



MEXICO CITY BOTANICAL TOUR

FAQS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: Will I be met at the airport?

A: You will be met by a tour leader at the airport to facilitate ground transportation to the hotel.

Q2: What is the name of the hotel the tour group will be staying at?

A: We will be staying at the Parador Monte Carmelo, C.de Manuel Garcia Vigil 705, Oaxaca, ph: +52 951 501 0514. It is situated within walking distance of the Zocalo (Main Square), with many nearby restaurants and shops.

Q3: How much future validity do I need on my passport to travel to Mexico? Do I need a visa? Should I make a copy of my passport?

A: U.S. Passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay in Mexico, with blank pages for immigration stamps. 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. It can be a digital copy to store on your smartphone or a photocopy to keep with you. A copy will facilitate obtaining an emergency replacement if it should be lost.

Q4: What immunizations are required or recommended?

A: No immunizations are currently required to visit Mexico. For the most current information, you may wish to consult your medical doctor or check the Center for Disease Control website.

Q5: How much cash should I bring?

A: You don't need to travel with much cash in the form of USD while in Mexico. With ATMs readily available at the airport and near the hotel, \$50-\$200 in USD cash should suffice.

Q6: How can I get Mexican Pesos?

A: Using an ATM/Debit card in Oaxaca City is an easy and convenient way to withdraw money in Pesos (often limited to a few hundred dollars per day). There are ATMs at the airport and banks throughout the city. You can easily get cash in Pesos before leaving the airport and replenish your funds at ATMs around town. You will likely get a better exchange rate in Oaxaca City than in a U.S. bank.

If you plan to convert USD to Pesos, we recommend you do so at one of the exchange kiosks at the airport. The rates can differ slightly, so you can compare before deciding which offers the better deal. Purchasing Pesos at a U.S. bank may result in a lower exchange rate.

Q7: Are credit cards accepted?

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

Q8: 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, it is important to check with the bank and/or your credit card company to see if they require notification before using the cards in Mexico. This will alleviate having cards "suspended" until they can verify the legitimacy of the "suspicious" charges.

Q9: Should I get travel insurance or minimum medical emergency and evacuation insurance?

A: **Travel insurance is highly recommended.** U.S. News & World Report's online "11 Best Travel Insurance Companies" at <https://travel.usnews.com/features/the-best-travel-insurance-companies>, lists and compares multiple providers, each offering various coverages. You may also wish to consider **minimum medical emergency & evacuation insurance.**

Q10: What is Oaxaca City weather like in October and November?

A: The temperatures will be in the high-70s to low-80s during the day and low to mid-50s at night. The evening temperatures may be cool, so a lightweight pullover or jacket may be practical. A hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen are helpful for our outdoor excursions: walking about the Centro Historico, visiting the Monte Abla archaeological site, strolling to Templo Santo Domingo, etc. Oaxaca City's chance of rain that time of year is 18%. You may pack an umbrella just in case. It may also be a good idea to carry a lightweight water bottle, which can be refilled at the hotel or locations offering filtered water.

Q11: What to Pack/What to Wear

Oaxaca City is much like the U.S. 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, dresses, skirts, and long pants/jeans are appropriate. T-shirts, collared shirts, and polos paired with long pants are proper for men. Shorts are considered resort wear or for children. Sunglasses and a hat can be helpful. Shoes should be c-o-m-f-o-r-t-a-b-l-e and designed for walking.

Q12: What is the altitude in Oaxaca City?

A: You will be at an altitude of over 5,100 feet, almost double Tucson's 2600 feet. So, the first couple of days may require some adjustment. It is important to stay hydrated to avoid feeling dizzy.

Q13: Are there pharmacies and medical offices readily available near our hotel?

A: Yes, a pharmacy and hospital are within walking distance.

Q14: What is Mexico's national emergency number?

A: Like in the U.S., you can call 911 in Mexico and connect with an emergency operator.

Q15: Is internet service available at the hotel?

A: Yes, our hotel provides free WiFi, as do many restaurants and cafes.

Q16: Do I need a special plug/adaptor or transformer to use or charge my smartphone, laptop, etc?

A: The power plugs in Mexico City are the same as in the U.S. You will not need an adapter. Mexico operates on a 127V supply voltage and 60Hz, which is very similar to the U.S.'s 110V and 60Hz. There should be no issues using electronic devices while traveling in Mexico.

Q17: Can I use my cell phone in Mexico?

A: Many cell phone companies include Mexico in their plan's service. You can check with your carrier to see if Mexico is included in your plan; if not, you may wish to look into purchasing a "travel pass" for Mexico for the duration of the trip.

Q18: How do I make an international call to the U.S.?

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).

Q19: Is the hotel room equipped with a hairdryer and an iron?

A: Yes, each room is equipped with both.

Q20: Can I drink water from the tap?

A: Tap water is generally unsafe in Oaxaca City and throughout Mexico. The hotel will provide two bottled waters in your room daily. They can be refilled at the filtered water dispenser in the lobby at no cost. Bottled or filtered water is readily available at tourist sites, hotels, and restaurants. Do not forget to use bottled water when brushing your teeth as well.

Q21: 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.

Q22: Is it safe to eat in the local restaurants?

A: Yes, but eating from street vendors or open markets can have risks.

Q23: Is tipping expected, and how much?

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

Q24: What is the pace and activity level of the tour?

A: The tour is moderately active. On a scale of 1 to 10, it would be a level 5 to 6. Travelers should be able to walk 2 to 3 miles, including climbing one or two flights of stairs and walking over uneven pavement or cobblestones. In addition, standing up for one to two hours may be required at some sites. The pace is moderate or level 5-6, on a scale of 1 to 10. Our itinerary includes two to three sites daily, allowing for a 90-minute lunch/rest break. Most venues offer benches or seating should you need to rest for a few minutes or catch your breath. Throughout each day, with regular restroom breaks at venues and restaurants. There are also opportunities to purchase bottled water at tour sites, kiosks, and mini-marts.

Q25: Should I be concerned about safety in Oaxaca City?

A: Although some of the states in Mexico are under a U.S. State Department "do not travel" or "reconsider travel" advisories, Oaxaca state is not. It has the same "exercise caution" warnings as France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and other

countries in the EU. According to Travel and Leisure, Oaxaca has become a top destination for foreign travelers. However, travel in Mexico may make some visitors (or their relatives) anxious. Once in beautiful Oaxaca City, you will soon see is not an inherently dangerous place, and your concerns will quickly melt away. Granted, as with any city, there are spots you should probably avoid, especially as a tourist. However, in the tourist-traversed areas, 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. It is advisable not to carry your passports 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.

Q26: Should I enroll in the U.S. 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 will enable you to **1.)** Receive important information from the State Department about safety conditions in your destination country; **2.)** Helps the U.S. Embassy or Consulate contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency, and **3.)** It allows family and friends to contact you in an emergency. You can create an account and enroll at <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

Q27: What is the best way to get around Oaxaca City?

A: The easiest way to get around is on foot. Many of the restaurants, shopping, museums, and sites of interest are within walking distance of our hotel. Taxis are also available and convenient alternatives for traveling greater distances.