

## Chapter 1 : Uncharted Ruins: Lost Cities of the Mexican Highlands

*The Central Mexican Plateau, also known as the Mexican Altiplano (Spanish: Altiplanicie Mexicana), is a large arid-to-semiarid plateau that occupies much of northern and central Mexico.*

Arrive to Mexico City Today you will be met by your driver outside of customs international flights or after leaving the secured area of the terminal domestic flights and privately transferred to your Mexico City hotel.

Las Alcobas Day 2: At the museum your expert guide will add contour and color to the myriad of exhibits with special attention on the Aztec and Maya rooms. This great square, called the Zocalo, evokes the place of homage and center of the world which was the heart of the ceremonial nucleus of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Late afternoon return to your fine hotel for relaxation and dinner on your own.

Las Alcobas Day 3: Teotihuacan and San Miguel de Allende After an early breakfast, meet your expert driver-guide in the hotel lobby and head northwards to Teotihuacan, one of the most famous archaeological sites in Mexico. After lunch in a local restaurant the journey will continue towards San Miguel de Allende, at arrival you will check in at your charming hotel and rest of evening at leisure. Early this evening you are invited to experience a tequila tasting in Casa Dragones, home to one of the finest, premium tequila brands of Mexico.

Guanajuato City Tour You will meet your guide in the lobby for a full-day excursion to the creative center of Guanajuato, approximately 1: With your expert guide, you will enjoy a walking tour of the historic landmarks of the city center and use the morning to orient yourself to the winding streets and subterranean passages that make this city a Mexican medina! The thriving down town is full of interesting shops, and the smells of delicious local fare wafts through the streets inviting you in to the many delicious eateries. Lunch at el Jardin de los Milagros, the famous restaurant of chef Bricio Dominguez not included. Our first stop is in Tlaquepaque, experience the culture combined with artisans work flavor of Mexico enjoy free time to see and shop the local hand crafts, along the pedestrian mall. The strip is lined by precious 17th and 18th century houses that have been converted into art galleries, museums, souvenir shops and restaurants. Guadalajara is filled with history. Hotel Demetria Day 7: Participate in the agave harvest with real Jimadores, followed by a private Tour and Tasting with exclusive access at Tequila Fortaleza – the most traditional Tequila process in the industry, made by a fifth generation tequilero descended from the Sauza dynasty. Say good bye to your expert guide and enjoy rest of evening at leisure. Hotel Demetria Day 8: Commercial Flight not included Day 9 – You may like to enjoy one or more of the following suggested not included but can be arranged activities, snorkeling, Sayulita Day Trip, Marietas Islands, Swim with dolphins in the wild, scuba diving, fishing or surfing golf. Imanta Resorts Day Puerto Vallarta has long-served as an unhurried refuge for people seeking more than just a beautiful beach. The sun-drenched colonial seaside town is both dramatic in setting and diverse in its appeal. Picturesque colonial and whitewashed buildings, cobblestone streets that wind in and out, red Spanish tile roofs, and a brilliant profusion of flowers and jungle-like fauna differentiate Puerto Vallarta from any destination. The architecture mirrors the colonial facades with brickwork and flowering plants. The beauty and charm of Puerto Vallarta is symbolized by the landmark Church of Guadalupe; built in , located in the picturesque main plaza.

**Chapter 2 : Mexico's Central Highlands & Pacific Coast | Journey Mexico**

*Because of their altitude, the Mexican highlands tend to be temperate all year, even in the height of summer. You might start by flying into Morelia, a walkable grid of a city occupying a broad hilltop.*

They were seized by a Maya lord, and most were sacrificed, although two managed to escape. Maya peoples  
The Spanish conquest stripped away most of the defining features of Maya civilization. However, many Maya villages remained remote from Spanish colonial authority, and for the most part continued to manage their own affairs. Maya communities and the nuclear family maintained their traditional day-to-day life. Traditional crafts such as weaving, ceramics, and basketry continued to be practised. Community markets and trade in local products continued long after the conquest. At times, the colonial administration encouraged the traditional economy in order to extract tribute in the form of ceramics or cotton textiles, although these were usually made to European specifications. Maya beliefs and language proved resistant to change, despite vigorous efforts by Catholic missionaries. Thompson promoted the ideas that Maya cities were essentially vacant ceremonial centres serving a dispersed population in the forest, and that the Maya civilization was governed by peaceful astronomer-priests. Rather, throughout its history, the Maya area contained a varying mix of political complexity that included both states and chiefdoms. These polities fluctuated greatly in their relationships with each other and were engaged in a complex web of rivalries, periods of dominance or submission, vassalage, and alliances. At times, different polities achieved regional dominance, such as Calakmul, Caracol, Mayapan, and Tikal. The first reliably evidenced polities formed in the Maya lowlands in the 9th century BC. The divine authority invested within the ruler was such that the king was able to mobilize both the aristocracy and commoners in executing huge infrastructure projects, apparently with no police force or standing army. In other cases, loose alliance networks were formed around a dominant city. An overriding sense of pride and honour among the warrior aristocracy could lead to extended feuds and vendettas, which caused political instability and the fragmentation of polities. Women in Maya society  
From the Early Preclassic, Maya society was sharply divided between the elite and commoners. As population increased over time, various sectors of society became increasingly specialized, and political organization became increasingly complex. Commoners included farmers, servants, labourers, and slaves. Such clans held that the land was the property of the clan ancestors, and such ties between the land and the ancestors were reinforced by the burial of the dead within residential compounds. The king was the supreme ruler and held a semi-divine status that made him the mediator between the mortal realm and that of the gods. From very early times, kings were specifically identified with the young maize god, whose gift of maize was the basis of Mesoamerican civilization. Maya royal succession was patrilineal, and royal power only passed to queens when doing otherwise would result in the extinction of the dynasty. Typically, power was passed to the eldest son. Although being of the royal bloodline was of utmost importance, the heir also had to be a successful war leader, as demonstrated by taking of captives. Government was hierarchical, and official posts were sponsored by higher-ranking members of the aristocracy; officials tended to be promoted to higher levels of office during the course of their lives. Officials are referred to as being "owned" by their sponsor, and this relationship continued even after the death of the sponsor. Ajaw is usually translated as "lord" or "king". In the Early Classic, an ajaw was the ruler of a city. Later, with increasing social complexity, the ajaw was a member of the ruling class and a major city could have more than one, each ruling over different districts. It indicated an overlord, or high king, and the title was only in use during the Classic period. A sajal would be lord of a second- or third-tier site, answering to an ajaw, who may himself have been subservient to a k'ulmte'. These last two may be variations on the same title, [ ] and Mark Zender has suggested that the holder of this title may have been the spokesman for the ruler. Rivalry between different factions would have led to dynamic political institutions as compromises and disagreements were played out. In such a setting, public performance was vital. Such performances included ritual dances, presentation of war captives, offerings of tribute, human sacrifice, and religious ritual. Their houses were generally constructed from perishable materials, and their remains have left little trace in the archaeological record. Some commoner dwellings were raised on low

platforms, and these can be identified, but an unknown quantity of commoner houses were not. Such low-status dwellings can only be detected by extensive remote-sensing surveys of apparently empty terrain.

**Chapter 3 : Read On The Mexican Highlands Light Novel Online**

*The thirteen day ride 'Magic of the Mexican Highlands' is designed for the intermediate rider. Rides are a bit slower and relaxing during the first week with sightseeing and picks up speed and duration of the rides on all day trips during the second week.*

Looking for remnants of the lost civilization The impressive megalithic Acropolis of Chimalacatlan rises on top of a high ridge overlooking the Sierra de Huautla and the vast plains of Morelos and Guerrero. Yet, for how impressive the architectural and artistic achievements of these great Pre-Columbian civilizations suffice to mention the great Maya pyramids, palaces and ballcourts , megalithic stone architecture seems to be largely absent from the landscape of ancient Mesoamerica. Certainly, many Mesoamerican civilizations were familiar with cutting and raising large stone monoliths. As an example, one could easily cite the over hundreds of stelae erected by the Mayas of the Classic Period to AD , some of which weighting over 60 tons [1], or the equally impressive Olmec stone heads weighting betwen 6 and 40 tons [2] and Aztec monoliths. The most famous Aztec monolith, the celebrated Stone of the Sun, or Piedra del Sol, now in the Museo Nacional de Antropologia in Mexico City, in fact a massive stone calendar and cosmologic monument, weights an estimate of nearly 25 tons [3]. Even more impressive, the Tlaloc monolith originally from San Miguel Coatlinchan and now decorating a fountain outside of the same Museo Nacional de Antropologia in Mexico City , weights in excess of tons and is also believed to date to the Aztec period [4]. In spite of these astonishing feats of engineering, the use of large and often very large stones seemed to be limited to free-standing monuments, while smaller stones, adobe and concrete were the materials of choice throughout Mesoamerica for all large scale constructions and pyramids. Even the most impressive Maya pyramids, as well as the even larger pyramids at Teotihuacan and Cholula, were built almost exclusively of small, incoherent stones and adobe, mixed with concrete and stuccoed or plastered on the outside. Unlike the Andean region of South America, with its impressive megalithic architecture as in the region of Cuzco, capital of the Inca empire, and Tiwanaku, nothing on the scale of the impressive megalithic walls and constructions of Peru seems to have ever characterized Mesoamerican architecture. There is however one remarkable exception to this rule, which is as impressive in its monumentality and scale as it is also remarkably unknown to the public at large, including many of the very specialists in Mesoamerican archaeology and architecture [5]. This is the case of the megalithic platforms and walls of Chimalacatlan, in the south of Morelos and near the border with the state of Guerrero. It takes about 40 minutes to reach the tiny village of Chimalacatlan from the municipal capital of Tlaquiltenango, and during the rainy season, another 30 to 40 minutes to walk the steep and muddy trail leading up to the ruins. The site lamentably lacks almost any kind of tourist infrastructure, with the exception of a decaying panel at the end of the trail, informing you that you have finally reached the site. What you will find, however, will more than compensate the effort required to get to this remote location. The first structured encountered on the Mesa del Venado and the only one at least partially cleared from the thick vegetation covering the hill is a ceremonial ballcourt resting on top of a high dry stone platform. Although of not particularly accurate workmanship, these platforms are remarkable for the use of dry, unmortared stone. Here for the first time the unusual character of the ruins of Chimalacatlan starts to emerge. The ballcourt itself rests on a large platform, built with carefully arranged unmortared stones: Even though the general quality of the masonry and stone construction is quite poor, the presence of dry walls and unmortared stone construction is striking when compared to the architectural style of other nearby sites like Xochicalco. The main ceremonial center of the ancient city occupies the hill right opposite to this first group of ruins, called Cerro del Venado. The trail to the top runs amidst giant cactuses and copal trees forming a scenery of stunning natural beauty in one of the largest protected areas of tropical dry forest in all of Mexico. The site itself is arranged on a set of dry stone platforms, placed at different levels, once connected though a system of monumental ramps and stairways of which only few sections emerge from the thick underbrush and vegetation. Unfortunately, the lower platforms are currently in a very ruinous state, still awaiting excavation and proper consolidation works. It seems, however, that the platforms formed a set of plazas at different levels, roughly following the profile of

the natural elevation. The decaying sign at the entrance of the site. You can zoom in the image to read an English and Spanish description of the ruins, as well as a map of the major structures still visible on the mountain. The megalithic buildings consists of a set of two superimposed platforms, at slightly different elevations, only the first one of which appears to be complete on all four sides. The lower platform is perfectly square and measures about 40 meters on each side. Its outer walls reach at least 7 to 8 meters high at the North-West corner, and are entirely built of massive ashlar, some of which over 2,5 meters long. The construction is of remarkable quality and accuracy, consisting of several layers of carefully laid out and jointed megalithic stone blocks. The second platform shares the exact same characteristics of the first one, including the slightly inward-sloping walls and fine megalithic masonry. Only the main facade of the platform survives in its entirety, while the remaining sides terminate abruptly after 25 or 30 meters against the natural bedrock. The great megalithic wall facing the ravine on the North-West side of the Acropolis. The wall continues without interruptions for a length of about 60 or 70 meters, and encircles the Acropolis on three sides the fourth one is the natural bedrock. Some of the stones are over 2,5 meters in length and might weight in excess of 5 or 6 tons. This would have made it rather unsuitable to serve a defensive purpose, and suggest instead a ritual or ceremonial use of the megalithic platform above. The top of the lower platform is occupied by what appears to be a sunken patio or courtyard, a feature not uncommon at other Olmec sites in the Region like Chalcatzingo and Teopantecuanitlan, which might provide important elements for the dating of the megalithic platforms of Chimalacatlan. The top of the uppermost platform was also artificially leveled around a natural rocky outcrop, and is occupied by several large boulders, still in the rough, which might have been intended as part of some sort of megalithic temple or construction, which was however never completed. In this view, taken from the South-West corner of the second uppermost megalithic platform, the rubble filling of both platforms, behind the megalithic retaining walls, can be clearly appreciated. The top of the first bottom platform is occupied by a sort of sunken patio, also delimited by large megalithic blocks, which is suggestive of the ceremonial use of the site. Interestingly, most stones appear to be cracked, something which might be compatible with exposure to very intense heat. The natural erosion has also cancelled any trace of tool marks, and is itself suggestive of the high antiquity of the site. Note the very accurate workmanship and placement of the megalithic stone blocks delimiting the second upper platform. This is possibly suggestive of later repairs, or even of the presence of a doorway in this part of the wall, that was later closed. The lower wall here is not even one meter tall, and would have certainly served no defensive purpose. It is unclear whether the wall was actually meant to be higher as the layer of stones placed here above the level of the platform would appear to suggest, or was only meant to act as a monumental retaining wall for the platform itself. There, the peak is occupied by a large pyramid-like structure, consisting of four super-imposed terraces, all sharing the same trapezoid shape with the exception of the top platform, which is a perfect square. From the uppermost platform, located almost at the center of a spectacular natural amphitheater of mountains, the view stretches far away to embrace the entire Sierra de Huatla and the plains of Cuernavaca. Although some larger stones were employed in the construction of this pyramid, and a few well cut stone blocks are visible on some of the terraces, the workmanship is generally poorer than the rest of the megalithic platforms, employing smaller and more irregular stones. Above the second megalithic platform and along the rather irregular path leading up to the top of Cerro del Venado, the natural bedrock lies perhaps artificially? The very deep trenches and pits cut into it might not be entirely natural, and could instead be part of an abandoned attempt at sculpturing the summit of the hill into terraces. Each level is trapezoidal in shape, retained by high dry-stone walls which, although lacking the megalithic precision and monumental appearance of the lower platforms, have survived remarkably intact the ravages of time over many centuries. Some larger stones of rather regular appearance, perhaps belonging to an earlier, megalithic, stage of construction, are to be found amidst the dry-stone masonry of this pyramid. Construction on the site might have resumed at a much later point in time, perhaps centuries later, when the more crude constructions were added, which included the ballcourt game on the Mesa del Venado, and the terraced pyramid which occupies the summit of the hill and incorporates several partially carved megalithic blocks that were likely part of some older, perhaps unfinished structure occupying the summit. In spite of the little interest that currently surrounds the ruins of Chimalacatlan and their

impressive megalithic constructions, a much larger controversy was sparked by their early discovery at the end of the XIX Century. Indeed, the first mention of the ruins of Chimalacatlan in the Sierra de Huautla might date back to the early times of the Spanish conquest. A passage in the *Relacion Historica de la Nacion Tulteca*, composed between and by Fernando de Alva Ixtlixochitl, one of the early native historians of the New Spain and descendant of the old kings of Texcoco, seems to refer to vestiges of a very similar kind to the ones of Chimalacatlan, also in the province of Cuernavaca. Describing some of the most ancient seats of the Toltecs, Ixtlixochitl describes the ruins in this terms: The modern discovery of the ruins of Chimalactlan must however be attributed to a certain Don Lorenzo Castro, Cura of Tlaquiltenango, who discovered the ruins towards the end of the XIX Century. The then bishop of Cuernavaca, Francisco Plancarte y Navarrete, informed of the discovery, also took a very keen interest in the enigmatic ruins of Chimalacatlan, to the point of identifying them with the long lost capital of the Olmecs, or Tamoanchan, a mythical place believed by the Aztecs to be the seat of the Mesoamerican equivalent of the Garden of Eden and the birthplace of the first Mesoamerican civilizations, if not of mankind itself [7]. Doubtless, the links between Chimalacatlan and the Olmec civilization run much deeper than the legendary accounts, and are also stressed in a recent paper by the Mexican Instituto Nacional de Antropologia INAH. Other sites with megalithic stone architecture might also exist in the remote wilderness of the Sierra de Huautla, but knowledge of these sites is still very scarce. The sites of Huautla and Mesa de los Tepalcates seem to share similar architectural features with Chimalacatlan, including the use of large megalithic stone blocks measuring over 2 meters in length. As of now, however, almost no documentation exists of these sites outside of the above mentioned report. A view of another one of the monumental platforms at Chimalacatlan, towards the summit of the Cerro del Venado. Some of the stones used in the construction are fairly large, although the workmanship is not nearly as accurate as that of the lower megalithic terraces. Similar ruins are said to exist at several other places in the remote wilderness of the Sierra de Huautla. A large rectangular block still lies in its trench next to several other ones at various stages of completion. The quarries were located uphill from the main megalithic platforms, at a distance of some one hundred meters. Aerial and satellite photographs do indeed show large, regular trenches cut in the natural backrock where the hill was likely intended to be cut into additional terraces and platforms, none of which was however completed at the time most monumental construction at the site suddenly ceased. The height of the megalithic stone wall to the left diminishes with the slope from as much as 7 to 8 meters at the North-West corner to as little as 2 meters towards the top. No significant ancient remains survive in the town of Tlaquiltenango itself, except for its Franciscan and later Dominican convent, built in and one of the oldest still standing in the Americas, also likely built on top of Pre-Columbian ruins and re-using much of the ancient stones. Still to this day, the area is filled with legends of a once large and populous city, simply known as La Ciudad Perdida - The lost City, believed to have since time immemorial vanished in the unexplored mountain ranges and ravines of the Sierra de Huautla. There are even rumors of underground tunnels and caves that would lead to the fabled lost city. One such tunnel is rumored to connect the present day convent of Santo Domingo in Tlaquiltenango to the Churches of Zacatepec, Tetelpa, Galeana, Las Bovedas and Jojutla, which also occupy the sites of former Pre-Columbian settlements. The absence of artifacts clearly relatable to the megalithic structures also significantly compounds the problem of the origins of their builders and the question of their date.

Chapter 4 : Maya civilization - Wikipedia

*Mexico's Colonial Highland Ajijic & Lake Chapala, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico City, San Sebastian, Mascota & Talpa*  
*The central highlands are classic Mexico, with prickly pear cacti, heavily laden burros, red-tiled roofs, narrow cobblestone streets and drowsy afternoon siestas.*

See Article History Alternative Titles: Mexican society is characterized by extremes of wealth and poverty, with a limited middle class wedged between an elite cadre of landowners and investors on the one hand and masses of rural and urban poor on the other. But in spite of the challenges it faces as a developing country, Mexico is one of the chief economic and political forces in Latin America. As its official name suggests, the Estados Unidos Mexicanos United Mexican States incorporates 31 socially and physically diverse states and the Federal District. Mexico City, the capital, is one of the most populous cities and metropolitan areas in the world. Mexico has experienced a series of economic booms leading to periods of impressive social gains, followed by busts, with significant declines in living standards for the middle and lower classes. In states such as Oaxaca or Chiapas, small communal villages remain where indigenous peasants live much as their ancestors did. In turn, these towns appear as historical relics when compared with the modern metropolis of Mexico City. Sometimes the most remote or hostile beliefs and feelings are found together in one city or one soul, or are superimposed like [pre-Columbian] pyramids that almost always conceal others. It is this tremendous cultural and economic diversity, distributed over an enormously complex and varied physical environment, that gives Mexico its unique character. Land 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. Including these insular territories, the roughly triangular country covers an area about three times the size of Texas. While it is more than 1, miles 3, km across from northwest to southeast, its width varies from less than miles km at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to more than 1, miles 1, km in the north. These and other Mexican volcanoes are young in geologic terms, from the Paleogene and Neogene periods about 65 to 2. It is in this dynamic and often unstable physical environment that the Mexican people have built their country. Physiographic regions Mexico can be divided into nine major physiographic regions: The Baja California peninsula in northwestern Mexico is an isolated strip of extremely arid land extending between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California Sea of Cortez. Unevenly divided between the states of Baja California and Baja California Sur, the peninsula is nearly miles 1, km long but seldom more than miles km wide. The gently sloping western side of these mountain ranges is in contrast to the steep eastern escarpment, which makes access from the Gulf of California extremely difficult. The Sonoran Desert extends onto the peninsula along the northern end of the gulf. The Pacific Coastal Lowlands begin near Mexicali and the Colorado River delta in the north and terminate near Tepic, some miles 1, km to the south. For most of that distance, they face the Gulf of California while traversing the states of Sonora, Sinaloa, and Nayarit. Bounded on the east by the steep-sided Sierra Madre Occidental, the lowlands are a series of coastal terraces, mesas, and small basins interspersed with riverine deltas and restricted coastal strips. Although the vast Sonoran Desert dominates their northern section, parts of the lowlands have been irrigated and transformed into highly productive farmland. The largest and most densely populated region is the inland Mexican Plateau, which is flanked by the Sierra Madre Occidental and Sierra Madre Oriental. The Mesa del Norte begins near the U. From there the Mesa Central stretches to a point just south of Mexico City. The plateau tilts gently upward from the north toward the south; at its northern end, the Mesa del Norte is about 4, feet 1, metres above sea level. Throughout the region, relatively flat intermontane basins and bolsones ephemeral interior drainage basins are interrupted by mountainous outcrops. In the north the Chihuahuan Desert covers a section of the plateau that is more extensive than the U. Its southern end rises 7,â€™9, feet 2,â€™2, metres in the vicinity of Mexico City. The Mesa Central, moister and generally flatter than the Mesa del Norte, is divided into a series of fairly level intermontane basins separated by eroded volcanic peaks. The largest valleys rarely exceed square miles square km in area, and many others are quite small. Many of the basins were once sites of major lakes that were

drained to facilitate European and mestizo settlement. Around Mexico City the weak, structurally unstable soils that remain have caused the colonial-era Metropolitan Cathedral and other buildings to shift on their foundations and, over many years, to list or sink unevenly into the ground. It has been highly incised by westward-flowing streams that have formed a series of gorges, or barrancas, the most spectacular of which is the complex known as Copper Canyon Barranca del Cobre in southwestern Chihuahua state. Its average elevations are similar to those of the Sierra Madre Occidental, but some peaks rise above 12,000 feet, 3,658 metres. The mountains have major deposits of copper, lead, and zinc. The region is rich in silver, lead, zinc, copper, and tin deposits. The depression is formed of small, irregular basins interrupted by hilly outcrops, which give the area a distinctive physical landscape. The triangular northern portion of the plain, which is characterized by lagoons and low-lying swampy areas, reaches a width of more than 100 miles (160 km) near the U. North of the port of Tampico, an outlier of the Sierra Madre Oriental reaches the sea and interrupts the continuity of the Gulf Coastal Plain. South from there the plain is narrow and irregular, widening at the northern end of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. On their southwestern side, approximately from Puerto Vallarta to the Gulf of Tehuantepec, are a series of relatively low ranges known collectively as the Sierra Madre del Sur. The crystalline mountains, which achieve elevations of 7,000–8,000 feet, 2,130–2,438 metres, often reach the sea to create a rugged coastal margin, part of which is known as the Mexican Riviera. Several coastal sites, such as Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Acapulco, and Puerto Escondido, have become alluring tourist destinations. However, the less-hospitable inland basins provide a difficult environment for traditional peasant farmers. Farther northeast is the Mesa del Sur, with numerous stream-eroded ridges and small isolated valleys some 4,000–5,000 feet, 1,219–1,524 metres above sea level. The picturesque Oaxaca Valley is the largest and most densely settled of these, with a predominantly indigenous population. It is one of the poorest areas of Mexico. Panoramic view of the coastal resort of Acapulco, Mex. Its hilly central area descends to narrow coastal plains on the south and to the Tabasco Plain on the north. The Chiapas Highlands are an extension of the mountain ranges of Central America. Within the highlands the low, crystalline Sierra de Soconusco range lies along the Pacific coast. To the northwest and paralleling the coast is the Grijalva River valley. A group of highly dissected, folded, and faulted mountains is located between the valley and the Tabasco Plain, a southeastern extension of the Gulf Coastal Plain. There is little surface drainage, and subterranean erosion has produced caverns and sinkholes (cenotes), the latter being formed when cavern roofs collapse. Drainage Because of its climatic characteristics and arrangement of landforms, Mexico has few major rivers or natural lakes. The largest are found in the central part of the country. The Santiago River then flows out of the lake to the northwest, crossing the Sierra Madre Occidental on its way to the Pacific. There are few permanent streams in the arid Mesa del Norte, and most of these drain into the interior rather than to the ocean. The Balsas River and its tributaries drain the Balsas Depression as well as much of the southern portion of the Mesa Central. Dammed where it crosses the Sierra Madre del Sur, the Balsas is a major source of hydroelectric power. Farther southeast, on the Guatemala frontier, the Grijalva-Usumacinta river system drains most of the humid Chiapas Highlands. Streams on the west and east coasts are short and steep because the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental originate close to the coastal margins. Soils Throughout tropical southeastern Mexico, high rates of precipitation produce infertile reddish or yellow lateritic soils high in iron oxides and aluminum hydroxides. The richest soils in the country are the chernozem-like volcanic soils found in the Mesa Central. Deep, easily crumbled, and rich in base minerals, some of those dark soils have been farmed continuously for many centuries. However, overuse has caused serious sheet erosion and has exposed tepetate (a lime hardpan) in many areas. In the arid north, gray-brown desert soils occupy the largest expanses. High in lime and soluble salts, they can be extremely productive when irrigated, but in such cases salinization (salt buildup) can be a serious problem, resulting in barren fields. Climate Because of its vast size and topographic diversity, Mexico has a wide array of climatic conditions. More than half of the country lies south of the Tropic of Cancer. In those areas, tropical maritime air masses from the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, are attracted by the relatively low pressures that occur over land. The maritime air masses are the main sources of precipitation, which is heaviest from May through August. Tropical hurricanes, spawned in oceans on both sides of the country, are common in the coastal lowland areas from August through October. Northern Mexico is dominated by the

Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts, and arid and semiarid conditions predominate over much of the Mexican Plateau. In those areas winter is defined as the rainy rather than the cold season. Elevation is a major climatic influence in most parts of Mexico, and several vertical climatic zones are recognized. North of the tropics, temperature ranges increase substantially and are greatest in the north-central portion of the Mesa del Norte, where summer and winter temperatures are extreme. Most of Mexico lacks adequate precipitation for at least part of the year. Except for the Sierra Madre Occidental, the Sierra Madre Oriental, and the Gulf Coastal Plain, the area north of the Tropic of Cancer generally receives less than 20 inches mm of precipitation annually and is classified climatically as either tropical desert or tropical steppe. Nearly all of Baja California, much of Sonora state, and large parts of Chihuahua state receive less than 10 inches mm of rainfall yearly. Much of central and southern Mexico receives less than 40 inches 1, mm of precipitation annually, mostly from May through August, and is classified as having tropical savanna or highland savanna climates. A tropical rainforest climate exists there because of uniformly high temperatures and humid conditions. Page 1 of

**Chapter 5 : La Loma | A Mexican Kitchen**

*The Mexican Highlands sub-region of the Sonoran Joint Venture comprises parts of Arizona, Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Durango, and Nayarit. This sub-region includes a portion of Bird Conservation Region*

Magic of the Mexican Highlands No reviews yet for this trip. Browse other reviews below for Rancho Las Cascadas. Get settled into your room, explore your beautiful surroundings and discover its many amenities. If time permits, the first afternoon ride takes you to our local village, San Agustin, with its quaint church from the s. During this ride you will be able to familiarize yourself with the style of riding and the horses. After this, relax in the hot tub overlooking the waterfalls with a margarita from the open, all-inclusive bar or go for a swim in the infinity pool. A canter beneath the eucalyptus trees takes us down to a lake where the horses love to splash along the shore! In the afternoon, a short drive takes you to the archaeological site of the Atlantes of Tula. On top of one of the pyramids you will find the great Atlantes, four huge and impressive warrior statues of black basalt. This is followed by a visit to the town center of Tula and some shops around it. Enjoy the vibrant colors and life of the main square before heading back for dinner. The flat fields and quiet unpaved roads offer excellent gallops for confident riders, real thrilling riding. On the way back encounter ancient churches, lakes and rivers. The wrought iron windows were brought from Sweden, the tiles covering the front porch from Spain and you can still admire part of the original blue wall paintings. Without a doubt, this place is incredible. A great trip for shoppers and a real treasure for architecture lovers, this colonial cityboasts beautiful churches, small town squares, picturesque alleys and many hidden patios Mexican courtyards. You can find coffee shops, antiques, handicrafts, jewelry, paintings and many other things while you wander around this enchanted town. We will be spending the night in San Miguel, ensuring you fall under the magic spell this city casts on you. Enjoy our special Sunset Surprise. Take time for a stroll through some other parts of town. Before heading back to the Rancho, you will visit the famous cactus garden which was sanctified as a peace zone by the Dalai Lama. Enjoy the many different species of native plants and animals and an impressive final view of San Miguel. The trail, passing San Miguel de las Piedras, leads into the canyon where wild horses still roam. Your lunchtime picnic will be taken by a river where the water is mixed with a volcanic warm spring, inviting a nice swim while the horses are resting. Homeward bound, you climb up the canyon and pass through the village of Carranza with its church dating from On to the Presa of La Goleta, where the soft flat lake shore offers you a final opportunity to canter or gallop, arriving at the ranch late afternoon. You will be amazed by the sure-footedness of your four-legged friends. Now and then you will enjoy some easy canters between the corn fields. Experience the leisurely lifestyle, visit the old church and have a little rest and some refreshment. Heading back the countryside is once again like a western movie. In the afternoon, the open fields heading back to the ranch are perfect for a canter and the occasional gallop too, if you like. Local cowboys charros and farmers use the myriad of trails to tend to their farm plots and small herds. If you would prefer you may also take an optional excursion to Tepetzotlan instead. The climb on your horse takes you up to the little sanctuary of the Virgin of Guadalupe from where you have a beautiful view into the canyon below. This afternoon you have some time to relax at the pool or go for another ride if you prefer. The farm land here is flat, rich, well irrigated and fertile. The Aztecs believe that the gods created the universe here. This site will prove to be a fascinating and worthwhile experience! Before lunch, you will visit a silver shop. As well as shopping you will learn about a special drink known as Pulque distilled agave liquor made in honor of the god of fertility. In the evening, enjoy another relaxing sunset at the Rancho followed by cocktails and dinner. These mixed deciduous and coniferous woodlands have delightful tracks for cantering. Lunch is taken in the town of Canalejas. Suitably tasty vegetarian options can also be arranged. After lunch and a leg stretching walk around the small town, the trail rises to the Cathedral of Canalejas. This cathedral, set on the summit of a hill, dominates the local view. It was built on the spot where an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe was found in a rock, which now forms part of the altar. Day 13 Departure Day with Market in Jilotepec - If time permits before departure Today is market day in the town of Jilotepec, approximately a minute drive from the ranch. You will discover the biggest weekly market in the region with all types of livestock, colorful fruits and

vegetables, fashionable sombreros, fine leather boots, tack for horse and rider and great mounds of chilies on offer. You can of course extend your stay at the Rancho for a few days more of fun.

### Chapter 6 : The Adventurer's Guide to Mexico's Highlands

*On the Mexican Highlands - With a Passing Glimpse of Cuba - Kindle edition by William Seymour Edwards. Download it once and read it on your Kindle device, PC, phones or tablets. Use features like bookmarks, note taking and highlighting while reading On the Mexican Highlands - With a Passing Glimpse of Cuba.*

### Chapter 7 : Magic of the Mexican Highlands by Rancho Las Cascadas | Reviews by Stride Travel

*See traveler and expert reviews. Get the best prices and full itinerary for Magic of the Mexican Highlands by Rancho Las Cascadas from \$3, Compare to similar trips.*

### Chapter 8 : Colonial City Guide | Mexican Highlands

*Excerpt: When the New York and Cincinnati Flyer (the "F. F. V. Limited") came into Charleston yesterday, it was an hour late and quite a crowd was waiting to get aboard.*

### Chapter 9 : On the Mexican Highlands

*Mexico can be divided into nine major physiographic regions: Baja California, the Pacific Coastal Lowlands, the Mexican Plateau, the Sierra Madre Oriental, the Sierra Madre Occidental, the Cordillera Neo-Volcánica, the Gulf Coastal Plain, the Southern Highlands, and the Yucatán Peninsula.*