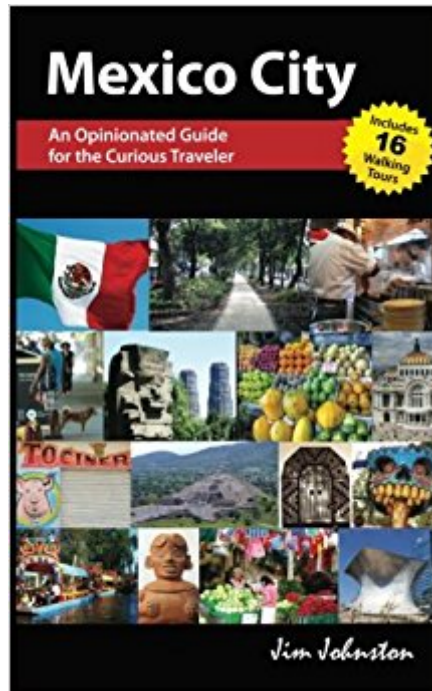


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# Mexico City: An Opinionated Guide For The Curious Traveler



## Synopsis

Mexico City, as one of the largest metropolises on the planet, can overwhelm even the most adventurous visitor. Thankfully, *Mexico City: An Opinionated Guide for the Curious Traveler* lends a thorough, guiding hand to help make the visitor's stay outstanding. Written by a longtime resident who knows the city inside and out, this travel guide delivers detailed walking tours of the city that include the most popular tourist sights as well as lesser-known spots. Johnston knows where to stay, what to do, and where to eat: everything from authentic market food to sophisticated Mexican cuisine. What began as a collection of notes to share with good friends is now available to every newcomer looking for a joyful, memorable stay in Mexico City. "This is the guidebook that I want. Wonderfully written, airtight information, organized in the smartest possible way. I can't imagine a better Mexico City guide for these times." -Tony Cohan, author of *Mexican Days* and *On Mexican Time* Johnston is the friend you wish you had in every great city, toting you from palace to museum to park but never missing the exquisite pastelería, the grand hotel lobby or the clean public bathroom." -San Francisco Chronicle

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## Customer Reviews

Jim Johnston was born in New York City and grew up in the woods of New Hampshire. After studying architecture at the University of Virginia and graphic design at the School of Visual Arts, he worked as a professional artist in New York City for 27 years before moving full-time to Mexico in 1997, where he continues working as an artist and writer.

The book is resembling a personal scrapbook with the very limited usefulness both for the first-time visitor and for someone who has the basic knowledge of the city. Chaotic 16 (!) "walking tours" have no maps. Listing of the hotels and restaurants is also chaotic, description close to none. Little advice and even less opinion can be found in this small publication.. Index is incomplete.(-)

Spoiler alert: This is the best \$13.90 you can hope to spend on a guidebook. My advice: Don't leave for Mexico City without it!! I came across this title while preparing for my recent trip to Mexico City. I wanted to update the guide books I already owned. This one stood out with both its unconventional approach and the excellent reviews it has earned. The book's philosophy is simple: The author leaves conventional, straightforward matters (like what is contained in which museum) to mainstream guidebooks (or the internet). Instead, he (a long-time resident of the city) shares his notes, insights and opinions with you. The book is densely packed with the kind of practical information which makes or breaks a trip: Safety, hotels, taxis, food (especially street food) and nightlife. The centerpiece is a collection of carefully crafted walking tours. I followed the itineraries using google maps rather than the maps in the books which worked out OK for me. I had time for four only and I can attest that without this guide I would have missed out on sights and experiences (and foods) which really turned my visit into an unforgettable one. For example: I would not have eaten in the Mercado de Antojitos in Coyoacan and tasted the best deep-fried quesadillas I've ever eaten (Tour # 15) . I would also never found the Plaza de Los Arcangeles, the serenity of which needs to be experienced to be believed (Tour #16). And so it goes...at the end there is even a list of classic Mexican films and novels to prepare you for the experience (or for you to remember the place fondly afterwards). All in all, it was like being accompanied by an experienced, sophisticated friend who wants to show you the city he loves. That's great value for \$13.90, don't you think?

Was only in Mexico City for 3 ½ days and this was the only guidebook I brought with me. It gave me a perfect overview of Historico Centro, which is where my hotel was. His series of walking tours don't miss a trick. With Mr. Johnston's encouragement, I even visited Mercado Merced--just about the ultimate mercado experience. I especially love all the information about street food, not only what it is, but where to find the best of it. I'm not sure I agreed totally with all the restaurant reviews, but close enough. Highly recommended. Even if you already have a more traditional guidebook.

We have used Jim Johnston's previous editions in Mexico City and find this newest edition even better. Jim clearly knows this city, the country, its people and its ways intimately well. He also has a

gift for writing to transmit all that to the visitor to Mexico City, first-timer or veteran. We particularly like the walking tours, which give you that intimate view of neighborhoods worth visiting more slowly. He shares not only basic information, but also insights that help enrich the visit. We host a good many visitors to our house in Mexico City and have Jim's guide in the kit we provide to them all. Jim Johnston's "Mexico City: An Opinionated Guide for the Curious Traveler" is the favorite resource for these many visitors, who inevitably fall in love with this wonderful town, thanks, in great measure, to this guide!

I'm using this right now in Mexico City. It's okay. I was most interested in the walking tours. They have given me some ideas, but not that much different from just sniffing out the interesting streets. What one would think is a no-brainer is to have maps of each of the walking tours with markings showing the key places mentioned. But no. There are a few mediocre maps in the back--you can get a good free map once you are here-- but they aren't keyed to the walking tours. The book is light in weight and might be useful. Just don't expect too much.

My wife, 14 year old son and I traveled to Mexico City, we used this book as our primary guide of what to do there. I bought it because the sample made it clear that the guide was comprised of walking tours of various neighborhoods, that's exactly what we (at least my wife and I), want to do. This guide saved me hours digging through each neighborhood and finding the highlights. My two cents would be to use this as a starting point, if he's sending you to places or architecture you're not super interested in, you can pass by quickly or skip. He clearly knows and loves the city, we covered maybe 7 of his tours in our 5 days and found it an ideal way to explore and enjoy Mexico City (and yes, we also loved Mexico City).

This is a great book. Specifically, for the walking tours that Jim has mapped out for one. I had a free Sunday and followed his tour of the colonia Maria de la Ribera. And it was wonderful. The only glitch was the starting point from the Republica, because there are now palm trees in several locations. But once I got my bearings, the walk was informative and enjoyable. I did eat at the Russian restaurant though cause I was craving a salad and soup, and I enjoyed it. And I had a drink at the Paris bar and finished the trip with a walk through the huge Buenavista mall, just as he described. I recommend this book highly. Jim has a very good Mexico City blog as well.

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