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Visit Chichen Itza in Mexico

Mexico is a land of diversity, which offers visitors many different experiences, whether they are after a cultural break, an archaeological adventure, historical trip or a sun-filled relaxing holiday.

With two million square kilometres of land divided into 32 states, this country, which is bordered by the US, Guatemala and Belize, is vast and unlikely to disappoint visitors on an [adventure tour](#).

From sunshine breaks in the popular holiday destination Cancun to a fast-paced trip to Mexico City, there is plenty to do.

Some highlights include visiting the Aztec pyramids of Teotihuacan near Mexico City, exploring the ancient Mayan temples of Tulum on the Caribbean Sea, snorkelling in the clear waters of the Mayan Riviera or trekking through the jungles of Palenque.

Mexico is home to one of the seven new wonders of the world and a visit to the country would not be complete without an [adventure tour to Chichen Itza](#).

Chichen Itza

Without doubt, [Chichen Itza](#) is one of the highlights of any visitor's trip to the country and with a history that is still largely clouded in mystery it is guaranteed to leave people wanting to learn more about its impressive temples.

Situated on the immense plain of the northern [Yucatan Peninsula](#), it is one of the most spectacular ceremonial centres of all antiquity and a must for anyone contemplating adventure travel in Mexico.

It is made up of a large number of impressive temples and monuments, which are connected by a dense network of paved roads, and forms part of one of the largest sites cleared from the jungle surroundings.

Although its exact history is shrouded in mystery, there are some things that are known about Chichen Itza - a large Mayan civilization was known to live in the area between 700 AD and 900 AD and the Mayans are believed to have built the majority of the structures. But some buildings have Toltec influence and legend suggests that the Toltec leader could have defeated the Mayan city tribes to make Chichen Itza his capital.

Whatever the origins of the structures, historians have worked out that the area was a major focal point in the region and the cenote was used as a place to sacrifice animals and humans to the Maya rain god Chaac.

But, all this changed in 1534 when the Spanish invaders seized Chichen Itza and turned it into a cattle ranch.

Today it is a major highlight for visitors on an adventure tour of Mexico and by wandering around the ancient structures, people will get a feel for the area whose name translates to mean "At the mouth of the well of the Itza" or "Magicians of water".

Most of the buildings have been restored and visitors can usually see the best bits in a day trip, although longer visits are also popular and a two-day trip is recommended.

Finding your way around the monuments

The three best known complexes in Chichen Itza are the Great North Platform, which includes the monuments El Castillo, the Temple of Warriors and the Great Ball Court, the Ossario Group, which contains a pyramid of the same name and the Temple of Xtoloc, and the Central Group, made up of Caracol, Las Monjas and Akrab Dzib.

Most visitors flock to the Sacred Cenote, a deep circular sinkhole in the limestone bed - the site of sacrificial ceremonies.

This is an interesting spot for those curious about the tales of children draped with offerings of treasure being given to the gods. Under the sinkhole the bones of many humans, who were mainly children, have been discovered alongside jewellery, pottery and figurines.

At the entrance to the site the large visitors' centre contains bookshops and a small museum for people to learn more about one of Mexico's most famous destinations.

There are also restaurants and a cafe to relax at and models of Chichen Itza - a good look at one of these will prove handy when exploring the structures.

Each evening there is a sound and light show which has proved popular with visitors and is a highlight of any trip to the site.