



PANORAMA

CRUISE & TRAVEL

We're here to get you there

Mexico and Cuba Itinerary

Day 1/ Saturday 4th April 2020

Bathurst - Sydney

Depart Bathurst Visitors Information Centre for your transfer to Sydney Airport Hotel.

Day 2/ Sunday 5th April 2020

Sydney - Cancun

Depart on your United Airlines flight at 9.30am flying across the date line and via Houston you will arrive at Cancun Mexico 3.45pm. Catch your group transfer to your hotel in Playa del Carmen for a full day to recoup and enjoy the atmosphere of this very popular area.

Accommodation: Hotel Fiesta inn or similar



Day 3/ Monday 6th April 2020

Playa del Carmen

Meals Included: Breakfast

A day to relax and soaking up the powdery beaches and azure waters of Playa del Carmen.

Choose whether you would like to dine together or go your own way. Perhaps take in the salty night air with a walk along the beach before returning to your hotel.

Included Activities

Playa del Carmen - Orientation walk

Accommodation: Hotel Fiesta inn or similar

Day 4/ Tuesday 7th April 2020

Playa del Carmen

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

The vestiges of the grand Mayan city of Chichen Itza are around 3-hours away. A guide will walk you through these spectacular

ruins, the ingenious design of which often manipulates light and sound. Make sure you stop and listen for strange echoes and watch for serpentine shadows. During the drive back, stop for an hour or so for an included buffet lunch and cool down in the fresh water rock pool of Cenote Ik-Kil. A cenote (pronounced say-NO-tay) is a natural sinkhole created where a limestone cave ceiling has collapsed creating a window to this spectacular subterranean world. In the evening, the bars and restaurants of Playa are yours for the taking.

Special Information

Pack your swimmers in your day pack, ready for the Cenote visit.

Included Activities

Chichen Itza - Archaeological site (Entrance fee, Guide & Transport)

Cenote Ik-Kil - Fresh water rock pool with option to swim (Entrance fee & Transport)

Accommodation: Hotel Fiesta inn or similar



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Day 5/ Wednesday 8th April 2020

San Cristobal de las Casas

Meals Included: Breakfast

The colonial town of San Cristobal de las Casas awaits you after a morning of travel. Beginning with a 10 am private transfer to Cancun Airport, board a 12:30 pm flight to Tuxtla Gutierrez, where you'll have another private vehicle waiting to escort you to your destination. Use the hour-long drive to take advantage of an informal Spanish lesson from your tour leader, then maybe try those new skills during a free afternoon in this city of colour and craft. At around 5:30 pm, your leader will walk you through the stunning, mural lined streets. Then, decide whether you would like to eat with the group or strike out on your own.

Included Activities

Informal Spanish Lesson

San Cristobal de las Casas - Leader-led city tour

Accommodation: Casa Vieja or similar

Day 6/ Thursday 9th April 2020

San Cristobal de las Casas

Meals Included: Breakfast

A short drive takes you to nearby Maya villages where local customs, habits and laws often prevail over the conventions of nonindigenous Mexico. This independent spirit is encapsulated in the church of San Juan Chamula where, if the timing is right, you can witness a ceremony that combines Maya customs and animism with a heavy dollop of Catholicism. Join some local women at home in Zinacantan and watch as they create the textiles typical of the area. Choose between lunching or strolling further, then return to your hotel where you can decide what to do with the rest of your day. If you're interested in Mesoamerican art, why not visit the Jade Museum? This privately-owned museum is a labour of love, designed to educate about the historical and cultural importance of the green mineral.

Included Activities

Maya villages - San Juan Chamula and Zinacantan, including textile making with community

Optional Activities

San Cristobal de las Casas - Jade Museum - USD5

San Cristobal de las Casas - Bicycle rental (per hour) - USD30

Accommodation: Casa Vieja or similar

Day 7/ Friday 10th April 2020

Oaxaca

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Rise with the sun and enjoy breakfast before driving towards Oaxaca (5-6 hours), with a brief stop in Tehuantepec for an included lunch. If you'd like, take a quick walk and observe the colourful dress of the local ladies, the style of which famously inspired artist and icon Frida Kahlo. After another 4 hours, arrive in Oaxaca in the evening and take a quick orientation walk before an optional dinner. If you're craving local fare, why not sit down for a bowl of sweet and spicy mole negro, a Oaxacan staple made from ground chilies, garlic and chocolate.

Included Activities

Oaxaca - Orientation walk

Accommodation Hotel Victoria or similar

Day 8/ Saturday 11th April 2020

Oaxaca

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Oaxaca is a city that needs to be savoured, just like the spiced cacao the locals drink. Enjoy a full day tour with transport, entrance fees and other details taken care of, so you can relax and feast your eyes on the sights instead of digging into your wallet or staring at a map. Speaking of feasts, food is central to understanding Oaxaca, a biodiverse culinary paradise with many regional dishes that are difficult to replicate elsewhere. With that in mind, today you'll enjoy a special lunch prepared and served in an indigenous Zapotec household, where you'll likely be stunned by the variety of dishes that can be prepared from the humble corn cob. The rest of the day is full to the brim with essential activities. Explore the Zapotec roots of modern Oaxaca in the ruins of Mitla, learning from a guide about this important religious site. Then, gaze upon the gnarled bark of the Tule Tree, the stoutest trunk in the world. The petrified falls of Hierve El Agua also await you. Despite their name (roughly boiling water) these cascading falls appear to be frozen in time and provide ample opportunity for stunning videos and photographs. Your Oaxacan culture immersion would not be complete without a tour of a mezcal distillery, and the proud folks at Don Agave Mezcal will be happy to show you how they make their traditional spirit. In the evening you can dine with the group in an optional dinner, then why not follow your nose and your ears to a local music cafe?

Included Activities

Oaxaca - Guided full-day tour including the Tule Tree, a Mezcal distillery, and lunch in a Zapotecan family home

Hierve el Agua - Petrified waterfalls (Entrance fee, Guide & Transport)

Mitla - Archaeological site (Entrance fee, Guide & Transport)

Oaxaca - Beeswax candle shop visit

Accommodation Hotel Victoria or similar





Day 9/ Sunday 12th April 2020

Oaxaca

Meals Included: Breakfast

The locals rise later than you might be used to, so feel free to sleep in and then enjoy a rich black coffee made with local beans.

The city is full of quirky streets dedicated to different foods and crafts, like de Los Dulces (candy street), for you to take in at your own pace. If you wish to learn more about the history of the regions indigenous people, why not walk the impressive Zapotec ruins of Monte Alban?

Optional Activities

Oaxaca - Monte Alban Ruins (Entrance fee) - USD5

Oaxaca - Cooking class - USD85

Accommodation Hotel Victoria or similar

Day 10/ Monday 13th April 2020

Mexico City

Meals Included: Breakfast

Rise early to make a 7:30 am flight to Mexico City. We should arrive before 9 am, giving you just enough time for a nap on the plane if you need it. Drop your bags and take an orientation walk around the salmon-coloured Hotel Geneve. Your luxurious lodgings have a curious history as a neutral zone during the Mexican revolution and meeting point for intellectuals and artists since opening in 1907. Later, check-in and begin exploring the city with your leader. Visit vast Zocalo Square, which has been a prominent hub since Aztec times, and listen to a cacophony of laughter, rapid fire Spanish and booming drums that characterise the busy square. The dome topped Palacio de Bellas Artes is the next attraction. Within the stark marble palace, you will find walls painted by the likes of Diego Rivera.

Included Activities

Mexico City - Orientation walk.

Mexico City - Leader-led city tour of Historic centre.

Mexico City - National Palace and Diego Rivera murals

Accommodation Hotel Geneve or similar

Day 11/ Tuesday 14th April 2020

Mexico City

Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Enjoy a free day to soak up the capital. For those who prefer to let their taste buds lead the way, why not partake in a Mexico City Markets and Food Tour with Urban Adventures? You'll see the markets most travellers don't and savour traditional treats while learning how they are made. The Leon Trotsky and Frida Kahlo museums are two popular sights worth checking out. Trotsky, having come off second-best to Stalin in the Soviet era, was expelled and found refuge in Mexico City where he was eventually murdered, while Frida Kahlo is perhaps the most renowned Mexican artist in history. If you're seeking something more relaxed, perhaps hop aboard a colourful boat and glide through the tree-lined canals of the Floating Gardens of Xochimilco. In the evening, head to Garibaldi square, where a mariachi band will be waiting to serenade you. Mariachi is equal parts longing and joy, and you'll get to listen to this delightful music in the centre of a popular and busy square.

Included Activities

Mexico City - Mariachi serenade in Garibaldi Square

Optional Activities

Mexico City Markets and Food Tour - Urban Adventures - USD39

Mexico City - National Museum of Anthropology (Closed Mondays) - MXN70

Mexico City - Boat ride through Floating Gardens of Xochimilco (Approx. per boat per hour) - MXN350

Mexico City - Frida Kahlo Museum (Cheaper for students, pensioners & on weekdays. Closed Mondays) - MXN200

Mexico City - Leon Trotsky Museum – MXN70

Accommodation Hotel Geneve or similar

Day 12/ Wednesday 15th April 2020

Mexico City - Havana

Meals Included: Breakfast

Your Mexico adventure comes to an end after breakfast this morning. Your private transfer will be arranged to take you to the airport to board your Aeromexico flight at 10.15am to Havana Cuba.

Bienvenido a Cuba! Welcome to Cuba! Arrive at Havana's Jose Marti International airport, where you'll be transferred to your Hotel. The rest of the day is free to explore.

Optional Activities

Havana - National Museum of Fine Arts - CUC5

Havana - Cigar factory tour - CUC12

Accommodation: Hotel Nacional or similar

Day 13/ Thursday 16th April 2020

Havana

Meals Included: Breakfast

This morning at 9am you will be picked up from the infamous Hotel Nacional to see outer-Havana in a convoy of classic American vintage cars (1 hour urban adventure) that cruises via points of interest such as the Malecon, Revolucion Square, Vedado and ending in Old Havana. Next, your leader will take you on a walking tour of the lovely Old Havana (approximately 2.5 hours). Go to the cathedral, Plaza de Armas, San Francisco de Asis, Plaza Vieja and Central Park.

Now that you are orientated in Old Havana you have the rest of the afternoon to lunch at leisure and explore further. Your leader can assist you to take a taxi if you wish to return to the hotel



Included Activities

Havana - Vintage American car tour.
Havana - Revolution Square.
Havana - Guided walking tour of Old Havana

Optional Activities

Havana - Jose Marti Memorial Tower - CUC2
Havana - Revolution museum - CUC5

Accommodation: Hotel Nacional or similar

Day 14/ Friday 17th April 2020

Vinales

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

This morning drive west to Soroa (1 hour) to tour the beautiful orchid garden. A local expert will take you on a private tour of the gardens to identify the bird and plant species of this diverse area (approximately 45 minutes). You will easily see why the valley is known as the rainbow of Cuba.

There will be time for lunch before continuing on to Vinales (1.5 hours), where tobacco and sugarcane fields lie side by side and limestone outcrops dot the landscape. Use this bus time to take part in another informal Spanish lesson so you can converse with the friendly locals throughout the rest of your trip.

Check in to the guesthouses, leaving enough time to undertake a quick orientation walk. Later, perhaps enjoy the porch rocking chair and soak up the slow, old-world pace of rural Cuba as oxen plod gracefully along the streets.

Included Activities

Soroa - Orchid garden tour with local expert.
Vinales - Orientation Walk

Optional Activities

Vinales - Live music venues - CUC2

Accommodation: Standard Guesthouse (There are currently no Premium guesthouses in this area).

Day 15/ Saturday 18th April 2020

Vinales

Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

At 9am go on a guided walk through the farm lands of Vinales (approximately 3 hours), which you'll soon see is home to some extraordinary scenery – some of Cuba's best. Learn more about the tobacco industry and see a farmer whip a world class cigar in seconds.

Take some time to find a local place for lunch, then regroup around 4:30pm to embrace the rhythm and learn a few steps in a salsa dancing class. Next, head to the top of the valley for dinner at an Eco-Farm. Everything is grown organically on the farm itself so get ready for one of the freshest dinner experiences in Cuba!

Included Activities

Vinales - Guided valley walking tour.
Vinales - Informal Salsa lesson.
Vinales - Ecological Farm Dinner

Accommodation: Standard Guesthouse

Day 16/ Sunday 19th April 2020

Cienfuegos

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Prepare for a long travel day as you board the comfortable bus at 8am towards Cienfuegos. Drive back through Havana before stopping in the Bay of Pigs for lunch (approximately 5 hours).

After lunch, go for a dip in the crystal clear water or simply sit back and try to imagine the battle played out in this monumental bay. Ask your leader for insight into the botched US Military counter-revolutionary invasion in the Bay of Pigs.

Then it is just a short drive to Cienfuegos (approximately 1 hour), one of Cuba's prettiest coastal spots. Arrive sometime after 5pm and take a short orientation walk before visiting the Palacio del Valle, Cienfuegos' architectural pride and joy. It's grandiose carvings in Venetian alabaster strike an impressive pose in this beautiful seaside city.



Included Activities

Bay of Pigs - Visit & swim. Cienfuegos - Orientation Walk. Cienfuegos - Visit to the Palacio del Valle

Accommodation: Hotel Jagua or similar

Day 17/ Monday 20th April 2020

Trinidad

Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Enjoy a free morning to explore. Then complete the two hour drive to Trinidad. During a guided walk of the town (1 hour), take in its eye-catching combination of cobblestone streets, colourful houses and old-fashioned locals. It's a great town to explore on foot, and almost every scene offers superb photographic opportunities – from residents relaxing with huge cigars on their doorsteps to old Chevrolets cruising by.



In the evening take a trip out of town to a local house for a homely and festive dinner. Be welcomed with the local drink; Canchanchara made from 'fire water', local honey and lime juice. There will even be a musician or two serenading you and your fellow travellers as you dine.

Included Activities

Trinidad - Orientation walk.

Trinidad - Private dinner at a local farmhouse

Accommodation: Comfort Guesthouse

Day 18/ Tuesday 21st April 2020

Trinidad

Meals Included: Breakfast

Today is a free day in Trinidad. For some beachside fun and perhaps a little snorkelling, head down to Playa Ancon. Just be careful you don't stand on a sea urchin. At some point while you're here, a great activity is to go to a folklore show at one of the town's numerous open-air venues. Cuba has a rich and varied music and dance tradition that draws roots from Spain, Africa and France, and this is your chance to experience it all first-hand, from the Mambo to the Rumba.

Optional Activities

Trinidad - Massage - CUC25

Trinidad - Ancon beach shuttle bus - CUC4

Trinidad - Bicycle rental (full day) - CUC5

Trinidad - Musical instrument lesson (guitar, double bass, tres, percussion - per hour) - CUC10

Accommodation: Comfort Guesthouse



Day 19/ Wednesday 22nd April 2020

Havana

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Head inland to Santa Clara (approximately 1.5 hours) to lunch then visit the Che Guevara mausoleum. Here you'll see the statue of the iconic revolutionary leader looming. In the museum that accompanies the mausoleum, you'll find an intriguing spread of photos and other ephemera related to Che – letters, medical devices, firearms.

Return to the capital (3 hours) for your final night to enjoy Havana.

Included Activities

Santa Clara - Visit to Che Guevara Mausoleum and Museum

Optional Activities

Havana - Buena Vista Social Club - CUC30

Accommodation: Hotel Nacional or similar

Day 20/ Thursday 23rd April 2020

Havana/ Cancun

Meals Included: Breakfast

Your Cuba trip comes to an end and you will be transferred back to the airport for a quick flight back to Cancun and another transfer back to Playa del Carmen for a final farewell to Mexico

Accommodation: Hotel Fiesta inn or similar

Day 21/ Friday 24th April 2020

Cancun - Home

Meals Included: Breakfast

Transfer back to the airport for your homeward bound United Airlines flight at 5.15pm via Los Angeles back to Sydney

Day 23/ Sunday 26th April 2020

Sydney - Home

Losing a day as you cross the date line you will arrive in Sydney 7am. and meet by your transfer back to Bathurst.

