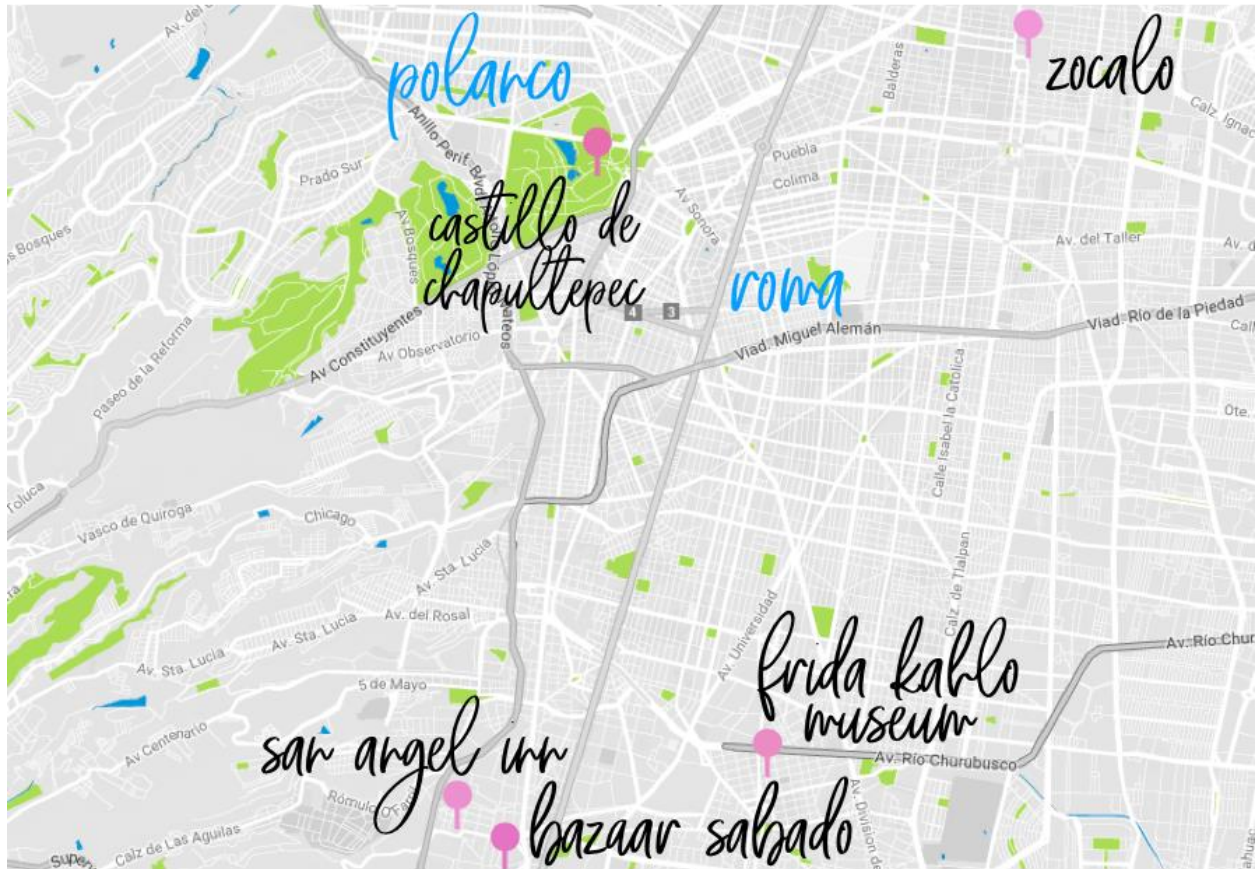


MEXICO CITY GUIDE – THE PERFECT WEEKEND GETAWAY



I have gone twice to Mexico City – once with a group of 7 girls for a weekend getaway and once with my husband to celebrate our one year anniversary. I went back with my husband 4 months after my first trip soooo yeah I love it. What drew me to the city was the FOOD first of all. Mexico City is known to be a huge culinary destination from top global chefs to anybody with a love of acidic, spicy flavors. The city is also home to amazing regional shopping, beautiful palaces and parks, Mexican culture and heritage, colorful architecture, mayan ruins outside the city, world-class museums and more. I would stay for a minimum of two nights to get a sense of the region (and eat as many meals as possible), but longer is always better! If you are from outside the US and wanted to make the trip longer you could add on San Miguel de Allende, Oaxaca, or any beach destinations like Riviera Maya (Tulum, Cancun, Playa del Carmen) or Cabo.

Both of my trips to Mexico City have revolved around the food and I didn't do many of the side excursions like the ruins or the hot air balloon thing, but I will cover below everything I did! The map shows a majority of the places I'll talk about for perspective. The city is huge!



SHOULD I GO TO MEXICO CITY?

Yes! If you love any of the following: Mexican food, Mexican culture, bright colors, Mexican goods, nature. Mexico City has it all. Honestly though the biggest draw is that from Texas it can be a very, very cheap flight. When you get there, prices are very low for accommodations and transportation as well, making it a no brainer. It is the perfect long weekend trip. A friend of mine even spent half her honeymoon here!

SIDE NOTE ON SAFETY:

I'm sure if you are thinking about going and have brought it up to your parents, they are a little freaked out. The generation before us has a very bad taste in their mouth about Mexico City! I think as long as you are a conscientious traveler and stay away from bad areas, there is absolutely nothing to worry about (I took barely any photos this trip because I kept my purse closed the whole time with my phone inside, for example). I never once felt threatened. My company has a strong focus on safety and security, so I am always hyper-vigilant when traveling. But I never even got the nervous tingles on this trip. All the tips I give below are just to make sure you're ultra smart about being safe, not because I experienced something bad.

WHAT TIME OF YEAR IS BEST TO VISIT MEXICO CITY?

I think year round it would be okay. I went in March and again in July. Since the altitude is high, it does not get crazy hot in the summer like other places.

HOW DO I GET TO MEXICO CITY?

Fly! If you live in Texas, you have to go for a weekend because of the deals and the low cost. There's only one airport in Mexico City. I would recommend using Uber when you land at the airport to get to your accommodation. The prices are low, and it felt like the safest option to me. One time, my Uber did not speak English but my elementary level Spanish allowed me to say "puerta nueve" (door nine) to tell him what door I was at.

[Check out Google Flights to find a flight deal to Mexico City](#)

WHERE SHOULD I STAY IN MEXICO CITY?

Both times I stayed in the Polanco neighborhood. This is one of the most high-end neighborhoods in the city, and it is pretty central as well. The first time we stayed in a very nice Airbnb, and the second time I stayed in the **[JW Marriott](#)** because the prices were so good. Both were great accommodations, but I liked the hotel more. But I would definitely look in the Polanco neighborhood to be on the safe side.

I have had a few friends stay in the Roma neighborhood and they have loved it as well. They said it felt very safe, and it was a quiet space to walk around.

I would avoid staying in the downtown area. There are some very new, cool looking hotels and Airbnbs there, but I did feel a little uncomfortable walking around.

[Check out TripAdvisor to find a hotel to stay at](#)

[Check out AirBnB to find a great rental spot](#)

HOW DO I GET AROUND MEXICO CITY?

Uber!! Most phone plans include Mexico at no cost, so you do not need an international plan to get an Uber. The prices were literally \$2-\$3 per trip. Very low. The city is not super walkable.

HOW MANY DAYS SHOULD I SPEND IN MEXICO CITY?

For me, I really just needed 1-2 full days here. There is one activity (more below) that is my favorite thing ever and is where I would go time and time again. For this I only need 1 day. There are activities outside of Mexico City like the ruins and canals, and for those activities you would need more than 1 day. Maybe even more than 2.

IS THERE A LANGUAGE BARRIER IN MEXICO CITY?

Actually, yes. Mexico City has very few English speakers! Which was amazing to me. I think it's because tourism is not very big there (because most people think it's unsafe!), so they don't have much need to know English. Just have google translate at the ready, and you should be fine.

WHAT IS THERE TO DO IN MEXICO CITY?

BAZAAR SABADO

I love this place so much. It's basically a market on Saturdays that has the most beautiful Mexican goods. I could totally fill a whole suitcase with the things I have found here, and it is what keeps me wanting to come back to Mexico City again and again. Think hand blown glassware, otomi print everything, beautiful hand painted ceramics, Mexican dresses, etc. This market is only open on Saturdays and is a 30-40 minute Uber from Polanco. I would get there early, 10-11 AM, to beat the crowds. My favorite find was some Otomi pillow cases that I had framed. They were roughly \$10 each. I bought otomi print runners as gifts for people, and those were roughly \$50 each. They retail for \$200 at some places in the states!! Remember to bring cash as most of the stands only take cash.

You can just type in Bazaar Sabado as your destination when you are taking the Uber. When you get there, there is an open square/Park thing that is covered with stands selling artwork. Right next to this square, you will see several stalls on the other side of the street (this is where the Otomi lady is, she does NOT budge on her prices so good luck haggling her down). If you head up the street a little bit, you will

see that there is a whole outdoor market with several stalls selling slightly lesser quality things for the most part, but it's still nice to walk around. The main event though is housed inside the beautiful building – you will see an entrance selling bright paper flowers. The shops in here surround the courtyard in two layers, and there is also an upstairs.



In the courtyard, you can find a brunch buffet that is absolutely delicious!!! It was only about \$8 per person. Both times I've come, I've done the buffet. The only difficult part is that you are itching to start shopping around!

MUST BUYS:

- Otomi print everything from the otomi lady outside (otomi coasters, placemats, runners, pillow cases)
- Hand painted ceramics from the lady in the corner shop of the bazaar – she makes the most beautiful nativity scenes I have ever seen. I wanted to buy one for every room.
- Mexican clothes, especially for little babies. I got a baby guayabera for my friends son's 1 year birthday and I can't even handle how cute he looked.
- Mexican chocolate, mezcal, and other food products
- I also got a beautiful hand painted cross from the bank of tents in the square behind the Sabado that I adore
- I want to go back and buy glassware from the store inside the bazaar

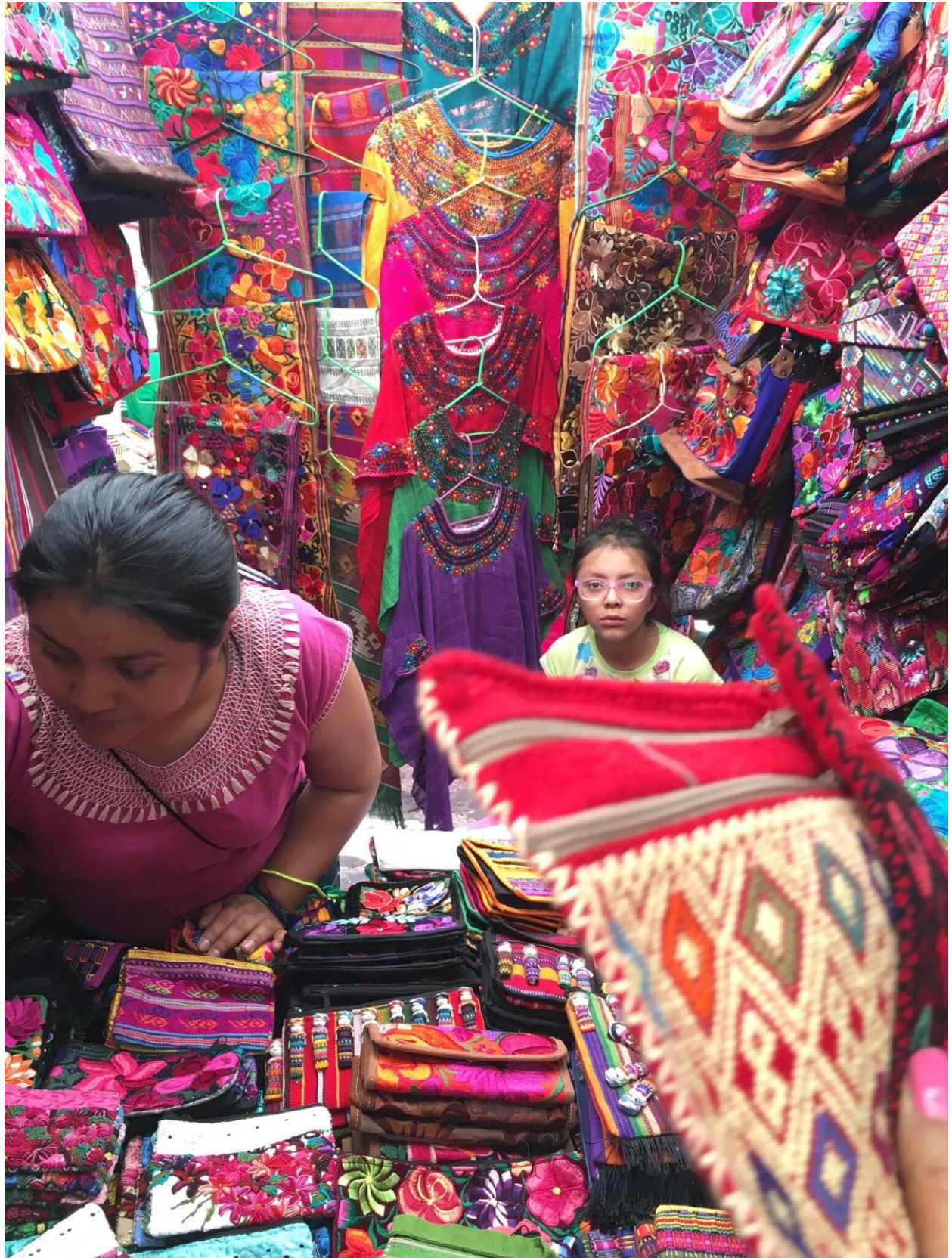
Around the bazaar, there are even more cute shops to shop around in at slightly higher price points. Especially on the corner of the art square and the tents square.

I could absolutely spend hours and \$100s of dollars here. If you want a great end to your shopping, head to **San Angel Inn** which is nearby for some margaritas. It is a gorgeous hotel full of gorgeous people with a beautiful courtyard.

Word to the wise: do not buy a snow cone or anything dealing with ice from the street vendors!! I had a lapse in my vigilance and bought one, ate it, and regretted it very much if you know what I mean.









CASTILLO DE CHAPULTEPEC

This is my second favorite thing to do in Mexico City. It's a **castle on top of a hill** in the middle of the park in Polanco!!

Put on your walking shoes and head that way through Polanco to the park. If your route allows you, make sure and walk along Paseo de la Reforma. It's a very pretty street, and on Sundays it's shut down to traffic. You will start walking up hill to the castle (Side note: your student id allows you to enter for free).

There may be a tram if you don't feel like walking, but I never did find it. Anyways, you walk up to the castle and the views are absolutely gorgeous. The prettiest views are in the gardens to the left, and at the other side (the patio) of the castle after you walk through it. I'm not much of a "views" hunter, but with the leafy backdrop of the park, the centuries old stonework, and the gorgeous black and white tiles, it's amazing.



ZOCALO / CITY CENTER AREA

There are several things to see in the zocalo. I advise you to walk around and see if you feel comfortable, and leave if you don't. I would absolutely not come in the evening. It's a very busy area which is never a good thing in a city. When I went with my husband, there were lots of policemen with heavy gear on that did not make me comfortable. When I asked a few shop-owners if that was normal, they were confused. I think the reason there were so many was because there was a soccer game going on in the main plaza, but I still didn't love the vibes and we left.

In the zocalo, a cool stop is the hotel "**Downtown Mexico**" that has some great shops and restaurants. It's a relatively new, very cool development. Seeing the cathedral is always nice. There are several restaurants as well. A really great rooftop bar nearby is called **El Balcón del Zócalo**.



FRIDA KAHLO MUSEUM

I never did do this because you have to buy tickets in advance and pick a time slot. I do not like being tied to a time when I travel. However, many people come to Mexico City for this! If it is a must for you, I have read that you should **buy your tickets ahead of time**. It is close to Bazaar Sabado, so you can probably schedule it around your market trip!

BRUNCH AT THE FOUR SEASONS

When I went with my girlfriends to Mexico City, we had 2 full days. They were all really feeling a boujee **brunch at the Four Seasons**. It ended up being really fun with all of us drinking unlimited prosecco in the Four Seasons courtyard for 4 hours for about \$50 a person. The whole time I was kind of itching to explore more of the city, but I did love it. It's a good option if you have some extra time here. The brunch was buffet and also very, very delicious.





ANTHROPOLOGY MUSEUM

I had heard great things about this museum, so my husband and I went there. Honestly, I found it to have a poor layout, and everything was in Spanish. I am not a museum person in the first place, and I usually only enjoy museums if they have a specific route with either audio guides or large text for the important concepts (lol). So for me, this was a no. Basically, if you're not a museum person this may not be for you.

WHERE DO I EAT IN MEXICO CITY?

Lots of people come to Mexico City for the food! **Pujol** was one of the first restaurants featured on the Netflix series Chef's Table. That and **Quintonil** are listed in the Top 20 Restaurants in the World list. It will be a pricy experience, but an exciting one. You must book these reservations at least 3 months in advance and put a credit card down.

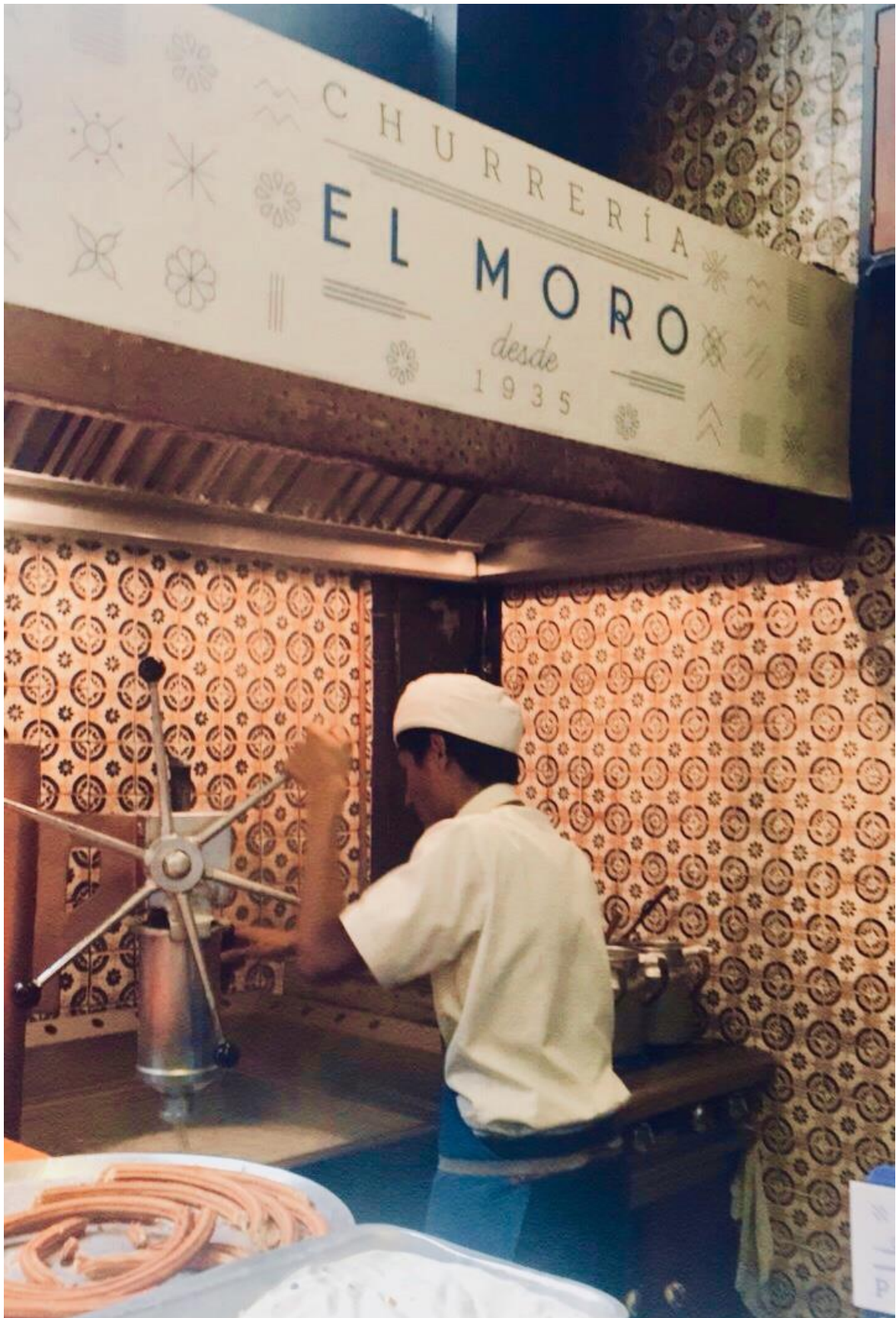
The restaurant scene is definitely changing but here are some popular ones:

- **Contramar**
- **Azul** – beautiful interiors, one location is Downtown Mexico
- **El Cardenal** – classic, but kind of touristy
- **Rosetta** – had a friend go here and love it, Italian food
- **Huset** – the same friend ate here and loved it, said it had a great outdoor patio
- **Mercado Roma** – a new food hall that has some great options, we got churros and chocolate here
- **Maximo Bistrot** – a famous, nice restaurant that you need a reservation for
- El Vilsito – an al pastor shack that is supposed to be great
- La Casa del Pastor – this is a chain that I stopped at before I flew home to get tacos because of its convenience to our place. It was super good.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to try all of these, and I know there are so many more places than this!!!! I would advise you to just do your research and see where you want to go.







WHERE DO I GO OUT IN MEXICO CITY?

There are lots of bars. Some you can just walk up to and have a drink. There are also lots of nightclubs, but we found that we got rejected from most – it seemed like they wanted to keep the American tourists out. Sad. I hope you have better luck.

WHAT SHOULD I PACK FOR MEXICO CITY?

The weather is usually pretty temperate. The dress is pretty urban. Do not wear flashy jewelry, and make sure your purse completely closes so you're not a potential pickpocket victim!

I wore jeans and tops most of the time with comfortable walking shoes for the day. They dress well in Mexico City, so I would not go "too" casual (cut off shorts and a crop top, for example). You don't want to draw attention to yourself – be smart!

HONESTLY, HOW MUCH DID YOU SPEND IN MEXICO CITY?

TOTAL – \$740

Flight – \$250

AirBnB (3 nights) – \$175 / person

Uber – \$35

Food (includes Quintonil) – \$240

Shopping – \$40

MY PERFECT MEXICO CITY ITINERARY

Day 1 – Get in and check into your accommodation. If you have time before dinner, walk around the neighborhood or even try and squeeze in Castillo de Chapultepec. Grab a margarita somewhere! Have dinner at a nice place (reservations in advance are a good idea).

Day 2 – Leisurely get up and get your pesos. Take an Uber to Bazaar Sabado. Have the buffet brunch in the courtyard! Shop around the rest of the day! Head to San Angel Inn after for some margaritas. Go home to unpack your findings and get ready for dinner. Go get margaritas somewhere before dinner. Head to dinner.

Day 3 (optional) – Make sure and see Castillo if you haven't yet. Go see the Zocalo and have lunch at Downtown Mexico. Get a casual dinner somewhere before heading home the next day.