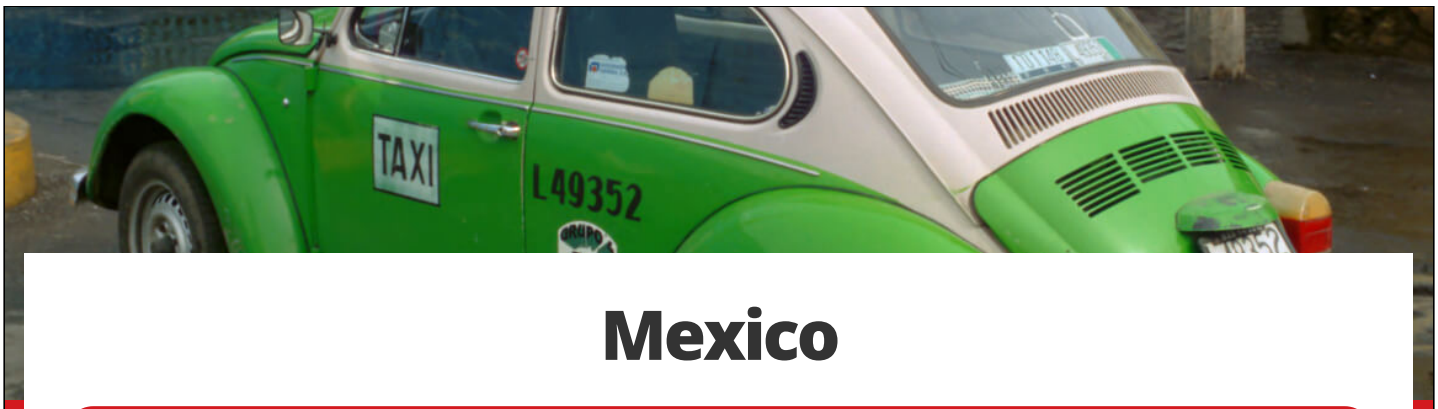
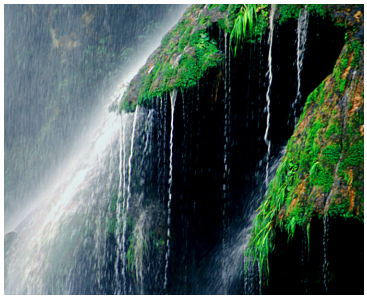


Mexico

Cultural, Leisure

Country : Mexico September 1999

The most beautiful pictures





Go to Mexico, a country with a rich history and culture. Whether it is the Mayan ruins, the Spanish colonization, the paradisiacal islands, the gastronomy halfway between the local and European cultures, Mexico has something to please you. By bus or by car, Mexico can be visited very easily.

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By Olivier Paudex

Mexico City

Mexico City is the capital of Mexico. The population of Mexico is close to**120 million (in 1999)**. The population of Mexico City alone is **20 million (in 1999)**. Its neighbors are the United States (to the north), Guatemala (to the south), and the small country of Belize (to the southeast). Mexican Spanish is officially

spoken, but in reality, **Mexico has 68 languages**, mostly regional dialects based on Quechua.



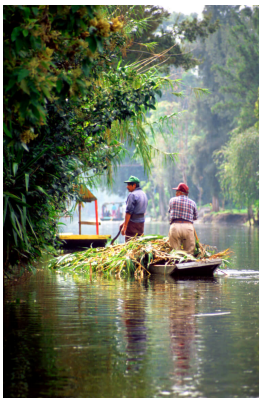



Dancers, VW Beetle Taxi, Metropolitan Cathedral, Granada (fruit)

Xochemilco

Xochemilco is a vast maze of floating canals around Mexico City. It has been declared a**UNESCO World Heritage Site**. It is possible to navigate the **170km** of canals by taking a gondola called **"Trajineras"**.






The canals of Xochemilco

Teotihuacan

Teotihuacan is an ancient site, **located 40km from Mexico City**. It is an ancient **Mesoamerican** city, dating from the pre-Columbian era, with two large pyramids very well preserved, **the pyramid of the sun and the pyramid of the moon.**



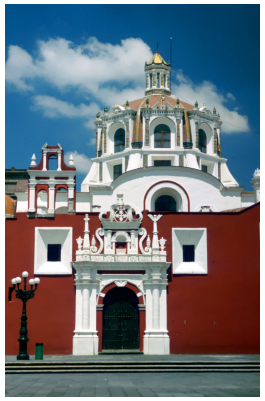
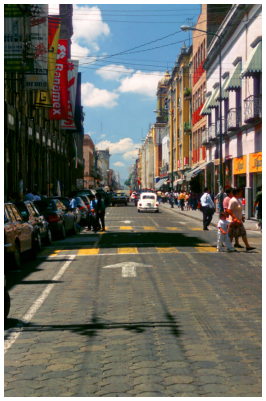



Site of Teotihuacan, pyramids and ornaments

Puebla

Puebla is a city located **135km** from Mexico City. Its population is **5 million (in 1999)**. It is the 5th largest city in Mexico.



Puebla

Taxco

Taxco was built on a hill. It is perched at an altitude of**1780** meters. Its name means **"Place of the ball game"** in the local language. **Taxco** is known far and wide for its silver jewelry factories. The Spanish colonial architecture is really present in the whole city. It is a good place to live. The Swiss built a cable car here.











Taxco, Internet Café, Butcher in the street

Oaxaca

To get to Oaxaca from Taxco, you have to retrace your steps to Puebla. **That's over 500km**. Fortunately, there are bus lines traveling at night between Puebla and Oaxaca. Otherwise, Oaxaca is a city 460km from Mexico City.

Oaxaca de Juárez, more simply called Oaxaca, is a small city of more than **3.5 million people (in 1999)**. Also colonized by the Spanish, it has managed to keep a trace of its past thanks to the many indigenous people who still live there.

Varieties of succulents grow in front of the cathedral of **"Our Lady of the Assumption"**.








Cathedral of "Our Lady of the Assumption", alleys and succulent plants

Monte Albán

The pre-Columbian site of Monte Albán is located just **9km** from Oaxaca. It is a **UNESCO** protected site since 1987. The city was built in the 3rd century B.C.

The main monument of Monte Albán is its central plaza and ball game field. A story says that the loser of the game would be beheaded. The ancestor of the circus games of Rome.













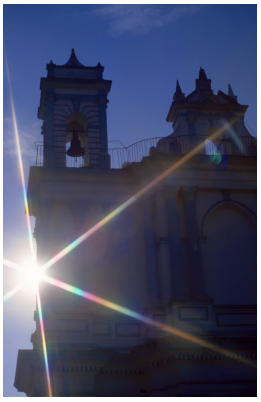
Archaeological site of Monte Albán

San Cristobal de las Casas

San Cristobal is the capital of Chiapas. It is also an excellent base for visiting the surrounding historical sites.





San Cristobal, Church and lively streets

Canyon del Sumidero

The Canyon del Sumidero is located **75km from San Cristobal**. The visit of the canyon is done by boat. The water of the cascades falling on the rocks is of great beauty.



Waterfalls of the Canyon del Sumidero

The blue lagoon of Agua Azul

The lagoon is located not far from the canyon. A haven of peace for those who like to commune with nature.





Blue lagoon and its flora

Palenque

From San Cristobal, don't forget to stop in Palenque.

Palenque is located just over **200km from San Cristobal**. It is a site of the **"Mayan"** civilization. Built in the middle of the jungle, it was very difficult to discover it. Its climate is very wet. It rains often and a lot.

This is one of the best preserved Mayan sites in the world. **Enlisted as a UNESCO heritage site in 1987.**

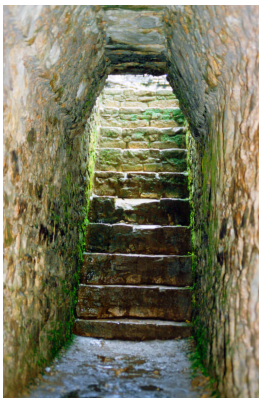












The ruins of Palenque

Uxmal

As you leave Palenque, plan to stop in the city of **Campeche**, located **350km away.** The area is full of archaeological sites, including Uxmal.

Uxmal is a site of the **"Maya"** civilization. It is also a **UNESCO heritage site since 1996**. It is known for its magnificent temples, relatively well preserved, including the governor's palace, the astronomical tower.



Pyramids and ruins in and around Uxmal

Chichén Itzá

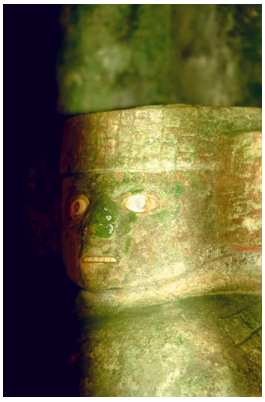
Chichen Itza is the most famous archaeological site in Mexico. **It has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1988**. The great central pyramid is called **"Temple of Kukulcan"**, more commonly known as **"El Castillo"**. You can visit its interior where you can see its guardian, the**"red jaguar"**.



Temple of Kukulcán

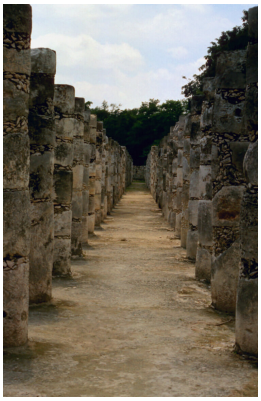




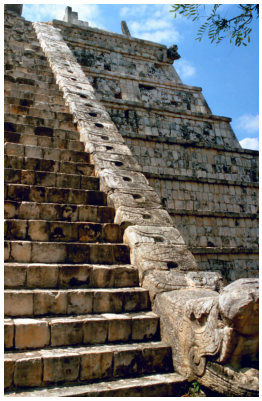


Inside the temple of Kukulcán



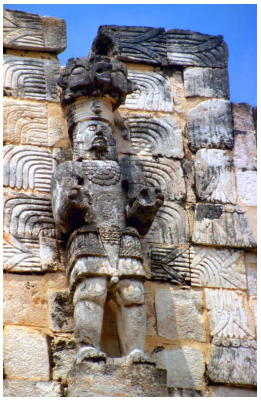


The palace of a thousand columns





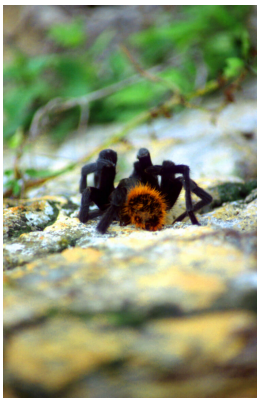




El Caracol and other details

Strange fauna ...

Only in Chichén Itzá can you see tarantulas and dragons.



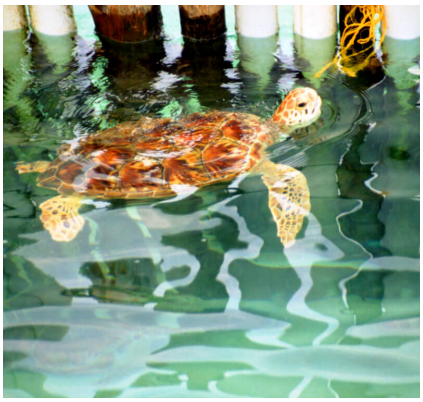


Local wildlife

Isla Mujeres

There would still be plenty of places to visit like the seaside site of**Tulum**, but this travel will end on **Isla Mujeres (the island of women)**.

Isla Mujeres is a small island located at the northeastern tip of Mexico, just off the city of**Cancún**. The island can be reached in 30 minutes by boat.





Wildlife on the Isle of Women









I, Olivia, The sun, Tequilla and coconut