

Sharing a common border throughout its northern extent with the United States, Mexico is bounded to the west and south by the Pacific Ocean, to the east by the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, and to the southeast by Guatemala and Belize. Mexico is located in one of the Earth's most dynamic tectonic areas. It is a part of the circum-Pacific "Ring of Fire"—a region of active volcanism. Mexico is one of the world's more biologically diverse countries, encompassing vast deserts, tropical rainforests, mangrove swamps, and alpine ecosystems. The country sits astride the commonly accepted boundary dividing the Nearctic and Neotropical biogeographic realms. Mexico's population grew more than sixfold from 1910 to the early 21st century. More than half of the Mexican people live in the centre of the country, whereas vast areas of the arid north and the tropical south are sparsely settled. Mexico City, the capital, is one of the most populous cities and metropolitan areas in the world.

**Museo Anahuacalli, Mexico City.** Anahuacalli, Diego Rivera's great dream for a City of the Arts in the south of Mexico City, comes to life in a landscape of volcanic stone dotted with native vegetation. Described as the "house on land between two seas", it is a temple to the arts fostering a permanent dialogue between pre-Hispanic and contemporary aesthetics. Rivera set out his project for the museum in the 1950s, designing and overseeing the construction of the main building. After his death in 1957, architect O'Gorman and Rivera's daughter Ruth continued his work. They envisioned buildings constructed from the same stone as the site and made murals on the ceilings with coloured stones that they later repeated at the Ciudad Universitaria. Before Taller Mauricio Rocha's extension in 2022, thousands of works of pre-Hispanic art that Rivera accumulated during his lifetime were stored away, but now many of them are on display. [museoanahuacalli.org.mx](http://museoanahuacalli.org.mx)

**Museo Tamayo, Mexico City.** Since its inauguration in 1981, the museum has presented the most significant modern and contemporary art in Mexico and abroad. It was designed in 1972 by Teodoro González de León and Abraham Zabludovsky who drew their inspiration from the pyramidal structures of pre-Hispanic architecture. The building is composed of a sequence of stepped platforms, without windows or doors, which rotate at 45 degrees in relation to the central courtyard. The architects chose to use concrete with crushed marble for both the exterior and the interior. Rufino Tamayo (1899–1991) is one of the most renowned artists of the second half of the 20th century. Born in the state of Oaxaca to a family with Zapotec roots, Tamayo sought to create paintings in "the Mexican tradition", distancing himself from the political and nationalist movements that dominated Mexican art after the Revolution. [museotamayo.org](http://museotamayo.org)

**Barragán Foundation, Mexico City.** Born in Guadalajara in 1902, Luis Ramiro Barragán Morfín is regarded as the most prominent figure in modern Mexican architecture. By the time of his death in 1988, his persona and way of working had attained almost mythical status, and the interest in his oeuvre has increased ever since. Praised in the Pritzker Prize laudatio for "his commitment to architecture as a sublime act of poetic imagination", Barragán's architectural approach embraced the principles of Modernism while remaining deeply rooted in Mexican tradition. A list of Barragán's work over five decades amounts to 170 entries and includes projects in Guadalajara, Mexico City and Monterrey, among others. [barragan-foundation.org/works/map](http://barragan-foundation.org/works/map)

**Teotihuacán, State of Mexico.** The holy city of Teotihuacán ("the place where the gods were created") is situated some 50 km north-east of Mexico City. Built between the 1st and 7th

centuries AD, it is characterized by the vast size of its monuments – in particular, the Temple of Quetzalcoatl and the Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon, laid out on geometric and symbolic principles. As one of the most powerful cultural centres in Mesoamerica, Teotihuacán extended its cultural and artistic influence throughout the region, and even beyond. The pre-Hispanic City of Teotihuacán fully preserves its monumentality, urban design and artistic wealth, as well as the relationship of the architectural structures with the natural environment, including its setting in the landscape. [inah.gob.mx/zonas/23-zona-arqueologica-de-teotihuacan](http://inah.gob.mx/zonas/23-zona-arqueologica-de-teotihuacan)

**Puebla.** The city of *Puebla de los Ángeles* was founded *ex nihilo* in 1531, among the boundaries of the indigenous dominions of Tlaxcala, Cholula and Cuauhtinchán, following Spain's regal recommendations to not take possession of indigenous territories. The historic centre has retained its integrity primarily through the retention and extension of the original Renaissance grid plan laid out the mid-16th century. The city is situated in the Valley of Cuertaxcoapan at the foot of one of Mexico's highest volcanoes, known as Popocatepetl. [whc.unesco.org/en/list/416](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/416)

**Oaxaca.** The World Heritage property, located in the region known as the Central Valleys of Oaxaca in the depression formed between the Sierra Madre Oriental and the Sierra Madre del Sur, is composed of two distinct cultural sites: the historic centre of Oaxaca de Juárez and the archaeological site of Monte Albán. Inhabited over a period of 1,500 years by a succession of peoples—Olmecs, Zapotecs and Mixtecs—the terraces, dams, canals, pyramids and artificial mounds of Monte Albán were literally carved out of the mountain and are the symbols of a sacred topography. The nearby city of Oaxaca, which is built on a grid pattern, is a good example of Spanish colonial town planning.

**Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca.** Fundación Casa Wabi is a non-profit, civil association that fosters an exchange between contemporary art and local communities in three locations: Puerto Escondido, Mexico City and Tokyo. The mission is focused on forging social development through the arts, carried out through five key programmes: residencies, exhibitions, clay workshops, films and a mobile library. Casa Wabi is located on the Pacific Coast, 30 minutes from the Puerto Escondido airport. Set between the mountains and the sea, the headquarters have been designed by Japanese architect Tadao Ando and under the initiative of Mexican artist Bosco Sodi. Japanese architect Kengo Kuma conceived the *Chicken Coop* (2019) as a representation of collective housing. The structure is built from charred wooden boards following the traditional Japanese technique of *Shou Sugi Ban* which is intended to contrast with the environment of the Mexican beaches. As the first work of Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza in Mexico, the *Clay Pavilion* (2017) is intended to hold clay workshops for children and young people. The main objective of the programme is to fully revalue the importance and organic nobility of this material. The curved wall—made entirely of local bricks—forms a patio that houses the low-temperature kiln. Paraguayan architects Solano Benítez and Gloria Cabral (Estudio Gabinete de Arquitectura) designed the *Compost Pavilion* (2020) based on recycled brick and cement fragments, which form patterns of light and shadow throughout the day. [casawabi.org](http://casawabi.org)

**"Riviera Oaxaqueña". Mazunte Beach** has flown under the radar for years, known mostly to backpackers, hippies, and beach lovers. *Puerto Ángel* is a small coastal town. Despite tourism development since the 1960s, the town is still mostly a fishing village. From where ocean meets land, there are only a couple of hundred metres of flat land before the terrain steeply rises into rocky hills that lead to the Sierra Madre del Sur.

