armpit in your general facial area. Otherwise, taking the metro in Mexico City is relatively safe, but you should always be very conscious of your whereabouts and belongings.