

# SMALL-GROUP MÉXICO CITY TOUR

## FAQS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### Q1: Will I be met at the airport?

**A:** For those arriving by 5:00 PM: After landing, you will go through immigration and customs. Once you exit the arrival area, a tour leader will greet you and arrange your transfer to the Hotel. Your tour leader will be easily recognizable, holding a Casa Gonzalez sign and wearing a red polo shirt.

For those arriving after 5:00 PM, you can book a taxi at one of the kiosks inside the terminal. You pay for a ticket at the kiosk, then wait in line at the outdoor taxi stand for the next taxi. Credit cards are readily accepted. The city controls the kiosks, and the rate is set depending on the city zone you travel to. A sedan taxi to the tour Hotel in Zone 5 costs \$340-\$360 PESOS (\$20-\$25 USD). There are various companies to choose from, including Yellow Cab and Sitio 300, all of which are reputable and safe. **ADVISORY:** Be cautious of some vendors who may try to lure you to a much pricier executive van or luxury taxi. The tour will reimburse you for the cost of the sedan taxi. Tell them you want a sedan (SAY-DAN) at the time of purchase; if you do not, they may put you in a mid to large-sized executive van, which costs much more.

The booths accept credit cards or USD. If you pay in USD, they will give you change in Pesos. You will need to provide the person at the counter with your destination's name and address so they can enter the details to determine your zone and fare. Be sure to have the hotel address ready for the attendant.

HOTEL CASA GONZÁLEZ  
Rio Sena #69, Colonia Cuauhtémoc  
Ciudad de México 06500  
Tel. +(52 55) 5514-3302

You will be given two receipts: one for you and one for your taxi driver. We recommend tipping the driver a \$1.00 U.S. per bag.

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

**A:** See above; Hotel Casa Gonzalez is well situated in the Cuauhtémoc neighborhood, the US Embassy 2 blocks away, and the nearby Zona Rosa, known for its shopping, cafés, and nightlife – the area is considered to be reasonably safe.

### Q3: How much future validity do I need to have on my Passport to travel to México? Do I need a visa? Should I make a copy of my Passport?

**A:** US Passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay in México, with blank pages for immigration stamps. Visitors remaining in México for less than 180 days do not require a Mexican visa. It is advisable to make a copy of your Passport. You can make a digital copy to store on your smartphone. Alternatively, you can make two photocopies, one to keep with you and the second to keep in your luggage. A copy will help you obtain an emergency replacement if you lose your Passport.

### Q4: What immunizations are recommended/required?

**A:** No immunizations are currently required to visit México. For the most current information, you may wish to consult your medical doctor and/or check out the [Centers for Disease Control](#) website.

### Q5: How much money should I bring?

**A:** You don't need to travel with much cash in the form of USD while in México City. With ATMs and Casas de Cambio (Exchange Houses) readily available at the airport and near the Hotel, \$100-\$200 in USD cash should suffice. ATMs in México City are a convenient alternative. You can also easily replenish funds at one of the three banks with multiple ATMs within walking distance of the Hotel. Purchasing Pesos at a US bank may result in a lower exchange rate.

### Q6: How can I get Mexican Pesos?

**A:** You will generally get a better exchange rate in México City than in a US bank. If you plan to convert USD to Pesos, we recommend you do so at one of the many airport exchange kiosks. The rates can differ slightly, so compare before deciding which offers the better deal. Purchasing Pesos at a US bank may result in a lower exchange rate. Exchanging dollars for pesos at Mexican banks or money exchanges (Casas de Cambio) is easy, and both are close to our Hotel. Using an ATM/Debit card is another very convenient alternative to withdraw money in Pesos (often limited to a few hundred dollars

per withdrawal per day). ATMs are convenient, with several at the airport and one just a block from our Hotel. ATMs tend to offer the best exchange rates.

**Q7: Are credit cards accepted?**

**A:** Credit cards are widely accepted in major stores, large shopping areas, and museum shops. It is important to notify the bank/credit card company of your foreign travel plans to avoid having your cards "suspended" while they verify the legitimacy of "suspicious" charges.

**Q8: Is it a good idea to notify my bank/credit card company of my foreign travel plans?**

**A:** YES; if you plan to use your bank debit card or credit card while in México, you may wish to notify both the bank and/or your credit card company that you will be using the cards in México. This will prevent cards from being "suspended" until they can verify the legitimacy of the "suspicious" charges.

**Q9: Should I get travel insurance?**

**A:** Travel insurance is highly recommended. US News and World Report's 11 Best List offers multiple companies to choose from, each with various coverage options. Coverages may include trip cancellation, interruption, medical evacuation, medical secondary, etc. Here is a US News and World Report link to compare policies, coverages, and costs. <https://travel.usnews.com/features/the-best-travel-insurance-companies>

**Q10: What is México City's weather like in September?**

**A:** The temperatures will be in the mid-70s to high 70s during the day and in the mid-50s in the evening. The evening temperatures are pleasant, and each room has a ceiling fan. A lightweight pullover or jacket may be useful in the evenings. With México City's rainy season from May to September and an average rainfall of 2.3 inches in September, you may wish to pack an umbrella for occasional late-afternoon showers. It may also be a good idea to carry a lightweight water bottle, which can be refilled at the Hotel or at locations along the way that offer filtered water.

**Q11: What to Pack/What to Wear**

México City is much like the US. 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 all 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/or a hat can be helpful. There may be light rain in the evening, so you should pack an umbrella. Shoes should be c-o-m-f-o-r-t-a-b-l-e and designed for walking.

**Q12: What is the altitude in México City?**

**A:** You will be over 7,000 feet, so that the first few days will require some adjustment. You may feel dizzy if you do not keep hydrated. If you have an alcoholic beverage, you will notice the effect, particularly at a higher altitude. The Hotel has bottled water in the rooms. You should fill up your water bottles every morning before departure.

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

**A:** Yes.

PHARMACY: Farmacia San Pablo, at Calz. Manuel Villalongín 160, Cuauhtémoc, 06500 Ciudad de México, CDMX, México is four blocks from the Hotel and is open 24 hours.

MEDICAL CARE: Hotel Casa Gonzalez has a DOCTOR "ON CALL" 24 hours per day. He will come to the Hotel to assist guests who have become ill. The guest would arrange payment with the nurse.

URGENT CARE CLINIC: Hospital General De México Urgencias, Dr. Pasteur 96, Cuauhtémoc, 06720 Ciudad de México, CDMX, México, 25 minutes by taxi from the Hotel. Open 24 hours, Tel: (52) 55 2789-2000.

HOSPITAL: Hospital San Ángel Chapultepec, Av Chapultepec 489, Juárez, 06600 Ciudad de México, 15 minutes by taxi from the Hotel. Tel: (52) 55 5241-1700. Open 24 hours.

**Q14: What is México's national emergency number?**

**A:** Just like in the US, you can call 911 in México and connect with an emergency operator.

**Q15: Is internet service available at the Hotel?**

**A:** Our Hotel does provide WiFi. Most restaurants and coffee shops also offer free WiFi.

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

**A:** No, the power plugs in México City are the same as in the US. You will not need an adapter <https://www.power-plugs-sockets.com/mexico/>. México operates on a 127V supply voltage and 60Hz, which is very similar to the US's 120V supply voltage and 60Hz. There should be no issues using electronic devices while traveling in México.

**Q17: Do I need an electrical adapter to use my laptop, iPad, charge my smartphone, etc.?**

**A:** Electricity in México is 110 volts, the same as in the US. Electrical outlets are the same as those in the US, with either two flat prongs or two flat prongs with an additional round grounding pin.

**Q18: Can I use my cell phone in México?**

**A:** Many cell phone companies include México in their plans. Check with your carrier. If yours does not, you may wish to look into purchasing a "travel pass" for México for the duration of the trip.

**Q19: How do I make an international call to the US?**

**A:** For international mobile long-distance calls originating in México, 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).

**Q20: Does my hotel room have a security safe to secure travel documents, currency, valuables, etc.?**

**A:** Yes, each room is equipped with a security safe.

**Q21: Is the hotel room equipped with a hairdryer and an iron?**

**A:** Yes, each room is equipped with a hairdryer. No, the rooms are not equipped with irons. The Hotel can press your clothes for \$20 MXN per kilo. You can drop them off at the front desk; they will be ready in the afternoon. A "rush" pressing is \$30 MXN per kilo.

**Q22: Does the hotel offer laundry service?**

**A:** Laundry service for \$30 MXN per kilo (2.2lbs). If you turn in your laundry to the front desk before 10:00 AM, it will be ready by 4:00 PM."

**Q23: Can I drink tap water?**

**A:** No, tap water is generally unsafe to drink in México City and throughout México. Bottled water is readily available at tourist sites, hotels, and restaurants. Do not forget to use bottled water when brushing your teeth, too!

**Q24: Can I drink beverages served with ice in restaurants?**

**A:** Generally, yes, all the good restaurants use purified water for their ice and to wash fruits and vegetables.

**Q25: Is it safe to eat in the local restaurants?**

**A:** Yes, but eating from street vendors is not recommended.

**Q26: Is tipping expected, and how much?**

**A:** Yes, it is appropriate to tip servers and drivers when you are exploring on your own. The rate is similar to that in the US, at 10-15%.

**Q27: What is the pace and activity level of the tour?**

**A:** The itinerary calls for departing the Hotel each morning at 9:00 AM except Saturday, when we depart at 9:30 AM. We will be returning to the Hotel between 4:00 PM and 4:30 PM each day. On our last night, we will be departing the Hotel at 7:00 PM for a farewell dinner at a nearby restaurant, returning to the Hotel at 9:30 PM.

If we had to rate the tour's activity and pace levels, overall, on a scale of 1 to 10, the activity would be a level 5-6; travelers should be able to leisurely walk 1 to 2 miles, which includes climbing one or two flights of stairs and walking over uneven pavement or cobblestones. In addition, standing for up to 1 to 2 hours may be required at some sites. Regarding the pace, on a scale of 1 to 10, the tour is moderate or level 5-6, with our itinerary typically including three sites daily, allowing for a 90-minute lunch/rest break. Most, if not all, the venues offer benches and seating, should you need to rest for a few minutes or catch your breath. Throughout each day, there should be ample opportunities to purchase bottled water at tour sites, kiosks, or mini-marts, as well as restroom breaks at venues and restaurants.

**Q28: Should I be concerned about safety in México City?**

**A:** Although other areas of México are under higher US travel advisories and warnings, México City is not under any travel restrictions. As of March 10, it has a "Level 2 - Exercise increased caution" advisory by the US State Dept. This is the same advisory Level posted for Spain, France, Italy, and Germany. According to Fodor's Travel website, México City is a destination on the rise. However, it's one that often makes potential visitors (or, more accurately, the relatives of those visitors) fraught with unfounded fear. However, contrary to what many think, México City is not inherently dangerous for a

foreign tourist. Sure, as with any major world capital city, there are spots you should probably avoid, especially as a tourist. However, in the capital's tourist areas, the most prevalent danger is petty theft.

To avoid becoming a crime target, tourists need to be cautious, keeping a low profile and watching out for pickpockets. When in México City, you should not carry your passports while we are out during the day. We suggest a lightweight, easy-to-carry backpack or tote bag for storing things. Typically, men are advised not to carry a wallet. 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 anywhere by taking reasonable precautions to keep yourself safe, being aware of your surroundings, dressing inconspicuously, and not carrying excessive cash or wearing expensive jewelry.

**Q29: Should I enroll in the US State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)?**

**A:** The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service that allows US citizens traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. Enrollment is advised as it will enable you to 1.) Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country; 2.) Helps the US Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether a natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency, and 3.) It allows family and friends to reach you in an emergency. You can create an account and enroll at <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

**Q30: What is the best way to get around México City?**

**A:** The best way for visitors to get around in México City is by Uber, Taxi, bus, or metro in that order. Uber: It's super easy to use in México City and often cheaper than a regular taxi. For example, a trip from the Hotel to the Centro Histórico will cost about 60 Pesos (roughly \$3). Please consider downloading the Uber app on your smartphone (Lyft is not available). UBER transportation is safe, secure, and comfortable. You do not need to negotiate a price or exchange money if you have it set up from the US It is a global application that will automatically charge your credit card. You can generally calculate the fare by dividing the fare cited by 17 to get a sense of the cost in dollars.

**Taxi:** Use sitio (stationed) taxis at stands or call for one. Do not hail taxis on the street. Two reliable radio taxi companies, Servitaxi and Taximex, accept credit cards. If you need a taxi, the hotel reception desk can call one for you. If you are at a restaurant and need a taxi, have a host/hostess or waiter call you a sitio taxi.

**Buses:** Within México City, buses are a cheap and convenient way to travel, particularly the city's modern bus rapid transit system, the Metrobus. The fleet's red buses travel along fixed routes in their own dedicated lanes and pick up passengers at designated stations, just like a metro. Transportation cards can be purchased with pesos at automated machines located at each station, then loaded up with credit that can also be used for the city's fast, cheap, and frequently sardine-packed subway. Metrobus rides cost 6 Pesos; the metro is 5 Pesos. Buses often take longer than the underground metro. It is always wise to be conscious of your surroundings and belongings.

**Metro:** On the upside, the metro in México City is convenient, completely avoids the city's chaotic traffic, is easy to use, and costs 5 pesos (25¢) or less with a rechargeable card. On the downside, it is by far the most crowded method of transportation in the city. If possible, avoid using the metro during rush hour between 6 AM and 9:30 AM and between 5 PM and 7 PM. During these times, the carriages can be jam-packed and overwhelming as you find yourself pressed against fellow passengers like sardines, likely with someone's armpit in your general facial area. Otherwise, taking the metro in México City is relatively safe, but you should always be very aware of your surroundings and belongings.