

Contents

List of Maps

viii

What's New in Mexico

1

1 The Best of Mexico

7

by David Baird, Lynne Bairstow, Juan Cristiano & Joy Hepp

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 The Best Beach Vacations | 7 | 7 The Best Art, Architecture & Museums | 15 |
| 2 The Best Cultural Experiences | 10 | 8 The Best Shopping | 16 |
| 3 The Best Archaeological Sites | 11 | 9 The Best Luxury Hotels | 17 |
| 4 The Best Active Vacations | 12 | 10 The Best Inexpensive Inns | 19 |
| 5 The Best of Natural Mexico | 13 | 11 The Best Spa Resorts | 20 |
| 6 The Best Places to Get Away from It All | 14 | 12 The Best Mexican Food & Drink | 21 |

2 Mexico in Depth

23

by David Baird

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 Mexico Today | 23 | <i>Dining Service Tips</i> | 35 |
| 2 Looking Back at Mexico | 24 | 4 The Regions in Brief | 36 |
| <i>It's Just a Game</i> | 26 | 5 Mexico's Art & Architecture | 38 |
| <i>A Sticky Habit</i> | 28 | 6 Mexico in Popular Culture: Books, Film & Music | 40 |
| 3 Eating & Drinking in Mexico | 32 | | |

3 Planning Your Trip to Mexico

45

by Juan Cristiano

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 Visitor Information | 45 | 6 Health | 65 |
| 2 Entry Requirements | 46 | 7 Safety | 68 |
| <i>Cut to the Front of the Airport Security Line</i> | 48 | <i>Smoke Free Mexico?</i> | 68 |
| <i>Calendar of Events</i> | 51 | 8 Specialized Travel Resources | 71 |
| 3 When to Go | 50 | 9 Sustainable Tourism | 75 |
| 4 Getting There & Getting Around | 57 | <i>It's Easy Being Green</i> | 76 |
| 5 Money & Costs | 63 | | |

<i>Frommers.com: The Complete Travel Resource</i>	77	11 Special-Interest Trips	80
10 Packages for the Independent Traveler	78	12 Staying Connected	83
		13 Tips on Accommodations	85

4 Suggested Mexico Itineraries 87

by David Baird

1 Central Mexico's Pre-Columbian Treasures in a Week	87	3 Los Cabos to Copper Canyon	90
2 The Best of Western Mexico in a Week	89	4 La Ruta Maya in 2 Weeks	91

5 Mexico City 94

by Juan Cristiano

1 Orientation	96	<i>¡Café, Por Favor!</i>	126
<i>Taxi Safety Precautions in Mexico City</i>	99	5 Exploring Mexico City	126
<i>The Neighborhoods in Brief</i>	102	6 Organized Tours	146
2 Getting Around	105	7 Shopping	147
<i>Fast Facts: Mexico City</i>	110	8 Mexico City After Dark	149
3 Where to Stay	113	9 A Side Trip to the Pyramids of San Juan Teotihuacán	154
4 Where to Dine	120		

6 Silver, Spas & Spiritual Centers: From Taxco to Tepoztlán 159

by Juan Cristiano

1 Taxco: Cobblestones & Silver	159	4 Cuernavaca: Land of Eternal Spring	175
<i>Spanish Lessons & Art Classes in Taxco</i>	164	<i>Fast Facts: Cuernavaca</i>	178
2 Ixtapan de la Sal: A Thermal Spa Town	170	5 Tepoztlán	185
3 Valle de Bravo & Avándaro: Mexico's Switzerland	172		

7 San Miguel de Allende & the Colonial Silver Cities 190

by David Baird

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 San Miguel de Allende192
 <i>Fast Facts: San Miguel de Allende</i>195
 <i>Learning at the Source: Going to School in San Miguel</i>197</p> <p>2 Guanajuato206
 <i>Fast Facts: Guanajuato</i>209
 <i>Ranch Museum</i>214
 <i>The Redolent Mexican Cantina</i>220</p> | <p>3 Santiago de Querétaro221
 <i>Fast Facts: Querétaro</i>224
 <i>All Things Querétaro</i>225
 <i>Shopping for Opals</i>227
 <i>Hot Tamales</i>229</p> <p>4 Zacatecas231
 <i>Fast Facts: Zacatecas</i>234</p> <p>5 San Luis Potosí241
 <i>Fast Facts: San Luis Potosí</i>242</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

8 Michoacán 248

by David Baird

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 Morelia249
 <i>Fast Facts: Morelia</i>250
 <i>Free-Market Forces</i>253
 <i>A Brief Pause for the Food Cause</i>254
 <i>Michoacán's Monarch Migration</i>259</p> | <p>2 Pátzcuaro260
 <i>Fast Facts: Pátzcuaro</i>262</p> <p>3 Uruapan: Handicrafts & Volcanoes270</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

9 Guadalajara 273

by David Baird

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 Orientation273
 <i>The Neighborhoods in Brief</i>274</p> <p>2 Getting Around275
 <i>Fast Facts: Guadalajara</i>276</p> <p>3 Where to Stay277</p> <p>4 Where to Dine281</p> | <p>5 Exploring Guadalajara284
 <i>Guadalajara Bus Tours</i>286</p> <p>6 Shopping289</p> <p>7 Guadalajara After Dark292
 <i>Tequila: The Name Says It All</i>293</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

10 Puerto Vallarta & the Central Pacific Coast 294

by Lynne Bairstow

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 Puerto Vallarta294
 <i>Fast Facts: Puerto Vallarta</i>300
 <i>A Huichol Art Primer</i>314</p> | <p>2 Mazatlán343
 <i>Fast Facts: Mazatlán</i>347
 <i>Mazatlán's Carnaval: A Weeklong Party</i>351</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- 3 Costa Alegre: Puerto Vallarta to Barra de Navidad 359
- 4 Manzanillo 369
Fast Facts: Manzanillo 372

11 Acapulco & the Southern Pacific Coast 379

by Juan Cristiano

- 1 Acapulco 380
Fast Facts: Acapulco 385
- 2 Northward to Zihuatanejo & Ixtapa 403
Fast Facts: Zihuatanejo & Ixtapa .. 407
- 3 Puerto Escondido 420
- Fast Facts: Puerto Escondido* 424
Ecotours & Other Adventurous Explorations 426
- 4 Bahías de Huatulco 434
Fast Facts: Bahías de Huatulco ... 437

12 The Southernmost States: Oaxaca & Chiapas 443

by David Baird

- 1 Oaxaca City 444
Peace & Poverty in Oaxaca 446
Fast Facts: Oaxaca 449
Oaxacan Street Food 460
- 2 Villahermosa 470
- 3 Palenque 473
- 4 San Cristóbal de las Casas 481
The Zapatista Movement & Chiapas 484
Fast Facts: San Cristóbal de las Casas 485

13 Eastward from Mexico City: Puebla & Veracruz 496

by David Baird

- 1 Puebla & Cholula 496
Fast Facts: Puebla 499
Cinco de Mayo & the Battle of Puebla 500
- 2 Tlaxcala 508
- 3 Xalapa 511
- 4 Veracruz City 515
Fast Facts: Veracruz 517
- 5 El Tajín & the Town of Papantla .. 523

14 Cancún 527

by Juan Cristiano

- 1 Orientation 528
The Best Websites for Cancún ... 530
Fast Facts: Cancún 532
- 2 Where to Stay 534
- 3 Where to Dine 542
- 4 Beaches, Watersports & Boat Tours 547
- 5 Outdoor Activities & Attractions .. 551
- 6 Shopping 552
- 7 Cancún After Dark 554

15 Isla Mujeres & Cozumel 556

by David Baird

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Isla Mujeres 556 | 2 Cozumel 569 |
| <i>The Best Websites for Isla Mujeres
& Cozumel</i> 558 | <i>An All-Inclusive Vacation
in Cozumel</i> 572 |
| <i>Fast Facts: Isla Mujeres</i> 560 | <i>Fast Facts: Cozumel</i> 574 |

16 The Caribbean Coast: The Riviera Maya, Including Playa del Carmen & the Costa Maya 587

by David Baird

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Puerto Morelos & Vicinity 590 | 5 Cobá Ruins 615 |
| 2 Playa del Carmen 595 | 6 Majahual, Xcalak & the Chinchorro
Reef 618 |
| <i>Fast Facts: Playa del Carmen</i> 598 | 7 Lago Bacalar 620 |
| <i>Choosing an All-Inclusive
in the Riviera Maya</i> 602 | 8 Chetumal 621 |
| 3 South of Playa del Carmen 604 | 9 Side Trips to Maya Ruins
from Chetumal 623 |
| 4 Tulum, Punta Allen & Sian Ka'an . . 611 | |
| <i>The Sian Ka'an Biosphere
Reserve</i> 615 | |

17 Mérida, Chichén Itzá & the Maya Interior 625

by David Baird

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The Best Websites for Mérida,
Chichén Itzá & the Maya Interior</i> . . 626 | <i>Of Haciendas & Hotels</i> 642 |
| 1 Mérida: Gateway to the
Maya Heartland 627 | 2 The Ruins of Uxmal 653 |
| <i>Daily Festivals & Special Events
in Mérida</i> 630 | 3 Campeche 659 |
| <i>Fast Facts: Mérida</i> 631 | <i>Fast Facts: Campeche</i> 661 |
| | 4 The Ruins of Chichén Itzá 665 |
| | 5 Valladolid 672 |

18 The Copper Canyon 677

by David Baird

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1 The Copper Canyon Train & Stops
Along the Way 678 | 3 Chihuahua: The Eastern
Terminus 691 |
| <i>Choosing a Package or Tour
Operator</i> 681 | <i>Fast Facts: Chihuahua</i> 692 |
| 2 Los Mochis: The Western
Terminus 689 | |

19	Los Cabos & Baja California	698
<i>by Joy Hepp</i>		
1	Los Cabos: Resorts, Watersports & Golf	701
	<i>Fast Facts: San José del Cabo</i>	704
	<i>Fast Facts: Cabo San Lucas</i>	718
	<i>Surf & Sleep</i>	723
2	Todos Santos: A Creative Oasis	730
3	La Paz: Peaceful Port Town	732
	<i>Fast Facts: La Paz</i>	735
4	Mid Baja: Loreto, Mulegé & Santa Rosalía	742
	<i>Whale-Watching in Baja</i>	748
5	Tijuana & Rosarito Beach	749
	<i>First Crush: The Annual Harvest Festival</i>	753
	<i>A Northern Baja Spa Sanctuary</i>	755
	<i>Surfing, Northern Baja Style</i>	758
6	Ensenada: Port of Call	759
Appendix A: Mexico Fast Facts		761
Appendix B: Survival Spanish		766
Index		771

List of Maps

Mexico	8	Downtown Mexico City	106
Central Mexico's Pre-Columbian Treasures	88	Polanco/Chapultepec Area	115
The Best of Western Mexico	90	Historic Downtown (Centro Histórico)	127
Los Cabos to Copper Canyon	91	Chapultepec Park	129
La Ruta Maya	92	Coyoacán	131
Mexico City & Environs	95	San Angel	133

Alameda Park Area 135
 Teotihuacán 155
 Side Trips from Mexico City 160
 Taxco 163
 Ixtapan de la Sal 171
 Valle de Bravo & Avándaro 173
 Cuernavaca 177
 The Colonial Silver Cities 191
 Where to Stay in San Miguel de
 Allende 193
 Guanajuato 207
 Santiago de Querétaro 223
 Zacatecas 233
 San Luis Potosí 243
 Morelia 251
 Pátzcuaro 261
 Uruapan 271
 Downtown Guadalajara 285
 Puerto Vallarta: Hotel Zone &
 Beaches 295
 Downtown Puerto Vallarta 311
 Mazatlán Area 345
 Costa Alegre & Central Pacific
 Coast 361
 Barra de Navidad Bay Area 365
 Manzanillo Area 371
 Acapulco Bay Area 382
 Zihuatanejo & Ixtapa Area 405
 Downtown Zihuatanejo 411
 Puerto Escondido 421
 Oaxaca Area 445
 Downtown Oaxaca 447
 Monte Albán 465
 Palenque Archaeological Site 475
 Where to Stay &
 Dine in Palenque 477
 San Cristóbal de las Casas 483
 Puebla 497
 Tlaxcala 509
 Xalapa Orientation 513
 Downtown Veracruz 516
 Downtown Cancún 529
 Isla Cancún (Zona Hotelera) 535
 Isla Mujeres 557
 Cozumel 571
 San Miguel de Cozumel 575
 The Yucatán's Upper Caribbean
 Coast 591
 Playa del Carmen 597
 The Yucatán's Lower Caribbean
 Coast 619
 Where to Stay & Dine in Mérida 639
 The Copper Canyon 679
 Chihuahua 693
 The Baja Peninsula 699
 San José del Cabo 703
 The Two Cabos & the Corridor 714
 Cabo San Lucas 717
 The Lower Baja Peninsula 743
 Tijuana 751
 The Upper Baja Peninsula 757