

Mexico Concert Tour

Mexico City – Puebla – Taxco – Acapulco

(8 nights / 9 days)

Day 1 Mexico City

Depart via scheduled air service, including full meal, beverage service and in-flight entertainment. Arrive in Mexico City. Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motorcoach for a transfer to the hotel. Enjoy a Welcome Dinner and overnight.

Mexico City is both the oldest (founded in 1325) and the highest (2,200 meters above sea level) metropolis on the North American continent. And with nearly 24 million inhabitants, it's the most populous city in the world. At the southern edge of the Mesa Central region of the Plateau of Mexico, the city remains Mexico's industrial, financial, cultural, and political core. Fast, thrilling, and hard to get your head around, it seems permanently in the thrall of turbulent and exciting change, braving the 21st century while clinging to its deeply entrenched Aztec heritage.

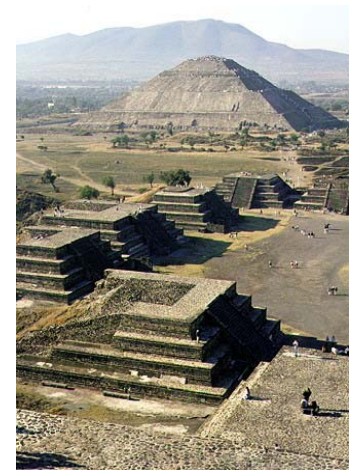
Day 2 Mexico City

Sightseeing today includes Chapultepec Park, topped by its Castle, once the residence of ill-fated Emperor Maximilian of Habsburg. Visit the impressive National Museum of Anthropology, with its extraordinary collection of pre-Columbian art from the different civilizations that flourished in the territory of what is known today as Mexico: the early Olmec and Teotihuacan mother-cultures, Totonacs and Huastecs from the Gulf coast, Toltecs, Zapotecs, Mayas and Aztecs, among many others. Wonder at some masterpieces such as the famous 24-ton Aztec Calendar, or the sculpture of the gruesome goddess of Earth, Coatlicue, the snake-skirted one. The Museum's entrance is guarded by the imposing rain-god Tláloc.

Also visit the Zócalo, National Palace and Diego Rivera's famous murals, the impressive Cathedral and the vestiges of the pre-Hispanic Templo Mayor, the main shrine of the old Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, conquered by the Spaniards. The Zócalo is today the political as well as the economical heart of the country, where worldly and religious powers meet and concentrate. Continue to Alameda Park, past the white-marble Palace of Fine Arts, the fancy Postal Palace, reminiscent of a classical Venetian palazzo, and the unique House of Tiles, a significant city landmark. **Perform a concert in the Cathedral.** Dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 3 Mexico City

Morning drive to Teotihuacan, a city that flourished several centuries prior to the arrival of the Aztecs; it was probably the largest of Mexico's ancient cities, the capital of a great and powerful empire that reached its apogee approximately at the time Constantinople was founded, in the 4th century. Visit the awe-inspiring, pre-Aztec pyramids of the Sun and Moon, and walk down the Road of the Dead to the Citadel, to wonder at the Temple of Quetzalcóatl, with its stone-sculptured plumed-serpent heads, intersected with the masks of rain god Tlaloc. Because of its size, but also because of its historical importance and the monumentality of its constructions, Teotihuacan is Middle America's most relevant archaeological site and, to be sure, one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. On the way back to town, stop at the Basilica of Guadalupe, the famous shrine of the Mexicans' most revered patron saint, not by mere chance built on the very same spot where the Aztecs already had a temple dedicated to the mother-deity Tonantzin. **Afternoon/evening concert in Mexico City.** Dinner at a local restaurant.



Day 4 Mexico City

Full-day excursion to Mexico City's southern colonial suburbs of San Angel, Coyoacan to visit the Frida Kahlo Museum, University City and the floating gardens of Xochimilco.

University City, built in the early 1950's on top of the vast Pedregal lava fields, is home the Continent's oldest university. A short walk around campus will provide insight into the great architectural and artistic project that lies behind the construction of this city of learning, which also includes the splendid Olympic Stadium.

The unique floating gardens of Xochimilco are sometimes called the Mexican Venice. Here, embark on a typical trajinera, starting a canal-ride to the accompaniment of Mariachi bands sailing alongside, and participating in the merrymaking of Mexican families enjoying their favourite Sunday pastime. A simple but tasty Mexican luncheon will be served on board, before disembarking for a walk around the colourful market, with its variety of vegetables, fruits, and a special section for plants and flowers. Xochimilco is a UNESCO Cultural Heritage Site. **Concert in the Xochimilco area.**

Day 5 Puebla

Morning at leisure in Mexico City. Afternoon transfer through the Puebla valley, soon reaching the country's most beautiful colonial city of Puebla, a historical landmark as well. Enjoy a comprehensive tour that includes the historical forts of Guadalupe and Loreto, where Napoleon III's Imperial French Army was defeated by the poorly armed Mexican troops under General Zaragoza. The city has preserved a strong Spanish-French flavour, and boasts an impressive number of historic and cultural monuments and buildings. Time permitting, visit the imposing and massive grey-stone Cathedral, the high-baroque Rosary Chapel, and the unique Biblioteca Palafoxiana. This library dates back to the 17th century and once housed the finest collection of manuscripts in the New World. Today there are over 43,000 books on display, including rare works from the 15th century. UNESCO has declared Puebla a World Heritage Site. **Evening concert in Puebla.** Dinner and overnight.

Puebla (the forth-largest city in Mexico) is full of idiosyncratic Baroque structures built with red bricks, gray stone, white stucco, and the beautiful Talavera tiles produced from local clay. Because of the splendor of its colonial architecture Puebla was declared a Patrimony of Humanities site by the United Nations. Today Puebla retains a strong conservative religious element. Overflowing with religious structures, this city has more convents, monasteries, chapels and churches per square mile than anywhere else in the country. It was said to have 224 churches and 10 convents and monasteries in its heyday.

Day 6 Taxco

Morning at leisure in Puebla. Afternoon transfer over a panoramic highway, through rural Mexico, with its cornfields and sugar cane plantations, up the rugged Sierra Madre Mountains, till reaching Taxco. This charming old silver mining town of cobble-stoned streets and red-tiled roofs is nestled in the craggy hills of Taxco the State of Guerrero. Enjoy a sightseeing walk to the beautiful baroque church of Santa Prisca, with its splendid Churrigueresque gilded altarpieces. Free time will be available to browse through the many tempting silver shops and workshops. **Evening concert in Santa Prisca Church.** Dinner and overnight at one of Taxco's charming country-style hotels.



Taxco is Mexico's most medieval-looking city - marvelously preserved colonial buildings nuzzle cobblestone streets that wind up and down the foothills of the Sierra Madre. White stucco buildings, red-tile roofs, quaint inns and cafes make it a centuries-old Mexican town at its best. This living work of art was declared a national monument by the government in 1928. Known as The Silver City, mines were discovered in 1522 and made the city exceedingly wealthy. Today there are over 2,000 silver shops throughout the city.



Day 7 Acapulco

Depart after breakfast, once again across the mountains, soon reaching the tierra caliente lowlands, and eventually the Pacific coast with Mexico's most famous seaside resort, lively, exhilarating Acapulco. Afternoon at leisure, to enjoy the resort's gold sand beaches, the mild climate and the magnificent vistas of what's often called world's most beautiful bay. This evening we will drive up to La Quebrada, to watch the breathtaking spectacle of the daring clavadistas, diving into the ocean from over 120 ft. high. **Concert in Acapulco.** Dinner and overnight at a friendly hotel close to the beach.



Acapulco is a vibrant port city with one of the most beautiful bays in the world. Swimming, waterskiing, snorkeling, parasailing, fishing, shopping, markets, championship golf courses, tennis courts, and the nightlife are only some of the activities that rarely succeed in luring visitors away from the beach. The natural harbor of Acapulco Bay is the city's centerpiece. Some time ago the city fathers initiated a multimillion-dollar beautification program which is renewed annually to keep the bay, beaches and streets landscaped and clean. Acapulco is truly a place to relax.

Day 8 Acapulco

Day at leisure in Acapulco. Just about everything that can be done on, under or above the water is done in Acapulco. On the bay, water-skiing, wind surfing and parasailing are all popular activities. The smaller beaches have boats of all kinds: sailboats, fishing boats, motorboats, pedal boats and canoes. Evening Farewell Dinner.



Day 9 Depart for home

Morning free time on the beach, and the opportunity for some last-minute shopping. Transfer to Mexico City's International Airport for return flight to USA. Arrive home in the evening.

