

# The New York Times

## 36 Hours in Mexico City

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Link <http://goo.gl/RdptYx>

The Mexican capital is more cosmopolitan than ever, with world-class museums, vibrant street art and bustling markets.

Map <http://goo.gl/RdptYx>

Roma Ramble, 4 p.m.

In La Roma, secondhand bookstores and upholsterers are interspersed with designer shoe shops. Ring the bell at Fábrica Social, for hand-embroidered blouses and bags. Price tags name the local artisan and the number of hours it took to make the garment. Pick out handmade brogues or ankle boots at Goodbye Folk (about 2,600 pesos \$146) or have them made to measure. Grab coffee or a delicious brioche at La Puerta Abierta, a tiny bakery, then walk on to David Pompa's store, which sells beautiful hand-blown glass lights. Carla Fernández on Álvaro Obregón has bold geometric clothes based on Mexican weaves; or walk west to Carmen Rión's Condesa boutique, which sells gorgeous scarves.

New Mexican, 8 p.m.

Settle into a banquette in the gracious dining room at Quintonil, where Jorge Vallejo draws on pre-Hispanic ingredients to produce elegantly reinvented Mexican cuisine. Try the tostada with smoked crab, lime, radish and habanero chile or the steak in pulque, made with fermented agave sap. Indulge in a tamarind margarita or the signature Quintonil (mezcal, lime, mandarin and amaranth greens). Dinner costs about 8 pesos without drinks; a 10-course tasting menu is 1150 pesos. Reservations a must on weekends.

Cool Cantina, 10 p.m.

On Thursdays and Fridays, the Covadonga, a peach-walled cantina in La Roma with strip lighting and old-school waiters, draws a noisy local crowd that comes to drink beer or tequila, talk and play dominoes. Artists, writers and filmmakers mingle with old-timers; despite — or because of — its unapologetically retro aesthetic, the bar has become so trendy that it's often used for parties during Mexico's biggest art fair, Zona Maco, held in February.

Photo

A courtyard at the Franz Mayer Museum. Credit Adriana Zehbrauskas for The New York Times

Saturday

Corn Fixation, 9:30 a.m.

Gerardo Vázquez Lugo has brought to his new Condesa venture, Fonda Mayora, the dedication to tradition and local ingredients that made his restaurant Nico's a favorite for chefs. The jugo verde — a mix of cactus, celery and orange juice — arrives dark and frothy. Try the huevos encamisados, eggs cooked on a griddle inside a puffy tortilla, served with tasty bean stew (ask for salsa roja, a piquant sauce of tomato and guajillo chiles). Tortillas here are exceptional: Mr. Vázquez is fixated on corn, which is ground on site. Breakfast costs about 250 pesos.

Your Stripes, 11 a.m.

Swing by Telas Típcas, a bare-bones shop that sells narrow-striped cloth woven on wooden looms in Puebla State. The fabric, a rough, strong cotton, is suitable for upholstery and curtains and is a bargain at 90 pesos per meter. Call to check that open.

Art Walk, 11:30 a.m.

Mexico City's walls are a canvas where artists keep the country's tradition of muralism alive. Street Art Chilango's three-hour weekly walking tour reveals art that's hidden in plain sight: a stenciled face on a newspaper kiosk by Colombian artist Stinkfish; a Oaxacan woman gazing at a flock of birds by Oaxacan collective LaPiztola. Founded in 2013, Street Art Chilango helps artists find walls they can "legally" paint and produces artwork on commission. Book the Saturday tour (200 pesos a person) or a private tour (\$100 for up to eight people). Understand Mexico offers private tours for up to people at \$50 per hour; connoisseurs looking for a personal introduction to designers and artists can organize a visit with Mexico Cultural Travel for \$350 and up.

To Market, to Market, 2 p.m.

No trip to Mexico City is complete without eating at one of its many markets. Meche and Rafael's meat stand at the Mercado Medellín in La Roma (Local 349), serves succulent carnitas (Saturdays only) and crispy slabs of chicharrón. Wander among the pyramids of fruit and towering bags of chiles to Helados Palmeiro (Local 507), where Eugenio, a molecular biologist from Havana, makes deliciously creamy ice cream. The market to end all markets is La Merced, a staggering maze of vegetables, fruit, meat, piñatas, sweets, hardware — you name it — that occupies something like four football fields near the city center.

Cloister Collection, 4 p.m.

In a city of terrific museums, the Franz Mayer Museum is an overlooked gem. Mayer, a German-born financier, left a collection of decorative arts spanning three centuries in trust to the Bank of Mexico. It is housed in a gorgeous 18th-century building with a quiet cloister, which once served as a hospice run by the San Juan de Dios order of monks. Don't miss the 17th-century screen on the second floor that depicts the chaos of conquest on one side (look at this first) and, on the other, the pristine Mexico City that the artist (unknown) would have us believe succeeded it. The silver collection includes small 17th- and 18th-century goblets of carved coconut shells with silver stems, used by the gentry to drink chocolate. Admission is 45 pesos.

On the Half-Shell, 8 p.m.

A wave of surf-and-turf restaurants has broken over mile-high Mexico City and one of the best is La Docena, an airy space with floor-to-ceiling windows whose name refers

to its raw-bar offerings. If you don't want oysters, start with tangy Peruvian-style ceviche or a plate of grilled shrimp rubbed with paprika and garlic and move on to a juicy, charred hanger steak with sweet potato fries. Dinner starts at about 600 pesos without drinks.

Condesa Cocktails, 10 p.m.

Head to Condesa for a nightcap at Baltra, a small bar with soft lighting and excellent drinks, including an Old George Sour, a fragrant mix of tequila, cucumber and cardamom or a Melissa — gin, citronela and mint. Then move on to Felina, a relaxed Condesa hangout that's so discreet many miss it. On weekend nights, a DJ will get you moving. If it's mezcal you're after, check out La Clandestina, a hole in the wall where 20-odd mezcals are stored in -gallon bottles. The bartenders will guide you through the intimidating list of mezcals made from different kinds of agave, until you fall off your stool.

Photo

Felina, a relaxed Condesa hangout. Credit Adriana Zehbrauskas for The New York Times  
Sunday  
In-Crowd Breakfast, 9 a.m.

Lardo, the latest addition to Elena Reygadas's empire of restaurants, hums with the hip and well-heeled downing fresh juice — beetroot with pineapple, hibiscus with ginger — and the pastries for which her bakery, Rosetta, is justly known (a flaky turnover filled with fig compote; small, sweet brioche-like buns with rosemary). Sit at a wooden table or the brushed-copper bar and sink into a croque monsieur or poached eggs with hoja santa served in a little enamel caserole. Arrive early to beat the lines. Breakfast is about 200 pesos.

Colonial Oasis, 11 a.m.

In a city of crazy traffic, the cobbled lanes of San Ángel, lined with tumbling flowering plumbago shrubs, are a world apart. Wend along quiet streets like Santismo, once home to Rufino Tamayo, the late contemporary artist, and still home to the discreetly rich. The Museo Casa del Risco on the Plaza San Jacinto boasts a 24-foot fountain, decorated with pottery and china. Check out the lovely Museo el Carmen (admission 52 pesos), a former Carmelite monastery with an exhibit on the order and a collection of mummies. You can even freshen up with a 60-peso straight-razor shave, hot towels and all, at Baños Colonial, one of the city's few remaining bathhouses — let's the only close shave you'll have in Mexico.

Lodging

Housed in the 17th-century Palacio de los Condes de Miravalle in Centro, the Habita Group's Downtown hotel (Isabela la Católica 30, Centro; [downtownmexico.com](http://downtownmexico.com)) has 17 spacious rooms, with boveda brick ceilings. The complex includes a restaurant called Azul Historico, and high-end craft, chocolate and design shops. The rooftop bar has stunning views over the Casino Español. Bring earplugs. The basic rate for a "colonial" room with a king bed is \$262 CQ plus tax.

Casa Stella (Amsterdam 141, Condesa; [stellabb.com](http://stellabb.com)) in a gracious Art Deco house on Condesa's shady Amsterdam Avenue, has seven simple, elegant rooms, great

breakfast and friendly, accommodating staff. Prices are \$79 to \$173 plus tax.

Somewhere between a B&B and boutique hotel is the popular Red Tree House, (Culiacán 6, Condesa; [theredtreehouse.com](http://theredtreehouse.com)), which has 17 rooms. Single rooms, \$95 plus tax; suites \$250 plus tax.