The wonders of Mexico by Anne Mary

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There is a uniqueness about Mexico that sets it apart from any other country on the planet. Effectively it is split into two parts by the Tropic of Cancer, dividing it into temperate and tropical zones with much of its northern and central territories are located at high altitude, which can take a little getting used to. The weather conditions vary more than in any other country adding to its individuality. Although bordered by the United States, once across you could be worlds apart, which adds to its great appeal for some.

Tourism in Mexico is very big business, indeed it is regularly in the top ten for international arrivals with a choice of either magnificent beach resorts or extraordinary cities including the capital which is the third most populous in the world and the remarkable Chichen Itza which has been given both World Heritage Status and was listed in 2007 as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

Mexico City sits 7,350 above sea level and is inhabited by in excess of 20 million people, so that does take some adjusting to but once settled it is a real treat. Known as the City of Palaces there is so much history to explore at the many colonial-era buildings such as the National Palace, the Metropolitan Cathedral and the Great Temple. The floating gardens of the Xochimilco Ecological Park have earned themselves the nickname of the Venice of Mexico due to the masses of connecting canals. The National Museum of Anthropology is widely regarded as the best of its kind and the historic center of Coyoacan is extremely popular with visitors keen to see the preserved sixteenth century layout with its eye catching narrow streets.

Chichen Itza was one of the great cities of the Mayan civilization dating back to the tenth century and today serves as a religious focal point with the emblematic pyramid at the center, and other structures such as the Observatory, the Temple of the Warriors and the Building of a Thousand Columns all incredibly impressive. It is a breathtaking sight and worthy of the effort to visit.

Other great cities include Guadalajara and Monterrey both packed with cultural delights and excellent alternatives if looking for somewhere different from the capital. Guadalajara is very much a cosmopolitan city and very proud of its nickname of the Pearl of the West, with stunning tree-lined avenues, superb parks, fascinating monuments and a great mix of modern and colonial architecture. Monterrey is equally gratified with its own nickname of the Sultan of the North and offers some real glimpses of true Mexican history, especially in the Old Neighbourhood.

For those looking for a more relaxing stay in the country the two main tourist resort destinations are Acapulco and Cancun. Located on its Pacific coast, Acapulco has everything you could wish for from a beach vacation. All the water sports are available in a place that is completely geared towards the the international visitor. Cancun however with its soft white sandy beaches is now regarded as even more popular. Beautiful turquoise waters, great shops, terrific night life in a safe environment are all key factors in making this glorious place so special. There really is something for everyone in this amazing country.

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