

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



FIND YOURSELF IN TEOTIHUACÁN, MEXICO MAY 2-7, 2019

PASSPORT REQUIRED!

US Citizens need a passport. If you don't have a passport, get one. This process could take several months. Start now!

If you have a passport, make sure the expiration date is at least 6 months after your departure date.

If you're a citizen of another country, please check your requirements, as they may be different.

FLIGHTS

It is your responsibility to book your round-trip flight from your home to Mexico City. Flights are not included in the cost of the trip.

To use the pre-paid hotel transfers you **MUST**:

ARRIVE by 3:00 PM on Thursday, MAY 2

DEPART after 3:00 PM on Tuesday, MAY 7

In the past everyone arrived around 12:00 NOON. This is ideal, as we can leave as soon as everyone arrives and not have to wait a long time for anyone.

If those flight times don't work for you, or you have questions, please let me know. We can work out alternate plans for you.

TOURIST CARD

On your airplane, or at the airport, you'll receive an immigration form to fill out. There is an area that asks for the contact information of where you're staying. It's rather small so just write **Casa de los Suenos, in Teotihuacan**. (Spanish for Dreaming House) You don't need the full address.

As you go through Customs & Immigration at the Mexico City airport, they'll tear off and hand back to you a small portion of this form. **DON'T LOOSE THIS LITTLE PIECE OF PAPER. YOU MUST HAVE IT TO GET OUT OF MEXICO.** I suggest you **keep it in the back page of your passport** so you'll have it with you when you return to the airport to leave Mexico.

TRANSFER TO HOTEL

As you exit customs, hang out just outside the customs area. You'll recognize this area because when the doors open you're immediately faced with people waiting to greet their family and friends as they exit. **Look for someone holding a sign that says, "The Dreaming House"**. If you don't see us, keep hanging out there. Outside of customs is the place we'll be looking for you. There are 2 terminals with customs at Mexico City airport. We'll know your arrival terminal, because you'll tell us your flight on the registration form. It's possible we're picking up someone else at the other terminal and we're heading to your terminal.

If you miss your flight, you're delayed, or don't find us at the airport, TEXT ME at (512) 656-1287. If you don't get me, call the Dreaming House +52 594 956 3969.

Once everyone is accounted for, we'll go to the moneychangers and ATMs to get pesos. Then we'll board our private van for the 60-90 minute drive to Teotihuacan.

ELECTRICITY

Your plugs will work in their outlets. You don't need a converter. Phone chargers, etc. will work.

MONEY – GETTING PESOS

Few, if any, places around Teotihuacan take credit cards, so it's important that you have some pesos with you. By the time we leave the Mexico City airport you should have all the pesos you think you'll need for the entire trip. **There are no local banks or ATMs at Teotihuacan.** If you must use an ATM during your stay, a taxi can be arranged to take you to the ATM in a nearby village.

You'll have the opportunity to exchange your money - cash or traveler's checks - into pesos at the Mexico City airport. You can use your debit or credit card to get pesos at the ATMs in the airport. Beware of your card's daily withdrawal limits, though. Also, be aware that if you want to use your credit card for cash withdrawals, and you don't normally do this, then you may have to activate a PIN number before you go. This may involve snail mail. So allow time to get a PIN activated before the trip if you plan to use your credit card at the ATM.

When exchanging money, ask for some small denominations (20, 50 peso notes). The shops and vendors in Teotihuacan often cannot change large bills. Sometimes the moneychangers at the airport have it and are willing to give you small bills, and sometimes you have to accept what they have available.

MONEY – HOW MUCH?

It's difficult to say how much money you'll need, as everyone's spending patterns are unique. **I suggest you bring at least \$300-\$400 in US Dollars, plus \$90-\$100 to convert to Pesos.** We'll exchange at the airport. ...bring more if you shop and snack a lot.

See the chart on the last page where I describe the opportunities to spend money. **Adjust my estimates based on your spending tendencies.**

PHONES

Phone calls, texting and data use can be very expensive once you leave the US. It's worth the effort to determine how you will use your phone and plan how to mitigate the costs. Otherwise you might run up a bill in the \$1000s.

Text Messaging is cheaper than phones calls. Make sure your service provider activates your text messaging for international service.

If you plan to do a lot of calling or texting, consider getting a free app for internet based (Wi-Fi) calling or texting like Skype or WhatsApp.

Consider getting an international travel package for the duration of your trip from your service provider, if you want to use your phone away from Wi-Fi. This is especially useful if you want to make private calls in your room, or use your Smart Phone features like GPS, or you like to post pictures immediately when you take them at the pyramids.

WI-FI

Our hotel has Wi-Fi in the dining area only. This becomes the hang out place during our free time.

There is an Internet café in the village we're staying in should you need a computer.

MEALS

The home cooked meals at The Dreaming House are tasty and varied. Yum! I'm remembering my favorites as I write this. You won't be ordering from a menu. It's like you're at someone's home. Whatever meal they cook is what there is to eat.

On the registration form, **please tell us if you have any special dietary needs.** The Dreaming House will do all they can to accommodate everyone. If you have particular dietary requirements, consider bringing items from home to supplement what is available, shopping is limited there.

Timing of meals is Mexican style:

- Big breakfast (~ 8:00 am)
- Snack (~11:00 am while we're hiking the ruins. Bring your favorite trail snacks.)
- Big lunch (~ 3:00 pm)
- Light dinner (~ 8:00 pm)



What to expect at meal times:

- At breakfast, you'll stroll in and find the first course waiting for you at your chair, juice and a plate of seasonal fruit (maybe mango, papaya, banana, cantaloupe or cactus fruit). In the center of the table are toast, butter, jam, and yogurt to share.

You'll help yourself to Mexican coffee, or the hot water and assorted teas. If you have a favorite tea, feel free to bring a few tea bags from home. I don't drink coffee, but they tell me the Mexican coffee doesn't taste like what Americans are used to. The mornings are usually chilly, so you'll enjoy the warm beverage as we gather.

A variety of main breakfast dishes are on a buffet counter where they serve us as much as we want. There's usually a scrambled egg dish, a bean dish, and a pancake or bread dish. One of my favorites is the banana pancakes.

- **Lunch is the big meal of the day.** You'll be hungry after walking around the ruins, and it will be late. **About 3:00 pm.** Typically, we'll go through a buffet table containing a soup, a green salad, a main course, vegetables, beans and plenty of tortillas. Just when you think you're stuffed, they bring a tasty dessert. Another of my favorites, which they call water, is a light tasting fruit drink, like watermelon, hibiscus, or other local fruits.
- Dinner is very light. It could be popcorn, assorted cookies, crackers and maybe a sandwich.



WATER

It's not wise to drink the tap water anywhere in Mexico, or to brush your teeth with tap water. When you shower don't let water get in your mouth.

Bottled water is provided in your room for brushing your teeth. A big water cooler is available in the dining room to refill your personal water bottle to carry with you. You can also purchase water locally with pesos.

LODGING

The Dreaming House is a family owned and operated retreat center. It's in a small village that bumps up against the perimeter fence of the archeological site. The family can tell stories about the pyramids before it was fenced in as a national archeological site.

I've had the pleasure of watching The Dreaming House expand from the remodel of the original family home to over 17 guest rooms and 2 apartments. One year, when they stirred up the dirt



for a new garden, I found bits of ancient pottery and obsidian. The energy in this place is palpable

The compound consists of several buildings. You'll walk through an open-air courtyard to get from your room to the dining room and to the classroom. It will be chilly in the morning and evening. If it's raining, you'll get wet. Pack accordingly.

CLIMATE & ALTITUDE

Teotihuacan is in the high desert with cool nights and warm days. We're going in May so expect 40s - 50s at night and 70s - 80s in the day. We'll likely see some rain. A cheap plastic rain poncho is easy to carry and works beautifully if you get caught in the rain.

The altitude is 7500 feet. That's more than 2000 feet higher than Denver.



This means the air is dry and thin. You may or may not notice it. To me it feels clear and crisp with gorgeous blue skies and a strong sun that can easily burn you. I have to stop and catch my breath more often when

hiking or climbing. We'll take it slow to acclimate to it. Drink lots of water. Eat well. You'll be well taken care of.

You'll want to dress in layers. It will be chilly (50's) in the morning when you walk across the courtyard to breakfast. A sweatshirt or hoody will feel good. The sun will start warming up everything nicely about the time we head to the pyramids. You'll want to shed the layers quickly, unless it's cloudy. It will get very warm (80's) while we're walking around the pyramids. Sunscreen and a hat are a must.

You'll want to wear cool breathable clothes suitable for climbing and sitting on dusty stones...and good walking shoes.

By the time we get back, eat a late lunch and relax,



the sun will set and the temperature will drop quickly. We'll head across the courtyard to the classroom where long sleeves or a sweatshirt or hoody

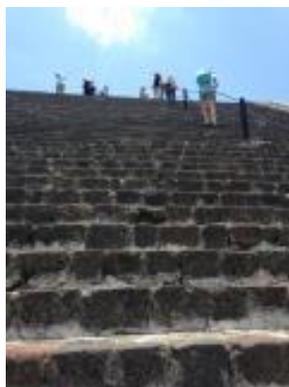
will feel good...and maybe socks, as we remove our shoes to enter the room.

WALKING & CLIMBING

We'll do a lot of walking. Start climbing stairs and walking whenever you can. Walk for exercise to prepare for this trip. You'll appreciate it when you start climbing the pyramids. I walk 3 miles 4 times a week to stay in shape for this trip.

I've seen people of all ages and fitness levels do this trip. I've been amazed by what seemingly unfit people have accomplished.

Don't get discouraged if you think you're not in good enough shape. It will work out. You don't have to do anything you don't want to. And, I encourage you to go beyond what you think you can do. You may be surprised at what you can do. I was. It was one of my many breakthroughs.



PACKING LIST

Mandatory Items:

- Valid Passport.
- Money for extra food & personal expenses.
- Sturdy walking shoes suitable for climbing pyramids and daily treks.
- Any prescription medication.
- Water bottle to carry during our treks.

Suggested Items:

- Personal items and toiletries, including blow dryer and wash cloth as these are not provided.
- Rain poncho.
- Backpack or fanny pack for transporting items/water on the daily outings.
- Snacks to eat on our treks.
- Special dietary needs items.
- Band-Aids, traveler's remedies.
- Sunscreen (the altitude is high and the sun is strong during the day).
- Hat/Visor.
- Personal pillow (if desired).
- Sunglasses.
- Casual, comfortable clothes that you can layer and that are suitable for walking and sitting while in the pyramid grounds.
- Warmer clothes for evening & early morning.
- Alarm clock.
- Phone/tablet/camera and chargers.
- Journal and pen/pencil.
- Extra space in your luggage for the goodies you'll buy.

INWARD JOURNEY

All the above is the information you'll need for your outward physical journey. Now turn your attention to the inward spiritual journey.

For your inward spiritual journey, bring an open mind, open heart and willingness to go beyond what you know yourself to be.



Eliminate as many distractions from home as possible. Be respectful of others and their journey.

Bring a journal to record and reflect on your experiences and insights.

Expense	BUDGET PLANNING: Here's all the places you may spend money.	Approx. cost	U.S. \$ accepted
Tips – Hotel	You'll want to hold back about \$50, or 500 pesos, to leave as a tip for the Dreaming House staff at the end of your stay. The custom is \$10 per day. This is shared with all the staff, including the cooks, cleaning and maintenance personal. You'll get to know them during the trip and likely want to tip them. We'll pool this on the last day.	\$50-\$60	YES
Tips – restrooms	It's customary to leave small change at public restrooms. You'll use the public restroom one or more times during our 4 trips to the pyramids.	\$1-\$5	NO
Snacks – at pyramids	You'll likely want to buy snacks at the Teotihuacan archeological site, at least once, during our 4 trips there. What I'm talking about are things like ice cream, potato chips, candy and soda. It's my weakness, even though I bring healthy snacks with me and plenty of the bottled water from the Dreaming House.	\$5-\$50	NO
Snacks – in village	During your spare time you may walk around the small village where we're staying. The bakery tempts many people with its Mexican breads and cakes. Maybe you'll pass a small market displaying your favorite fresh fruit or the tortilla factory that's making a fresh batch of tortillas. I rarely do any of these because I'm so full after eating all the food at the Dreaming House, but many people do.	\$5-\$50	NO
Taxi – at pyramids	You may want to take a taxi back to the Dreaming House from the pyramids. Most days I walk back, but most people prefer to take a taxi back which costs \$2-\$5 depending on how well you negotiate and if you're splitting it with others.	\$5-\$20	NO
Spontaneous excursions	An unplanned event may present itself that you'll want to participate in. Examples: It's highly likely that a fiesta will be going on in a nearby village. If so, it's worth experiencing. We might take a taxi (\$3-\$5) to watch fireworks and dancing. It's a carnival like atmosphere with rides, games, and food to tempt you. We may take a guided nature hike to the nearby mountain or caves depending on the weather and time. You'll want to tip the guide \$10-\$20. We may take a taxi (\$3-\$5) to the nearby town to go to the ATM or wander around.	\$10-\$100	NO
Massage / healer	Alberto (the owner of the Dreaming House) usually brings in a healer or massage person. It's a fascinating experience that's hard to resist. Typical cost is \$100.	\$100	YES
Souvenirs - vendors	You'll likely buy something from the vendors at the ruins. This could range from small trinkets, t-shirts, hats (\$5-\$50) to more expensive items like handmade table cloths, jewelry (\$100 +). Beware of vendors selling 'original artifacts' such as jade beads and clay figures, 99% chance they're fake. If you can't resist buying things – you know who you are – increase your budget and make room in your luggage.	\$10-\$100 +	NO Some take US\$. A rare few take credit cards.
Souvenirs – museum	In your free time, you may decide to explore the museum on the archeological grounds. They sell books, maps and t-shirts.	\$10-\$100 +	NO credit cards(?)
Souvenirs – Dreaming House	This is where you'll break your budget. You'll want to get something to remember the trip. Alberto's stone carvings are tempting and can be expensive, hundreds of dollars for the larger pieces. If stones are your weakness, add a few hundred dollars to your budget and room in your suitcase. Luckily, he has small inexpensive stonework, too. Along with good quality handicrafts made by local artisans, you'll be able to find something within your budget.	\$10-\$300 +	YES
Souvenirs – Basilica	More than likely, we'll have time to swing by and tour the Basilica in Mexico City before we catch our flights home. We'll split the cost of the excursion, about \$30 each. We'll probably grab a quick lunch, about \$5-\$10. You may want to buy a souvenir from the place, perhaps a rosary, or do some quick last-minute shopping to buy more Mexican trinkets from the market of vendors outside the Basilica.	\$40-\$100 +	\$30 excursion fee can be USD. Souvenirs & lunch are pesos
Food at airports	On your travel days, you'll want money for water and maybe meals depending on your travel time and layovers.	\$5-\$30	NO in Mexico.
TOTALS	I suggest a MINIMUM OF \$300-\$400 in US Dollars, plus at least \$90-\$100 to convert into Pesos. Add a lot more if you tend to shop and snack a lot.	\$300-\$1000 +	