

NEIGHBORHOODS

top picks

- **National Anthropology Museum** (p80) Superb showcase for the nation's indigenous legacy.
- **Xochimilco** (p113) Ancient network of canals plied by festive flowery *trajineras* (gondolas).
- **Bosque de Chapultepec** (p77) Mexico City's principal park, crowned by the former emperor's castle.
- **Templo Mayor** (p51) Legendary ceremonial precinct of the Aztec empire.
- **Museo Casa de Frida Kahlo** (p96) Blue-hued home of the country's most famous tortured artist.
- **Centro Histórico** (p46) Mexico City's historic core, with four centuries of architectural gems on display.
- **Palacio de Bellas Artes** (p63) Belle époque opera house graced with the works of Mexico's leading muralists.
- **Zócalo** (p46) The thumping heart of the city and the nation.
- **Colonia Condesa** (p86) Trendy, tree-lined neighborhood.
- **Basilica de Guadalupe** (p116) Magnet for millions, site of a Christian miracle atop a pre-Hispanic shrine.

What's your recommendation? www.lonelyplanet.com/mexico-city

NEIGHBORHOODS

The Mancha Urbana, or ‘urban stain,’ as the metropolitan area is often referred to, spreads across the ancient bed of the Lago de Texcoco and beyond. Encompassing approximately 1500 sq km of the Distrito Federal and another 3200 sq km of the neighboring state of México to the north, Mexico City comprises hundreds of *colonias* (neighborhoods). Though this vast urban expanse is daunting at first, most of what’s important to the majority of visitors lies in a relatively limited, well-defined and easily traversed central area.

The historic heart of the city is the wide plaza known as **El Zócalo**, surrounded by the Palacio Nacional (the presidential palace), the cathedral and the excavated site of the Templo Mayor, which is the main temple of Aztec Tenochtitlán. The Zócalo and the surrounding neighborhood are known as the **Centro Histórico** (Historic Center). Full of notable old buildings, interesting museums and other sights, it’s where most visitors begin their explorations. Conveniently, there are loads of economical hotels and restaurants north, west and south of the Zócalo.

Eight blocks west of the Zócalo – and linked to it by Calles Madero and 5 de Mayo – lies the verdant park called the **Alameda Central**. On the east side of the Alameda stands the magnificent Palacio de Bellas Artes. The landmark Torre Latinoamericana (Latin American Tower) pierces the sky a block south of Bellas Artes, beside one of the city’s main north–south arterial roads, the Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas.

Some 750m west of the Alameda, across Paseo de la Reforma, is **Plaza de la República**, marked by the somber, copper-domed Monumento a la Revolución. This is a fairly quiet, mostly residential area with many budget and midrange hotels.

Mexico City’s grandest boulevard, Paseo de la Reforma, skirts the Alameda Central’s west side, tracing a northeastward diagonal across the city’s heart. Major hotels, embassies, office buildings and banks rise alongside it. Landmark *glorietas* (traffic circles) along Reforma are marked with statues, including those commemorating Christopher Columbus, Cuauhtémoc (the last Aztec emperor; at the intersection with Av Insurgentes), and Mexican independence (the Monumento a la Independencia, or El Ángel).

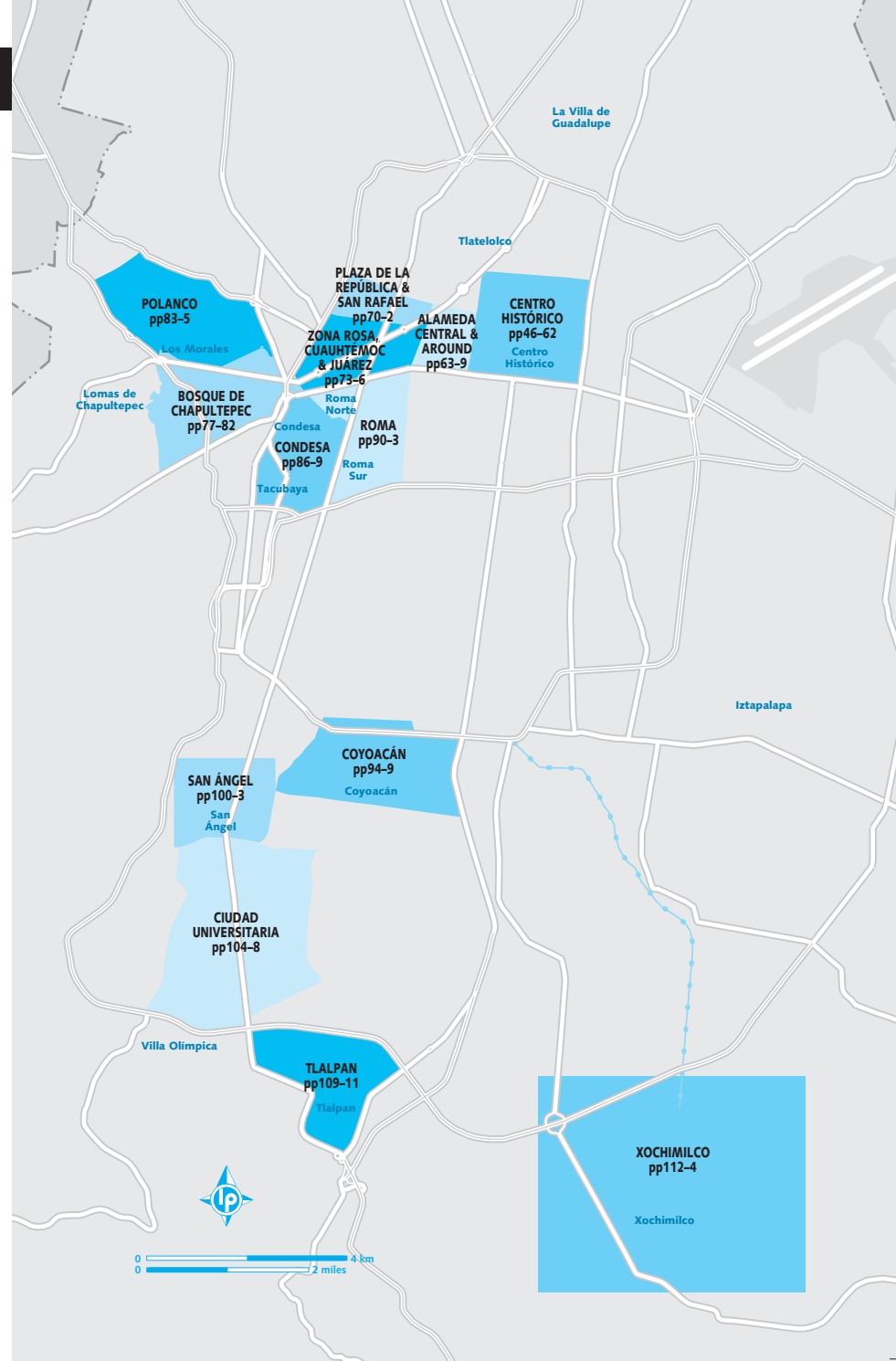
The independence monument marks the northern edge of the **Zona Rosa** (Pink Zone), a shopping, eating, hotel and nightlife district bounded by Av Insurgentes to the east and Av Chapultepec to the south. North of Paseo de la Reforma is Colonia **Cuauhtémoc**, a quieter residential zone where many expats live.

South of the Zona Rosa across Av Chapultepec is Colonia **Roma**, a lower-key, more bohemian section of town with lots of cafés, galleries and early-20th-century, Parisian-influenced architecture. Roma makes a good, relatively central base with a range of lodgings to choose from.

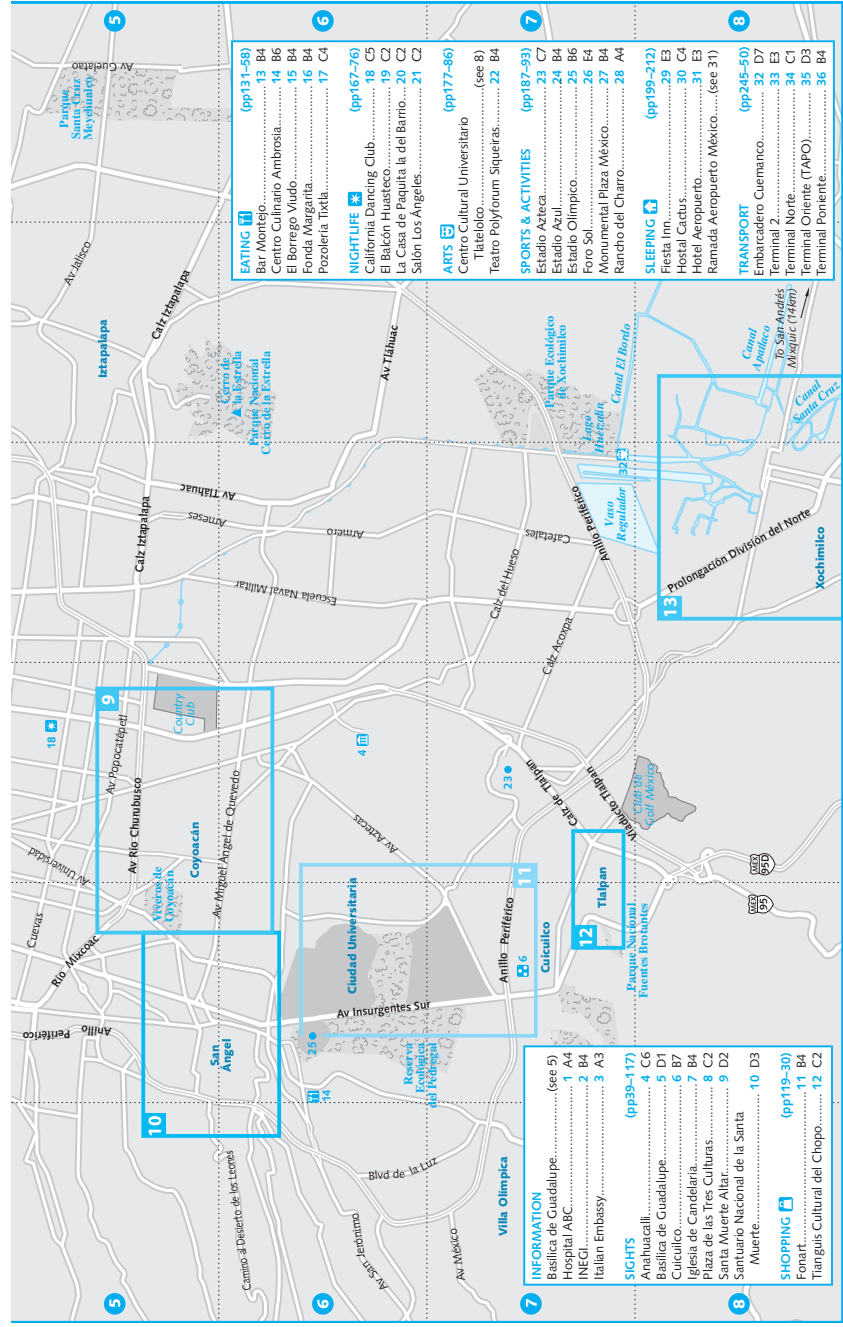
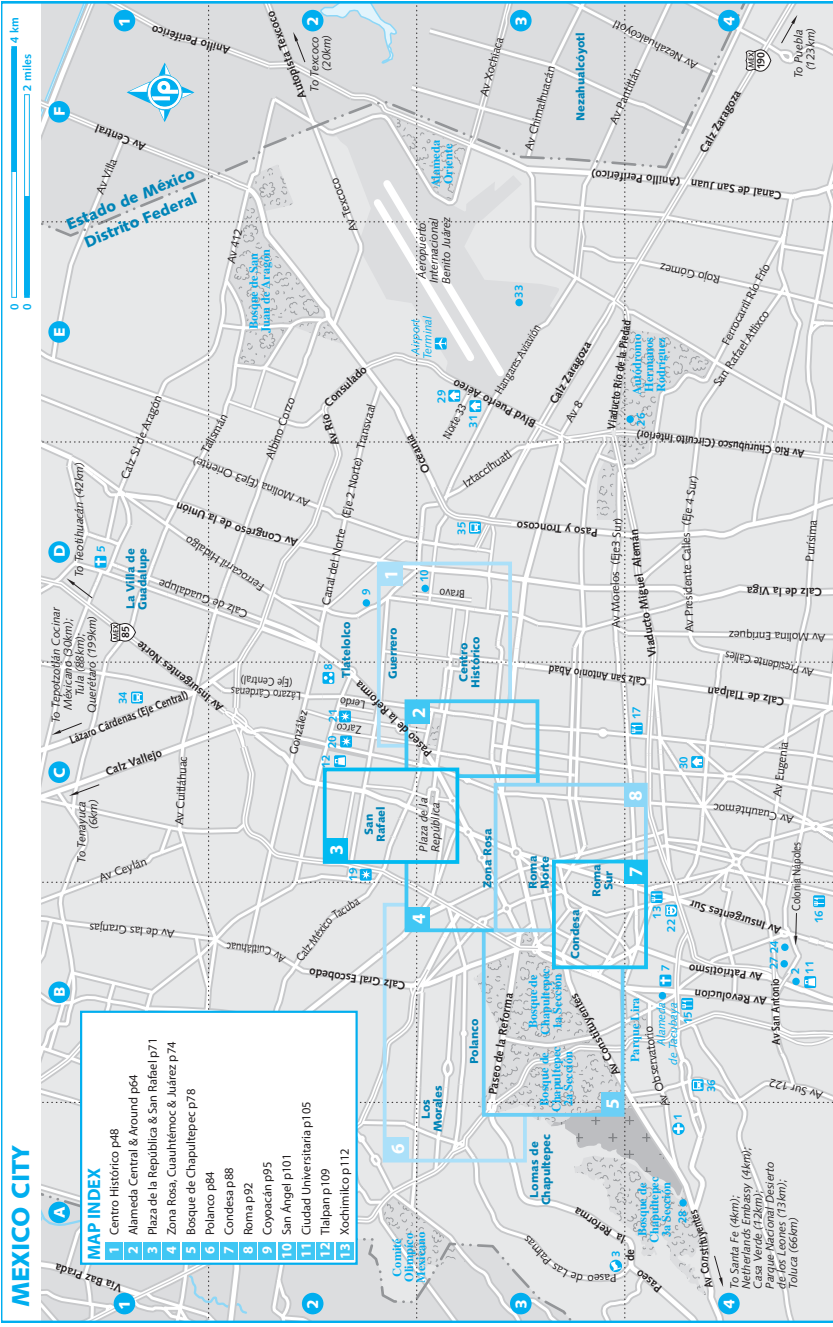
West of the Zona Rosa, Paseo de la Reforma traverses **Bosque de Chapultepec**, generally known to gringos as Chapultepec Park. A large expanse of trees, gardens and lakes, it is Mexico City’s ‘lungs,’ and holds many of the city’s major museums, including the renowned Museo Nacional de Antropología and the Museo Nacional de Historia.

Two important neighborhoods flank the Bosque. To the north is **Polanco**, an affluent zone where many countries have their embassies and internationally acclaimed chefs work their magic at some of the city’s most prestigious restaurants. A cluster of top-end hotels stands on the neighborhood’s southern edge opposite the Auditorio Nacional, the main concert hall. To the south and east of Chapultepec Park, Colonia **Condesa** is a delightful residential enclave that’s been reborn as a chic restaurant and nightlife destination.

Av Insurgentes, the city’s major north–south axis, intersects with Paseo de la Reforma, connecting it to points of interest in both directions. Now plied by the metrobus, a rapid transit option that runs along a dedicated lane, the avenue extends almost 30km, straddled by mostly middle-class areas along the way. About 6½km north of Centro Histórico via Insurgentes stands the **Basílica de Guadalupe**, Mexico’s most revered shrine. About 9km south of El Ángel are the atmospheric former colonial villages of **San Ángel** and **Coyoacán**. Immediately south of San Ángel spreads the **Ciudad Universitaria**, the vast campus of the national university, aka UNAM. In the far southeast of the city are the canals and gardens of **Xochimilco**.



MEXICO CITY



ITINERARY BUILDER

You could spend weeks getting to know all the magnificent architecture, archaeological sites, murals, museums, markets, nightspots and taco stands this multifaceted capital has to offer. Particularly in the Centro Histórico, every block is worthy of extended exploration. Think of this handy tool as a way to scratch the surface.

HOW TO USE THIS TABLE

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sights	Eating	Drinking & Nightlife	Shopping
CENTRO HISTÓRICO		<p>Templo Mayor (p51)</p> <p>Catedral Metropolitana (p50)</p> <p>Museo del Estanquillo (p53)</p>	<p>El Cardenal (p135)</p> <p>Los Girasoles (p136)</p> <p>Hostería de Santo Domingo (p136)</p>	<p>La Ópera Bar (p161)</p> <p>Salón Corona (p161)</p> <p>Pasajero (p173)</p>	<p>Museo de Arte Popular (p122)</p> <p>Palacio de Las Máscaras (p121)</p> <p>Arte Mexicano Para El Mundo (p121)</p>
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		<p>Paseo de la Reforma (p73)</p> <p>Monumento a la Independencia (p73)</p>	<p>Tezka (p141)</p> <p>Fonda El Refugio (p141)</p> <p>U Rae Ok (p142)</p>	<p>Cafetería Gabi's (p162)</p> <p>Bar Milán (p168)</p> <p>Papa Beto (p174)</p>	<p>Mercado Insurgentes (p123)</p> <p>Plaza Del Ángel (p124)</p> <p>Miniaturas Felguérez (p125)</p>
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		<p>Parque México (p86)</p> <p>Casa del Poeta Ramón López Velarde (p90)</p> <p>Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm (p184)</p>	<p>Hip Kitchen (p148)</p> <p>Ixchel (p150)</p> <p>Tierra de Vinos (p151)</p>	<p>La Botica (p163)</p> <p>Condesa DF (p169)</p> <p>Mestizo Lounge (p164)</p>	<p>Naco Miscelánea (p127)</p> <p>Milagro (p127)</p> <p>Chic By Accident (p128)</p>
		<p>Museo Frida Kahlo (p96)</p> <p>Ex-Convento de Churubusco (p97)</p> <p>Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo (p100)</p>	<p>Los Danzantes (p152)</p> <p>Taberna De León (p154)</p> <p>Saks (p154)</p>	<p>La Bipolar (p165)</p> <p>El Hijo Del Cuervo (p169)</p> <p>Altavista 154 (p175)</p>	<p>Casa Del Coleccionista (p129)</p> <p>Bazar Sábado (p123)</p> <p>Plaza Loreto (p130)</p>
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CENTRO HISTÓRICO

Shopping p120; Eating p135; Drinking p160; Sleeping p200

The area defined as the Centro Histórico focuses on the large downtown plaza known as El Zócalo (Plaza de la Constitución) and stretches for several blocks in all directions from there. To the west it reaches almost as far as the Alameda Central. Packed with magnificent buildings and absorbing museums, it is the obvious place to start your explorations of the city. More than 1500 of its buildings are classified as historic or artistic monuments and it is on the Unesco World Heritage list. It also vibrates with modern-day street life and nightlife, and is a convenient area to stay in, with a range of hotels in all price categories except the very highest.

The 34-block area of the Centro Histórico approximates Mexico City's pre-20th-century extents. It was in this spot that the Aztecs founded their capital, Tenochtitlán, in 1325, when the wandering tribe sighted the prophesied vision: an eagle perched upon a cactus devouring a snake (a scene enshrined in a diorama that stands on the east side of the DF government building on Pino Suárez). As it happened, the scene unfolded on a small island in the middle of a lake, and the Aztecs were obliged to build their city in this unlikely setting. The causeways they built to connect the island to the mainland remain in use today as major thoroughfares, including Tacuba and Pino Suárez.

After the Spaniards destroyed the Aztec capital, the lake was drained and the new city was superimposed on the Aztec ruins. Many of the early structures were built of *tezontle*, a blood-red volcanic stone still in evidence around the Centro. The early Spanish city was dominated by the vast monastic complexes erected by the Franciscans, Augustinians and other evangelizing orders. Within a century of the city's construction, they had installed more than 40 of these monasteries and convents, along with hospitals and educational institutions.

Following independence, reforms on the ecclesiastical hegemony were carried out with a vengeance. The vast monastic complexes were carved up to make way for new streets, or completely demolished. Fortunes made during the late-19th-century dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz fueled a construction boom, and more colonial gems were torn down to be replaced by Parisian-style mansions. Following the Revolution, new neighborhoods were laid out to accommodate an emerging middle class, and the Centro fell into decline. The relocating of the national university to the DF's southern edge in the 1950s was a further blow to the Centro's vitality. By the 1980s much of the Centro had become very run-down, with many of its former mansions turned into overcrowded housing for the poor or simply abandoned.

Starting in 2000, under the administration of Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador, capital was poured into upgrading the image and infrastructure of the Centro. Streets were repaved, buildings refurbished, lighting and traffic flow improved and security bolstered. The campaign is ongoing, and under Mayor Marcelo Ebrard, more museums, restaurants and clubs have moved into the newly renovated structures, and festivals and cultural events are staged in the plazas, spurring a real renaissance. In spring, the Festival del Centro Histórico turns the whole area into a venue for special performances, exhibitions and conferences with plenty of international guests. Ebrard has also pushed to clear the Centro of the thousands of 'informal' vendors who set up stalls along the streets and sidewalks. So far, this initiative has been effective, though its success is of course dependent on the availability of alternative employment for the vendors.

Although most of the improvements have been made in the area west of the Zócalo, the unimproved portions remain equally worthy of exploration. We can only suggest some of the places to visit, but almost anywhere you poke around you're bound to make discoveries. The Centro is like a giant historical jigsaw puzzle. What is on display today are fragments of overarching themes which have been dismantled and repurposed over the centuries.

ZÓCALO

EL ZÓCALO Map pp48–9

M Zócalo

The heart of Mexico City is the Plaza de la Constitución, more widely known as the Zócalo, meaning 'base.' City residents gave

it this nickname in the 19th century, when plans for a major monument to independence went unrealized, leaving only the pedestal. Measuring more than 220m from north to south and 240m from east to west, the Zócalo is one of the world's largest city squares.

The ceremonial center of Aztec Tenochtitlán, known as the Teocalli, lay immediately northeast of the Zócalo. In the 1520s Cortés paved the plaza with stones from the ruined Teocalli and other Aztec buildings. The Inquisition performed its first auto-da-fe here in 1574. In the 18th century, the Zócalo was given over to a maze of market stalls until it was dismantled by Santa Anna who placed the unfinished independence monument in its center. Under Emperor Maximilian's reign, the square was redesigned as a European-style garden with tree-lined paths and a gazebo for military-band recitals, but these items were removed in the next century to leave it in its current open state.

Today, the Zócalo is home to Mexico City's powers-that-be. On its east side is the Palacio Nacional, on the north the Catedral Metropolitana, and on the south the offices of the Distrito Federal government. Jewelry shops and extravagant hotels line the arcade known as the Portal de Mercaderes on the plaza's west side, once the domain of silversmiths.

The huge Mexican flag flying in the middle of the Zócalo is ceremonially removed from the Palacio Nacional and raised at 8am by soldiers of the Mexican army, then lowered at 6pm.

PALACIO NACIONAL Map pp48–9

☎ 5528-1252; Plaza de la Constitución; admission free, ID required; 🕒 9am-5pm; M Zócalo Home to the offices of the president of Mexico, the Federal Treasury and dramatic murals by Diego Rivera, the National Palace fills the entire east side of the Zócalo.

The first palace on this spot was built by Aztec emperor Moctezuma II in the early 16th century. Cortés destroyed the palace in 1521, rebuilding it as a fortress with three interior courtyards. In 1562 the crown bought the palace from Cortés' family to house the viceroys of Nueva España. Destroyed during riots in 1692, it was rebuilt and remained the vice-regal residence until Mexican independence.

As you face the palace you will see three portals. On the right (south) is the guarded entrance for the president (though in fact he rarely makes an appearance here). The north (left) entrance is for Federal Treasury employees. High above the center door hangs the *Campana de Dolores*, the bell rung in the town of Dolores Hidalgo by Padre

Miguel Hidalgo in 1810 at the start of the Mexican War of Independence. From the balcony underneath it, the president delivers the *grito* (shout) – *Viva México!* – on September 15 to commemorate independence.

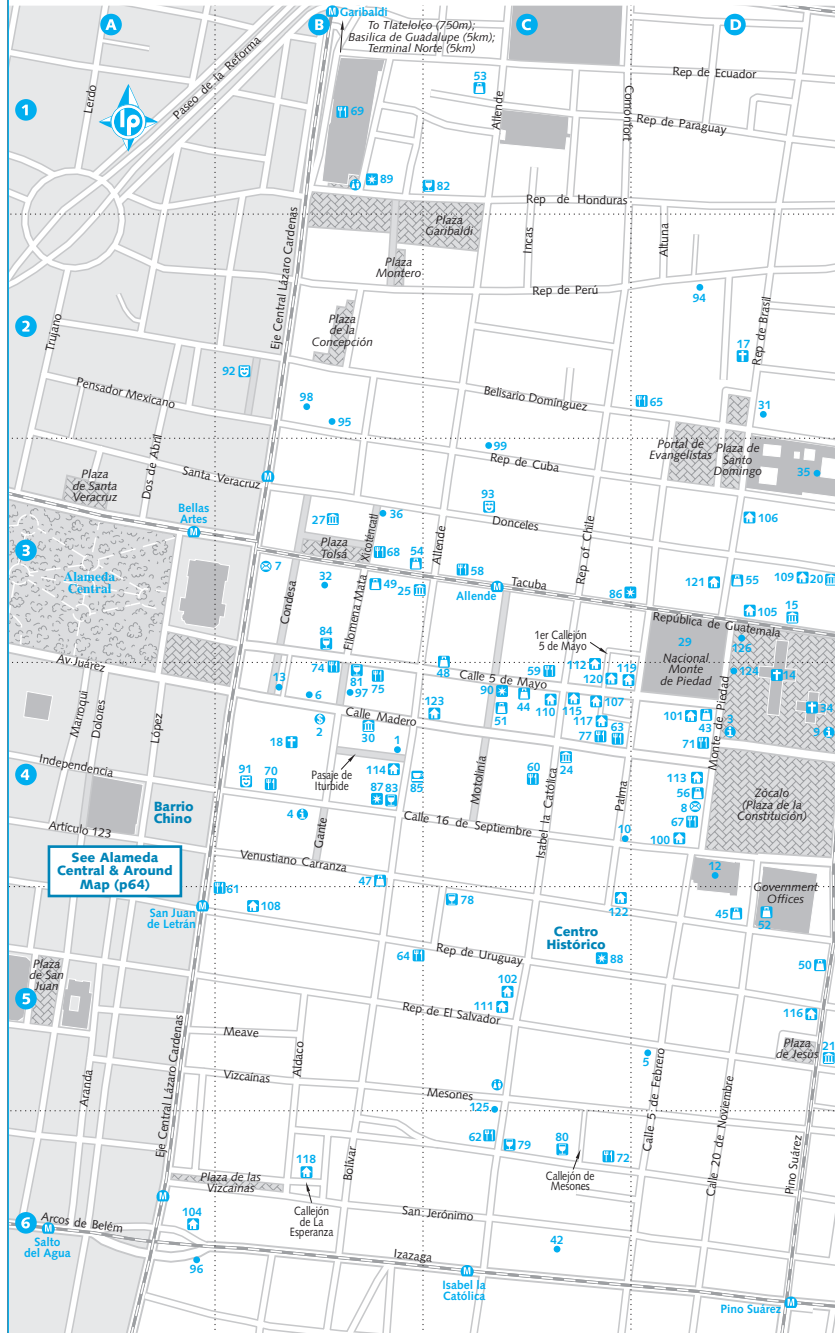
Enter the palace through the center door. The *Diego Rivera murals* above the main staircase were painted between 1929 and 1935. The main, largest work here is one of Rivera's masterpieces, *México a Través de los Siglos* (Mexico Through the Centuries), which shows just about every major event and personage in modern Mexican history from Cortés' conquest of the Aztecs at bottom center to the Mexican Revolution at top center. Between these two is the eagle-on-cactus symbol of Aztec Tenochtitlán, which figures even today on the Mexican national flag. Portrayed on the right wall of the stairs is the ancient god Quetzalcóatl, as an antecedent to the Spanish-influenced centuries, along with other aspects of pre-Hispanic belief and life. On the left wall Karl Marx presides over what Rivera no doubt believed to be the logical outcome of the colonial and bourgeois eras, La Lucha de Clases (Class War).

The unfinished series of frescoes around the walkway level at the top of the staircase was painted by Rivera between 1945 and 1951. They show a sequence of pre-Hispanic cultures – Tenochtitlán, then the Tarascos of Michoacán, the Zapotecs and Mixtecs of Oaxaca, the peoples of Veracruz, and the Huastecs of the northeast. The Huastec panel emphasizes maize-growing and is followed by panels on two other plants of great importance in pre-Hispanic Mexico: the cacao (source of chocolate) and maguey (from which the drink *pulque* was made). Finally we see the arrival of Cortés – portrayed as a grotesque, knobby-kneed simpleton – in Veracruz in 1519.

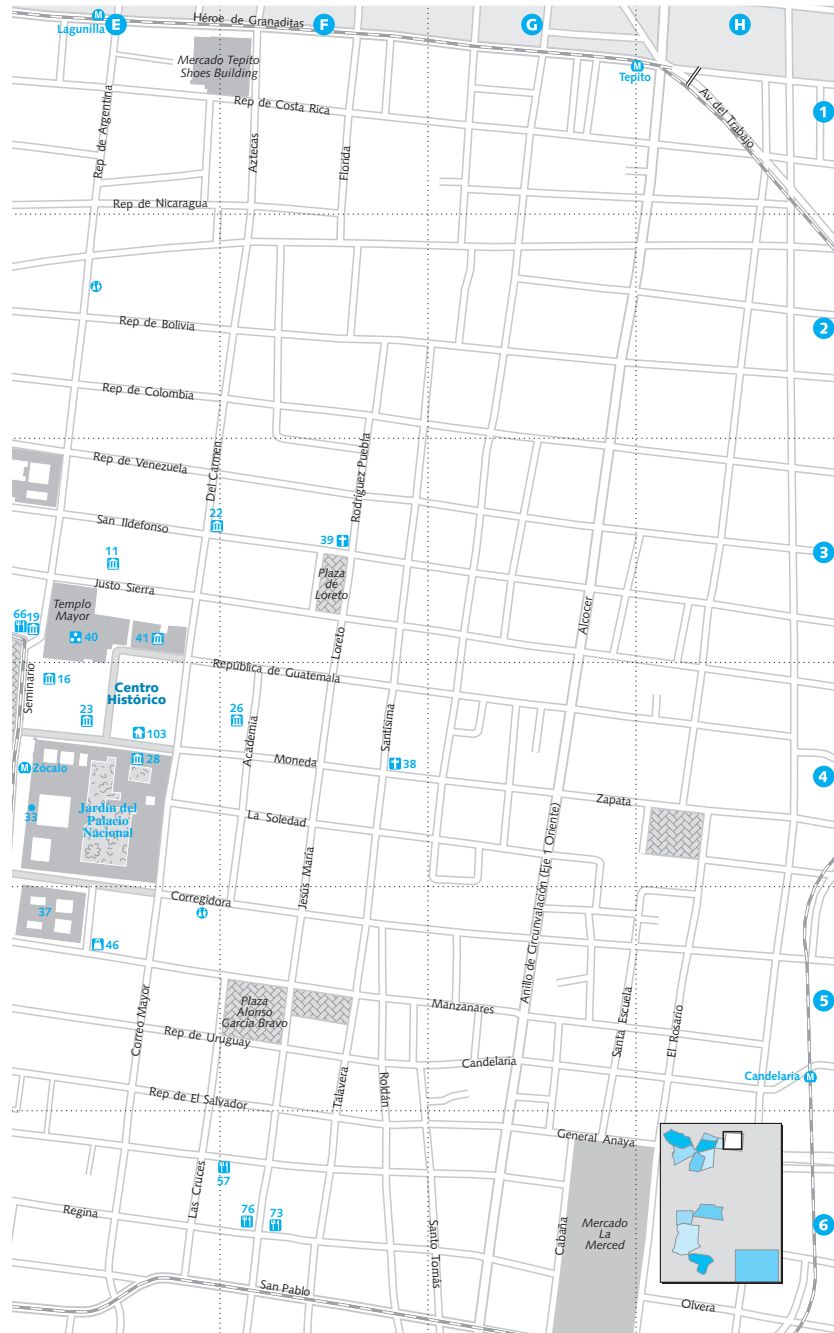
Also located on this level is the *Recinto Parlamentario*, a reconstructed version of the original Chamber of Deputies that was destroyed in an 1872 blaze. On display is a copy of the constitution, passed in this legislative rotunda back in 1857.

On the palace's north side is the *Recinto de Homenaje a Benito Juárez* (Place of Homage to Benito Juárez). Juárez, one of Mexico's most respected heroes, was born into poverty in the state of Oaxaca, but rose to lead the reform movement in the 1850s and the fight against the French invaders in the 1860s. He served as president until his death in

CENTRO HISTÓRICO



0 300 m 0.2 miles



CENTRO HISTÓRICO

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1872. This exhibit includes various personal effects and displays on his life and times.

Beyond the main patio are botanical gardens containing plants from around Mexico.

CATEDRAL METROPOLITANA

Map pp48-9

☎ 5510-0440; admission free; 🕒 7:30am-8pm;

📍 Zócalo

Although construction of the **Metropolitan Cathedral** began in 1573, it remained a

work in progress throughout the entire colonial period. This explains the mélange of architectural styles on display, as each successive construction stage reflected the modes of the era. To complicate matters, due to the cathedral's strategic placement right on top of the ruins of the Aztec temple complex, the massive building has been sinking unevenly since its construction, resulting in fissures and cracks in the structure.

With a five-nave basilica design of vaults on semicircular arches, the cathedral was built to resemble the one in Seville. The baroque portals facing the Zócalo, built in the 17th century, have two levels of columns and marble panels with bas-reliefs. The central panel shows the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, to whom the cathedral is dedicated. The upper levels of the towers, with unique bell-shaped tops, were added in the late 18th century. The exterior was completed in 1813, when architect Manuel Tolsá added the clock tower – topped by statues of Faith, Hope and Charity – and a great central dome.

The first thing you notice upon entering from the Zócalo is the elaborately carved and gilded Altar de Perdón (Altar of Pardon). Invariably there is a line of worshippers at the foot of the Señor del Veneno (Lord of the Poison), the dusky Christ figure on the right. Legend has it that the figure attained its color when it miraculously absorbed a dose of poison through its feet from the lips of a clergyman, to whom an enemy had administered the lethal substance.

The cathedral's chief artistic treasure is the gilded 18th-century **Altar de los Reyes** (Altar of the Kings), behind the main altar. It's a high point of Churrigueresque style. The two side naves are lined with 14 richly decorated chapels. At the southwest corner, the **Capilla de los Santos Ángeles y Arcángeles** (Chapel of the Holy Angels and Archangels) is another example of baroque churlery and painting, with altarpieces embellished by the 18th-century painter Juan Correa.

Also worthy of admiration are the intricately carved late-17th-century wooden choir stalls in the central nave and the **sacristy**, the first component of the cathedral to be built, with a pair of enormous painted panels. *La Asunción de la Virgen*, by Correa, depicts the ascension of Mary, while *La Mujer del Apocalipsis*, by Cristóbal de Villal-

pando, portrays the apocalyptic vision of St John the Apostle.

A M\$10 donation is requested to enter the sacristy or choir, where authorized guides provide commentary. You can climb the **bell tower** (admission M\$12; 🕒 10:30am-12:30pm & 3-6pm). Sunday at noon, Mass is conducted by the archbishop of Mexico.

Adjoining the east side of the cathedral is the 18th-century **Sagrario Metropolitano** (Map pp48-9; 🕒 7:30am-7:30pm). Originally built to house the archives and vestments of the archbishop, it is now the city's main parish church. Its front entrance and mirror-image eastern portal are superb examples of the ultradecorative Churrigueresque style.

You may well wonder what those guys are doing sitting on the ground on the west side of the cathedral, with tool bags at their feet and cardboard signs in front of them. They're plumbers, painters, bricklayers and electricians, and they're just looking to make an honest peso. Their signs announce their trades to potential customers seeking home improvements.

TEMPLO MAYOR Map pp48-9

☎ 5542-4943; www.conaculta.gob.mx/templo-mayor; Seminario 8; admission incl entry to Museo del Templo Mayor M\$45, Sun free; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun

The Teocalli of Tenochtitlán, demolished by the Spaniards in the 1520s, stood on the site of the cathedral and the blocks to its north and east. It wasn't until 1978, after electricity workers happened on an eight-ton stone-disc carving of the Aztec goddess Coyolxauhqui, that the decision was taken to demolish a block of colonial buildings and excavate the **Templo Mayor**. The temple is thought to be on the exact spot where the Aztecs saw their symbolic eagle, perching on a cactus with a snake in its beak – the symbol of Mexico today. In Aztec belief this was, literally, the center of the universe.

FILLING IN THE SQUARE

It is the very emptiness of the Zócalo that allows it to be adapted and rearranged for multiple uses. It has variously served as a forum for mass protests and a campground for demonstrators, a free concert venue, a great dance hall, a human chessboard, a stage for military marches on Independence day and a gallery of spooky altars for Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) in November. Café Tacuba and Manu Chao have played before crowds of 200,000 fans in the Zócalo. It became an extension of the cathedral's atrium when Pope John Paul II conducted mass here. It's even been a canvas for photo artist Spencer Tunick, who filled the square with 18,000 nude Mexicans in May 2007 (a record for Tunick, who has staged similar photo shoots in cities around the world). The buildings around the square are often decorated with holiday iconography.

MODERN DANCE

As you emerge from Metro Zócalo onto the vast central plaza, you'll invariably hear the booming of drums from the direction of the cathedral – the Aztec dancers are doing their thing. Wearing snakeskin loincloths, elaborately feathered headdresses and shell ankle bracelets, they move in a circle and chant in Nahuatl in what appears to be a display of pre-Hispanic aerobics. At the center, engulfed in a cloud of fragrant copal smoke, drummers bang on the conga-like *huehuetl* and the barrel-shaped, slitted *teponzantli*.

Variouly known as Concheros, Danzantes Aztecas or Danza Chichimeca, the ritual is performed daily near the Templo Mayor, often throbbing on for hours without pause. It is meant to evoke the Mexica *mitote*, a frenzied ceremony performed by pre-Conquest Mexicans at harvest times. Yet scant evidence exists that their moves bear any resemblance to those of their forebears. Prohibited by the Spanish colonists from performing their dances or using the *huehuetl*, indigenous Mexicans fused elements of Christian worship into their rituals, dancing in the atriums of churches and playing mandolinlike instruments backed by a *concha* (armadillo shell); from whence the name Concheros derives).

Today's Zócalo dancers, however, reject any association with Christianity, seeking instead a purer connection to their pre-Hispanic roots. Critics mock their representation of a sacred yet unknowable past as a pastiche of New Age nonsense. Yet this celebration of Mexican heritage appears to be developing into a movement, as it's embraced by more and more young Mexicans seeking a continuity with their past, many of whom you'll see gyrating along in their street clothes. Stranger still, the dance craze is being taken up by the descendants of the conquistadors, as roots-minded youth in Madrid go Aztec.

Like other sacred buildings in Tenochtitlán, the temple, begun in 1325, was enlarged several times, with each rebuilding accompanied by the sacrifice of captured warriors. In 1487 these rituals were performed at a frenzied pace to rededicate the temple after one major reconstruction. By some estimates, as many as 20,000 sacrificial victims went under the blade in one ghastly four-day ceremony.

What we see today are sections of the temple's different phases. (Little is left of the seventh and last version seen by the Spanish conquistadors, built around 1500.) At the center is a platform dating from about 1400; on its southern half, a sacrificial stone stands in front of a shrine to Huizilopochtli, the Aztec war god. On the northern half is a *chac-mool* (a Maya reclining figure that served as a messenger to the gods) before a shrine to the water god, Tláloc. By the time the Spanish arrived, a 40m-high double pyramid towered above this spot, with steep twin stairways climbing to shrines of the two gods.

Elsewhere in the site, don't miss the stone replica of a *tzompantli* (skull-display rack), carved with 240 stone skulls, or the 15th-century *Recinto de los Guerreros Águila* (Sanctuary of the Eagle Warriors, an elite band of Aztec fighters), decorated with colored bas-reliefs of military processions.

As you approach the museum, notice the large-scale quotations chiseled on its west walls. These are awestruck descriptions of

Tenochtitlán from three of its earliest European visitors – Hernán Cortés, Bernál Díaz del Castillo and Motolinía.

The *Museo del Templo Mayor* houses artifacts from the site and gives a good overview of Aztec civilization, including *chinampa* agriculture, systems of government and trade, and beliefs, wars and sacrifices. Pride of place is given to the great wheel-like stone of Coyolxauhqui (She of Bells on her Cheek, the Aztec goddess of the moon), best viewed from the top floor vantage point. On the stone, Coyolxauhqui is shown decapitated. According to Aztec mythology, she led her 400 siblings in an attack against her pregnant mother, Coatlicue. But before they could do so, Coatlicue bore Huizilopochtli (god of war) who hacked Coyolxauhqui to pieces, hurling her head into the sky where it became the moon. Other outstanding exhibits include full-size terracotta eagle warriors.

The entrance to the temple site and museum is east of the cathedral, across the hectic Plaza Templo Mayor, with its model of Tenochtitlán. On the temple site, explanatory text is accompanied by quality English translations, but no translations are provided inside the museum. Alternatively, rent a recorded audio-guide inside the museum, available in English (M\$50), or hire one of the authorized tour guides (with Sectur ID, M\$250) by the entrance.

GALERÍA DE NUESTRA COCINA DUQUE DE HERDEZ

Map pp48–9
☎ 5522-8860; www.fundacionherdez.com.mx;
Seminario 18; admission M\$5; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sat; **M** Zócalo

This modest museum, sponsored by Mexican canned-food giant Herdez, follows the history of the country's renowned cuisine. You'll find out what Mexicans were eating before the Spanish conquest and how the two traditions fused to yield all those wonderful tacos, tamales and salsas. Probably the most useful feature is the gastronomic library downstairs.

MUSEO ARCHIVO DE LA FOTOGRAFÍA

Map pp48–9
☎ 2616-7057; www.maf.df.gob.mx; República de Guatemala 34; admission free; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; **M** Zócalo

Inaugurated in November 2007, the photographic archive museum occupies the 16th-century Casa de Ajaracas, which was completely renovated for the purpose. The museum draws from a century's worth of images taken for the *Gaceta Oficial del Distrito Federal* – the DF public record – to document the capital's development and preserve the memory of its streets, plazas, buildings and people.

ANTIGUO PALACIO DEL AYUNTAMIENTO

Map pp48–9
☎ 5662-7680; www.df.gob.mx; Plaza de la Constitución 7; admission free; ☎ 10am–6pm; **M** Zócalo

The two buildings on the south side of the Zócalo may look similar with their stately arcades and handsome carved window frames, but the *Ayuntamiento* (the one on the right) predates its twin by over 400 years. The mayor has his office there, while various city departments occupy the east building. Recently restored and opened for public viewing, the grand *Salón de Cabildos*, on the upper level of the Ayuntamiento, was the place where the city council traditionally convened to settle local disputes. The entry hall contains a gallery of portraits of all 62 Spanish viceroys.

WEST OF THE ZÓCALO NACIONAL MONTE DE PIEDAD

Map pp48–9
Monte de Piedad 7; ☎ 8:30am–6pm Mon–Fri, to 1pm Sat; **M** Zócalo

Facing the west side of the cathedral is Mexico's national pawnshop, founded in 1774 by silver magnate Pedro Romero de Terreros. The site was once occupied by the Palacio de Axayacatl, where Cortés and his companions were first lodged by Moctezuma II in 1519. Cortés installed the original colonial headquarters over the ruins of his host's palace. People pawn their jewelry and other possessions in the central hall for loans at 12% interest. Unclaimed items are sold in shops off the central passageway.

MUSEO DEL ESTANQUILLO

Map pp48–9
☎ 5521-3052; www.museodeestanquillo.com.mx;
Isabel la Católica 26; admission free; ☎ 10am–6pm Wed–Mon; **M** Allende

The 'corner shop' museum contains the vast pop-culture collection amassed over the decades by DF essayist, commentator and pack rat Carlos Monsivais. Housed in a magnificent neoclassical building which was an important jewelry store in the early 20th century, the museum illustrates various phases in the capital's development through numerous photos, paintings, daguerreotypes, board games, movie posters, illustrated sheets of verse, comic strips and so on from the collection. Taken together, these objects culled from the city's flea markets, rare book stores and antique shops add up to a vivid people's history of Mexico City.

PALACIO DE ITURBIDE

Map pp48–9
☎ 1226-0011; Madero 17; admission free; ☎ 10am–7pm Wed–Mon; **M** Allende

West of Bolívar, you'll encounter the baroque facade of the late-18th-century Palacio de Iturbide. Built for colonial nobility, in 1821 it became the residence of General Agustín Iturbide, a hero of the Mexican struggle for independence. To the cheers

NEW FINDS

Ongoing excavation continues to turn up major pieces in the vicinity of the Templo Mayor. Just west of the temple, a monolithic stone carved with the image of Tlaltecuhli, the goddess of earth fertility, was unearthed in a fractured state in October 2006. Archaeologists believe the stone marks the tomb of Ahuizotl, the Aztec *tlatoani* (emperor), who immediately preceded Moctezuma II and whose military conquests greatly expanded Aztec domains. Excavation of the tomb was proceeding as this was being written.

WORTH THE TRIP

Tenayuca & Santa Cecilia

These two sites of lesser Aztec ruins in Estado de México, north of the DF line, might appeal not only to archaeology enthusiasts but also to anyone who enjoys discovering calm and beautiful nooks amid the modern urban sprawl. You can visit both in a half-day trip from the city center.

Settled by Chichimecs in about the 13th century, **Tenayuca** (☎ 5391-0780; Tizoc & Calle Quetzalcóatl; admission M\$34, free Sun; 🕒 10am-5pm) was later ruled by the Aztecs, and the double-staircase pyramid they left is a smaller version of the now-ruined one that stood in the Templo Mayor. As at the Templo Mayor, each staircase was topped by a temple – one dedicated to the water god Tláloc, the other probably dedicated to the Aztec tribal god Huizilopochtli. Striking serpent sculptures, possibly pre-Aztec, surround three sides of its base (imagine what they looked like when they were painted bright red, yellow and green!). If you just want to admire the pyramid there's no need to go in, other than to visit the small museum and read the explanatory signs, since the site is perfectly visible from the outside.

Santa Cecilia Acatitlán (admission M\$34, free Sun; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), 2km north of Tenayuca, is a small but fine pyramid topped with a temple (both reconstructed) dedicated to the gods Tláloc and Huizilopochtli. It stands in pleasant, leafy grounds behind the pretty, 16th-century Parroquia Santa Cecilia, some of whose stone came from the original pyramid. Access to the pyramid is through the Museo Hurtado, with a small collection of pre-Hispanic sculpture.

Tenayuca is 11km north-northwest of the Zócalo. To get there you can take a northbound 'Tenayuca' pesero on the Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas at Donceles (one block north of the Palacio de Bellas Artes), or from the Plaza de las Tres Culturas. You need to get off at the intersection of Av Acueducto de Tenayuca and Cuauhtémoc, half an hour from the Bellas Artes in moderate traffic (there are traffic signals at the corner; if in doubt ask the driver or fellow passengers for the *pirámide de Tenayuca*). Walk north (to the right) along Cuauhtémoc and you'll see the pyramid beside a park after a couple of blocks.

You can reach Santa Cecilia by taking a pesero that's headed north up Carretera Tenayuca Santa Cecilia, north of the Tenayuca pyramid. Get off at Calle Pirámide de Tula and walk a few blocks east to the church. You'll probably need to ask for directions – the people at Tenayuca will get you started.

of a rent-a-crowd, Iturbide was proclaimed Emperor Agustín I here in 1822. (He abdicated less than a year later, after General Santa Anna announced the birth of the republic.) Acquired and restored by Banamex bank in 1965, the palace now functions as the **Palacio de Cultura Banamex**, with exhibits drawn from the bank's vast Mexican art collection, as well as contemporary Mexican handicrafts. Some of the palace's original salons are displayed on the upper level, along with exhibits on its eventful history. Free guided tours are offered (in Spanish) at noon, 2pm and 4pm.

CASA DE AZULEJOS Map pp48–9

☎ 5512-9820; Madero 4; 🕒 7am-1am; 📍 Allende A block east toward the Zócalo stands one of the city's gems, the Casa de Azulejos. Dating from 1596, it was built for the Condes (Counts) del Valle de Orizaba. Although the superb tile work that has adorned the outside walls since the 18th century is Spanish and Moorish in style, most of the tiles were actually produced in China and shipped to Mexico on the Manila *naos* (Spanish galleons used up to the early

19th century). The building now houses a Sanborns restaurant in a covered courtyard around a Moorish fountain. The staircase has a 1925 mural by Orozco.

IGLESIA DEL CONVENTO DE SAN FRANCISCO Map pp48–9

Madero 7; admission free; 🕒 7:30am-9pm The temple is just a remnant of the vast Franciscan monastery erected in the early 16th century over the site of Moctezuma's private zoo. In its heyday it extended two blocks south and east, and its atrium could hold 60,000 worshippers. The monastic complex was divvied up under the post-Independence Reform Laws, then returned to the Franciscan order, in a deplorable state, in 1949, and was subsequently restored. The entrance is reached through a broad atrium, where art exhibitions are held; the elaborately carved doorway is a shining example of 18th-century baroque.

PLAZA TOLSÁ Map pp48–9

Several blocks west of the Zócalo is this handsome square, named after the illustrious late-18th-century sculptor and

architect who completed the Catedral Metropolitana.

Manuel Tolsá also created the bronze equestrian statue of the Spanish king Carlos IV (who reigned from 1788 to 1808), which is the plaza's centerpiece. It originally stood in the Zócalo, then on Paseo de la Reforma, before being moved here in 1979 ('as a work of art,' a chiseled plaque emphasizes).

MUSEO NACIONAL DE ARTE Map pp48–9

☎ 5130-3400; www.munal.com.mx, in Spanish; Tacuba 8; admission M\$30, Sun free; 🕒 10:30am-5:30pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Bellas Artes Built around 1900 in the style of an Italian renaissance palace, the National Art Museum holds collections representing every school of Mexican art until the early 20th century. A highlight is the work of José María Velasco, depicting the Valle de México in the late 19th century, with Guadalupe and Chapultepec far outside the city.

PALACIO DE MINERÍA Map pp48–9

☎ 5623-2982; Tacuba 5; admission M\$25; 🕒 tours 10am-3pm Sat & Sun; 📍 Bellas Artes Opposite the national art museum is the Palace of Mining, where mining engineers were trained in the 19th century. Today it houses a branch of the national university's engineering department. A neoclassical masterpiece, the palace was designed by Tolsá and built between 1797 and 1813. Visits are by guided tour only. There's a small museum (admission M\$10; 🕒 10am-6pm Wed-Sun) on the illustrious architect's life and work.

SENADO DE LA REPÚBLICA Map pp48–9

☎ 5130-2200; Xicotécatl 9 The upper house of Mexico's federal congress, the **Cámara de Senadores**, meets in a building on the east side of the Museo Nacional de Arte. It's usually in session from September to December. The Distrito Federal's elected assembly, the **Asamblea Legislativa del Distrito Federal (ALDF)**, uses the old Cámara de Diputados building around the corner at Donceles and Allende. The **Cámara de Diputados** itself, the lower house of the federal congress, now uses the modern Palacio Legislativo on Av Congreso de la Unión, about 2km east of the Zócalo. It, too, is in session from September to December.

PALACIO POSTAL Map pp48–9

☎ 5521-1408; Tacuba 1; 📍 Bellas Artes More than just Mexico City's central post office, this early-20th-century palace is an architectural stunner. Across Eje Central from the Palacio de Bellas Artes, it was designed in Italian renaissance style by that structure's original architect, Adamo Boari. The beige stone facade features baroque columns and carved filigree around the windows; inside, the bronze railings on the monumental staircase were cast in Florence. Philatelists can ogle the rare Mexican stamps in the first-floor **postal museum** (admission free; 🕒 10am-5:30pm Mon-Fri, to 1:30pm Sat), while even noncollectors might enjoy the mural depicting a Tarascan farmer, which is a mosaic of more than 48,234 stamps postmarked between 1890 and 1934.

MUSEO INTERACTIVO DE ECONOMÍA Map pp48–9

☎ 5130-4600; www.mide.org.mx; Tacuba 17; adult/child M\$45/35; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Allende Housed in the former hospital of the Bethlehemites (the only religious order to be established in the Americas), this sprawling 18th-century structure has since 2006 been the unlikely home of a museum devoted to economics. A slew of hands-on exhibits are aimed at breaking down economic concepts and demonstrating how every Mexican affects and is affected by these principles. Visitors can start a corporation, chart their investments or design their own currency. For coin connoisseurs, the highlight is the Banco de México's numismatic collection. Unfortunately, only a few of the exhibits provide English text.

EAST OF THE ZÓCALO

MUSEO DE LA SECRETARÍA DE HACIENDA Y CRÉDITO PÚBLICO Map pp48–9

☎ 9158-1245; Moneda 4; admission M\$8, Sun free; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Zócalo The Museum of the Finance Secretariat shows off its vast collection of Mexican art, much of it contributed by painters and sculptors in lieu of paying taxes. The former colonial archbishop's palace also hosts a full program of cultural events (many free), from puppet shows to chamber-music recitals.

TRANSPORTATION: CENTRO HISTÓRICO

- Metro – the Zócalo station (Línea 2) exits right onto the central plaza. Metro Allende, one stop west on Línea 2, is best for points west of the Zócalo along Madero, Av 5 de Mayo and Tacuba (note: there's no transfer between eastbound and westbound sides of the platform at this station). Metro Isabel La Católica (Línea 1) and Pino Suárez (Línea 1 & 2) are on the south side of the Centro Histórico, at the bottom of the streets of the same name. Metro San Juan de Letrán (Línea 8) and Salto del Agua (Líneas 1 & 8) access the Centro from the west, along the north-south thoroughfare Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas.
- Trolleybus – 'Autobuses del Sur' and 'Autobuses del Norte' trolleybuses run south and north, respectively, along Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas, which skirts the west side of the Centro Histórico.
- Bus – though it's often faster to walk, pesero routes ply most of the streets crisscrossing the Centro grid, including Bolívar (southbound) and Isabel La Católica (northbound).
- Bicycle – free bike loans are offered 9am to 6pm daily, from a module on the west side of the Catedral Metropolitana. Leave a passport or driver's license for two hours of riding time.

MUSEO NACIONAL DE LAS CULTURAS

Map pp48-9

☎ 5512-7452; Moneda 13; admission free; ☎ 9:30am-6pm Tue-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun; 🚶 Zócalo

Constructed in 1567 as the colonial mint, the museum features ethnographic displays on the dress and handicrafts of the world's cultures. At least as interesting is the Rufino Tamayo mural in the entryway, entitled *La Revolución*. An atypically realistic canvas for the artist, it depicts the downfall of the Porfirio Díaz regime.

MUSEO JOSÉ LUIS CUEVAS

Map pp48-9

☎ 5522-0156; www.museojoseluiscuevas.com.mx; Academia 13; admission M\$20, Sun free; ☎ 10am-5:30pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Zócalo

A haven for Mexico's fringe art scene, the museum showcases the works of Cuevas, a leader of the 1950s Ruptura movement which broke with the politicized art of the postrevolutionary regime. Cuevas' *La Giganta*, an 8m-high bronze figure with male and female features, dominates the central patio, while the Sala de Arte Erótico is an intriguing gallery of the artist's sexual themes.

TEMPLO DE LA SANTÍSIMA

Map pp48-9

☎ 5522-2215; cnr Zapata & Santísima; admission free; ☎ 7am-1:30pm & 5-8pm

The profusion of ornamental sculpture on the facade – including ghostly busts of the 12 apostles and a representation of Christ with his head in God's lap – is the main reason to visit the Church of the Holy Sacrament, three blocks east of the Museo Nacional de las Culturas. Most of the carving was done by Lorenzo Rodríguez between 1755 and 1783.

ANTIGUO COLEGIO

DE SAN ILDEFONSO

Map pp48-9

☎ 5702-6378; www.sanildefonso.org.mx, in Spanish; Justo Sierra 16; admission M\$45, Tue free; ☎ 10am-5:30pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Zócalo

Built in the 16th century as a Jesuit college, this remarkable building was later turned into a prestigious teacher-training institute. In the 1920s, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and others were brought in to do murals. Most of the work on the main patio is by Orozco; check out the portrait of Cortés and La Malinche, his mistress, underneath the staircase. The amphitheater, off the lobby, holds Rivera's first mural, *La Creación*, commissioned by education minister José Vasconcelos upon Rivera's return from Europe in 1923. Mural tours (in Spanish) are given at noon and 4pm. Nowadays, the San Ildefonso hosts outstanding temporary exhibitions, as well as the Filmoteca of the national university.

MUSEO DE LA LUZ

Map pp48-9

☎ 5702-3183; Del Carmen 31; admission M\$20; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 Zócalo

The 'museum of light' occupies the former monastery of San Pedro and San Pablo, one of the Centro's most ancient structures. Kids will enjoy the array of interactive exhibits here, including optical illusions, one-way mirrors and kaleidoscopes, designed to demonstrate various optical principles (though only readers of Spanish will be illuminated by the accompanying explanations). At the rear of the museum are all kinds of devices to test your eyesight, and an optometrist performs eye exams for just M\$25.

TEMPLO DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LORETO

Map pp48-9

cnr San Ildefonso & Rodríguez Puebla; ☎ noon for midday mass

Noticeably sagging toward the east, this extraordinary church stands upon the site of an earlier chapel that housed a replica of Our Lady of Loreto brought from Italy by a Jesuit priest in 1675. The current church was completed in 1816 with the obligatory neoclassical facade of the period. It promptly started sinking into the ground but fortunately stopped a few years later. Inside, the sinking effect makes you feel like you're in a topsy-turvy funhouse. A magnificent cupola, ringed at the base by stained-glass images, crowns an unusual four-lobed cross with semicircular chapels in the lobes. After the 1985 earthquake the building was raided of its treasures, and the murals that covered the underside of the cupola were allowed to deteriorate.

NORTH OF THE ZÓCALO

CENTRO CULTURAL DE ESPAÑA

Map pp48-9

☎ 5521-1925; www.ccemx.org; República de Guatemala 18; admission free; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue & Wed, to 11pm Thu-Sat, to 4pm Sun; 🚶 Zócalo

One of the more happening spaces in the Centro, the Spanish Cultural Center has various cutting-edge exhibitions going on at once, plus frequent shows by Spanish performers. The splendidly restored building, which conquistador Hernán Cortés once awarded to his butler, has a rooftop terrace for tapas-munching and, on weekends, late-night DJ sessions (see p175).

MUSEO DE LA CARICATURA

Map pp48-9

☎ 5702-9256; Donceles 99; admission M\$20; ☎ 10am-6pm; 🚶 Zócalo

Mexico boasts a rich tradition of cartooning. Save for an eight-year period during the Porfirio Díaz regime when the dictator banned their publication, Mexican political cartoons have targeted the country's leaders since the early 19th century. And as a glance at many daily newspapers shows, the art of scathingly political caricatures is very much alive and well.

Housed in an 18th-century building that was originally an annex to the Jesuit college of San Ildefonso, the Museum of Cartooning displays the works of Mexico's

most prominent cartoonists from a collection of some 1500 original panels. These date from 1826, when Italian Claudio Linati published the country's first political cartoon, entitled 'Tyranny,' in his newspaper the *Iris*. A browse through the collection provides an amusing take on Mexican political history. Prominently featured are the works of José Guadalupe Posada, whose instantly recognizable skeletal figures illustrated newspapers and sheet music in the early 1900s. His Calavera de Catarina, a female skeleton wearing a broad-brimmed frilly hat, has become a Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) icon, though originally it was a satiric barb against the typically aristocratic characters who sashayed through the capital prior to the revolution.

PLAZA DE SANTO DOMINGO

Map pp48-9

Two blocks north of the Zócalo is this smaller, less formal plaza. The printers who work beneath the [Portal de Evangelistas](#), along its west side, are descendants of the scribes who did the paperwork for merchants using the customs building (now the Education Ministry) across the square. The maroon stone [Iglesia de Santo Domingo](#) was at the time of its construction in 1736 a more formidable temple than the Catedral. The three-tiered facade deserves a close look: statues of St Francis and St Augustine stand in the niches alongside the doorway. The middle panel shows St Dominic de Guzmán receiving a staff and the Epistles from St Peter and St Paul, respectively; the dove above them represents the Holy Spirit. At the top is a bas-relief of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.

Opposite the church, the 18th-century [Palacio de la Inquisición](#) was headquarters of the Holy Inquisition in Mexico until Spain decreed its closure in 1812. Its official shield can be seen at the top of the facade.

SECRETARÍA DE EDUCACIÓN PÚBLICA

Map pp48-9

☎ 3003-1000; República de Brasil 31; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 Zócalo

In the 1920s the postrevolution education minister, José Vasconcelos, commissioned talented young artists – among them Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco – to decorate numerous public buildings with dramatic, large-scale

DEATH'S NEW FACE

Garbed in a sequined white gown, wearing a wig of dark tresses and clutching a scythe in her bony hand, the skeletal figure bears an eerie resemblance to Mrs Bates from the film *Psycho*. Santa Muerte (St Death), as she is known, is the object of a fast-growing cult in Mexico, particularly in the rough Barrio Tepito, where the principal altar (Map pp42–3; **M** Tepito) stands on Alfarería north of Mineros. Possibly rooted in pre-Hispanic ritual, Santa Muerte has been linked to Mictlantecuhtli, the Mexican god of death.

On the first day of each month, as many as 5000 followers line up at the Tepito altar to express their devotion and leave candles, bottles of tequila and other tokens of their affection. The proceedings are overseen by the cheerful, aproned Enriqueta 'Doña Queta' Romero, who built the shrine herself back in 2001.

At the saint's official home 1km south of the shrine, however, she is nowhere to be seen. Instead, the **Santuario Nacional de la Santa Muerte** (National Sanctuary of St Death; (Map pp42–3; ☎ 5702-8607; Bravo 35; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Fri, 11am–6pm Sun; **M** Morelos) has a new figure of worship: a tall, winged woman with a ghostly pale complexion (though like her predecessor, she bears a scythe). In August 2007, the church substituted this ethereal Angel of St Death, because, as its bishop explained, Santa Muerte had become associated with drug runners, Satanists and other bad elements – an image, he claimed, that runs counter to her nature.

Some attribute the image change to other factors. The saint's popularity, especially among the lower echelons of society, is feared to be rivaling that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the Roman Catholic Church has harshly denounced the cult. The Traditional Catholic Mex-USA Church, the cross-border sect's official title, had recently lost its recognition (and associated tax benefits) by Mexico's Board of Religious Associations and is petitioning to regain its former status. But if the new lite version of Santa Muerte is in fact the church's attempt to demonstrate a more wholesome mission, it runs the risk of losing its more fervent devotees to keepers of the flame like Doña Queta.

While the altar and sanctuary are open to the public, travelers should be aware that the Tepito neighborhood is notorious among Mexicans as a scene of criminal activity and that church members may not welcome the scrutiny of curious onlookers.

murals conveying a new sense of Mexico's past and future. One was the former monastery that housed the newly established Education Ministry. The entrance is on the east side of Plaza de Santo Domingo.

The two front courtyards (on the opposite side of the building from the entrance) are lined with 120 fresco panels painted by Diego Rivera in the 1920s. Together they form a tableau of 'the very life of the people,' in the artist's words. Each courtyard is thematically distinct: the one nearest the República de Argentina entrance deals with labor, industry and agriculture, and the top floor holds portraits of Mexican heroes. The second courtyard depicts traditions and festivals. On its top level is a series on capitalist decadence and proletarian and agrarian revolution, underneath a continuous red banner emblazoned with a Mexican *corrido* (folk song). The likeness of Frida Kahlo appears in the first panel, as an arsenal worker.

SOUTH OF THE ZÓCALO

SUPREMA CORTE DE JUSTICIA

Map pp48–9

Pino Suárez 2; admission free, ID required; 🕒 9am–5pm Mon–Fri; **M** Zócalo

More Orozco murals are inside the Supreme Court Building, just south of the Zócalo. In 1940, the artist painted four panels around the first level of the central stairway, two of which deal with the theme of justice. A more contemporary take on the same subject, *Los Siete Crimenes Mayores* (*The Seven Worst Crimes*), by *defeño* (DF native) Rafael Cauduro, unfolds over the three levels of the building's southwest stairwell. Executed in his hyperrealist style, the series catalogues the horrors of state-sponsored crimes against the populace, including the ever-relevant torture-induced confession. Cauduro's mural is one of four justice-related works recently commissioned by the Supreme Court for each of the building's corner stairwells. The other three are by Luis Nishizawa, Leopoldo Flores and Ismael Ramos.

MUSEO DE LA CIUDAD DE MÉXICO

Map pp48–9

☎ 5542-0083; Pino Suárez 30; admission M\$20, Wed free; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; **M** Pino Suárez For a good overview of the megalopolis, visit the **Museum of Mexico City**. The innovative permanent exhibit, 'It All Fits in a Basin,' presents a concise history of the city with models and maps; one room is devoted to

the Zócalo and its role as a stage for social movements. Upstairs is the former studio of Joaquín Clausell, considered Mexico's foremost impressionist. He used the four walls of the windowless room as a sketchbook during the three decades he worked there until his death in 1935. The result is an insanelly detailed mural consisting of hundreds of small canvasses, full of people, animals, bucolic landscapes, religious motifs – whatever was on his mind.

UNIVERSIDAD DEL CLAUSTRO DE SOR JUANA

Map pp48–9

☎ 5130-3336; www.ucsj.edu.mx; Izazaga 92; admission free; 🕒 7am–8pm Mon–Fri, to 3pm Sat; **M** Isabel la Católica

Considered the greatest Spanish-language poet of the 17th century, Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz composed many of her sonnets in the former convent of San Jerónimo, today the **University of the Cloister of Sor Juana**. Its magnificent two-level cloister, dating from 1585, now buzzes with students of gastronomy, literature and philosophy. To the east is the painstakingly restored Iglesia de San Jerónimo containing Sor Juana's tomb and a 1750 portrait of the poet. The series of tiled niches on its south wall is what remains of the confessionals. The adjacent **Museo de la Indumentaria Mexicana** (admission free; 🕒 10am–5pm Mon–Fri) displays regional outfits from around Mexico.

The university also hosts a dynamic range of cultural activities, including films, plays, book presentations and conferences.

GILT TRIP

Walking Tour

1 Metro Pino Suárez Before exiting the station, take the corridor that links lines 1 and 2 (look for the 'Correspondencia' sign) to find the shrine to Ehécatl, the Aztec god of the wind (p62). Dating from 1400, the circular structure is one of the numerous pre-Hispanic pieces unearthed during the excavations for the metro.

2 Museo de la Ciudad de México To exit the station, look for the blue 'Salida' sign near the shrine. You'll emerge onto a frenetic plaza with a large market building. At the nearest intersection, cross Av Izazaga, and head north along Pino Suárez. At República de El Salvador, you'll find another pre-

Hispanic fragment, a set of serpent's teeth embedded into the **Mexico City Museum** (opposite). The museum, by the way, presents a compelling overview of the city.

To exit the station, look for the blue 'Salida' sign near the shrine. You'll emerge onto a frenetic plaza with a large market building. At the nearest intersection, cross Av Izazaga, and head north along Pino Suárez.

3 Templo de Jesús Nazareno Diagonally opposite the museum, across Pino Suárez, is the **Templo de Jesús**, where conquistador *número uno*, Hernán Cortés, is entombed. Note the incongruously anticlerical mural by Orozco over the church's choir section.

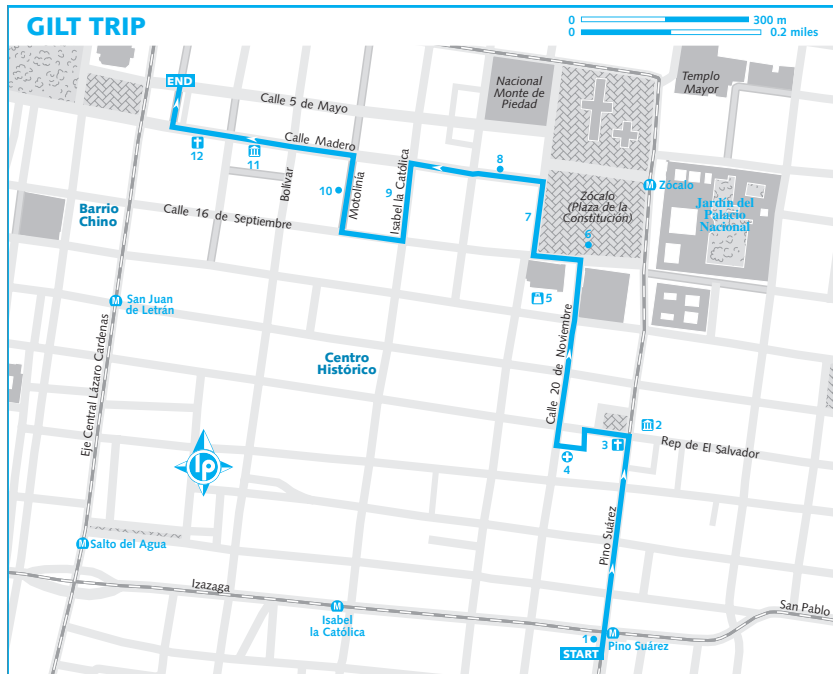
4 Hospital de Jesús Continue west on República de El Salvador past the rear of the church. Take the first left, through the hospital garage. Behind the modern exterior is the superb double patio of the original **hospital** established by Cortés in 1524. This is supposedly where the conquistador first met Moctezuma II, a scene depicted in a mural on the upper level.

5 Calle 20 de Noviembre Turn right (north) on 20 de Noviembre, a busy shopping thoroughfare. Two blocks up stand the original Palacio de Hierro and Liverpool department stores, dating from the 1920s and '30s. The two upscale stores have since branched across the DF and beyond.

6 El Zócalo Proceed up to **El Zócalo** (p46), entering the broad plaza between the twin **buildings of the city government** (p53). Go left, through the stately arcade of the **Ayuntamiento**, emerging opposite the **Gran Hotel de la Ciudad** (p200), a French art nouveau structure from the gilded age before the Revolution.

7 Portal de Mercaderes Cross Calle 5 de Febrero and proceed along the plaza's western side, through the Portal de Mercaderes. Dating from the 1600s, the arched passageway was once lined with silversmiths' workshops; today it fronts a number of jewelry stalls. At the north end is another longstanding Zócalo luxury hotel, the **Majestic** (p200).

8 Calle Madero Next, turn left onto Calle Madero. This stately avenue boasts a veritable catalogue of architectural styles interspersed with opticians and jewelers. At the second corner is the Edificio Esmeralda, a fine example



WALK FACTS

Start Metro Pino Suárez
End Casa de los Azulejos
Distance 1.7km
Duration 1½ hours
Fuel stops Numerous

of the Parisian mode favored by the city's early-20th-century moguls. Above a Mixup record store is the [Museo del Estanquillo](#) (p53).

9 Calle Isabel la Católica Turn left on Isabel la Católica. On your right, across the street, is the [Casino Español](#) (p136), built by Spanish immigrants as a social hall in 1903; on your left, the Casa del Conde de Miravalle, former home of a 16th-century silver baron. Its beautifully restored patio makes a nice respite from the crowds.

10 Calle Motolinía Turn right at the corner, Calle 16 de Septiembre, past the Casa Boker, a hardware store started by German immigrants in 1865. Go right on Motolinía, a pedestrian thoroughfare with a few popular cantinas and greasy spoons specializing in

turkey sandwiches. Back at Madero, a lion's head on your left marks the water level during the great flood of 1629.

11 Gandhi and Iturbide Continue west along Madero. Stop into the new Gandhi bookstore (Madero 32), across the street, with two levels of literature and music to browse. Half a block past Bolívar, on your left, the [Palacio de Iturbide](#) (p53) displays handicrafts from the Banamex collection behind its sumptuous facade.

12 Casa de los Azulejos On the next block west, the [Iglesia de San Francisco](#) (p54) is a remnant of the vast Franciscan monastery built over the site of Moctezuma's private zoo in the 16th century. Conclude the tour with refreshments at the Sanborns branch opposite, inside the magnificent [House of Tiles](#) (p54).

EASTERN LOOP Walking Tour

1 Catedral Metropolitana Start at the massive Mexico City cathedral. (Alternatively, you can rent a bicycle at the Plaza del Empedradillo, on the church's west side.) You

might pick up a bargain at the [Nacional Monte de Piedad](#) (Map p53), the national pawn shop, just across the way.

2 Plaza de Santo Domingo Take República de Brasil north two blocks to reach the [Plaza de Santo Domingo](#) (p57). On your left, printers ply their trade beneath the Portal de Evangelistas. On the right, the [Secretaría de Educación Pública](#) (p57) houses Diego Rivera's epic series of murals on Mexican life and culture.

3 Museo de la Luz From the top end of the plaza, take República de Venezuela two blocks east. Across Calle Del Carmen, the building on your right is the ancient [Templo de San Pedro y San Pablo](#), which today houses the interactive [Museum of Light](#) (p56) (entrance one block south).

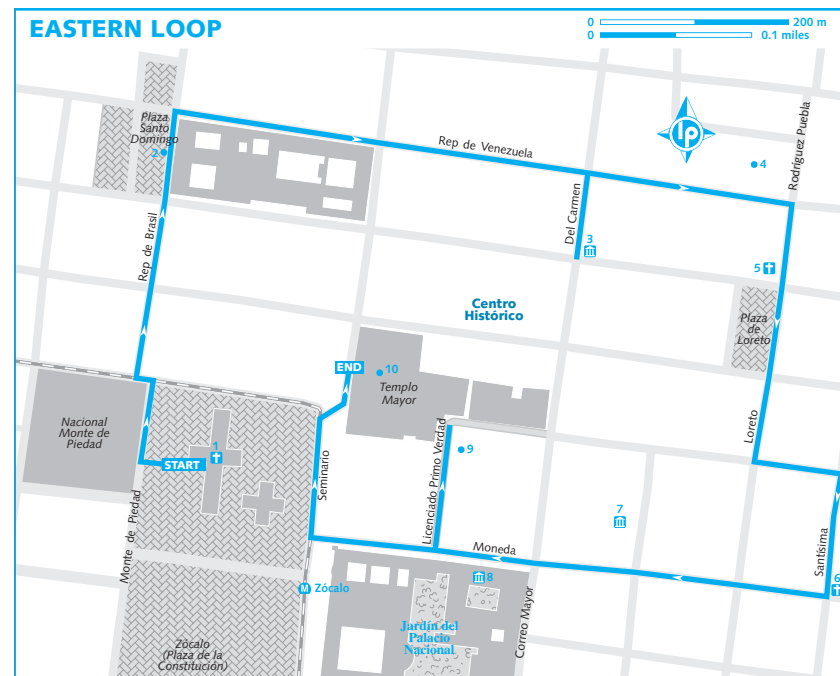
4 Mercado Abelardo Rodríguez Half a block east, the tall arcade on the left fronts the Teatro del Pueblo – inside, the theater is decorated with a startling combination of art deco and indigenous motifs. Enter the adjacent [Mercado Abelardo Rodríguez](#) (p26) to admire the numerous murals painted by Rivera's students in the 1920s.

5 Templo de Nuestra Señora de Loreto Turn right at the corner (Rodríguez Puebla). One block south, the [Templo de Nuestra Señora de Loreto](#) (p57) has a remarkable dome, best viewed from inside. Across the eponymous plaza on Justo Sierra is Mexico City's first synagogue, built by the Syrian Jews who formerly populated this zone. Look for the Star of David over the doorway.

6 Templo de la Santísima Trinidad Follow Loreto one block south to República de Guatemala, turn left, then go right on Santísima. The below-street-level walkway here follows the course of an earlier waterway used to ferry produce from the southern community of Xochimilco. On the next corner is the hyperbaroque [Templo de la Santísima Trinidad](#) (p56).

WALK FACTS

Start Catedral Metropolitana
End Plaza del Templo Mayor
Distance 2.2km
Duration 2½ hours
Fuel stop Carnitas 'Don One' inside Mercado Abelardo Rodríguez



METRO ACTIVE

As if there weren't enough to see *above* ground in this encyclopedia of a city, a number of the capital's metro stations give you something to look at while waiting for a train or transferring to another line. When planning your next excursion, be sure to include some of the following attractions en route.

- **Metro Pino Suárez** (Líneas 1 & 2) Unearthed in 1967 during excavations to install metro Line 2, the Templo de Ehecatl dates from the origins of Aztec Tenochtitlán. The circular shrine was devoted to the god of the wind. Look for it in an open-air section of the transfer corridor between Lines 1 and 2.
- **Metro Zócalo** (Línea 2) Models inside the station's busy main corridor show Mexico City's central precinct at three different periods in its history: before the Conquest, with the Templo Mayor standing prominently at the front of the ceremonial center; before independence, with the equestrian statue of Spain's King Carlos IV; and in the early 1900s, with streetcars running around the square when it still had trees and gardens.
- **Metro La Raza** (Líneas 3 & 5) The long hike between Lines 3 and 5 becomes an educational field trip as you traverse a Tunnel of Science. The corridor is lined with large-format photos that span the focal spectrum from planetary phenomena to single-celled organisms. About midway, there's a planetarium.
- **Metro Bellas Artes** (Líneas 2 & 8) French artist Jean Paul Chambas' colorful murals for the Line 8 corridor present his affectionate vision of Mexico with a strong dose of magical realism. The artist himself appears in the first panel, sipping *mezcal* (tequilalike drink) and contemplating a pair of masks from Teotihuacán.
- **Metro Auditorio** (Línea 7) At the top of the escalators is a permanent exhibit on the metros of the world, with a different panel for each city.
- **Metro Insurgentes** (Línea 1) *Defeño* (DF native) painter Rafael Cauduro executed two murals for the Zona Rosa's principal station, one interpreting the London Underground and the other the Parisian Metro. Executed in the artist's typically multilayered realist style, these paintings may give riders the fleeting illusion that they're waiting on the platform in those European capitals.

7 Museo José Luis Cuevas Now head west on Zapata, which becomes Moneda. Two blocks along, on your left, stands the Academia de San Carlos, where Mexico's 19th-century painters and sculptors learned their skills. Strike half a block north on Academia to stand face-to-ankle with modern Mexican artist José Luis Cuevas' imposing 8m woman (p56).

8 Calle Moneda Return to Moneda and continue west. This historic corridor has long been dominated by 'informal' vendors until a major sweep by the current city government. Just past Correo Mayor on your left is the building that Calle Moneda was named for, the old colonial mint, now an **ethnographic museum** (p56).

9 Licenciado Primo Verdad A bit further west, the building at the corner of Licenciado Primo Verdad housed the Americas' first printing press. Behind it, the ancient convent of **Santa Teresa de Ávila** is now a space for cutting-edge art. Across the way, the **former archbishop's palace** (p55) is a showcase for the tax bureau's vast art collection.

10 Plaza del Templo Mayor Continue west along Moneda, keeping the Palacio Nacional's wall to your left. Just before the Zócalo, the building on the right-hand side marks the site of the continent's first university, established in 1551 (it was relocated south in the 1940s). Celebrate the conclusion of the tour by joining the Aztec dancers at the **Plaza del Templo Mayor** (p52).

ALAMEDA CENTRAL & AROUND

Shopping p122; Eating p139; Sleeping p203

Emblematic of the downtown renaissance, the green rectangle just west of the Centro Histórico holds a vital place in Mexico City's cultural life. Surrounded by historically significant buildings, the Alameda Central has been a leisurely strolling ground for the capital's denizens for over four centuries. Indelibly linked with the city's long, tumultuous history, the park became the stage for one of Diego Rivera's most imaginative tableaux, a mural populated with a cast of Mexican notables that is today enshrined in its own museum on the park's west side. Anchoring the opposite end is the shimmering Fine Arts Palace, an art nouveau masterpiece which continues to attract opera- and theater-goers more than a century after its completion. On the park's north side, the sunken Plaza de Santa Veracruz features a couple of superb museums housing collections of colonial and modern art.

The Alameda Central has also been the focus of ambitious redevelopment over the past decade. In particular, the high-rise towers on the Plaza Juárez and the Sheraton Centro Histórico have transformed the look of the zone south of the park, much of which was destroyed in the 1985 earthquake. Behind the Sheraton stands the recently opened Museo de Arte Popular, a compendium of folk-art styles within an innovatively restored art deco building dating from the 1920s.

Largely unaffected by the development wave, the streets south of the Alameda remain a chaotic hodgepodge of shops, markets, hotels and eateries. Immediately west of this zone is La Ciudadela, a former factory and prison that today houses the national library and an excellent photography museum; nearby you'll find a sprawling crafts market that's an obligatory stop for souvenir shoppers.

Metro stations Bellas Artes and Hidalgo are located on the Alameda's east and west sides, respectively.

ALAMEDA CENTRAL Map p64

Created in the late 1500s by mandate of then-viceroy Luis de Velasco, the Alameda took its name from the *álamos* (poplars) planted over its rectangular expanse. By the late 19th century, the park was lit by gas lamps and graced with European-style statuary and a bandstand – it became the place to be seen for the city's elite. Today the Alameda is a popular refuge, particularly on Sundays, when families stroll its broad pathways and gather for open-air concerts.

On the south side of the Alameda, facing Av Juárez, is the **Hemiciclo a Juárez**, a gleaming white semicircle of marble columns around a regally seated statue of Benito Juárez (1806–72). Born a poor Zapotec villager in the state of Oaxaca, Juárez – one of Mexico's most respected heroes – rose to become national president and conquer the armies of Maximilian of Hapsburg.

PALACIO DE BELLAS ARTES Map p64

☎ 5130-0900; Av Juárez & Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas; admission M\$35, Sun free; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🚗 Bellas Artes

Dominating the east end of the Alameda is the splendid white-marble Palace of Fine Arts, a concert hall and arts center commis-

sioned by President Porfirio Díaz. Construction began in 1905 under Italian architect Adamo Boari, who favored neoclassical and art nouveau styles. The project became more complicated than anticipated as the heavy marble shell sank into the spongy subsoil, and then the Revolution intervened. Work was halted and Boari returned to Italy. Architect Federico Mariscal eventually finished the interior in the 1930s, using the more modern art deco style.

One of Mariscal's achievements was to incorporate pre-Hispanic motifs into the structure. Notice, for example, the serpents' heads set atop the window arches on the lower level. Inside, check out the Maya Chac masks atop the vertical light panels, a feature borrowed from the temples of Uxmal.

Immense murals dominate the upper floors. On the 2nd floor are two early-1950s works by Rufino Tamayo: *México de Hoy* (Mexico Today) and *Nacimiento de la Nacionalidad* (Birth of Nationality), a symbolic depiction of the creation of the mestizo (person of mixed indigenous and European ancestry) identity.

At the west end of the 3rd floor is Diego Rivera's famous *El Hombre En El Cruce de Caminos* (Man at the Crossroads), originally

ALAMEDA CENTRAL & AROUND

See Zona Rosa, Cuauhtémoc & Juárez Map (p74-6)

See Centro Histórico Map (p48-50)

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commissioned for New York's Rockefeller Center. The Rockefellers had the original destroyed because of its anticapitalist themes, but Rivera recreated it here in 1934. Capitalism, accompanied by war, is shown on the left; socialism, with health and peace, on the right.

On the north side are David Alfaro Siqueiros' three-part *La Nueva Democracia* (New Democracy) and Rivera's four-part *Carnaval de la Vida Mexicana* (Carnival of Mexican Life); to the east is José Clemente Orozco's eye-catching *La Katharsis* (Catharsis), depicting the conflict between human-kind's 'social' and 'natural' aspects.

The 4th-floor **Museo Nacional de Arquitectura** (admission M\$30, Sun free; ☎ 10am-5:30pm Tue-Sun) features changing exhibits on contemporary architecture.

The Bellas Artes theater (only available for viewing at performances) is itself an architectural gem, with a stained-glass curtain depicting the Valle de México. Based on a design by Mexican painter Gerardo Murillo (aka Dr Atl), it was assembled by New York jeweler Tiffany & Co from almost a million pieces of colored glass. A 55m mural over the proscenium arch studded with mythological figures offers audiences plenty to look at during slow-paced performances.

In addition, the palace stages outstanding temporary art exhibitions and the *Ballet Folclórico de México* (see p180). A worthwhile bookstore and an elegant café are on the premises, too.

TORRE LATINOAMERICANA Map p64

☎ 5518-7423; Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas 2; adult/child M\$50/40; ☎ 9am-10pm; (M) Bellas Artes A landmark for disoriented visitors since 1956, the Torre Latinoamericana was Latin America's tallest building when constructed. (Today it's Mexico City's fifth tallest.) Thanks to the deep-seated pylons that anchor the building, it has withstood several major earthquakes. In 2002 it was acquired by Mexican mogul Carlos Slim. Views from the 44th-floor observation deck are spectacular, smog permitting.

MUSEO FRANZ MAYER Map p64

☎ 5518-2266; www.franzmayer.org.mx; Hidalgo 45; admission M\$35, Tue free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, to 7pm Wed; (M) Bellas Artes Housed in the old hospice of the San Juan de Dios order, which under the brief reign

TRANSPORTATION: ALAMEDA CENTRAL

- Metro – Bellas Artes (Líneas 2 & 8) and Hidalgo (Líneas 2 & 3) stations are at the northeast and northwest corners of the Alameda respectively.
- Bus – peseros along Paseo de La Reforma stop at Metro Hidalgo, on the northwest side of the Alameda, on their way to and from the Zona Rosa and Bosque de Chapultepec.
- Trolleybus – 'Autobuses del Sur' and 'Autobuses del Norte' trolleybuses run south and north, respectively, along Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas.

of Maximilian became a halfway house for prostitutes, the museum is the fruit of the efforts of Franz Mayer, born in Mannheim, Germany, in 1882. Prospering as a financier in his adopted Mexico, Mayer amassed the collection of Mexican silver, textiles, ceramics and furniture masterpieces that is now on display. The exhibit halls open off a superb colonial patio; along its west side is a suite of rooms decorated with antique furnishings, on the north side is the Cloister Café.

The museum takes up the west side of the **Plaza de Santa Veracruz**, a sunken square north of the Alameda across Av Hidalgo. It's named for the slanting structure on the opposite side, the **Iglesia de la Santa Veracruz**. Elaborately carved pillars flank the doorway of the harmonious 18th-century church. Inside is the tomb of neoclassical architect and sculptor Manuel Tolsá.

MUSEO NACIONAL DE LA ESTAMPA Map p64

☎ 5521-2244; Av Hidalgo 39; admission M\$10, Sun free; ☎ 10am-5:45pm Tue-Sun Adjacent to the Iglesia de Santa Veracruz is the National Print Museum. Devoted to the graphic arts, it stages compelling thematic exhibits from the National Fine Arts Institute's collection of over 10,000 prints, lithographs and engravings, as well as the tools of these techniques.

LABORATORIO DE ARTE ALAMEDA Map p64

☎ 5510-2793; www.artelameda.inba.gob.mx; Dr Mora 7; admission M\$15, Sun free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun; (M) Hidalgo As with many museums in the Centro Histórico, the building that contains the

WORTH THE TRIP

Santa María La Ribera

One of the first residential zones to be constructed outside the city center, Santa María La Ribera, northwest of the Alameda Central, possesses a distinct neighborhood character. Though a bit rough around the edges, the neighborhood provides refreshing glimpses of Chilango everyday life. Strolling the streets, you'll hear the knife grinder's whistle and the singsong banter of workmen, get whiffs of *pulque* mingled with propane, and see schoolgirls in plaid skirts hopping along cracked sidewalks past walls of peeling posters.

Streets bearing names of literary and artistic figures like Salvador Díaz Mirón, Jaime Torres Bodet and Dr Atl are lined with a mishmash of architectural styles. Check out, for example, the house at **Santa María La Ribera 182**, which has an exquisite stained-glass bay window, adjacent to a hideous apartment building with purple painted window panes.

The remarkably calm center of the neighborhood, the expansive **Alameda de Santa María**, covers an entire city block. At its center is the almost surreal **Kiosco Morisco**, an arabesque, iron-framed rotunda ringed by Moorish archways and capped by a glass dome. It was the Mexico pavilion at the New Orleans World Expo of 1885, and was placed here for the independence centennial celebration of 1910.

Most of the neighborhood's modest attractions are on the Alameda's perimeter: a Russian diner (p157), a few cafés, a lively cantina and the **Museo de Geología** (☎ 5547-3900; Jaime Torres Bodet 176; M\$15; 🕒 10am-4:30pm Tue-Sun). Built around 1904, it was the national university's geological institute until UNAM moved south. More compelling perhaps than the cases of rocks and minerals is the cast-iron art nouveau staircase in the entryway beneath a translucent oval dome. A couple of blocks west of the Alameda is the **Mercado Sabino**, the zone's busy market, with aisle after aisle of neatly arranged food and produce.

Santa María's most impressive structure, with its two prominent spires, is the **Museo Universitario del Chopo** (☎ 5546-5484; www.chopo.unam.mx; Enrique González Martínez 10; 🕒 San Cosme), four blocks south of the Alameda. Forged of iron in Dusseldorf around the turn of the 20th century, the building was brought over in pieces and assembled in Mexico City to serve as a pavilion for trade fairs. UNAM took over the historic building in 1975 and made it into a center for on-the-fringe artistic currents. At the time of research, the museum was closed for renovations.

Metro San Cosme is four blocks south of the Alameda de Santa María; slightly closer is Metro Buenavista (or metrobus Buenavista), three blocks east of the plaza.

Alameda Art Laboratory is as interesting as its contents. The former church is just a fragment of the 17th-century Convento de San Diego which was dismantled under the postindependence reform laws. As the museum's name suggests, it hosts installations by leading experimental artists from Mexico and abroad, with an emphasis on current electronic, virtual and interactive media. They could not have asked for a grander exhibition space.

MUSEO MURAL DIEGO RIVERA Map p64

☎ 5510-2329; cnr Balderas & Colón; admission M\$15, Sun free; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚇 Hidalgo Among Diego Rivera's most famous works is *Sueño de una Tarde Dominical en la Alameda* (Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda), painted in 1947. In the 15m-long by 4m-high mural, the artist imagined many of the figures who walked in the city from colonial times onward, among them Cortés, Juárez, Emperor Maximilian, Porfirio Díaz, and Francisco Madero and his nemesis, General Victo-

riano Huerta. All are grouped around a *Catarina* (skeleton in prerevolutionary women's garb). Rivera himself, as a pug-faced child, and Frida Kahlo stand beside the skeleton. Charts identify all the characters. Just west of the Alameda, this Diego Rivera Mural Museum was built in 1986 to house the mural, after its original location, the Hotel del Prado, was wrecked by the 1985 earthquake.

JARDÍN DE LA SOLIDARIDAD Map p64

The little parklike plaza in front of the Museo Mural Diego Rivera is the Solidarity Garden, created in 1986 on the site of the old Hotel Regis to commemorate the struggle of Mexico City's residents to rebuild their city after the earthquake of 1985. People gather here to play and watch open-air chess.

PLAZA JUÁREZ Map p64

Av Juárez & Dolores 11 Representing the new face of the zone, this modern plaza is across the way from the Alameda's **Homicidio a Juárez**, a semicircle

of marble columns dedicated to post-independence president Benito Juárez, and behind the fully restored **Templo de Corpus Christi**, which now holds the DF's archives. The plaza's centerpiece is a pair of Tetris-block towers by leading Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta: the 24-story **Foreign Relations Secretariat** building and the 23-story **Tribunales** (courts) building. Fronting these monoliths is some interesting art, including a bronze aviary by Mexican sculptor Juan Soriano and, near the west entrance, a David Alfaro Siqueiros mosaic entitled *Velocidad* (Speed), originally designed for a Chrysler factory. Perhaps the most arresting piece, though, is a set of 1034 reddish pyramids in a broad pool, a collaboration between Legorreta and Spanish artist Vicente Rojo. The plaza also hosts some excellent photo exhibits.

MUSEO DE ARTE POPULAR Map p64

☎ 5510-2201; www.map.org.mx; Revillagigedo 11; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Thu; 🚇 Juárez

Opened in 2006, the Museo de Arte Popular is a major showcase for Mexico's folk arts and traditions. Contemporary crafts from all over Mexico are thematically displayed on the museum's three levels, including pottery from Michoacán, carnival masks from Chiapas, *alebrijes* (fanciful animal figures) from Oaxaca and trees of life from Puebla. There are also beaded textiles, fantastic headdresses and votive paintings, along with videos of indigenous festivities. The museum occupies the former fire department headquarters, itself an outstanding example of 1920s art deco by architect Vicente Mendiola, with a skylight over the interior patio. Not surprisingly, the ground-level shop is an excellent place to look for quality handicrafts.

VIRGEN DEL METRO Map p64

Cnr Paseo de la Reforma & Zarco Housed in a small tiled shrine is this evidence of a recent miracle. Metro riders in June 1997 noticed that a water leak in Hidalgo station had formed a stain in the likeness of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Following the discovery, thousands flocked to witness the miraculous image. The stone section was removed and encased in glass at the Zarco entrance to metro Hidalgo.

BIBLIOTECA DE MÉXICO Map p64

☎ 9172-4730; Plaza de la Ciudadela 4; 🕒 8:30am-7:30pm; 🚇 Balderas The formidable compound now known as 'The Citadel' started off as a tobacco factory in the late 18th century. Later it was converted to an armory and a political prison, but it is best known as the scene of the Decena Trágica (Tragic Ten Days), the coup that brought down the Madero government in 1913. Today it is home to the National Library, with holdings of over 260,000 volumes and a good periodicals collection. The central halls are given over to art exhibits.

CENTRO DE LA IMAGEN Map p64

☎ 9172-4724; centrodelaimagen.conaculta.gob.mx, in Spanish; admission free; 🕒 11am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚇 Balderas

At the Balderas entrance to La Ciudadela is the city's photography museum. The innovatively curated space stages compelling exhibitions, often focusing on documentary views of Mexican life by some of the country's sharpest observers. Pick up a copy of *Luna Córnea*, the photography journal published by the center, at the excellent bookstore.

DREAM OF AN AFTERNOON IN (& AROUND) THE ALAMEDA

Walking Tour

1 Sears Café Start things off with coffee on the Sears building's 8th-floor terrace, with stunning views of the **Palacio de Bellas Artes** (p63) across the way. The café makes a particularly good vantage to admire the palace's onyx-paned triple dome, crowned by the proverbial eagle devouring a snake.

2 Alameda Down on the ground, cross Av Juárez and join the crowds milling about the broad plaza that fronts the Palacio. Look for the tourism module at the Alameda's southeast corner, and enter the park. The fountain here, with water-spouting cherubs around its central pedestal, is often the backdrop for some performance event.

3 Park ramble Make your way up the diagonal path to the modestly attired Venus, then turn right (north). You may run into some horse-riding *charros* (cowboys); they're police

on patrol. Continue past a Madonna statue and a fountain with a pair of water carriers, finally emerging on Av Hidalgo.

4 Plaza de Santa Veracruz Cross Hidalgo to enter the Plaza de Santa Veracruz, the sunken square named for the sinking church on the right. Art aficionados can survey the collection of the adjacent **Museo Nacional de la Estampa** (p65) or the treasure trove of colonial masterworks at the **Museo Franz Mayer** (p65) across the plaza.

5 Hotel de Cortés Proceed west along Hidalgo. At the end of the next block, pop into the **Hotel de Cortés** (p203) for a peek at the tranquil courtyard, once part of a hospice for Augustinian missionaries. The front bar

makes a suitably colonial setting for a tequila and sangrita break.

6 Dr Mora Recross Av Hidalgo and walk down the west side of Dr Mora, alongside the Alameda. Ponder conceptual art at the **Laboratorio Arte Alameda** (p65), inside the former San Diego monastery. Around the corner, the **Museo Mural Diego Rivera** (p66) displays the artist's hallucinatory vision of the nearby park.

7 Sheraton Centro Histórico Continue around the Alameda. The black monolith across Av Juárez is the **Sheraton hotel** (p203), whose opening in 2004 heralded an ambitious redevelopment of the zone which is still going on. Just beyond the hotel, cross Juárez and proceed down Revillagigedo.

8 Museo de Arte Popular At the next corner, Independencia, stands the recently inaugurated **Museo de Arte Popular** (p67), an art deco gem that once housed the fire station. Note the pair of Olmec masks embedded into the base at the corner. Don't miss the museum's outstanding collection of folk art.

9 Calle Luis Moya Head east on Independencia, then south down the next block over, Luis Moya. Dozens of lighting and plumbing wholesalers line this busy shopping corridor. Just past Ayuntamiento stop into **lucha libre** (wrestling) shrine **El Cuadrilátero** (p140) to admire its gallery of wrestlers' masks or chomp a giant *torta* (Mexican-style sandwich in a bread roll).

10 Mercado de la Ciudadela Turn right at Pugibet. A block past the modest Plaza Pacheco, you reach Balderas. Pick up that beaded mask or painted armadillo at the **Mercado de Ciudadela**, across the way. If it's a Saturday, you can learn a few dance steps at the Plaza de Danzón, southwest of the market.

11 La Ciudadela Proceed down Balderas to the Ciudadela building, a former cigar factory that now contains the Biblioteca de México, the **national library** (p67), swarming with students during the school term. Nearer to Balderas is the entrance to the excellent Centro de la Imagen (p67), a space for photographic art.

12 Book market Prowl through the book-sellers' stalls along the next stretch of Balderas, which skirts the east side of the Ciudadela building. Some of these vendors do a brisk trade in textbooks; others hawk political manifestos, used magazines and comic books. At the bottom of the market, board the metro to your next destination.

WALK FACTS

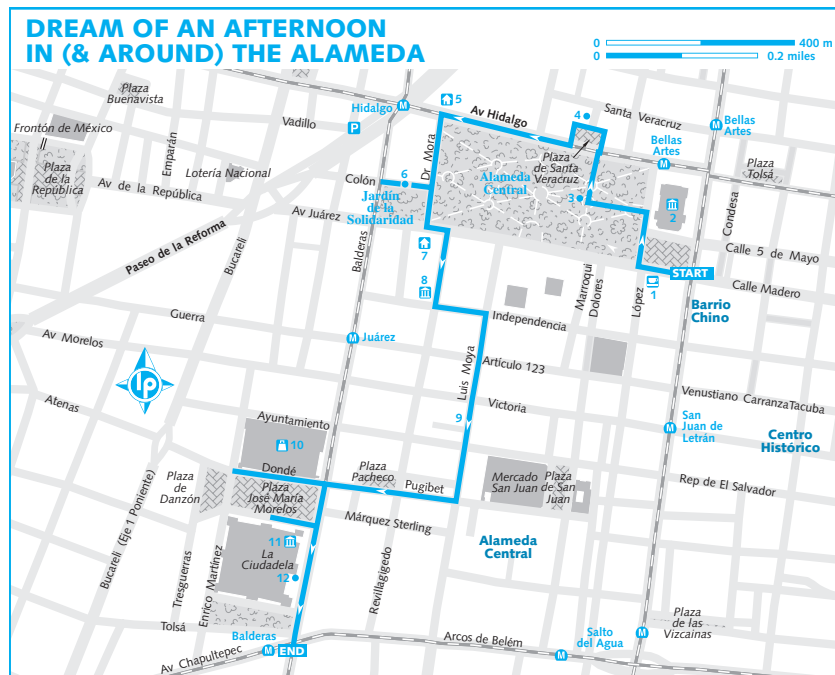
Start Sears building

End Metro Balderas

Distance 2km

Duration 2½ hours

Fuel stop Cloister Café in Museo Franz Mayer



PLAZA DE LA REPÚBLICA & SAN RAFAEL

Eating p140; Sleeping p204

The Plaza de la República is dominated by the vaguely Stalinist domed Monumento a la Revolución. The site of demonstrations, military displays and the odd rock show, the square is the somber centerpiece of the otherwise cheerfully scruffy Tabacalera. Named after the tobacco industry that once thrived here, the zone is dotted with low-cost lodgings, cafés and cantinas.

Erected in the 1880s, Colonia San Rafael was one of the earliest residential districts for the affluent seeking greener pastures. Their elegant private lodgings line Sadi Carnot, Serapio Rendón and Rosas Moreno, all of which run into Ribera de San Cosme, the hectic thoroughfare that forms the neighborhood's northern border. Street vendors have established semipermanent stalls along this avenue's length, leaving pedestrians a thread's-width strip of sidewalk.

MONUMENTO A LA REVOLUCIÓN

Map p71

Plaza de la República

Begun in the 1900s under Porfirio Díaz, this monument was originally meant to be a meeting chamber for legislators. But construction (not to mention Díaz' presidency) was interrupted by the Revolution. The structure was modified and given a new role in the 1930s: the tombs of the revolutionary and postrevolutionary heroes are inside its wide pillars.

MUSEO NACIONAL DE LA REVOLUCIÓN

Map p71

☎ 5546-2115; Plaza de la República; admission M\$15, Sun free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Revolución

Underlying the monument, this museum covers an 80-year period, from the implementation of the constitution guaranteeing human rights in 1857 to the installation of the postrevolutionary government in 1920. Explanatory text is in Spanish only. Enter from the northeast quarter of the plaza.

MUSEO NACIONAL DE SAN CARLOS

Map p71

☎ 5566-8342; Puente de Alvarado 50; admission M\$25, Mon free; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon; 🚶 Revolución

The museum hosts a formidable collection of European art from the 16th century to the early 20th century, including works by Rubens, Van Dyck and Goya. This former mansion of the Conde de Buenavista later became home to Alamo victor Santa Anna, and subsequently served as a cigar factory, a lottery headquarters and a school before being re-born as a museum in 1968.

IGLESIA Y PANTEÓN DE SAN FERNANDO

Map p71

Avs Hidalgo & Guerrero; admission free; ☎ 9am-3pm Tue-Fri, to 5pm Sat; 🚶 Hidalgo

At the top of the Plaza de San Fernando stands the handsome 18th-century church of the same saint, with baroque carved doors and an impressive altar. Next door is the Panteón de San Fernando, a cemetery containing the tombs of illustrious 19th-century Mexicans such as Benito Juárez, Vicente Guerrero and Ignacio Zaragoza.

LOTERÍA NACIONAL

Map p71

☎ 5140-7000; Plaza de la Reforma 1; admission free; 🚶 Hidalgo

Mexico's lottery is a national passion, and the art deco tower on the west side of Paseo de la Reforma is the game's headquarters. Almost any Sunday, Tuesday or Friday after 7:30pm, you can take a seat in the auditorium to watch the *sorteo* (the ceremony of picking the winning numbers) at 8pm. Numbered wooden balls are plucked from cages by uniformed pages who announce the winning numbers and amounts.

EL CABALLITO

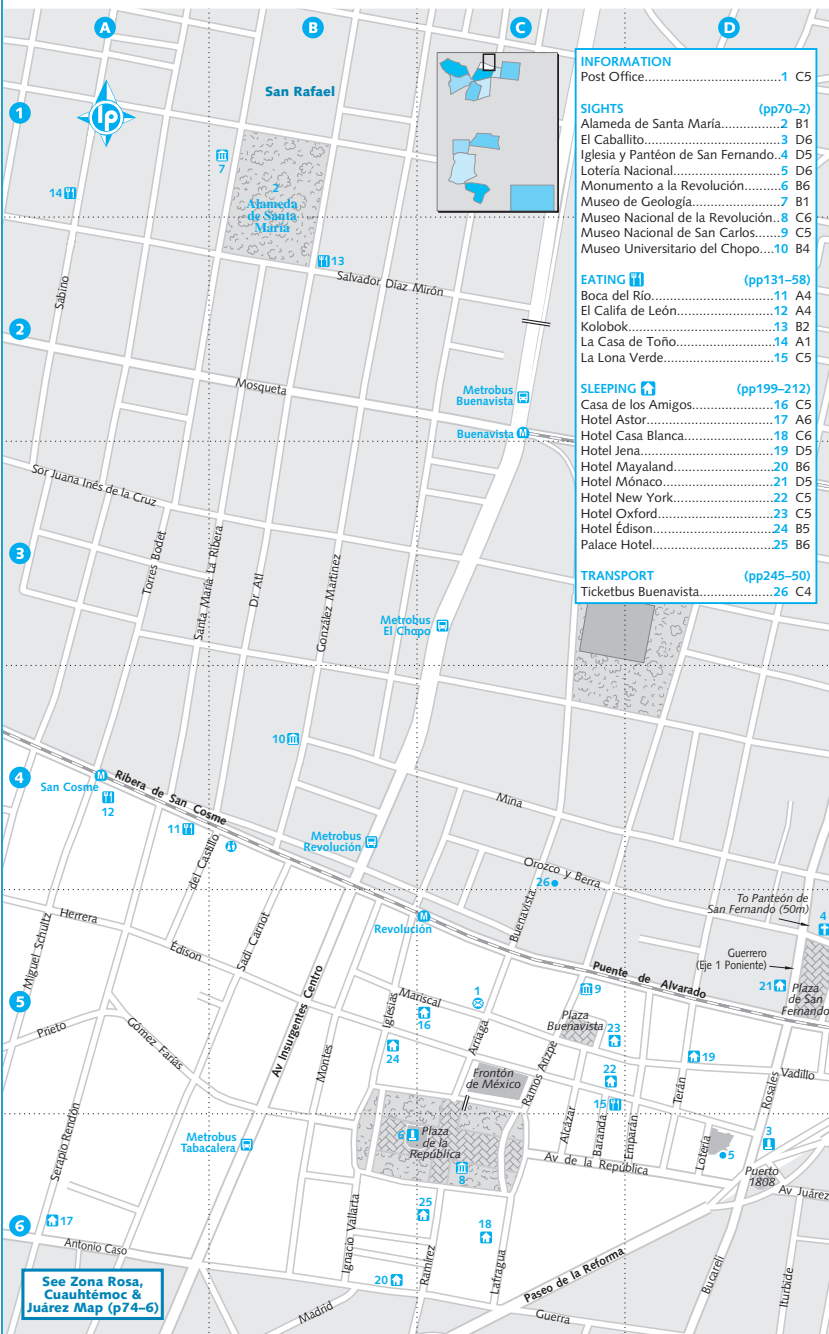
Map p71

A couple of blocks west of the Alameda Central is **El Caballito**, a bright yellow horse's

TRANSPORTATION: PLAZA DE LA REPÚBLICA & SAN RAFAEL

- Metro—Línea 2 stops north of Plaza de la República (Revolución) and San Rafael (San Cosme).
- Metrobus—the Tabacalera station on Av Insurgentes is 100m west of Plaza de la República.
- Bus—any pesero running along Paseo de la Reforma en route to the Alameda Central or Bosque de Chapultepec stops at the Monumento a Cristóbal Colón.

PLAZA DE LA REPÚBLICA & SAN RAFAEL



top picks

IT'S FREE

- Bosque de Chapultepec (p77)
- Diego Rivera murals at Secretaría de Educación Pública (p57)
- Museo del Estanquillo (p53)
- Museo de Arte Popular (p67)
- Most museums on Sunday

head by the sculptor Sebastián. It commemorates another equestrian sculpture that stood here for 127 years and today fronts the [Museo Nacional de Arte](#) (p55).

WALKIN' 'BOUT A REVOLUTION

Walking Tour

1 El Caballito The tour takes off from El Caballito, which marks the old location of a traditional statue of Spain's King Carlos V on horseback which has been relocated to the [Plaza Tolsá](#) (p54).

2 Lotería Nacional Cross Rosales to the [National Lottery building](#) (p70); its stature reflects the institution's importance in the lives of ordinary Mexicans. Look west (left) down Av de la República to see the imposing copper dome of the Monument to the Revolution.

3 Monumento a la Revolución Once you've paid your respects to the heroes com-

memorated here, visit the [Museo de la Revolución](#) (p70), underneath the plaza's east side. Note the Frontón de México building immediately north of the plaza. This now-abandoned palace used to host jai alai (court game) matches.

4 Plaza Buenavista Skirt the right side of this building, and head north on Ramos Arizpe. In one short block you reach the sleepy [Plaza Buenavista](#), a showcase for abstract topiary, behind the [Museo Nacional de San Carlos](#) (p70). (The entrance is around the corner on Puente de Alvarado.)

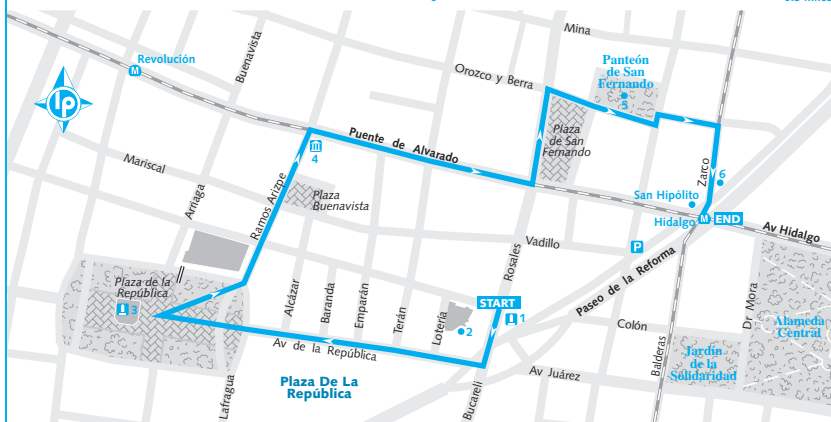
5 Plaza de San Fernando Two blocks east is the Plaza de San Fernando, with fountains and neatly tended gardens, below the church of the same name. Next to the church entrance is the [San Fernando graveyard](#) (p70), where Benito Juárez and other illustrious Mexicans lie.

6 San Hipólito Proceed east through the arcade that flanks the Panteón. A block past the cemetery, turn right onto Zarco. Note the oddly turned towers of San Hipólito church on your right. A nearby shrine contains the Virgen del Metro, the Virgin's image miraculously engraved in a slab of subway platform.

WALK FACTS

Start El Caballito
End Virgen del Metro
Distance 1.7km
Duration 1½ hours
Fuel stop Café Quetzal

WALKIN' 'BOUT A REVOLUTION



ZONA ROSA, CUAUHTÉMOC & JUÁREZ

Shopping [p124](#); Eating [p140](#); Drinking [p162](#); Sleeping [p206](#)

Wedge between Paseo de la Reforma and Av Chapultepec, the 'Pink Zone' was developed as an international playground and shopping district during the 1950s, when it enjoyed a cosmopolitan panache. After the installation of the metro station on its southern edge in 1969, the area fell into decline. What remains after decades of haphazard redevelopment is a hodgepodge of touristy boutiques, strip clubs, discos and fast-food franchises. People-watching from its sidewalk cafés reveals a higher degree of diversity than elsewhere: it's the city's principal gay and lesbian district and an expat haven, with a significant Korean population. Recently, the Ebrard administration has been busy renewing the Génova pedestrian mall in an attempt to put the zone back in the pink.

PASEO DE LA REFORMA [Map pp74-5](#)

Originally laid out by Emperor Maximilian of Hapsburg to connect his castle on Chapultepec Hill with the old city center, Mexico City's main boulevard links a series of monumental *glorietas* (traffic circles) on its way from the Bosque to the Alameda Central. The López Obrador administration undertook a thorough restoration of Reforma, paving the broad esplanades with mosaic cobblestones and planting attractive gardens along its length.

MONUMENTO A LA INDEPENDENCIA [Map pp74-5](#)

Admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm; 🚇 Insurgentes
 On the northwest flank of the Zona Rosa stands the symbol of Mexico City, the

TRANSPORTATION: ZONA ROSA, CUAUHTÉMOC & JUÁREZ

- Metro – Insurgentes station (Línea 1) marks the southern edge of the Zona Rosa at Av Chapultepec, 500m south of Reforma. Metro Sevilla and Cuauhtémoc, on the same line, are on the west and east ends of the zone, respectively.
- Bus – any pesero along Paseo de la Reforma stops at the Ángel monument, between the Zona Rosa and Cuauhtémoc neighborhoods, en route to the Alameda Central or Bosque de Chapultepec.
- Metrobus – north- and southbound metrobus lines (which are labeled 'Indios Verdes' and 'Dr Gálvez', respectively) have stations above the big Insurgentes roundabout, which provides access to the Zona Rosa via the Calle Génova exit. Another convenient metrobus station, Hamburgo, is situated on the east end of the Zona Rosa.

top picks

FOR CHILDREN

- Chapultepec Zoo (p79)
- Papalote Museo del Niño (p81)
- La Feria (p81)
- Xochimilco Canals (p113)
- Torre Latinoamericana (p65)

Monument to Independence. Known as 'El Ángel' (The Angel), this gilded statue of Victory on a 45m pillar was sculpted for the independence centennial of 1910, just as the Mexican Revolution got under way. The female figures around the base portray Law, Justice, War and Peace; the male ones represent Mexican independence heroes. Inside the monument are the remains of Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Alíndez, José María Morelos and nine other notables.

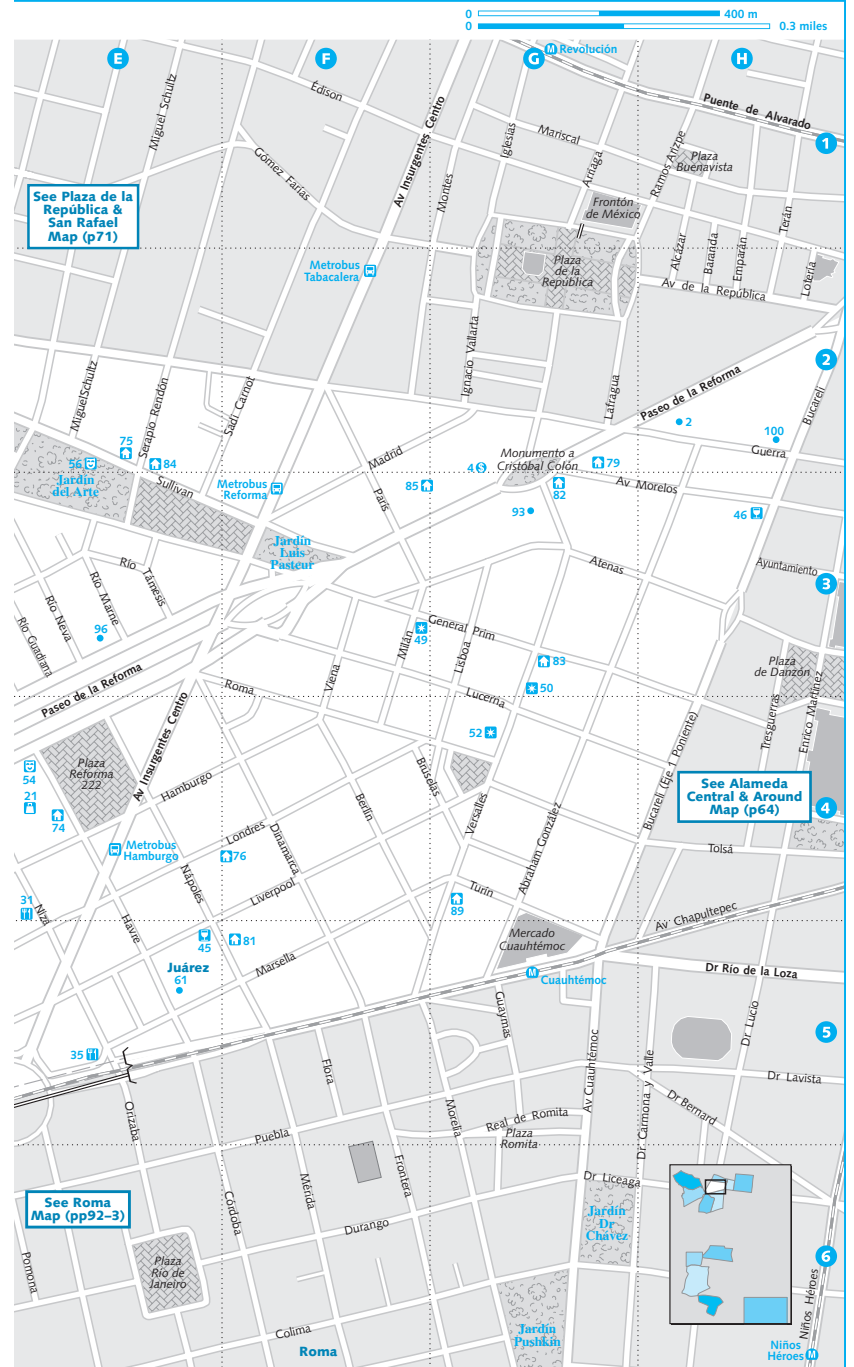
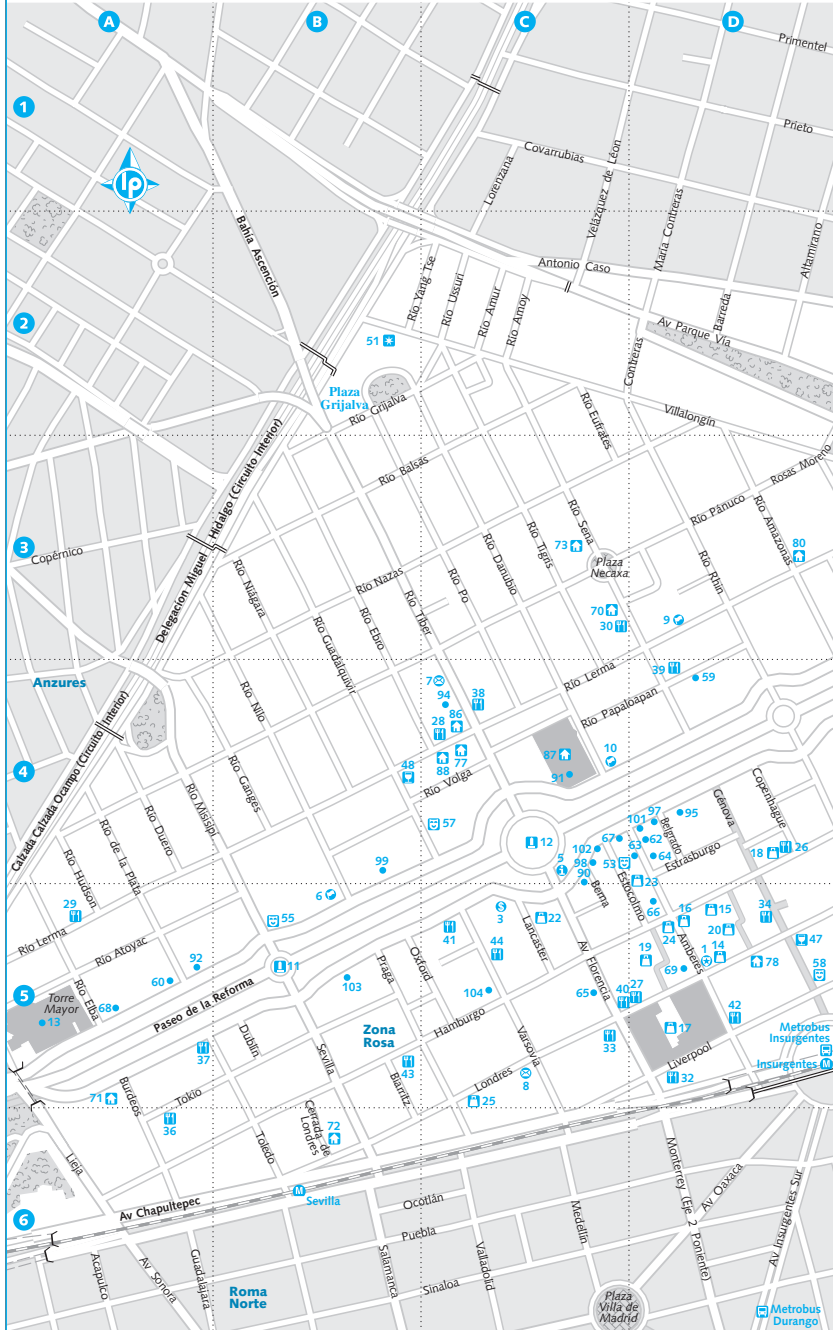
LA DIANA CAZADORA [Map pp74-5](#)

At Reforma's intersection with Sevilla is the monument commonly known as [La Diana Cazadora](#) (Diana the Huntress), a 1942 bronze sculpture actually meant to represent the Archer of the North Star. The League of Decency under the Ávila Camacho administration had the sculptor add a loincloth to the female figure, which wasn't removed until 1966.

TORRE MAYOR [Map pp74-5](#)

☎ 5283-8000; [www.torremayor.com.mx](#); Paseo de la Reforma 505; 🚇 Sevilla
 A 2003 addition to the Mexico City skyline, the [Torre Mayor](#) stands like a solitary sentinel

ZONA ROSA, CUAUHTÉMOC & JUÁREZ



ZONA ROSA, CUAUHTÉMOC & JUÁREZ

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Centro de Cambios y Divisas.....	4	G2
Del Ángel Tourism Module.....	5	C4
Japanese Embassy.....	6	B5
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Post Office.....	8	C5
UK Embassy & Consulate.....	9	D3
US Embassy.....	10	C4

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before the lion's gate of Bosque de Chapultepec. Designed by the Canadian architect Heberhard Zeidler, the green-glass tower soars 225m above Mexico City, making it Latin America's tallest building.

The earthquake-resistant structure is anchored below by 98 seismic shock absorbers. Unfortunately, the observation deck on the building's top tower was shut in 2006, with no explanation.

BOSQUE DE CHAPULTEPEC

Eating p143; Sleeping p208

Chapultepec (Náhuatl for 'Hill of Grasshoppers') served as a refuge for the wandering Aztecs before becoming a summer residence for their noble class. It was the nearest freshwater supply for Tenochtitlán, and in the 15th century, Nezahualcōyōtl, ruler of nearby Texcoco, oversaw the construction of an aqueduct to channel its waters over Lago de Texcoco to the pre-Hispanic capital.

Today Mexico City's largest park, the Bosque de Chapultepec covers more than 4 sq km and has lakes, a zoo and several excellent museums. It also remains an abode of Mexico's high and mighty, hosting the current presidential residence, **Los Pinos** (Map p78), and a former imperial palace, the Castillo de Chapultepec (Chapultepec Castle).

Sunday is the park's big day as vendors line its main paths, and throngs of families come to picnic, navigate the big lake on rowboats and crowd into the museums. It is divided into two main sections by two major north-south roads: Calz Chivatito and the Anillo Periférico. Most of the major attractions are in or near the eastern **1a Sección** (First Section; Map p78; ☎ 5am-5pm Tue-Sun), while a large amusement park and a children's museum dominate the 2a Sección.

A pair of bronze lions overlooks the main gate at Paseo de la Reforma and Lieja, across from the Torre Mayor building. Other access points are opposite the Museo Nacional de Antropología and by metro Chapultepec. The fence along Paseo de la Reforma serves as the Galería Abierta de las Rejas de Chapultepec, an outdoor photo gallery that extends from the zoo entrance to the Rufino Tamayo museum.

MONUMENTO A LOS NIÑOS HÉROES

Map p78

The six marble columns marking the eastern entrance to the park, near Chapultepec metro, commemorate the 'boy heroes,' six brave cadets who perished in battle.

On September 13, 1847, more than 8000 American troops stormed Chapultepec Castle, which then housed the national military academy. Mexican General Santa Anna retreated before the onslaught, excusing the cadets from fighting, but the youths, aged 13 to 20, chose to defend the castle. Legend has it that one of them, Juan Escutia, wrapped himself in a Mexican flag and leapt to his death rather than surrender.

CASTILLO DE CHAPULTEPEC Map p78

☎ 5061-9200; www.castillodechapultepec.inah.gob.mx; adult/child under 13 M\$45/free, Sun free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun; M Chapultepec

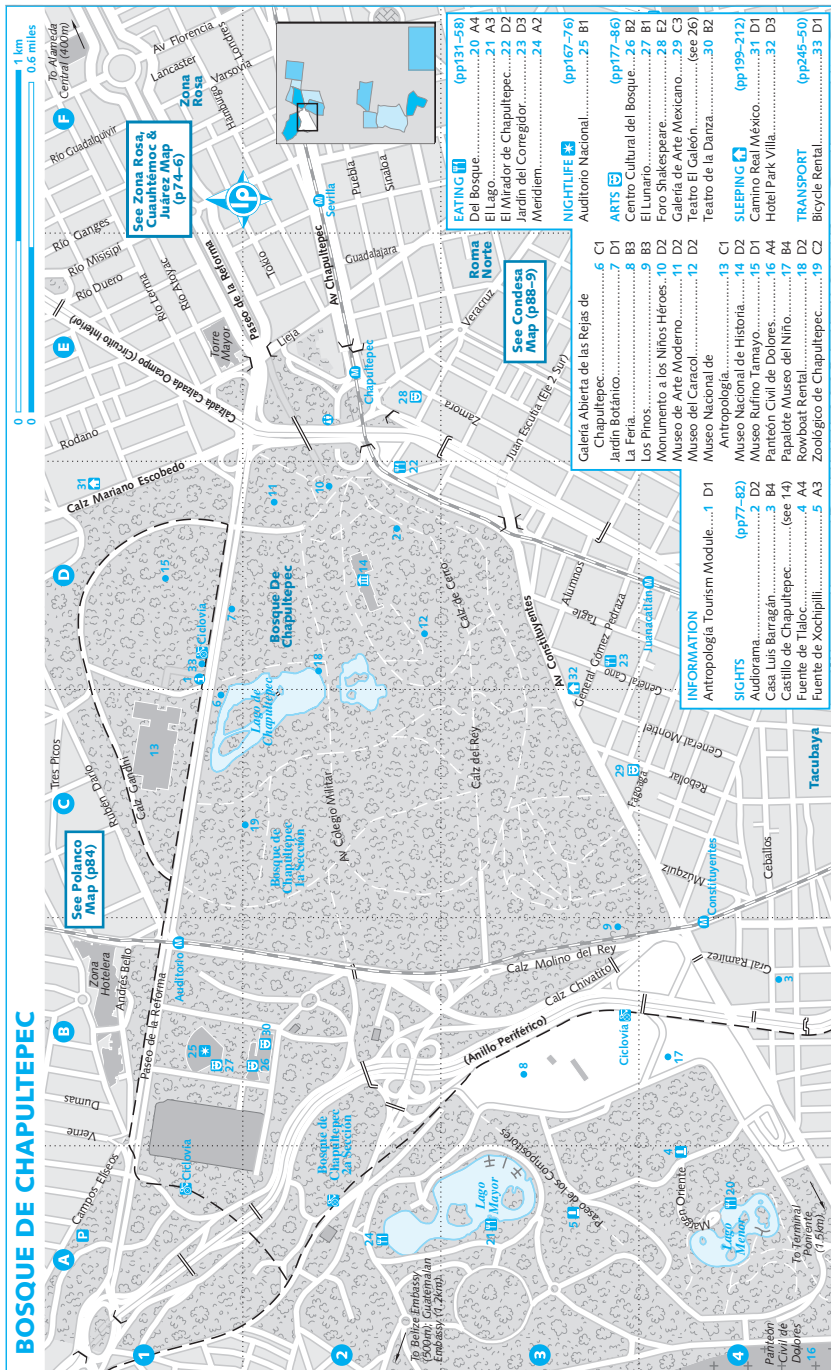
A visible reminder of Mexico's bygone aristocracy, the 'castle' that stands atop Chapultepec Hill was begun in 1785 but not completed until after independence, when it became the national military academy. When Emperor Maximilian and Empress Carlota arrived in 1864, they refurbished it as their residence. The castle became home to Mexico's presidents until 1939, when President Lázaro Cárdenas converted it into the **Museo Nacional de Historia** (National History Museum).

Historical exhibits chronicle the period from the rise of colonial Nueva España to the Mexican Revolution. In addition to displaying such iconic objects as the sword wielded by José María Morelos in the Siege of Cuautla and the Virgin of Guadalupe banner borne by Miguel Hidalgo on his march for independence, the museum features a number of dramatic interpretations of Mexican history by leading muralists. These include Juan O'Gorman's panoramic *Retablo de la Independencia* (Panel of Independence) in room 6, and David Alfaro Siqueiros' *Del Porfiriato a la Revolución* (From Porfirism to the Revolution) alongside the main staircase. Explanatory text is not translated into English.

The east end of the castle preserves the palace occupied by Maximilian and Carlota, with sumptuously furnished salons opening on an exterior deck with sweeping city views. On the upper floor, Porfirio Díaz' opulent rooms surround a lovely patio where a tower marks the top of Chapultepec Hill, 45m above street level.

To reach the castle, follow the road that curves up the hill behind the Monumento a los Niños Héroes. Alternatively, a little road-train (M\$10 round-trip) runs up every 15 minutes while the castle is open.

Back at ground level, follow the south side of the hill's base to find a formidable monument to Mexico's WWII veterans on



TRANSPORTATION: BOSQUE DE CHAPULTEPEC

- Metro** – Chapultepec metro station (Línea 1) is at the east end of the Bosque de Chapultepec, near the Monumento a los Niños Héroes and Castillo de Chapultepec. Auditorio metro station (Línea 7) is on the north side of the park, in front of the Auditorio Nacional and 500m west of the Museo Nacional de Antropología. The park can also be accessed from the south side at Constituyentes station (Línea 7).
- Bus** – from anywhere on Paseo de la Reforma west of the Alameda Central, buses saying ‘Metro Chapultepec’ reach Chapultepec metro station, while ‘Metro Auditorio’ buses pass right outside the Museo Nacional de Antropología. Returning downtown, any ‘Metro Hidalgo/La Villa’, ‘Alameda’ or ‘Garibaldi’ bus, from either metro Chapultepec or heading east on Reforma, follows Reforma at least as far as metro Hidalgo. To get to the 2a Sección and La Feria, take the ‘Paradero’ exit from metro Chapultepec and catch a ‘Feria’ bus at the top of the stairs. These depart continuously and travel nonstop to the 2a Sección (Second Section), dropping off riders at the Papalote Museo del Niño and La Feria.
- Bicycle** – rent bikes from a module on Paseo de la Reforma, just outside the Museo de la Antropología (8am-6pm; per hr M\$50, per day M\$150). A *ciclavia* (bicycle path) runs through the park’s 2a Sección, with access from the west side of Polanco.

your right. On the left side of the monument, enter the **Audiorama**, a pebbly garden where you can kick back on body-contoured benches and enjoy opera or classical in septophonic sound.

JARDÍN BOTÁNICO Map p78

☎ 5553-8114; admission free; 🕒 10am-4pm; 🚗 Auditorio

Gardening is an ancient pastime in this part of the world – Nezahualcōyōtl was planting cypresses here six centuries ago for their sheer aesthetic value – and the recently opened Botanical Garden, 300m east of the anthropology museum, carries the tradition forward. Highlighting Mexico’s plant diversity, the 4-hectare complex is divided into sections that reflect the country’s varied climate zones, with a special emphasis on the plants and trees of central Mexico. Still in a nascent stage, the garden features a desertlike patch of diminutive cacti and a greenhouse full of rare orchids, with over 150 varieties on display.

MUSEO DEL CARACOL Map p78

☎ 5061-9241; admission M\$48; 🕒 9am-4:15pm Tue-Sun; 🚗 Chapultepec

A short distance down the road from the Castillo, this ‘gallery of history’ traces the origins of Mexico’s present-day institutions, identity and values through a series of audio-enhanced dioramas re-enacting key moments in the country’s struggle for liberty. The museum is shaped like a snail shell, with its 12 exhibit halls spiraling downward. Along the way you’ll see the cry for independence at Dolores Hidalgo, the

May 5 battle of Puebla, the execution of Maximilian, and the triumphant entrance of Madero into Mexico City. The tour ends at a circular hall which contains only one item – a replica of the 1917 Constitution of Mexico.

MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO Map p78

☎ 5211-8331; cnr Paseo de la Reforma & Gandhi; admission M\$20, Sun free; 🕒 10am-5:30pm Tue-Sun; 🚗 Chapultepec

The Museum of Modern Art exhibits work by noteworthy 20th-century Mexican artists. The main building consists of four skylit rotundas, housing canvasses by Dr Atl, Rivera, Siqueiros, Orozco, Kahlo, Tamayo and O’Gorman, among others. *Las Dos Fridas*, possibly Frida Kahlo’s most well-known painting, is in the Sala Xavier Villarrutia. Temporary exhibitions feature prominent Mexican and foreign artists. Just northwest of the Monumento a los Niños Héroes (access is via Paseo de la Reforma), the museum has a pleasant café beside a sculpture garden.

ZOOLOGÍCO DE CHAPULTEPEC

Map p78
☎ 5553-6263; www.chapultepec.df.gob.mx; admission free; 🕒 9am-4:30pm Tue-Sun; 🚗 Auditorio

The Chapultepec Zoo houses a wide range of the world’s creatures in large open-air enclosures. The first place outside China where pandas were born in captivity, the zoo has three of these rare bears, descendants of the original pair donated by the People’s Republic in 1975. Endangered Mexican species include the Mexican grey wolf and the hairless xoloitzcuintle, the only surviving dog species from pre-Hispanic times.

WORTH THE TRIP

Tacubaya

Strange as it may seem today, this working-class neighborhood south of the Bosque de Chapultepec's 2a Sección (Second Section) was a coveted locale for Mexico City's elite during the 19th century, when they maintained garden-filled estates there. Crisscrossed by rivers and standing on slightly higher ground than the center of town, it was a more salubrious, less flood-prone area in which to reside. Tacubaya's character changed irrevocably under the administration of President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines in the 1950s, when the rivers were overlaid by major highways, slicing the neighborhood into isolated fragments. Urban explorers should enjoy picking up the pieces of its illustrious past.

Just south of the Bosque across Av Constituyentes, the **Casa Luis Barragán** (Map p78; ☎ 5272-4945; www.casa.luisbarragan.org; Ramírez 14; admission M\$100; 🕒 10am-2pm & 4-6pm by guided tour only; 🚻 Constituyentes) was the home of internationally prominent Mexican architect Luis Barragán from 1948 until his death 40 years later. With its purposely circuitous passageways, seamless integration of outdoor and indoor spaces and bold swathes of Mexican folk tones, the building was designated a Unesco World Heritage Site in 2004 'as a masterpiece of human creative genius.'

One of Tacubaya's lavish 19th-century estates remains open to the public as the **Parque Lira**. Studded with fountains and crisscrossed by sloping paths, it's a favorite Sunday strolling place for neighborhood families and sweethearts. The **Casa de la Bola** (Map pp42-3; ☎ 5515-8825; admission M\$20; Av Parque Lira 136; 🕒 11am-5pm Sun), on the park's east side, was occupied by Mexican gentry from the 1600s until the 1940s, when its last resident, Don Antonio Haghenbeck, chose to restore it as a museum. Each of the interconnected upper-floor rooms is a showcase for Mexican aristocratic tastes, with beautiful painted ceilings, ebony-inlay furniture, alabaster vases, European tapestries and so on. The idyllic rear gardens are interlaced with paths through tropical foliage.

Southeast of the park, past the chaotic zone of Metro Tacubaya, you come to the **Alameda de Tacubaya**. This city plaza once formed part of the atrium of the **Iglesia de Candelaria**, though the two are now separated by the major southbound artery Av Revolución. The single-nave church has been in continuous use since the 16th century, when it was built atop the pre-Hispanic temple of Cihuacoatl by the Dominican order.

Part of Chapultepec forest was given over to a bird sanctuary back during Moctezuma's reign; today, parrots, macaws, toucans, flamingos and other Mexican species swoop around the Aviario Moctezuma (only 20 visitors allowed in at a time).

There are various fast-food franchises on the premises.

MUSEO NACIONAL DE ANTROPOLOGÍA

Map p78
☎ 5553-6381; www.mna.inah.gob.mx; cnr Paseo de la Reforma & Gandhi; admission M\$48; 🕒 9am-7pm Tue-Sun; 🚻 Auditorio

The National Museum of Anthropology, among the finest of its kind, stands in an extension of the Bosque de Chapultepec.

The vast museum offers more than most people can absorb in a single visit. Concentrate on the regions you plan to visit or have visited, with a quick look at some of the other eye-catching exhibits. Everything is superbly displayed, with much explanatory text translated into English. Audio-guide devices, in English, are available at the entrance (M\$60).

The complex is the work of Mexican architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez. Its long,

rectangular courtyard is surrounded on three sides by two-story display halls. An immense umbrellalike stone fountain rises up from the center of the courtyard.

The 12 ground-floor *salas* (halls) are dedicated to pre-Hispanic Mexico. The upper level shows how Mexico's indigenous descendants live today. Here's a brief guide to the ground-floor halls, proceeding counterclockwise around the courtyard:

Culturas Indígenas de México Currently serves as a space for temporary exhibitions.

Introducción a la Antropología Introduces visitors to the field of anthropology.

Poblamiento de América Demonstrates how the hemisphere's earliest settlers got here and survived in their new environment.

Preclásico en el Altiplano Central Focuses on the pre-classic period, approximately 2300 BC to AD 100, and the transition from a nomadic hunting life to a more settled farming life in Mexico's Central Highlands.

Teotihuacán Displays models and objects from the Americas' first great and powerful state.

Los Toltecas y Su Época Covers cultures of central Mexico between about AD 650 and 1250; on display is one of the four basalt warrior columns from Tula's Temple of Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli.

Mexica Devoted to the Mexicas, aka Aztecs. Come here to see the famous sun stone, unearthed beneath the Zócalo in 1790, and other magnificent sculptures from the pantheon of Aztec deities.

Culturas de Oaxaca Displays the legacy of Oaxaca's Zapotec and Mixtec civilizations.

Culturas de la Costa del Golfo Spotlights the important civilizations along the Gulf of Mexico including the Olmec, the Totonac and the Huastec. Stone carvings include two Olmec heads weighing in at almost 20 tons.

Maya Exhibits findings from southeast Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and Honduras. A full-scale replica of the tomb of King Pakal, discovered deep in the Templo de las Inscripciones at Palenque, is breathtaking.

Culturas del Occidente Profiles cultures of western Mexico.

Culturas del Norte Covers the Casas Grandes (Paquimé) site and other cultures from northern Mexico, and traces their links with indigenous groups of the US southwest.

In a clearing about 100m in front of the museum's entrance, indigenous Totonac people perform their spectacular *voladores* rite – 'flying' from a 20m-high pole – several times a day.

MUSEO RUFINO TAMAYO

Map p78
☎ 5286-6519; www.museotamayo.org, in Spanish; cnr Paseo de la Reforma & Gandhi; admission M\$15, Sun free; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚻 Auditorio
A concrete and glass structure east of the anthropology museum, the Tamayo Museum was built to house international art donated by Oaxaca-born Rufino Tamayo and his wife, Olga, to the people of Mexico. Exhibitions of modern art from around the globe alternate with thematically arranged shows from the Tamayo collection.

SEGUNDA (2ª) SECCIÓN

Map p78
The second section of the Bosque de Chapultepec lies west of the Periférico. In addition to family attractions, there is a pair of upscale lake-view restaurants on the Lago Mayor and the Lago Menor.

Kids will enjoy **La Feria** (☎ 5230-2121; passes from M\$50; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, to 7pm Sat, to 8pm Sun; 🚻 Constituyentes), an old-fashioned amusement park with some hair-raising rides. A 'Super Ecolín' passport (M\$80) is good for all the rides except the roller coaster.

Your children won't want to leave **Papalote Museo del Niño** (☎ 5237-1773; www.papalote.org.mx; adult/child 2-11yr & seniors M\$85/80; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Wed & Fri, to 11pm Thu, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun;

🚻 Constituyentes). At this innovative, hands-on museum, kids can put together a radio program, join an archaeological dig and try out all manner of technological gadget games. All activities are supervised. The museum also features a 3-D IMAX movie theater.

About 200m west of the Papalote, turn right to reach the **Fuente de Tláloc**, an oval pool containing a huge mosaic-skinned sculpture of the rain god by Diego Rivera. There's more Rivera art inside the Chapultepec waterworks, housed in a pavilion behind the fountain (p26). To the north is the beautiful **Fuente de Xochipilli**, dedicated to the Aztec 'flower prince,' with terraced fountains around a *talud-tablero*-style pyramid (a steep building style typical of Teotihuacán).

PANTEÓN CIVIL DE DOLORES

Map p78
🕒 6am-6pm
Chapultepec's second and third sections are divided by this huge cemetery. Near its main entrance on Av Constituyentes, the Rotonda de los Hombres Ilustres (Rotonda of Illustrious Men) holds the remains of celebrated Mexicans such as the artists Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and Dr Atl (Gerardo Murillo).

HILL OF THE GRASSHOPPERS

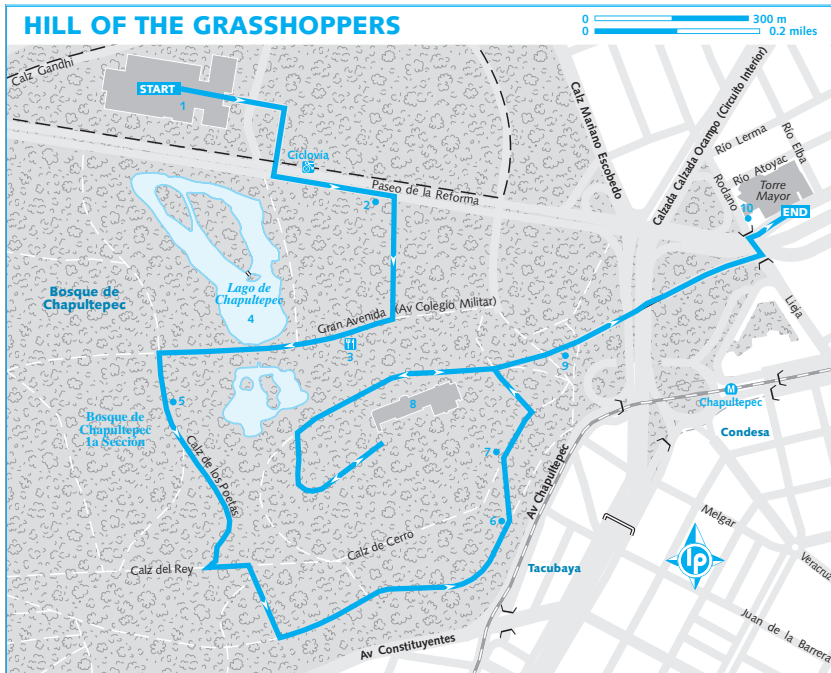
Walking Tour

1 Museo Nacional de Antropología Start in front of the **National Anthropology Museum** (opposite). Across from the main entrance, witness the Voladores de Papantla perform their ritual 'flying' descent from a 30m-high pole. Then stroll down the entry plaza to Paseo de la Reforma.

2 Jardín Botánico Cross Reforma to the Bosque entrance, then go left to check out the excellent open-air photo exhibit along the fence. Around 250m east, you'll find another entrance to the **Botanical Garden** (p79), with a greenhouse full of exotic orchids.

3 Gran Avenida Leaving the garden toward the park's interior, turn right on the Gran Avenida, which loops around this section of the Bosque. On Sunday this route becomes a major promenade for Chilango families. Off to your right is a warren of food stalls, all serving some variation on tacos and *tortas*.

4 The Lake Continue along the Gran Avenida as it cuts across Chapultepec Lake. There



WALK FACTS

Start Museo Nacional de Antropología
End Torre Mayor
Distance 4.5km
Duration 3½ hours
Fuel stop Taco and tortas by Lago de Chapultepec

are rowboats and pedal boats for rent along the east bank. A short distance up the opposite bank, the Casa del Lago stages art exhibits and performances.

5 Poets Walk On the west end of the lake, turn left to head down the Calzada de los Poetas. Proceed beneath a tunnel of trees lined with monuments to Mexico's greatest poets. At the end of the path, look for a small sculpture of Don Quixote to your right.

6 Baños de Moctezuma Continue down to the next major path, the Calzada del Rey, and turn left. Take the first path down to your right to reach the lower section of the Gran Avenida. Another 200m on are the Baños de Moctezuma (Moctezuma's Baths), which supplied Aztec Tenochtitlán with drinking water.

7 Auditorama Just past the Baños, go left to return to the upper path. Continuing east, the monument to Mexico's WWII veterans is on your left. On its left side, enter a **pebbly garden** (p79) and enjoy opera in septophonic sound.

8 Chapultepec Castle Continue around the base of Chapultepec Hill. About 150m further along, board the little train up to the **Castillo de Chapultepec** (p77). Up on the hill, you may browse the posh chambers of the former emperor's residence and enjoy incomparable views down Paseo de la Reforma.

9 Monumento a los Niños Héroes Hike back down the hill, optionally stopping in at the **Museo de Caracol** (p79). At the bottom make for the six tall torches that comprise the **Monumento a los Niños Héroes** (p77), commemorating the boy cadets who plunged to their deaths rather than surrender to gringo invaders in 1847.

10 Paseo de la Reforma Take the broad path over the Circuito Interior to the park's main gate, guarded by a pair of bronze lions. Across the way is the 59-story Torre Mayor, the city's tallest building. From here, you can take a pesero (minibus) back downtown.

POLANCO

Eating p144; Drinking p162; Sleeping p209

The affluent neighborhood of Polanco, north of Bosque de Chapultepec, arose in the 1940s as a residential alternative for a burgeoning middle class anxious to escape the overcrowded Centro. With streets named after famous writers, philosophers and scientists, the neighborhood cultivated a cosmopolitan outlook. Looking northward for architectural inspiration, builders erected many homes in the California Colonial style, a Hollywood version of Andalusian splendor with intricate carvings around doorways and windows. Polanco is traditionally considered a Jewish enclave though much of the community has moved even further west to Lomas de Chapultepec.

Today the area is known for its exclusive hotels, fine restaurants, nightlife and designer stores, with much of the retail activity along Calle Presidente Masaryk. Some of the city's most prestigious art galleries are here, including the **Gallery Juan Martín** (p185) and the **Lourdes Sosa gallery** (p185).

MUSEO SALA DE ARTE PÚBLICO DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS Map p84

☎ 5203-5888; www.siqueiros.inba.gob.mx; Tres Picos 29; admission M\$10; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🎫 Auditorio

One of the Big Three of Mexican muralism along with Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros is recalled as much for his fiercely radical political views as for his larger-than-life paintings. An avowed anarchist, he notoriously organized an (unsuccessful) assassination attempt on the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky.

Shortly before his death in 1974, Siqueiros donated his Polanco residence and studio to the government for use as a museum. Fans of the iconoclastic painter will find plenty of illuminating material about his life and work here, including sketches for his mural projects, and some of his paintings, notably an unfinished homage to Vietnam. But Siqueiros' greatest works reside elsewhere, such as at the **Museo Nacional de Historia** (p77),

Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso (p56), **Palacio de Bellas Artes** (p63) and the campus of **UNAM** (p104).

A WALK ON THE CHIC SIDE Walking Tour

1 Gandhi's Place Start at the monument to Mahatma Gandhi, behind the Museo Nacional de Antropología. Ironically, the shrine was erected by Mexican President Díaz Ordaz two years after his forces gunned down peaceful student protesters. Facing Gandhi, take the path to the left and bear right where it forks.

2 Art of Siqueiros Cross Rubén Darío and go left on Tres Picos, past the Canadian Embassy. Check out the **Sala de Arte David Siqueiros** (left), a space devoted to the prolific muralist. Turn right at the corner, then right again on Campos Elíseos, to the circle at Schiller.

3 Calle Schiller Head north up Schiller. As you approach the next corner, note the carved archways of the building that houses the Italian Coffee Company. It's a typical example of the California Colonial style which prevailed in the 1930s when the neighborhood was laid out. Turn left at the next block, Horacio.

4 Calle Horacio Stroll along Horacio's tree-lined central median. A block up on your left is the pretty Plaza Uruguay, a gathering place for local office workers and moms with nannies in tow. Beyond the archway at Arquímedes, the path becomes more parklike.

5 President Masaryk A block past the Spanish Embassy (another California Colonial gem), the **López Quiroga gallery** (☎ 5280-1710; Aristóteles 169) features works by contemporary Latin American artists. Turn left at Artistóteles and right at

TRANSPORTATION: POLANCO

- **Metro** – Metro Polanco (Línea 7), on Horacio, is smack in the center of the neighborhood. To reach the Zona Hotelera, the hotel zone on Polanco's south side, use the Auditorio station on the same line.
- **Bus** – 'Metro Auditorio' peseros traveling west from the Alameda access Polanco from the south (Bosque de Chapultepec) side of the neighborhood – get off at Verne, just past the Auditorio, and walk north. Another convenient pesero, labeled 'Metro Sevilla-P Masaryk', travels between Colonia Roma (Av Álvaro Obregón) and Polanco, stopping at metro Sevilla on the west end of the Zona Rosa.

POLANCO

INFORMATION

- 1 Australian Embassy
- 2 E4 Museo Sala de Arte Público David Alfaro Siqueiros
- 3 Cuban Embassy
- 4 C4 French Embassy
- 5 B2 German Embassy
- 6 B2 Instituto Nacional de Migración
- 7 A3 Irish Embassy
- 8 D3 New Zealand Embassy
- 9 D3 Sector
- 10 D3 Spanish Embassy

SIGHTS

- (pp83-5) Museo Sala de Arte Público David Alfaro Siqueiros
- (pp119-30) American Vintage
- (pp177-86) Artemex Casa de Arte
- Galería Juan Martín
- Liverpool Polanco
- (Trickermaster)
- Laudes Sosa
- National Music Conservatory

EATING

- 10 D4 Biko
- 21 C3 Breadhaus
- 22 D3 Cambalache
- 23 C3 Creperie de la Paix
- 24 C4 El Bajío
- 25 D3 El Farolillo
- 26 C3 Entrevinos
- 27 A3 Hacienda de los Morales
- 28 B3 Izoce
- 29 D3 Klein S.
- 30 C3 MP Bistró
- 31 C4 Ocho
- 32 C3 Pampino
- 33 B3 Salsipuedes
- 34 B3 Sur Honoré
- 35 D3 Villa María

SHOPPING

- 10 D4 Biko
- 21 C3 Breadhaus
- 22 D3 Cambalache
- 23 C3 Creperie de la Paix
- 24 C4 El Bajío
- 25 D3 El Farolillo
- 26 C3 Entrevinos
- 27 A3 Hacienda de los Morales
- 28 B3 Izoce
- 29 D3 Klein S.
- 30 C3 MP Bistró
- 31 C4 Ocho
- 32 C3 Pampino
- 33 B3 Salsipuedes
- 34 B3 Sur Honoré
- 35 D3 Villa María

DRINKING

- 37 B3 Big Red

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

- 46 A3 Conservatory
- 47 C4 Casa Vieja
- 48 D4 Hotel Nikko Mexico
- 49 B4 Hotel Polanco
- 50 D3 Hábita Hotel
- 51 C4 W Mexico City Hotel

TRANSPORT

- 52 B4 Air Canada
- 53 A2 Air France
- 54 C4 Continental Airlines
- 55 D2 Cubana
- 56 D2 Iberia
- 57 B2 Interjet
- 58 A3 KLM/orthwest
- 59 A2 Lufthansa
- 60 D3 Mexicana
- 61 D3 Tropicana Polanco

ARTS

- (pp177-86) Artemex Casa de Arte
- Galería Juan Martín
- Liverpool Polanco
- (Trickermaster)
- Laudes Sosa
- National Music Conservatory

SLEEPING

- (pp187-93) aWay Mexico City

See Bosque De Chapultepec Map (p78)

A WALK ON THE CHIC SIDE

WALK FACTS

- Start** Gandhi monument
- End** Auditorio Nacional
- Distance** 3km
- Duration** 2½ hours
- Fuel stops** Numerous

WALK FACTS

- Start** Gandhi monument
- End** Auditorio Nacional
- Distance** 3km
- Duration** 2½ hours
- Fuel stops** Numerous

the next street, Av Presidente Masaryk, Polanco's '5th Avenue,' lined with exclusive shops.

6 Pasaje Polanco Turn left into the Pasaje Polanco (behind Starbucks), a courtyard shopping plaza with boutiques and benches below the white-stuccoed balconies of a residential complex. Exit left, through the trattoria, where Polanco's smart set sip Perrier and gaze lovingly at their cell phones.

7 Virgilio Go right on Julio Verne, then right again on Virgilio, a hemispheric slice of old-time Polanco with fruit markets, a candy store, a kosher deli and a few *taquerías* (taco stalls). Turn left at the next corner, Oscar Wilde.

8 Parque Rosedal A few steps later, you emerge between two parks – to the right,

Lincoln; to the left, Rosedal – which together form a long leafy mall. Cross Castelar and go left. Past a reflecting pool is a tiny gallery, La Casita, a sculpture garden and a big cage chattering with parakeets.

9 Zona Hotelera Beyond the bird cage is a major playground. Turn right to reach the lower side of the park, and proceed down Tennyson, with more fine examples of California Colonial architecture. At the bottom of the street stands the **W Hotel** (p209), the westernmost of four high-rise luxury lodgings.

10 Campos Eliseos Turn right on Campos Eliseos. You'll pass Calle Dumas, site of some of the city's swankiest restaurants. At the bottom of the street, check out the rock memorabilia at the beautiful mansion housing the Hard Rock Café (p173).

11 Auditorio Nacional At the west end of Campos Eliseos is a 15m obelisk dedicated to Simón Bolívar. Cross Paseo de la Reforma and turn left. About 200m further stands the massive Auditorio Nacional; check the board in front for upcoming shows. You can alight the metro here, or catch a pesero down Reforma.

CONDESA

Shopping p126; Eating p148; Drinking p163; Sleeping p210

Colonia Condesa's architecture, tree-lined esplanades and idyllic parks echo its early-20th-century origins as a haven for a newly emerging elite. A network of quiet narrow streets is bordered by boulevards where fat palms rise royally from a central median. Stroll along Amsterdam, Tamaulipas or Mazatlán to admire art deco and California Colonial-style buildings. Several times a week, the usually low-key streets are invaded by busy *tianguis*, with many blocks of temporary pink-canopied stalls hawking the freshest tomatoes, chilies and mangos. Come February the jacarandas burst into bloom. Sweet-potato vendors and knife sharpeners cover the terrain by bicycle, conjuring a not-so-distant past when residents could still glimpse the twin volcanoes of Puebla state from their balconies. Parque México, at the neighborhood's east end, is certainly Mexico City's most harmonious enclave, fusing elements of European design with tropical abundance. It is a testament to Mexico's ingenuity in creating livable public spaces.

Only recently has 'La Condesa' earned its reputation as a trendy area of informal restaurants and sidewalk cafés. Property values have soared as Chilangos come to appreciate the zone's virtues, and hip boutiques and hot nightspots have sprouted up amid the family-run *fondas* (market eating stalls), old-fashioned barber shops, taco stands and cantinas. Fortunately, much of the neighborhood's old flavor is still in evidence, especially for those willing to wander outside the valet-parking zones.

Condesa's rather odd geography has two components. Immediately west of Av Insurgentes is the older section, often referred to as the Colonia Hipódromo in reference to the old race-track that later became the Parque México. Nearer Bosque de Chapultepec is the more recently constructed grid section, where the streets are named after Mexican towns and states; the main restaurant and club zone is found here, with most of the activity at the east end of Calle Michoacán and along Av Tamaulipas.

PARQUE MÉXICO Map p88

A main focus is the peaceful, beautifully kept Parque México, full of trees, well-maintained paths, benches with cute little roofs, and signs exhorting everyone to demonstrate their ecoconsciousness and treat their *parque* nicely. Amsterdam, which runs in an oval loop one block outside the park's perimeter, was originally a horse-race track. When the track was handed over to developers in 1924, it was stipulated that a certain area inside it must be kept green – hence Parque México. **Parque España**, two blocks northwest, has a children's fun fair and is a bit more frenetic.

Parque México is a 500m walk north from Chilpancingo metro station, or a 1km

walk south from Sevilla station – or you can get a pesero south on Av Insurgentes from Insurgentes metro station to the intersection with Calle Michoacán (there's a Woolworth store on the corner), and walk two blocks west to the park.

AV MÉXICO Map p88

A couple of art deco landmarks can be spotted on Av México, immediately northeast of Parque México. The **Edificio Basurto** (México 187), an aerodynamically streamlined structure from the mid-1940s, is a paragon of the style. Across the way, the **Edificio Tehuacán** (México 188), recently converted into the Hippodrome Hotel (p210),

features a typical deco marquee, as well as a Maya-influenced arch around the entryway.

FLIRTING WITH CONDESA

Walking Tour

1 Edificio Casas Jardines From metrobus Sonora station, walk west on Sonora, pausing before you cross Amsterdam to admire the art deco apartment building on the right. When it was built in the 1920s, the building's roof garden was considered a bold innovation. Across Amsterdam, at the Gran Vía bakery, you won't believe what they can do with Jello.

2 Art deco buildings More art deco treasures await one block west at Av México. On the right stands the barrel-shaped **Edificio Berta**. A few

steps north on Av México is the **Edificio Basurto** (México 187), a modernist milestone from the mid-1940s. Ask the doorman to let you peek inside at the amazing snail-shell staircase.

3 Parque México Return to Av Sonora and cross over to Parque México. Make your way south (paralleling Av México), choosing whichever paths suit you. Originally a horse-race track (and later an auto circuit), the park is an oval of lush tropical foliage and a favored spot for neighborhood children, dog walkers and joggers.

4 El Teatro South of the duck pond is an open-air theater dating from 1928. When it's not being used for performances, the broad plaza in front is the domain of skateboarders and soccer players. La Muñeca (The Doll), the buxom jug-bearing woman facing Calle Michoacán, is the park's art deco icon.

5 Radio fountain Cross Michoacán to dip down into Parque México's southern section. Its focal point is a fountain centered on a classic deco tower which used to have a clock and a radio for open-air listening. Return to Calle Michoacán and turn left (west).

WALK FACTS

Start Metrobus Sonora station

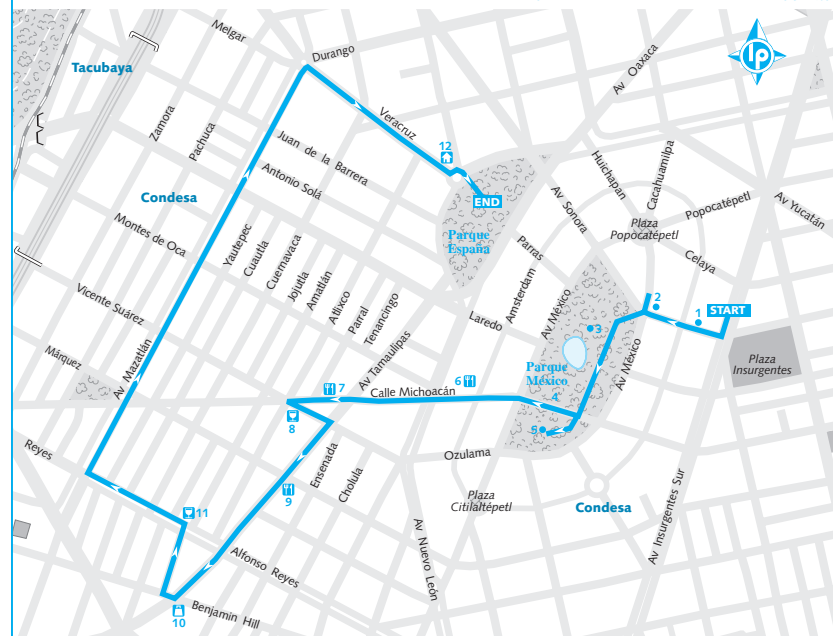
End Condesa DF

Distance 3.5km

Duration 2½ hours

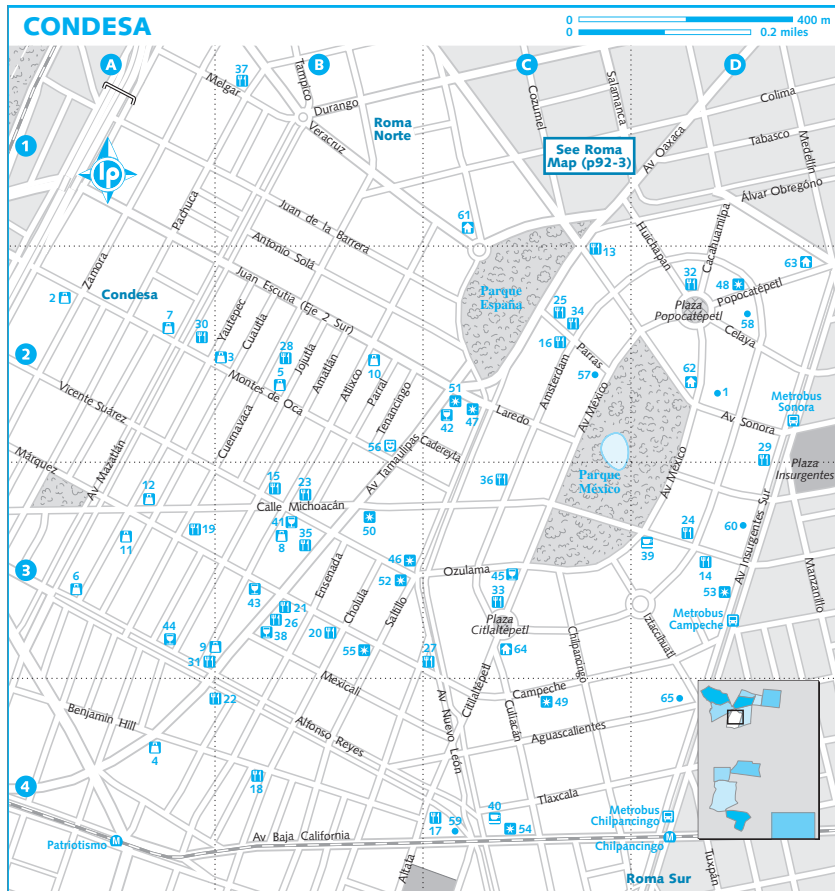
Fuel stops Numerous

FLIRTING WITH CONDESA



TRANSPORTATION: CONDESA

- **Metro** – Metro Patriotismo (Línea 9) provides the easiest access: take the 'Baja California' Nte exit, turn around at the top of the stairs and cross six-lane Av Patriotismo, then proceed up Av Tamaulipas. Alternatively, metro Chapultepec (Línea 1) is the northern approach.
- **Bus** – peseros labeled 'Metro Tacubaya-Balderas-Escandón' travel between Condesa and Plaza San Juan in the Centro Histórico via Colonia Roma.
- **Metrobus** – for Parque México, get off the Av Insurgentes metrobus at the Sonora station and go two blocks west. The Campeche station puts you on the park's south side.
- **Taxi** – there are convenient *taxi seguro* (safe taxi) stands on Calle Michoacán at the west side of Parque México and on Vicente Suárez, next to Cafetería El Péndulo.



6 Calle Michoacán For sustenance, grab a well-stuffed taco or two at **Hola** (p150), on the other side of Amsterdam. (But didn't I already cross Amsterdam? Yes, it circles Parque México.) Continue west on Michoacán, past Av Nuevo León to enter the heart of Colonia Condesa's restaurant district.

7 The Restaurant Zone Crossing Tamaulipas, you'll notice the oblong market building on your left, a throwback to a less trendy era. On your right is a continuous row of sidewalk tables, invariably filled with stylish Chilangos and foreign visitors, and serviced by an army of waiters and valet car parkers.

8 Vicente Suárez At Atlixco, cross Michoacán and double back on Vicente Suárez. Across from the market, **El Centenario** (p163) is a

beautiful tiled cantina that's more than suitable for a tequila stop. Turn right on Av Tamaulipas, an extension of the main restaurant zone.

9 Av Tamaulipas Proceed down Tamaulipas, optionally stopping at **El Tizoncito** (p150), an always lively *taquería* at the corner with Campeche, or at **Nevería Roxy**, an old-fashioned ice-cream parlor at the corner with Alfonso Reyes. Opposite the Roxy, across Alfonso Reyes, is the attractive neighborhood church, **Santa Rosa de Lima**.

10 Bella Época A block further south is a minaret marking the **Centro Cultural Bella Época** (p126). The former cinema was recently converted into a huge, browseable bookstore with a café and a video cinema. Leaving the Bella Época, turn left on Benjamín Hill, then right at the next corner, to return to Alfonso Reyes.

CONDESA

SIGHTS	(pp86–9)	Frutos Prohibidos.....	24	D3	Condesa DF.....	(see 61)		
Edificio Basurto.....	1	D2	Hip Kitchen.....	(see 62)	El Bataclán.....	48	D2	
Edificio Tehuacán.....	(see 62)		La Rauxa.....	25	C2	Hookah Lounge.....	49	C4
			La Sábila Virtud.....	26	B3	La Bodega.....	(see 48)	
SHOPPING	(pp119–30)		Lampuga.....	27	C3	Malafama.....	50	B3
Bodega de Quesos.....	2	A2	Maria del Alma.....	28	B2	Pata Negra.....	51	C2
Briguette.....	3	B2	Mexico Soul & Essence.....	29	D2	Rexo.....	52	B3
Centro Cultural Bella Época.....	4	A4	Nevería Roxy.....	30	A2	Rioma.....	53	D3
Entenaya Plata.....	5	B2	Nevería Roxy.....	31	A3	Ruta 61.....	54	C4
Esrave.....	6	A3	Orígenes Orgánicos.....	32	D2	T-Gallery.....	55	B3
Green Corner.....	7	A2	Photo Bistro.....	33	C3			
Headquarters.....	8	B3	Rojo Bistrot.....	34	C2	ARTS	(pp177–86)	
Kuss Kuss.....	9	A3	Sushi Shalala.....	35	B3	Café 22.....	56	B2
Milagro.....	10	B2	Taquería Hola.....	36	C3	SPORTS & ACTIVITIES	(pp187–93)	
Naco Miscelánea.....	11	A3	Tianguis de Pachuca.....	37	B1	Bicicletas.....	57	C2
Zembru.....	12	A3				Centro QI.....	58	D2
EATING	(pp131–58)		DRINKING	(pp159–66)		GAY & LESBIAN	(pp195–8)	
Barracuda Diner.....	13	C2	Black Horse.....	38	B3	Pride.....	59	C4
Bistrot Mosaico.....	14	D3	Caffè Toscano.....	39	D3	Tom's Leather Bar.....	60	D3
Café La Gloria.....	15	B3	Café Bola de Oro.....	40	C4			
Don Keso.....	16	C2	Cantina El Centenario.....	41	B3	SLEEPING	(pp199–212)	
El Califa.....	17	C4	Celtics.....	42	C2	Condesa DF.....	61	C1
El Diez.....	18	B4	La Botica.....	43	B3	Hippodrome Hotel.....	62	D2
El Figonero.....	19	A3	La Botica.....	44	A3	Hotel Roosevelt.....	63	D2
El Tizoncito.....	20	B3	Pastelería Maque.....	45	C3	Red Tree House.....	64	C3
El Tizoncito.....	21	B3				TRANSPORT	(pp245–50)	
El Zorral.....	22	B4	NIGHTLIFE	(pp167–76)		Ticketbus Condesa.....	65	D4
Fonda Garufa.....	23	B3	Cafebrería El Péndulo.....	46	B3			
			Cinna Bar.....	47	C2			

11 Alfonso Reyes Across Alfonso Reyes, just west of Amatlán, you'll spot **La Botica** (p163), a popular *mezcalería* where you can sample different varieties of *mezcal* from Oaxaca and Zacatecas. Continue west along Alfonso Reyes to Av Mazatlán and take a right. Stick to the palm-lined central median for this leg of the tour.

12 Av Mazatlán Five blocks up Mazatlán is the **Edificio Condesa**, a coveted apartment complex taking up the entire block between Mazatlán and Pachuca. Turn right at the next corner, Av Veracruz, and go three blocks east. Conclude the tour with cocktails on the roof of the **Condesa DF hotel** (p169), with views over Parque España, Parque México's little sister.

ROMA

Eating p150; Drinking p164; Sleeping p210

Northeast of Condesa, Colonia Roma is a bohemian enclave inhabited by artists and writers. This is where beat writers William S Burroughs and Jack Kerouac naturally gravitated during their 1950s sojourns to Mexico City. Built around the turn of the 20th century, the neighborhood is a showcase for the Parisian-influenced architecture favored by the Porfirio Díaz regime. Some of the most outstanding examples stand along Calles Colima and Tabasco. When in Roma, be sure to browse the secondhand-book stores, linger in the cafés and check out a few art galleries. A stroll down tree-lined Calle Orizaba takes you past two of the neighborhood's loveliest plazas – Río de Janeiro, with a statue of David, and Luis Cabrera, with its dancing fountains. On weekends inspect the **antique market** along Av Álvaro Obregón, the main thoroughfare.

Roma harbors a high proportion of the city's fashionable art galleries. The **Galería Nina Menocal** (p186) specializes in contemporary Latin American art, while the **Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm** (p184), in a handsome Porfiriano-era building, contains an excellent culturally oriented bookshop and exhibition rooms. More galleries are found on and around nearby Colima and Plaza Río de Janeiro – the Arte-México website (www.arte-mexico.com) is a good place to find out what's on where.

CASA DEL POETA RAMÓN LÓPEZ VELARDE

Map pp92–3

☎ 5533-5456; Álvaro Obregón 73; admission M55;

🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Fri, to 3pm Sat; 🚶 Insurgentes

Composer of the lyrical paean to the nation *La Suave Pátria*, the beloved poet Ramón López Velarde resided in this building until his death in 1921. From his humble studio, you go through an armoire to embark on a journey through López Velarde's imagination. Fragments of the poet's verses are scattered around surreal sculptures, toys and dioramas.

READING ROMA

Walking Tour

1 Romita From Metro Cuauhtémoc, take the 'Av Chapultepec Sur' exit. Turn left out of the station, then left at the corner, Guaymas. Cross Puebla and turn right at the next corner. You'll enter Plaza Romita, core of the old village that gives the greater neighborhood its name.

2 Calle Morelia After inspecting the beautifully preserved little **San Francisco Javier church**,

THE GREEN HOUSE

Art is, by definition, a creative expression and so should not necessarily be restricted to urban galleries and museums. And, in the case of the **Casa Verde** (Green House; off-Map pp42–3; ☎ 5810-1445; www.lacasaverde.com.mx; Desierto de los Leones, Santa Rosa Xochiac; 🚶 Barranca del Muerto), the reverse is the case. Located on the outskirts of the city, this bold new gallery, founded in 2005, has integrated contemporary sculpture with the natural environment in an open-air gallery that covers a hectare of lushly unspoiled natural parkland and gardens. Dramatic contemporary sculptures punctuate their surroundings like so many exclamation marks; exhibited on a series of grassy terraces and, thus, open to the elements, rather than just the air-con-cum-cigarette-smoke gallery norm.

The sculptures are well-spaced out and varied, which adds to the treasure-hunt intrigue of a visit here. New York-born Carol Miller, winner of numerous awards for her contribution to Mexican arts, has an evocative series of bold bronze figures, while Mexican-Japanese sculptor and UNAM professor Kiyoto Ota has four tantalizingly subdued pieces, all untitled and open to interpretation. Ota has also created an intriguing art structure here, entitled *Huipil*, made of rope and wood which visitors can climb and walk through.

Within Casa Verde there is a more conventional gallery, where past exhibitions have included the title *Ericando*. No guesses as to the theme here, but the sculptures and paintings exhibited were an aesthetic, rather than lewd, delight and included the exquisite sculptures of Brazilian sculptor Flavio José de Silva.

To reach the Casa Verde, take the metro to Barranca del Muerto and catch bus 45 outside the station to Santa Rosa; the complex is around 150m walk from the last stop. The complex includes art and sculpture workshops and a cafeteria. Prior appointment, via email or phone, is unproblematic but essential and there is no charge for visitors.

which was built by Jesuits in 1530, leave the plaza via the west side (opposite the church entrance), and head to the left on Calle Morelia. After crossing Calle Colima, you'll walk alongside **Jardín Pushkin**, site of a major *tianguis* (street market) on Wednesdays and Sundays.

3 Av Álvaro Obregón Continue south to Av Álvaro Obregón, the neighborhood's main street. Turn right, walking along the statue-studded median. Half a block past Mérida on the left is the former **home of poet Ramón Velarde**, who penned *La Suave Pátria* for his beloved Mexico.

4 Parque Luis Cabrera Next, turn left onto Córdoba, head three blocks south to Zacatecas, and then turn right. Halfway up

the block is the **Nina Menocal Gallery** (p186), specializing in Cuban sculpture. Just beyond is the lovely **Parque Luis Cabrera**, which features a group of dancing fountains. This was beat writer William S Burroughs' territory in the early 1950s.

5 Roma cafés Exit the park at the north end and proceed up Orizaba. Just before Álvaro Obregón on the right is **La Bella Italia**, a relic of 1950s Mexico City that was a setting in José Emilio Pacheco's novella *Las Batallas en el Desierto*. Across the street is the more popular **Café de Carlo** (p164).

6 Plaza Río de Janeiro Cross Álvaro Obregón and pop into the **Casa Lamm** (p184) to browse through its excellent bookstore and explore its art gallery. Continue up Orizaba to reach the **Plaza Río de Janeiro** and its statue of David. The reddish structure on the right is sometimes called the witch's house – a glimpse at its corner turret should explain why.

7 Calle Tabasco Head west along Durango, then turn left at Jalapa. One block down, across Colima, you'll find the **headquarters** of Mexico's 'legitimate government,' according to

WALK FACTS

Start Metro Cuauhtémoc

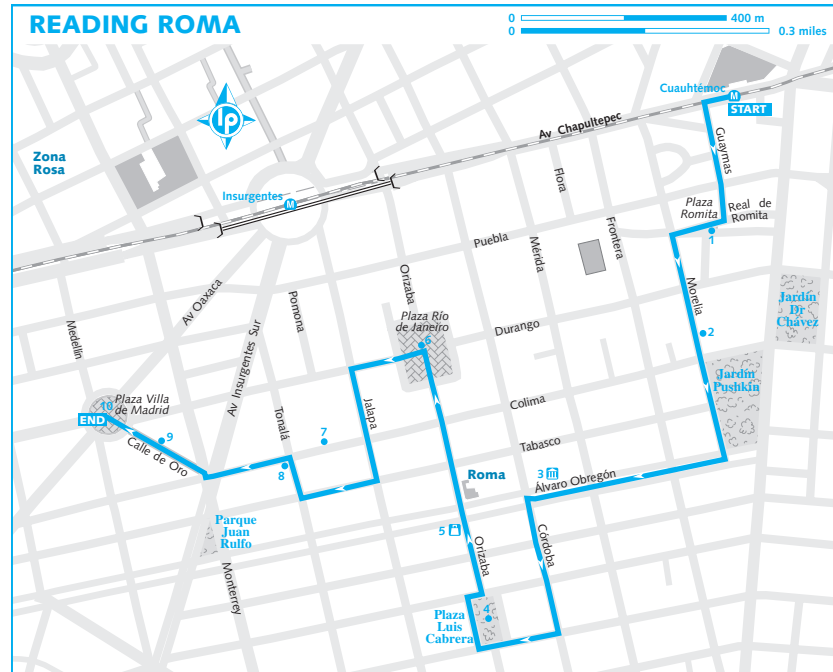
End Plaza de la Villa de Madrid

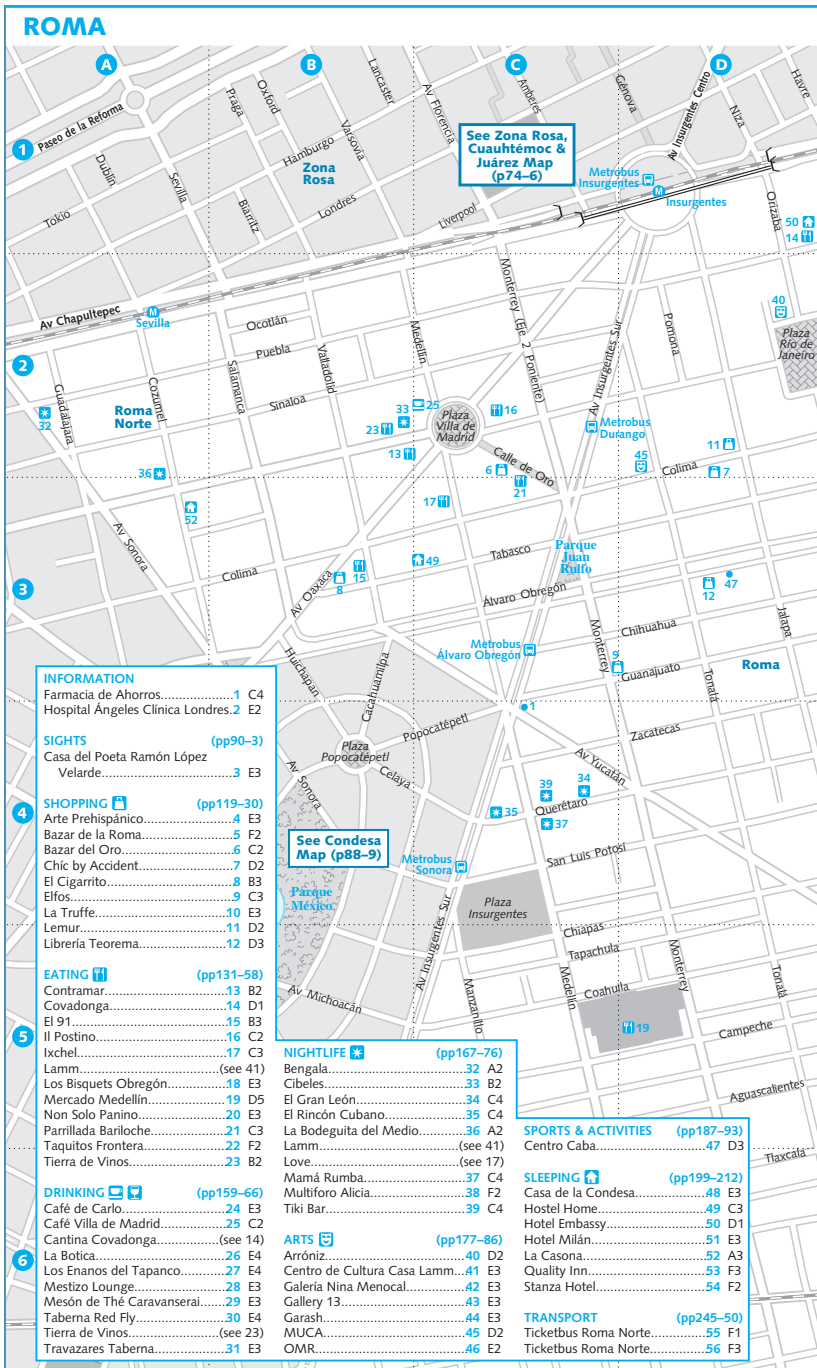
Distance 3km

Duration 2½ hours

Fuel stops Numerous

READING ROMA





COYOACÁN

Shopping p128; Eating p152; Drinking p165; Sleeping p212

Though part of the Distrito Federal, Coyoacán, 10km south of downtown, is often thought of as a distinct community. Once home to Leon Trotsky and Frida Kahlo (whose houses are now fascinating museums), it exudes a decidedly countercultural vibe and has traditionally been a haven for painters, writers, movie directors and other oddballs.

'Place of Coyotes' in the Náhuatl language, Coyoacán was one of a string of tribal centers on the western shore of Lake Texcoco before the Spanish conquest. It was subdued by the Aztecs soon after they defeated the neighboring Tepanecas, and later became Cortés' base after the fall of Tenochtitlán. The neighborhood's principal plazas – Hidalgo and La Conchita – were built over indigenous ceremonial centers.

Coyoacán has been a cultural hotspot since at least the early 1900s, when poet Francisco Sosa organized a series of soirees there that attracted some of the country's leading literary lights. During the 1920s, Frida Kahlo's house and the Ex-Convento de Churubusco hosted some of the earliest Schools of Open-Air Painting, a program supported by the postrevolutionary education ministry to train young artists of modest means. The Estudios Churubusco Azteca, which forms part of the Centro Nacional de las Artes complex at the east end of the neighborhood, has been the center of the Mexican movie industry for the past 60 years, and the Cineteca Nacional, just north, is the city's premier venue for art films.

Only in recent decades has urban sprawl overtaken the outlying village, and Coyoacán retains its restful identity, with narrow colonial-era streets, plazas, cafés and a lively atmosphere. On weekends, assorted musicians, mimes and crafts markets draw large but relaxed crowds from all walks of life to the festive double square at the center of the neighborhood, anchored by the massive San Juan Bautista temple. From there, walkers will find no shortage of splendid destinations to make for. North of the plazas stands one of the capital's most colorful markets and the main residential zone, permeated by the spirit of Frida. To the west, linked by quaint Av Francisco Sosa, are the Viveros de Coyoacán, the city's principal tree nurseries; to the east, the superb Franciscan monastery of Churubusco, housing an excellent historical museum.

There's a helpful **tourist information office** (☎ 5-659-2256, ext 181; Plaza Hidalgo 1; ☹ 9am-8pm) in the Casa de Cortés.

PLAZA HIDALGO & JARDÍN DEL CENTENARIO

Map p95

Plaza Hidalgo & Jardín del Centenario; (M) **Viveros**
The focus of Coyoacán life and the scene of most of the area's weekend fun are its twin central plazas. The eastern Plaza Hidalgo has a statue of Miguel Hidalgo; the western Jardín del Centenario is surrounded by attractive cafés and centers on a fountain with a coyote sculpture, which is a symbol of Coyoacán. The two plazas are divided by Calle Carrillo Puerto.

The Coyoacán tourist office is housed in the former Coyoacán Ayuntamiento (Town Hall), also called the **Casa de Cortés**, on the north side of Plaza Hidalgo. It's said that on this spot the Spanish tortured the defeated Aztec king Cuauhtémoc to try to make him reveal the whereabouts of treasure. The existing 18th-century building was the headquarters of the Marquesado del Valle de Oaxaca, the Cortés family's lands in

Mexico, which included Coyoacán. Above the entrance is the coat of arms bestowed on Coyoacán by King Carlos IV of Spain.

PARROQUIA DE SAN JUAN BAUTISTA

Map p95

Plaza Hidalgo

This single-nave church and its adjacent former monastery dominate the east side of Plaza Hidalgo. First erected in 1592 by the Franciscan order, the Parroquia de San Juan Bautista has a lavishly ornamented interior, with painted scenes all over the vaulted ceiling. Be sure to inspect the cloister, featuring Tuscan columns and a checkerboard of carved relief panels on the corner ceilings.

MUSEO NACIONAL DE CULTURAS POPULARES

Map p95

☎ 5554-8968; Av Hidalgo 289; admission free; ☹ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun

Half a block east of Plaza Hidalgo is the National Museum of Popular Culture, which has good temporary exhibitions on popular culture, indigenous crafts and celebrations

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	Artículos Soler Arumi	19
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	El Hijo del Cuervo	32
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	El Hijo del Cuervo	32
	El Hijo del Cuervo	32
	El Hijo del Cuervo	32
TRANSPORT	Terminal Sur	30
	Terminal Sur	30
	Terminal Sur	30
	Terminal Sur	30
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	Terminal Sur	30

TRANSPORTATION: COYOACÁN

- Metro – the nearest metro stations are Viveros and Coyoacán (Línea 3) and General Anaya (Línea 2), all 1.5km to 2km from Plaza Hidalgo. If you don't fancy a hike, catch one of the suggested peseros (below).
- Bus – from metro Viveros, walk south (left, if you're facing Av Universidad) to Peréz Valenzuela, cross and catch an eastbound 'Metro Gral Anaya' pesero to Allende. From the Coyoacán station take a 'Coyoacán' pesero going southeast on Av México. From metro General Anaya, take the exit off the southbound platform and catch an RTP bus labeled 'Centro Coyoacán.' (The last option is best for the Ex-Convento de Churubusco.) Returning, 'Metro Viveros' peseros go west on Malitzin; 'Metro Coyoacán' and 'Metro Gral Anaya' peseros depart from the west side of Plaza Hidalgo. San Ángel-bound peseros and buses head west on Av de Quevedo, five blocks south of Plaza Hidalgo.

in its various courtyards and galleries. Past exhibits have covered *lucha libre*, *nacimientos* (nativity models) and circuses.

VIVEROS DE COYOACÁN Map p95

☎ 5554-1851; admission free; 🕒 6am-6pm; 📍 Viveros

A pleasant approach is via the **Viveros de Coyoacán**, the principal nurseries for Mexico City's parks and gardens. The 390,000-sq-meter swath of greenery, 1km west of central Coyoacán, is popular with joggers and perfect for a stroll, but watch out for belligerent squirrels! From metro Viveros, walk south along Av Universidad and take the first left, Av Progreso; or enter on Av México near Calle Madrid.

CASA DE CULTURA JESÚS REYES HEROLES Map p95

☎ 5658-5281; Francisco Sosa 202; 🕒 8am-8pm; 📍 Viveros

Across the street from the tranquil Plaza Santa Catarina, the Casa de Cultura Jesús Reyes Heróles is an old colonial estate hosting book presentations, dance classes and so on (see p181). Take a wander round the grounds, where yuccas and jacarandas spring from carefully tended gardens.

MUSEO FRIDA KAHLO Map p95

☎ 5554-5999; www.museofridakahlo.org; Londres 247; admission M\$45; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Coyoacán

Iconic Mexican artist Frida Kahlo was born, lived and died in the 'Blue House,' six blocks north of Plaza Hidalgo.

Almost every visitor to Mexico City makes a pilgrimage here to gain a deeper understanding of the painter (and maybe to pick up a Frida handbag). Built by her father Guillermo three years before Frida's birth, the house is littered with mementos

and personal belongings that evoke her long, often tempestuous relationship with husband Diego Rivera and the leftist intellectual circle they often entertained here.

Kitchen implements, jewelry, outfits, books and other objects from the artist's everyday life are interspersed with art, photos and letters, as well as a variety of pre-Hispanic art and Mexican crafts. The collection was greatly expanded in 2007 upon the discovery of a cache of previously unseen items that had been stashed in the attic.

Kahlo's art expresses the anguish of her existence as well as her flirtation with socialist icons: portraits of Lenin and Mao hang around her bed, and in the upstairs studio an unfinished portrait of Stalin stands before a poignantly positioned wheelchair. In another painting, *Retrato de la Familia* (Family Portrait), the artist's Hungarian-Oaxacan roots are fancifully entangled.

MUSEO LÉON TROTSKY Map p95

☎ 5658-8732; Río Churubusco 410; admission M\$30; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Coyoacán

Having come second to Stalin in the power struggle in the Soviet Union, Trotsky was expelled in 1929 and condemned to death in absentia. In 1937 he found refuge in Mexico. At first Trotsky and his wife, Natalia, lived in Frida Kahlo's Blue House, but after falling out with Kahlo and Rivera they moved a few streets northeast, to Viena 45.

The Trotsky home remains much as it was on the day when a Stalin agent, a Catalan named Ramón Mercader, finally caught up with the revolutionary and smashed an ice pick into his skull. Memorabilia and biographical notes are displayed in buildings off the patio, where a tomb engraved with a hammer and sickle contains the Trotsky's ashes.

The main entrance is at the rear of the old residence, facing the Circuito Interior.

EX-CONVENTO DE CHURUBUSCO

Map p95

☎ 5604-0699; cr Calle 20 de Agosto & Anaya; admission M\$39, Sun free; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun; 📍 General Anaya

Scene of a historic military defeat, the 17th-century former Monastery of Churubusco, now a museum, stands within peaceful wooded grounds, 1.5km northeast of Plaza Hidalgo.

On August 20, 1847, Mexican troops defended the monastery against US forces in a dispute over the US annexation of Texas. The Mexicans fought until they ran out of ammunition and were beaten only after hand-to-hand fighting.

The US invasion was but one example in a long history of foreign intervention, as compellingly demonstrated by the **National Interventions Museum** inside the former *convento*. Displays include an American map showing operations in 1847, and material on the French occupation of the 1860s and the plot by US ambassador Henry Lane Wilson to bring down the Madero government in 1913. (None of the explanatory text is translated into English.)

The superbly restored exhibit rooms, bordered by original frescoes, surround a small cloister where numbered stations provided instructions for meditating monks. Leaving the museum, you may wander amid the monastery's old orchard, which now holds wonderful gardens.

To reach Churubusco, catch an eastbound 'Metro Gral Anaya' pesero or bus on Xicoténcatl at Allende, a few blocks north of Plaza Hidalgo. Alternatively, walk 500m west from the General Anaya metro station.

THROW A PESO IN THE HAT

Dressed in khaki uniforms, they stand on street corners, in front of theaters, at busy traffic intersections – anywhere that people congregate. They work in pairs: the organ grinder and the tip collector, who extends an upturned cap at any pedestrian or driver in sight. The music-maker cranks the handle of a varnished wooden box, manufactured in Berlin in the late 19th century, to produce a carnivalesque string of tunes that echo Mexico's distant past. The jukeboxes of their era, these 'organs' generally play eight tunes of a minute each. Though some passersby consider them a mere annoyance, the 100 or so organ grinders who work the city are actually heirs to a tradition dating back to before the Revolution. Brought over by Italian immigrants who earned their living as itinerant carnival performers, the instrument became fashionable during the Porfirio Díaz regime. Later the old European ditties were replaced by Mexican tunes. If you'd like to see the tradition continue, drop a few pesos in the hat.

top picks

ON SUNDAY

- Cycling (p188) on Paseo de la Reforma
- Museo Nacional de Antropología (p80)
- Coyoacán's Plaza Hidalgo (p94)
- Xochimilco (p113)
- Catedral Metropolitana (p50) hosts mass by the Archbishop

CENTRO NACIONAL DE LAS ARTES

Map p95

☎ 4155-0000; www.cenart.gob.mx in Spanish; Río Churubusco 79; 📍 General Anaya

The National Arts Center, just east of Calzada de Tlalpan, is a modern hothouse of the arts. It's home to the **Auditorio Blas Galindo** (p178), the Teatro de las Artes and two other theaters, the national music conservatory and the schools of theater, dance, cinema, painting, sculpture and engraving. Even if you're not here for a performance, it's still interesting to stroll through the grounds amid the modern architecture and browse the center's excellent bookshop and art materials shop.

ANAHUACALLI Map p95

☎ 5617-4310; www.anahuacallimuseo.org; Calle del Museo 150; admission M\$45; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun

Designed by Diego Rivera to house his collection of pre-Hispanic art, this museum, 3.5km south of Coyoacán, is a fortresslike building made of dark volcanic stone. It incorporates stylistic features from many pre-Hispanic cultures. An inscription over the door reads: 'To return to the people the artistic inheritance I was able to redeem from their ancestors.' If the air is

clear, the view over the city from the roof is great.

The House of Anáhuac (Aztec name for the Valle de México) also contains one of Rivera's studios and some of his work, including a study for *Man at the Crossroads*, the mural that was commissioned for the Rockefeller Center in 1934. In November elaborate Día de Muertos offerings pay homage to the painter.

The entry fee includes admission to the [Frida Kahlo house \(p96\)](#).

To get to Anahuacalli, take the Tren Ligero (from metro Tasqueña) to the Xotepingo station. Exit on the west side and walk 200m to División del Norte; cross and continue 600m along Calle del Museo.

FRIDA'S NEIGHBORHOOD

Walking Tour

1 Viveros de Coyoacán Exit metro Viveros onto Av Universidad, a major thoroughfare that skirts [Viveros de Coyoacán \(p96\)](#), which serves as the nursery for many of the DF's public gardens. Facing the fence, go right (south), walk 400m to the corner and turn left. The

WALK FACTS

Start Metro Viveros
End Café El Jarocho
Distance 3.7km
Duration 2½ hours
Fuel stops Numerous

entrance is a short distance down on your left. Enter the park, go straight ahead and take the second right (Olmos). Follow this broad path east, through the park, exploring the intersecting paths named after the kinds of trees along them. About 500m along, turn right, through the playground, to exit the park.

2 Plaza Santa Catarina Cross Av Pérez Valenzuela, go right and look for Calle Torresco – more an alley than a street. This bends right at a school, then puts you on the lovely Plaza Santa Catarina. On the far end is the modest, mustard-colored church that gives the plaza its name.

3 Casa de Cultura Jesús Reyes Héroles Cross the street that borders the plaza and stop into the [Casa de Cultura Jesús Reyes Heróles \(p181\)](#), a colonial complex hosting book presentations, dance classes and so on. Take a wander round the carefully tended gardens and bask in the tranquillity at the open-air café.

4 Francisco Sosa Leaving the Casa, head right and down Francisco Sosa. Named for the poet and journalist who organized literary soirees here in the early 1900s, the tree-lined street is flanked by fine colonial buildings and dotted with cafés, notably the one inside the [Italian Cultural Center](#) at number 77.

5 Jardín del Centenario About 700m east of the Plaza Santa Catarina, pass through a double-arched gate to enter the Jardín del Centenario, with Coyoacán's iconic coyotes frolicking in its central fountain and lively cafés around the

perimeter. If it's the weekend, wander through a maze of stalls hawking hippie accessories.

6 Plaza Hidalgo Proceed across Calle Carrillo Puerto to the adjacent Plaza Hidalgo, a sprawling cobblestoned square with an invariably festive atmosphere. Directly ahead stands which has a flamboyant interior. To the left is the [Casa de Cortés \(p94\)](#), now housing Coyoacán's delegational offices.

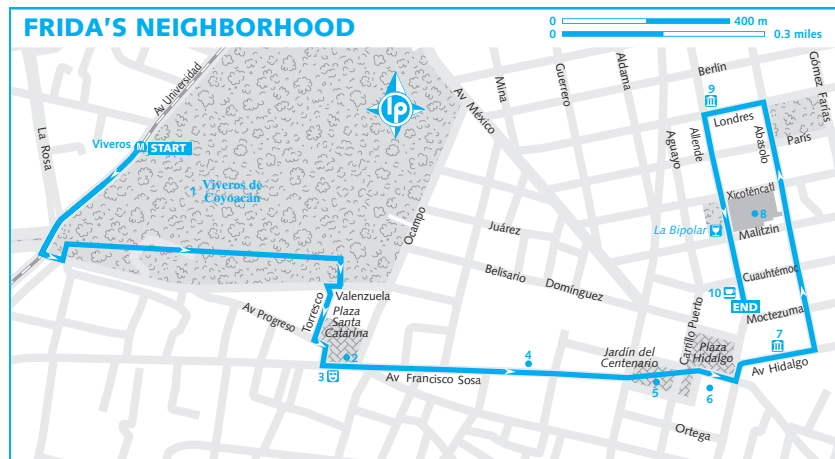
7 Museo de Culturas Populares Go around the left side of San Juan Bautista and cross over to the classic cantina, [La Guadalupana \(p165\)](#). Go left, then turn right at the corner, Av Hidalgo. Half a block east is the [Museo de Culturas Populares \(p94\)](#), which has compelling exhibits on home-grown arts and customs.

8 Mercado de Coyoacán Go left at the next corner, Abasolo, and walk north three blocks. On your left is the [Mercado de Coyoacán](#),

one of Mexico City's most inviting covered markets. It's densely packed with vendors of quality produce, *moles* (sauces), piñatas, basketry etc, as well as the terrific [Tostadas Coyoacán \(p156\)](#).

9 Casa Azul Continue another couple of blocks north and turn left on Londres. On the next corner, you'll find the famous Blue House, where artist Frida Kahlo was born and lived for many years, now housing the [Museo Frida Kahlo \(p96\)](#). Afterwards, head back down to the center via Allende.

10 El Jarocho A block below the market join the crowds lining up for cappuccino and doughnuts at popular [Café El Jarocho \(p165\)](#), an obligatory stop on any Coyoacán visit. Alternatively, knock back a few mescalts at [La Bipolar \(p165\)](#), the popular new cantina and guardian of Mexican kitsch, half a block west of the market on Malintzin.



SAN ÁNGEL

Shopping [p129](#); Eating [p153](#)

Settled by the Dominican order soon after the Spanish conquest, San Ángel, 12km southwest of the center, maintains its colonial splendor despite being engulfed by the metropolis. It's most often associated with the big Saturday crafts market held alongside the Plaza San Jacinto. Though the main approach via Av Insurgentes is typically chaotic, wander westward to experience the old village's cobblestoned soul, a tranquil enclave of colonial mansions with massive wooden doors, pots of geraniums behind window grills and bougainvillea spilling over stone walls.

The two main roads through San Ángel are Av Insurgentes Sur, which runs north-south through the eastern side of the suburb, and Av Revolución, which parallels Insurgentes about 200m to the west.

On weekends, tourist information is available at a [module](#) ([Map p101](#)); ☎ 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) on the Plaza San Jacinto.

TEMPLO Y MUSEO DE EL CARMEN

[Map p101](#)

☎ 5616-2816; Av Revolución 4; admission M\$39, Sun free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun

A storehouse of magnificent sacred art, this museum occupies a former school run by the Carmelite order, adjacent to their 17th-century Templo de El Carmen. (The village was named for their patron saint, San Ángelo Mártir.) The collection includes eight oils by Mexican master Cristóbal Villalpando; equally splendid are the polychrome and gilt designs on the ceilings. The big draw, however, are the dozen mummies in the crypt. Thought to be the bodies of 17th-century benefactors of the order, they were uncovered during the revolution by Zapatistas looking for buried treasure.

PLAZA SAN JACINTO [Map p101](#)

🚏 Metrobus La Bombilla

Every Saturday the [Bazar Sábado](#) ([p123](#)) brings a festive atmosphere, masses of color, and crowds of people to San Ángel's pretty little Plaza San Jacinto.

The main building of the Bazar Sábado is Plaza San Jacinto 11, on the north side of the square. This house served as quarters

for invading forces from the US in 1847 and from France in 1863. A plaque on one of the buildings on the west side of the plaza, however, commemorates 71 soldiers of the Irish Battalion of St Patrick who were hung after helping the Mexicans resist the US invasion. The Irish were originally fighting in the American forces but thought the US cause was so unjust that they switched sides.

Midway along the plaza's north side, look for the elaborate fountain inside the courtyard [Museo Casa del Risco](#) (☎ 5616-2711; Plaza San Jacinto 15; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun; 🚏 Miguel Ángel de Quevedo), a mad mosaic of Talavera tile and Chinese porcelain. Upstairs is a treasure trove of Mexican baroque and medieval European paintings.

About 50m west of the plaza is the 16th-century [Iglesia de San Jacinto](#) and its peaceful gardens.

MUSEO CASA ESTUDIO DIEGO RIVERA Y FRIDA KAHLO

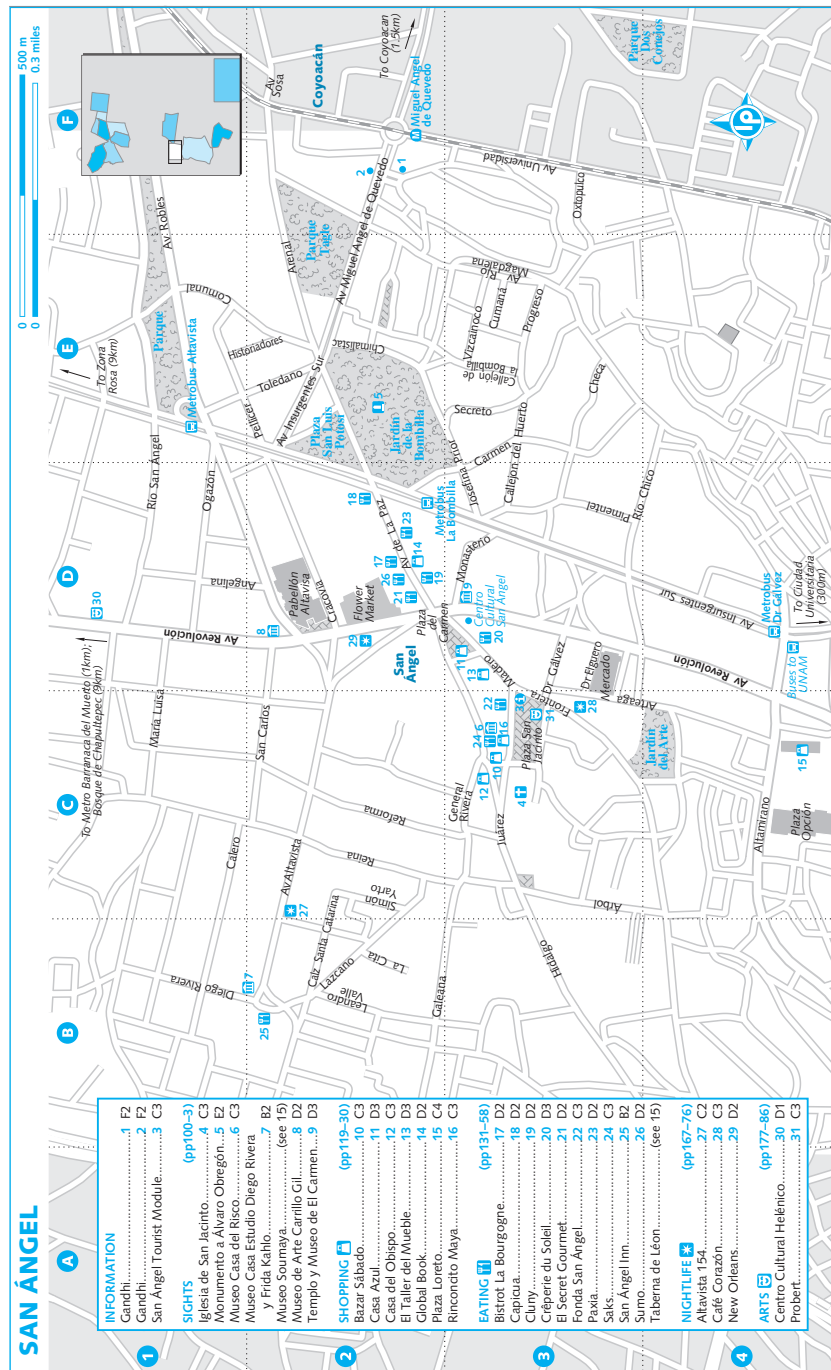
[Map p101](#)

☎ 5550-1518; Diego Rivera 2, cnr Av Altagracia; admission M\$10, Sun free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun

If you saw the movie *Frida*, you'll recognize the Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Studio Museum, 1km northwest of Plaza San Jacinto.

TRANSPORTATION: SAN ÁNGEL

- Metro – from Metro Miguel Ángel de Quevedo (Línea 3), walk or catch a 'San Ángel' pesero (minibus) 1km west to Plaza San Jacinto. From Metro Barranca del Muerto, catch any pesero 1.5km south along Av Revolución.
- Metrobus – the easiest option: from the La Bombilla station of the Av Insurgentes metrobus, it's a 500m walk west along Av de la Paz to Plaza San Jacinto.
- Bus – to Coyoacán, get a 'M(tasqueña)' pesero or bus going east on Miguel Ángel de Quevedo; it will take you to the corner of Carrillo Puerto (2.5km), a five-block walk north to the Jardín del Centenario.
- Taxi – there's a *sitio* (taxi stand) on the east side of Plaza San Jacinto.



Designed by their friend, the architect and painter Juan O’Gorman, the innovative abode was the home of the artistic couple from 1934 to 1940, with a separate house for each of them. Frida lived there for five years until she decided to divorce Diego for supposedly having an affair with her sister, and took her things over to the Casa Azul in Coyoacán. (They remarried soon afterward.) Rivera’s house preserves his upstairs studio, including Rivera’s collection of Judas effigies. Frida’s (the blue one) contains changing exhibits from the memorabilia archives.

See the Walking Tour (right) for directions from the Plaza San Jacinto to Diego and Frida’s houses.

SAN ÁNGEL INN Map p101

☎ 5616-1402; Diego Rivera 50; 🚏 Metrobus La Bombilla

Across the way from the Diego–Frida home, the San Ángel Inn is in the former Hacienda de Goicoechea, an 18th-century *pulque* plantation with a beautiful verdant courtyard, a fountain, a chapel and colonial gardens. It is historically significant as the place where ‘Pancho’ Villa and Emiliano Zapata agreed to divide control of the country in 1914. If your budget won’t run to a meal here at the prestigious restaurant (p153), you can still stroll in the gardens and perhaps have a drink in the cocktail bar.

MUSEO DE ARTE CARRILLO GIL

Map p101

☎ 5550-6289; Av Revolución 1608; admission M\$15, Sun free; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; 🚏 Barranca del Muerto

The Carrillo Gil Art Museum has a permanent collection of works by such Mexican luminaries as Rivera, Siqueiros and Orozco (including some of Orozco’s grotesque, satirical early drawings and watercolors). The museum also includes engravings and prints by Klee, Rouault, Braque and Kandinsky, plus often excellent temporary exhibits. In the basement is a pleasant bookstore and café.

MUSEO SOUMAYA Map p101

☎ 5616-3731; www.museosoumaya.com; Plaza Loreto, Altamirano 46; admission M\$10, Sun & Mon free; 🕒 10:30am–6:30pm Wed, Thu & Mon, to 8:30pm Fri & Sat; 🚏 Metrobus Doctor Gálvez
Property of multimillionaire businessman Carlos Slim and named after his late wife,

the Soumaya museum houses one of the world’s three major collections (70 pieces) of the sculpture of Frenchman Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). Located inside the Plaza Loreto shopping mall (p130), it also possesses work by Rodin’s contemporaries Degas, Matisse, Renoir and Daumier, collections of Mexican portraiture and colonial art, and murals by Rufino Tamayo, besides staging major temporary exhibitions.

JARDÍN DE LA BOMBILLA Map p101

☎ Cnr Av Insurgentes & Av de La Paz; 🚏 Metrobus La Bombilla

In this tropically abundant park spreading east of Av Insurgentes, paths encircle the **Monumento a Álvaro Obregón**, a monolithic shrine to the postrevolutionary Mexican president. The monument was built to house the revolutionary general’s arm, lost in the 1915 Battle of Celaya, but for some reason the limb was cremated in 1989. ‘La Bombilla’ was the name of the restaurant that once occupied this spot where Obregón was assassinated during a banquet in 1928. The killer, José de León Toral, was involved in the Cristero rebellion against the government’s anti-Church policies.

In July, the park explodes with color as the main venue for Feria de las Flores, a major flower festival.

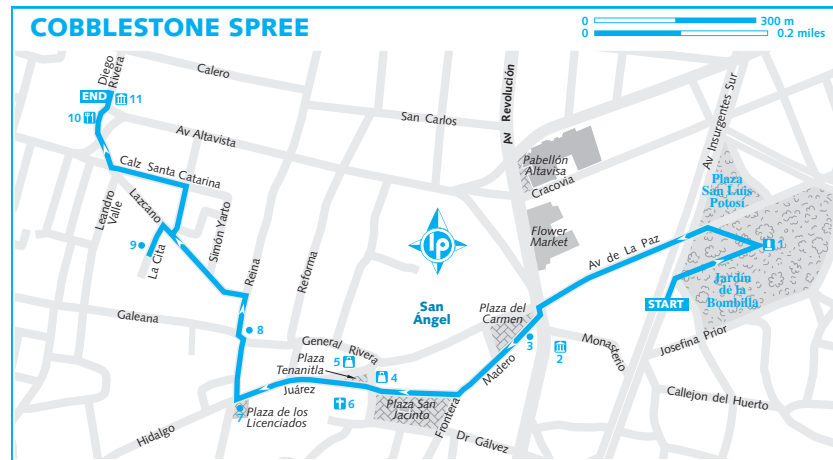
COBBLESTONE SPREE

Walking Tour

1 Jardín de la Bombilla Get off the Insurgentes metrobus at ‘La Bombilla’ and cross over to the east side of Insurgentes to enter the pretty **Jardín de la Bombilla** (above). The tall, Stalinist-style monument in the middle honors postrevolutionary president Álvaro Obregón; until 1989 it housed his arm, lost in battle.

2 Av de la Paz Cross Av Insurgentes and head west along Av de la Paz, a major dining and nightlife zone with restaurants and clubs enclosed in a series of courtyard malls. Turn left on Av Revolución. About 50m down the street, explore the inner sanctum of the former **Carmelite convent** (p100).

3 Plaza del Carmen Cross Av Revolución and skirt the left side of the **Plaza del Carmen**, where local artists display their works every Saturday. To your left across Madero is the



WALK FACTS

Start Jardín de la Bombilla

End Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo

Distance 1.7km

Duration 1½ hours

Fuel stops El Convento for *churros* and chocolate

Centro Cultural San Ángel, a neighborhood activity center with a theater and art exhibits.

4 Plaza San Jacinto A short walk down Madero takes you to the **Plaza San Jacinto** (p100), the zone’s center of activity, especially on Saturdays when the weekly crafts market is open for business. About halfway along the plaza’s north side, look for the insanely decorated fountain inside the **Casa del Risco**.

5 Plaza Tenanitla A few doors down is the **Bazar Sábado building**. The Saturday crafts market spills over to the smaller Plaza Tenanitla, opposite the building’s west side. The rest of the week you can still find great crafts at the **Casa del Obispo** (p123), off the plaza’s north side.

6 Ex Convento de San Jacinto Cross the plaza and enter the serene, manicured gardens that once formed the atrium of the **San Jacinto monastery** (p100). The small baroque church on the west end features an eye-catching gilt altar.

7 Plaza de los Licenciados Beyond Plaza Tenanitla, you enter the idyllic cobblestoned end of the quarter. Proceed westward down

Calle Juárez to Árbol, where you’ll find the Plaza de Los Licenciados, a tranquil enclave which seems a universe away from hectic Av Revolución.

8 Calle Reina Turn right on **Reina**. You’ll pass more stately private homes with massive wooden doors, pots of geraniums behind window grills and bougainvillea spilling over stone walls. Reaching the spooky **cylindrical cross** at the corner (in front of the former chapel of El Zacatito), jog left and continue up Reina.

9 Casa de los Delfines Turn left onto Lazcano, where some homes boast carved stone shields over their doorways. A short detour left on La Cita will take you to the **Casa de los Delfines**, a two-centuries-old house with fanciful dolphin decorations on its facade.

10 San Ángel Inn Return to Lazcano, retrace your steps 30m, and turn left (north) up jacaranda-lined Calzada de Santa Catarina. Follow this around a bend and keep going west. You emerge onto a plaza, opposite the **San Ángel Inn** (p153). Cross Av Alvarista (with extreme caution) and stop in for one of its excellent margaritas.

11 Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo Just above the San Ángel Inn, where Av Alvarista bends east, is the Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo (p100). The Diego–Frida complex should be immediately recognizable to anyone who’s seen the movie *Frida*. Across from the museum, ‘Metro Viveros’ buses head down Alvarista for Insurgentes and Coyoacán.

CIUDAD UNIVERSITARIA

Eating p155; Sleeping p212

The **University City** (Map p105; www.unam.mx/en; M Universidad), 2km south of San Ángel, is the main campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). With over 280,000 students and 31,000 teachers, it is Latin America's largest university. Five former Mexican presidents are among its alumni, as is Carlos Slim Helú, ranked the world's richest man in 2007.

Founded in 1551 as the Royal and Papal University of Mexico, UNAM is the second-oldest university in the Americas. It occupied various buildings in the center of town until the campus was transferred to its current location in the 1950s. Standing upon part of a vast dried-up lava field called El Pedregal, it was constructed by a team of 150 young architects, sculptors and technicians headed by José García Villagrán, Mario Pani and Enrique del Moral. With its buildings covered in optimistic murals linking Mexican and global themes, the university is a monument to national pride. An architectural showpiece, it was placed on Unesco's list of World Heritage Sites in 2007.

Although it is a public university open to all, UNAM remains 'autonomous,' meaning the government may not interfere in its academic policy. It has often been a center of political dissent, most notably prior to the 1968 Olympics, held in Mexico City, when protests culminated in the tragic massacre at Tlatelolco (see p21).

In normal times during the school semesters, the campus is busy with student life; out of term, when its libraries, faculties and cafés are closed, it's very quiet but still open to visitors.

The campus is divided into two main parts. Most of the faculty buildings are scattered over an area about 1km square at the north end. The second section, about 2km further south, includes the Centro Cultural Universitario. Student cafés, open to everyone during academic sessions, are in both the architecture and philosophy buildings at the Jardín Central's west end, and in the Centro Cultural Universitario.

NORTHERN SECTION Map p105

As you enter the northern part of the campus from Insurgentes, it's easy to spot the **Biblioteca Central** (Central Library) – 10 floors high, almost windowless and covered on every side with colorful, complicatedly symbolic mosaics by Juan O'Gorman. The south wall, with two prominent zodiac wheels, covers colonial times, while the north wall deals with Aztec culture.

La Rectoría, the administration building at the west end of the vast central lawn, has a vivid, three-dimensional Siqueiros mosaic on its south wall, showing students urged on by the people.

The building south of La Rectoría contains the campus's **Librería Central** (Central Bookstore). Adjacent to it, the **Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes** (☎ 5622-0305; www.muca.unam.mx; admission free, ID required; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) hosts eclectic, often polemical, exhibitions from the university collection.

The **Auditorio Alfonso Caso**, at the bottom (east) end of the Jardín Central, has on its north end a mural by José Chávez Morado showing the conquest of energy. Humanity progresses from the shadow of

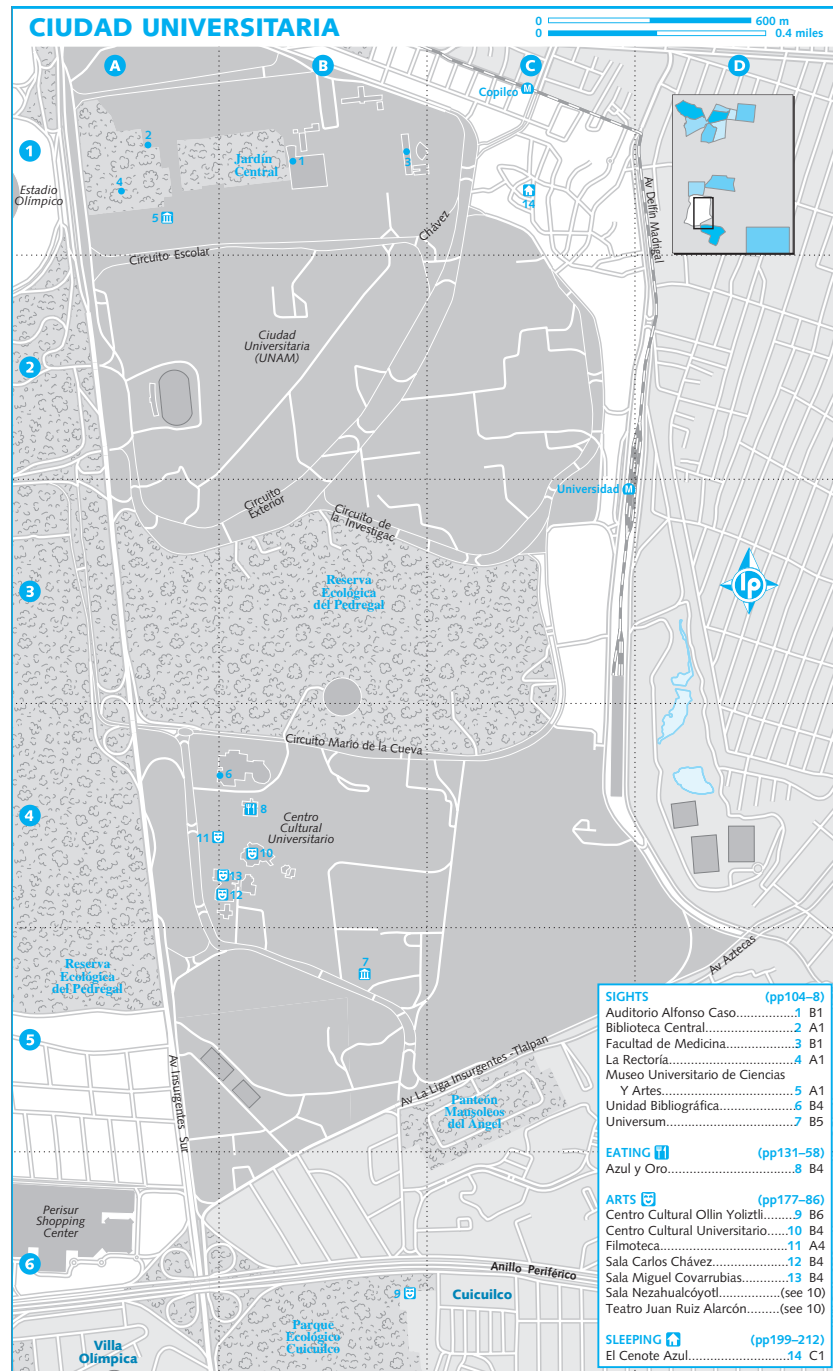
a primitive jaguar god to the use of fire and then the atom, before emerging into an ethereal, apparently female, future. The east side of the same building depicts a similarly didactic mural about progress in mining.

A little further east, on the west wall of the **Facultad de Medicina**, a mosaic in Italian stone by Francisco Eppens interprets the themes of life and death in Mexican terms. The central mask has a Spanish profile on the left and an indigenous one on the right, together making up a mestizo face in the middle. An ear of maize and symbols of Aztec and Mayan gods represent the forces of life and death.

ESTADIO OLÍMPICO Map p105

☎ 5522-0491; Insurgentes Sur 3000

The Olympic Stadium stands on the west side of Av Insurgentes opposite the northern part of the campus. Built of volcanic stone for the 1968 Olympics, it is designed to resemble an elliptical volcano cone. With seating for over 72,000, it is now home to UNAM's Pumas soccer club, which competes in the national **Primera División** league (p190). Over the main entrance is Diego Rivera's



TRANSPORTATION: CIUDAD UNIVERSITARIA

- **Metro** – from Metro Universidad (the last stop on Línea 3), the university runs three bus routes (free) between 6:30am and 10:30pm Monday to Friday. Ruta 1 goes west to the main part of the campus; Ruta 2 traverses the Circuito Exterior, flanking the main campus' southern edge; Ruta 3 heads southwest to the Centro Cultural Universitario. Copilco metro station is near the northeast edge of the campus, 1km east of the Biblioteca Central. Take the 'Cerro de los Tres Zapotes' exit and follow the students down Filosofía y Letras to the university entrance.
- **Metrobus** – take the metrobus to its southern terminus, Dr Gálvez, then catch a pesero (minibus) to the west side of the university (see below). Plans are afoot to extend the metrobus line further down Insurgentes as far as Tlalpan, so it won't be necessary to make the transfer.
- **Bus** – from the metrobus terminus, cross Av Altamirano and catch a southbound 'Villa Coapa' pesero. For the northern part of the campus, get off at the first yellow footbridge crossing on Av Insurgentes, just before the Estadio Olímpico. For the southern section, get off at the second yellow footbridge after the Estadio Olímpico. Returning, catch any pesero marked 'San Angel-Revolución'; to catch the metrobus, get off just after it turns left.

dramatic sculpted mural on the theme of sports in Mexican history. You can peep inside when it's closed by going to Gate 38, at the south end.

SOUTHERN SECTION Map p105

The **Centro Cultural Universitario** (University Cultural Center) is the focus of the southern part of the campus, about 2km south of the Estadio Olímpico. Entering off Av Insurgentes, go down the steps behind Rufino Tamayo's tall black sculpture, *La Universidad Germen de Humanismo y Sabiduría* (The University, Seed of Humanism and Wisdom). You'll find the **Sala Nezahualcōyotl** (p179), a major concert hall, down here on the left, and a collection of theaters, cinemas and smaller concert halls to the right. Nearby is the **Universum** (Museo Universitario de Ciencias; ☎ 5622-7287; www.universum.unam.mx, in Spanish; adult/child M\$40/35; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun), a science museum with kids' activities and workshops.

The large **Unidad Bibliográfica** (Bibliographic Unit), which houses part of Mexico's National Library, is about 200m north of the Centro Cultural. A short distance east of the library is the university's Espacio Escultórico (Sculpture Garden), with a trail leading through volcanic fields past a dozen or so innovative pieces. The most formidable work, by sculptor Mathias Goeritz, is found just north of the cultural complex. *Corona del Pedregal* comprises an enormous ring of concrete blocks, which surround an exposed section of the lava bed upon which the university was built.

THE ART OF UNAM

Walking Tour

1 Metro Copilco Take metro línea 3 (Dirección Universidad) to the next-to-the-last stop, Copilco. Before leaving the station, have a look at the megamural above the platform, **El Perfil del Tiempo** (p26), a survey of world painting by Durango artist Guillermo Cenicerros. Take the 'Cerro de los Tres Zapotes' exit.

2 UNAM Leaving the station, turn around and follow the students (down Calle Filosofía y Letras) to the university entrance. You'll cross a corridor lined with stalls serving a variety of snacks. Enter the campus through the ground floor passageway of the Facultad de la Medicina, emerging on the medical mall.

3 Facultad de la Medicina To your right is the medical school's north wing, dominated by a mosaic mural on its curved west wall which is packed with indigenous imagery. Concerts are performed beneath the mural every Friday. The zone buzzes with white-coated students engaged in between-class snacking and socializing.

4 Facultad de Odontología Looking north, you'll see an even trippier mosaic on the wall of the Facultad de Odontología (School of Dentistry), featuring a treelike figure whose head appears to be vaporizing. Head straight west, past a soccer court, to the next group of buildings.

5 Antigua Facultad de Ciencias Continue straight ahead, traversing a corridor between

two buildings. The comic-bookish mural at your left, adorning the top part of the old sciences building, shows mankind's conquest of energy.

6 Biblioteca Central To the west spreads the university's main esplanade. Take a ramble across this grassy expanse to the campus' main section. The imposing **Biblioteca**

Central (p104), with its four walls of murals by Juan O'Gorman, stands on the north side.

7 Rectoría Directly in front of you, across the west lawn, is the **Torre de la Rectoría**, the administrative tower, with an abstract Siqueiros mural on the lower portion. Circle around this building to the left to see a politically inspired three-dimensional mosaic, also by Siqueiros.

8 Estadio Olímpico Universitario Exiting the campus underneath Av Insurgentes, you arrive at the **Estadio Olímpico Universitario** (p104), the former Olympic stadium and now home of UNAM's Pumas team. Peer through the fence to admire Diego Rivera's dramatic sculpted mural over the stadium entryway on the theme of sports in Mexican history.

WALK FACTS

Start Metro Copilco

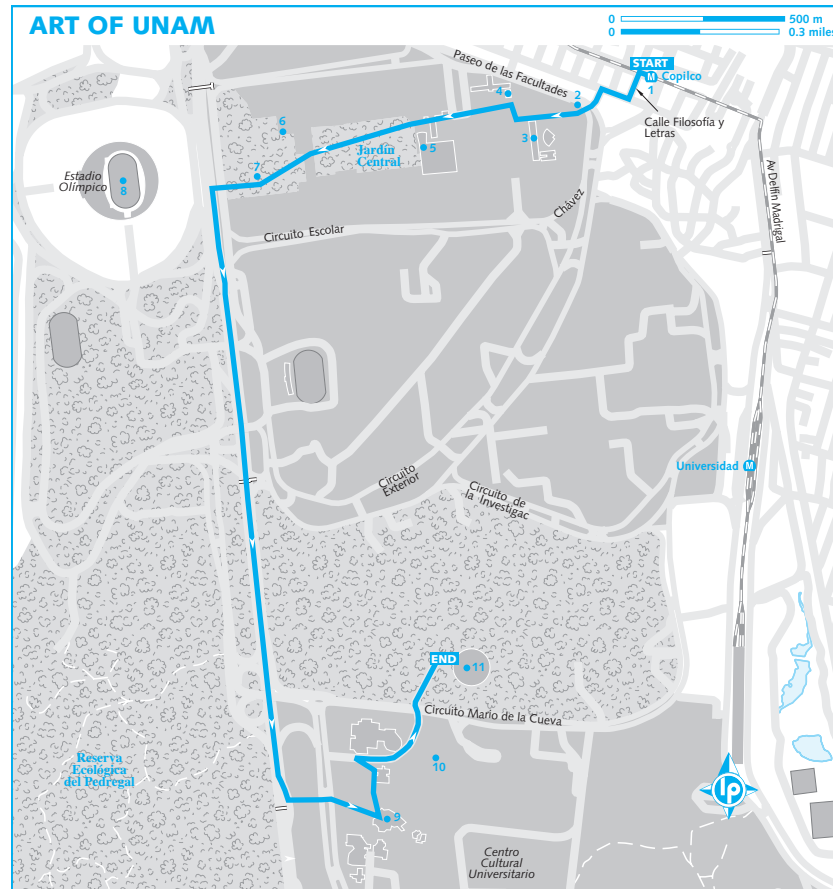
End Espacio Escultórico

Distance 3.2km

Duration 2 hours

Fuel stops Student cafeterias in the Architecture and Philosophy buildings

ART OF UNAM



9 Centro Cultural Universitario To continue the tour, catch any pesero down Av Insurgentes and get off at the second yellow footbridge. Take the bridge over Insurgentes, then follow the signs to the ‘CUC.’ You’ll arrive in the middle of a plaza surrounded by five theaters and two cinemas.

10 Sculpture Garden Skirt the left side of the Sala Nezahualcōyotl (the pyramidal concrete structure to the north); a path leads to another complex with the Hemeroteca Na-

cional (the periodicals library). To your right, enter the university **sculpture garden**, where a trail leads through volcanic fields past a dozen or so innovative pieces.

11 Espacio Escultórico Leaving the garden, continue north and cross the road to find a major sculptural work by Mathias Goeritz, an enormous ring of concrete blocks around a lava bed. To return downtown, it’s a 400m walk to Av Insurgentes; any ‘San Ángel’ bus will arrive at the metrobus terminus.

TLALPAN

Eating, p155; Drinking p165

Tlalpan is ‘what Coyoacán used to be’ – an outlying village with a bohemian atmosphere, a grid of idyllic cobblestoned streets and some impressive colonial architecture. Municipal seat of the city’s largest *delegación* (borough), Tlalpan sits at the foot of the southern Ajusco range and enjoys a cooler, moister climate. There are some fine restaurants along the arcades of the cute little plaza and an atmospheric cantina nearby, La Jalisciense (p165).

‘Terra firma’ in the indigenous tongue of Náhuatl, Tlalpan was inhabited as early as 800 BC, when a civilization arose at nearby Cuicuilco and thrived until a volcanic eruption obliterated the settlement. The formidable remains of Cuicuilco’s ceremonial center are still on view on a hilltop park north of the village center. In 1645, the community was dubbed San Agustín de las Cuevas, a reference to the network of caves that were formed when subterranean gases perforated the volcanic ash. The name still belongs to Tlalpan’s main temple, which stands alongside the square, and San Agustín is paid homage the last weekend of August during the Fiestas de San Agustín, a boisterous blend of processions, performances of traditional dance, gambling, cockfights and *charreadas* (rodeo displays).

MUSEO DE HISTORIA DE TLALPAN

Map p109

☎ 5485-9048; Plaza de la Constitución 10;

admission free; 🕒 10am-7pm Tue-Sun

Half a block from the plaza, the Tlalpan history museum hosts compelling historical and art exhibits in naturally lit galleries off the courtyard.

CAPILLA DE LAS CAPUCHINAS SACRAMENTARIAS

Map p109

☎ 5573-2395; Hidalgo 43; admission M\$50;

🕒 10am-noon & 4-6pm Mon-Thu

There’s a sublime simplicity about this chapel of a convent for Capuchine nuns, designed by modernist architect Luis Barragán in 1952. The austere altar, free of the usual iconography, consists only of a

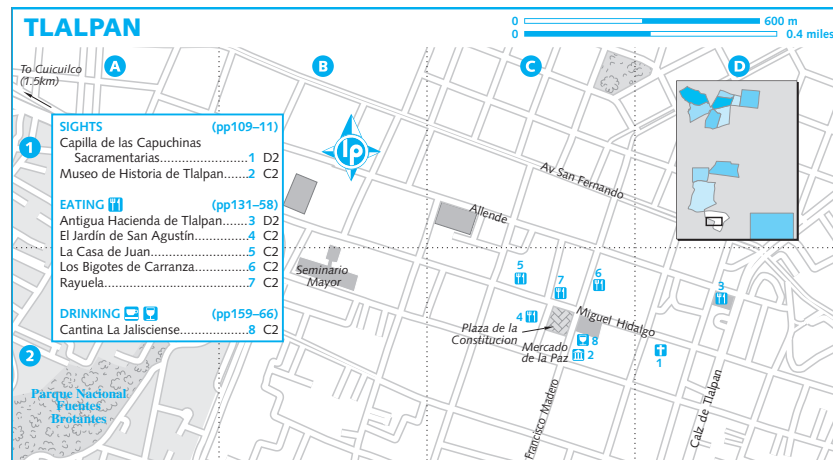
trio of gold panels. Visit in the morning to appreciate how light streams through the stained-glass window by Mathias Goeritz.

TLALPAN PRANCE

Walking Tour

1 Antigua Hacienda de Tlalpan Arriving on the bus from San Ángel (labeled ‘Villa Coapa’), get off at the corner of San Fernando and Calzada de Tlalpan. A block south, past a large fountain, is the entrance to the [Antigua Hacienda de Tlalpan](#) (p155). Follow the white peacocks around the broad lawn that fronts the elegant restaurant and reception hall.

2 Casa Chata At the next corner south (Hidalgo), go right. A magnificently carved



doorway at the next street gives access to the **Casa Chata** (☎ 5655-0158; admission free; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Fri). The 18th-century building houses a social-anthropology research center, with a library and bookstore off the patio.

3 Barragán Chapel About midway down the next block west is the **convent of the Capuchin sisters of the Sacred Heart** (p109), with a chapel designed by renowned Mexican architect Luis Barragán. Ring the bell to get a tour of the beautifully austere interior.

4 San Agustín de las Cuevas Proceeding west on Hidalgo, toward the end of the next block enter the grounds of the **Parroquia de San Agustín de las Cuevas** (☎ 5573-2373; 🕒 6am-6pm) on your left. Dating from the 1600s, the church features an oddly modernist contemporary altar, no doubt owing to Barragán's influence. Exit through the woody atrium which fronts the church.

5 Jardín Principal You exit onto Tlalpan's delightfully compact main plaza, centered on the sort of cute little gazebo that graces so many Mexican towns. Stop for coffee at **Café**

WALK FACTS

- Start** Av San Fernando at Calzada de Tlalpan
- End** Parque Nacional Fuentes Brotantes
- Distance** 2km
- Duration** 3 hours
- Fuel stops** Various restaurants and cafés on Jardín Principal

TRANSPORTATION: TLALPAN

- **Metrobus** – take the Insurgentes metrobus to the end of the line, and catch a pesero to Tlalpan (see below). By the time your read this, the metrobus line may be extended all the way to Tlalpan, making the transfer unnecessary.
- **Bus** – from the metrobus terminus, cross Altamirano and catch a southbound 'Villa Coapa' pesero. Get off at Calle Juárez, and walk three blocks south to Tlalpan's main square.

de La Selva or lunch at any of the restaurants behind the arched *portales* on the plaza's north side.

6 Casa Frissac On the far (west) side of the plaza, go through a formidable arched brick gateway to the **Casa Frissac**. Built by prerevolutionary oligarch Jesús Pliego, the handsome mansion today hosts concerts and art exhibits. A pathway weaves through the hilly grounds; note the tiled minaret on the other side of the far wall.

7 Government buildings At the bottom of the main square, you'll see the **Edificio Delegacional**, the administrative seat of Mexico City's largest borough. Take a moment to study the murals on the building's facade, which illustrate Tlalpan's history. Glyphs around the entryway refer to the indigenous tribes that populated the region.

8 Cocktails and History Across the street (to your left as you're facing the town hall),

pop into the **Cantina La Jalisciense** (p165), a favorite local watering hole, and order a 'bull,' a refreshing vodka cocktail. Next door you'll find the **Museo de Historia de Tlalpan** (p109), with excellent historical exhibits.

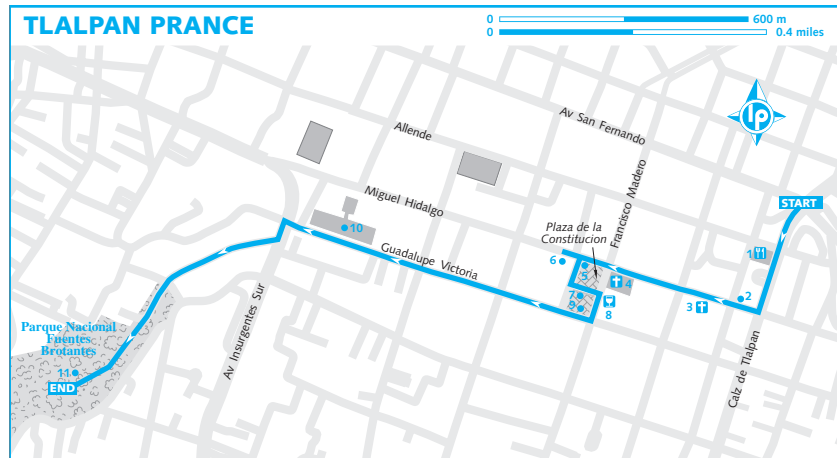
9 Market Across the street from the history museum and directly behind the town hall is the **Mercado de la Paz**, the central market building. Take a wander amid the busy stalls, perhaps stopping to quaff a fresh-squeezed juice or to admire the hills of *moles* being sold.

10 Seminary Exit the market on the south side, then proceed west along Guadalupe Victoria, flanked by attractive buildings. Two

blocks down, past Calle Abasolo, you'll see the imposing **Seminario Mayor** on your right, faced with maroon *tezontle* stone. Swarming with kids in red-and-white uniforms, this parochial school is definitely 'old school.'

11 Spring Time Reaching Av Insurgentes, take the footbridge over the busy thoroughfare. At the bottom, proceed to the next corner and turn right. The street winds uphill, past several food stalls, eventually entering the **Parque Nacional Fuentes Brotantes** (☎ 5424-5981; 🕒 6am-6pm), a national park built around natural springs. At the top of the trail, about 1km southwest of Av Insurgentes, is a large reservoir inhabited by ducks.

TLALPAN PRANCE



XOCHIMILCO & AROUND

Shopping [p130](#); Drinking [p166](#)

Almost at the southern edge of the Distrito Federal, this network of canals flanked by gardens is a vivid reminder of the city's pre-Hispanic legacy. Xochimilco is famous for its *chinampas*, where the indigenous inhabitants grew their food. Remnants of these 'floating gardens' are still in use today, as are the waterways, even if the focus has shifted from agriculture to tourism. Gliding along the canals in a fancifully decorated *trajinera* (gondola) is an alternately tranquil and festive experience that may seduce even the most jaded traveler.

As if that weren't reason enough for an excursion, Xochimilco boasts one of the city's best art museums, the Museo Dolores Olmedo Patiño. There's also a bustling public market and a handful of visitor-friendly *pulquerías* (drinking venues serving *pulque*).

A range of other attractions, including an ecological park, can be found in the surrounding area. To reach the Nativitas and Zacapa *embarcaderos* (boat landings), some 2km southeast of central Xochimilco, board a 'Galeana' pesero southbound on Ramírez del Castillo, a block west of the plaza. This or a 'Tulyehualco' pesero from the same place will take you to the Museo Arqueológico.

See the Directory chapter for locations of information modules in Xochimilco ([p260](#)).

XOCHIMILCO

INFORMATION		DRINKING ☰ ☱ (pp159–66)	
Xochimilco Tourism Module.....1	E4	El Templo de Diana.....8	D3
Xochimilco Tourist Office.....2	D2	La Botijona.....9	D3
SIGHTS (pp112–4)		SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp187–93)	
Mercado de Xochimilco.....3	D3	Pista de Cuernavaca.....10	D1
Museo Dolores Olmedo Patiño.....4	A2	TRANSPORT (pp245–50)	
Parroquia de San Bernardino de Siena.....5	D3	Embarcadero Caltongo.....11	E3
SHOPPING ☰		Embarcadero Fernando Celada.....12	G2
Mercado Annex.....6	D3	Embarcadero Nativitas.....13	F4
Mercado Xochitl Zona.....7	D3	Embarcadero Salitre.....14	E3
		Embarcadero San Cristóbal.....15	D3

MUSEO DOLORES OLMEDO PATIÑO

Map pp112–13

☎ 5555-1221; Av México 5843; admission M\$40, Tue free; 🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Sun

Possibly the most important Diego Rivera collection of all belongs to the Olmedo Patiño museum, ensconced in a peaceful 17th-century hacienda 2km west of central Xochimilco.

Dolores Olmedo Patiño, who resided here until her death in 2002, was a socialite and a patron of Rivera. The museum's 144 Rivera works – including oils, watercolors and lithographs from various periods – are displayed alongside pre-Hispanic figurines and folk art. Another room is reserved for Frida Kahlo's paintings, including an especially anguished self-portrait depicting her spine as a stone column broken in several places. Outside

TRANSPORTATION: XOCHIMILCO

- Metro – take metro Línea 2 to the end of the line, Tasqueña, then continue on the Tren Ligero (light rail, M\$2) to its last stop. Upon exiting the station, turn left (north) and follow Av Morelos to the market, the plaza and the church.
- Bicycle taxi – if you don't feel like walking to the *embarcaderos*, bicycle taxis will shuttle you there for M\$30 to M\$50.

the exhibit halls, you'll see *xoloitzcuintles*, a pre-Hispanic hairless canine breed, roaming the estate's extensive gardens.

To get here take the Tren Ligero (light rail) from metro Tasqueña and get off at La Noria. Leaving the station, turn left at the top of the steps, walk down to the street and continue to the intersection with the footbridge. Here turn a sharp left, almost doubling back on your path, onto Antigua Camino a Xochimilco. The museum is 300m down this street.

CANALS Map pp112–13

Xochimilco (Náhuatl for 'Place where Flowers Grow') was an early target of Aztec hegemony, probably due to its inhabitants' farming skills. The Xochimilcos piled up vegetation and mud in the shallow waters of Lago de Texcoco, to make fertile gardens called *chinampas*, which later became an economic base of the Aztec empire. As the *chinampas* proliferated, much of the lake was transformed into a series of canals. Approximately 180km of these waterways remain today and provide a favorite weekend destination for *defeños*. The *chinampas* are still under cultivation, mainly for garden plants and flowers such as poinsettias and marigolds. Owing to its cultural and historical significance, Xochimilco was designated a Unesco World Heritage Site in 1987.

On weekends a fiesta atmosphere takes over as the waterways become jammed with boats carrying large groups of families and friends. Local vendors and musicians hover alongside the partygoers serving food and drink, playing marimbas and taking photos with old box cameras. (Mid-week, the mood is far more mellow.)

Hundreds of *trajineras* await passengers at the village's nine *embarcaderos*. Nearest

to the center are Salitre and San Cristóbal, both 400m east of the plaza, and Fernando Celada, 400m west on Guadalupe Ramírez. Boats seat 14 to 20 persons; official cruise prices (M\$140 to M\$160 per hour) are posted at the *embarcaderos*. On Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 60-person *lanchas colectivos* (collective boat taxis) run between the Salitre, Caltongo and Nativitas *embarcaderos*, charging M\$20 per passenger round-trip.

Fixed prices for food, drink and even music on the waterways are also posted at the *embarcaderos* – one tune costs M\$25 on marimbas, M\$50 *norteño* (northern) style, and M\$70 by mariachis! You can arrange for your *trajinera* to stop at Nativitas *embarcadero* for some shopping at its large *artesanías* (handicrafts) market.

While it is possible to get a taste of Xochimilco in an hour, it's worth going for longer; you'll see more and get a proper chance to relax.

XOCHIMILCO CENTER Map pp112–13

Though the canals are definitely the main attraction, Xochimilco village should not be overlooked. East of Jardín Juárez stands the 16th-century *Parroquia de San Bernardino de Siena* (🕒 7am–1pm & 4:30–8pm), with an elaborate gold-painted *retablo* (altarpiece) and a large tree-studded atrium. South of the plaza, the bustling *Mercado de Xochimilco* covers two vast buildings: the one nearer the Jardín Juárez has colorful flower displays and an eating annex for tamales and other prepared foods, while the one nearer the train station sells mostly produce and household goods, with a few pottery stalls.

PARQUE ECOLÓGICO DE XOCHIMILCO off Map pp112–13

📞 5673-8061; *Periférico Oriente 1*; adult/senior & child M\$20/5; 🕒 9am–6pm

Despite Xochimilco's Unesco World Heritage status, encroaching urbanization and

illegal settlement along the canals continue to strain this unique habitat. At least one endemic species of the zone, the *axolotl* (a fishlike salamander) is in danger of extinction. Thus in 1991 the Ecological Park of Xochimilco was established, about 3km northeast of downtown Xochimilco, both to recover the fragile ecosystem and to provide a retreat for stressed-out urbanites.

Covering some 2 sq km, the protected area comprises a botanical garden and artificial lakes, home to a variety of waterbirds. Stroll the pleasant pathways, or rent a bicycle or a pedal boat for more extensive exploration. In the park's southeast corner, *chinampas* have been set aside to demonstrate traditional indigenous cultivation techniques. A visitors center has displays on plants and birds.

Trajineras departing from Embarcadero Cuemanco, 2km west of the park entrance, ply this lower-key section of the canals.

To reach Parque Ecológico de Xochimilco, take the Tren Ligero to the Periférico station. Exit on the Xochimilco-bound side, then go through the tunnel that underpasses the Periférico freeway. Emerging from the tunnel, turn right and walk to where you catch a 'Cuemanco' *pesero*; the park entrance is a 10-minute ride.

ISLA DE LAS MUÑECAS

For a truly surreal experience, hire a *trajinera* to the Island of the Dolls. Whatever festive mood you may have set out with will turn to dread approaching this remote spot, where thousands of dolls, many partially decomposed or missing limbs, hang from trees and rafters. The installation was created by recently deceased island resident Don Julián, who fished the playthings from the canals to mollify the spirit of a girl who had drowned nearby. The best departure point for the four-hour round-trip is the Cuemanco landing, near the Parque Ecológico de Xochimilco.

OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS

CUICUILCO

One of the oldest significant remnants of pre-Hispanic settlement within the DF, *Cuicuilco* (Map pp42–3; 📞 5606-9758; *Insurgentes Sur*; admission free; 🕒 9am–5pm) echoes a civilization that stood on the shores of Lago de Xochimilco as far back as 800 BC. In its heyday in the 2nd century BC, the 'place of singing and dancing' counted as many as 40,000 inhabitants and rivaled Teotihuacán in stature. The site was abandoned a couple of centuries later, however, after an eruption of the nearby Xitle volcano covered most of the community in lava.

The principal structure is a four-tiered circular platform, 118m wide and 23m high, faced with volcanic-stone blocks. Atop the building are the remains of an altar, evidence that Cuicuilco was some kind of ceremonial center for an organized, priest-dominated society. (Earlier temples in the Valle de México were thatch-roofed affairs on low earth mounds.)

Set amid a park studded with cacti and shade trees, the platform can be easily scaled for sweeping views of the southern districts, including the formidable Xitle. The site hosts a small museum.

The archaeological site is set just back from the east side of Av Insurgentes, just over 1km south of the southern section of the Ciudad Universitaria.

To get to Cuicuilco, take the Insurgentes metrobus to the end of the line, then cross Altamirano to catch a southbound 'Villa Coapa' *pesero*. You'll see the entrance to the Cuicuilco archaeological park just south of the Periférico freeway.

TLATELOLCO

The northern district of Tlatelolco seems like a nondescript residential area whose most prominent feature is a series of low-income housing blocks. But beneath the surface is evidence of a stormy history.

The excavated remains of a major ceremonial complex attest to the zone's prominence in pre-Hispanic times, when it occupied an island in the lake. Tlatelolco was the site of the iconic clash between Cortés and Cuauhtémoc that forged modern Mexico.

Four and a half centuries later, more blood was spilled as government forces cracked

down on protesters in 1968. This incident is extensively documented in a brand-new museum and cultural center, which also houses a cache of canvasses by some of Mexico's most important artists.

PLAZA DE LAS TRES CULTURAS

Map pp42–3

📞 5583-0295; *cnr Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas & Flores Magón*; admission free; 🕒 8am–5:30pm; 🚏 Trolleybus 'Central Autobuses del Norte'

So named because it symbolizes the fusion of pre-Hispanic and Spanish roots into the Mexican mestizo identity, the *Plaza of the Three Cultures* displays the architectural legacy of three cultural facets: the Aztec pyramids of *Tlatelolco*, the 17th-century Spanish *Templo de Santiago* and, on the south side, the modern tower that now houses the *Centro Cultural Universitario*. A calm oasis north of the city center, the plaza is nonetheless haunted by echoes of its turbulent history.

Recent archaeological finds have altered long-held views about Tlatelolco's history. According to the conventional version, Tlatelolco was founded by an Aztec faction in the 14th century on a separate island in Lago de Texcoco and later conquered by the Aztecs of Tenochtitlán. But a pyramid excavated on the site in late 2007 actually predates the establishment of Tenochtitlán by as much as 200 years. All agree, however, that Tlatelolco was the scene of the largest public market in the Valle de México, connected by causeway to Tenochtitlán's ceremonial center.

During the siege of the Aztec capital by the Spaniards, Cortés defeated Tlatelolco's defenders, led by Cuauhtémoc. An inscription about that battle in the plaza translates: 'This was neither victory nor defeat. It was the sad birth of the mestizo people that is Mexico today.'

Tlatelolco is also a symbol of modern troubles. On October 2, 1968, 300 to 400 student protesters were massacred by government troops on the eve of the Mexico City Olympic Games (see the boxed text, p21). The area subsequently suffered some of the worst damage of the 1985 earthquake when apartment blocks collapsed, killing hundreds.

You can view the remains of Tlatelolco's main pyramid-temple and other Aztec buildings from a walkway around them. Like the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlán, Tlatelolco's main temple was constructed in stages, with each of the seven temples superimposed atop its predecessors. The double pyramid on view, one of the earliest stages, has twin staircases which supposedly ascended to temples dedicated to Tláloc and Huizilopochtli. Numerous calendric glyphs are carved into the outer walls. Recognizing the significance of the site, the Spanish erected the **Templo de Santiago** here in 1609, using stones from the Aztec structures as building materials. Just inside the main (west) doors of this church is the **baptismal font of Juan Diego**, the man to whom Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe appeared in 1531 (see [right](#)).

CENTRO CULTURAL UNIVERSITARIO TLATELOLCO Map pp42–3

☎ 5597-4061; www.tlatelolco.unam.mx; Flores Magón 1; admission M\$20; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun Inaugurated in 2007, the **Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco** occupies the former Foreign Relations Secretariat building (the agency has since moved to the Plaza Juárez complex on the Alameda Central). A component of the UNAM, the cultural center contains two interesting permanent exhibits. The **Colección Andrés Blaisten**, on the first floor, comprises the largest privately owned collection of Mexican 20th-century art, with over 650 paintings, prints and sculptures by both obscure and famed artists such as Rufino Tamayo, María Izquierdo and Juan Soriano. Downstairs, the **Memorial del 68** both chronicles and memorializes the 1968 student massacre at Tlatelolco ([p21](#)). Through film clips, newspaper articles, photos, posters and numerous taped interviews with leading intellectuals (in Spanish), the exhibit evokes the mood of the times and follows the sequence of events leading up to the government-sponsored slaughter of hundreds of student protesters on October 2.

LA VILLA DE GUADALUPE

La Villa de Guadalupe encompasses Mexico's most important shrine, the Basílica de Guadalupe. According to legend, it was here that Mexico's beloved saint, the Virgin of Guadalupe, appeared to the indigenous peasant Juan Diego. It is an annual pilgrimage site for

millions of Mexicans, necessitating an elaborate infrastructure to accommodate them. In addition to the modern big-top basilica, the pilgrimage complex is a veritable theme park of religious architecture, gardens and shrines, surrounded by a warren of vendor stalls with all manner of Guadalupe iconography and snacking options. Easily accessible from the center of town by bus or metro, 'La Villa' should be visited by anyone wanting to tune in to Mexico's spiritual wavelength.

BASÍLICA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE Map pp42–3

☎ 5577 6022; www.virgendeguadalupe.org.mx; Plaza de las Américas 1; ☎ 6am–9pm; **M** La Villa-Basilica

In December 1531, as the story goes, an indigenous Christian convert named Juan Diego stood on Cerro del Tepeyac (Tepeyac Hill), site of an old Aztec shrine, and beheld a beautiful lady dressed in a blue mantle trimmed with gold. She sent him to tell the bishop, Juan de Zumárraga, that he had seen the Virgin Mary, and that she wanted a shrine built in her honor. But the bishop didn't believe him. Returning to the hill, Juan Diego had the vision several more times. After the lady's fourth appearance, her image was miraculously emblazoned on his cloak, causing the church to finally accept his story, and a cult developed around the site.

Over the centuries Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe came to receive credit for all manner of miracles, hugely aiding the acceptance of Catholicism by Mexicans. Despite the protests of some clergy, who saw the cult as a form of idolatry with the Virgin as a Christianized version of the Aztec goddess Tonantzin, in 1737 the Virgin was officially declared the patron of Mexico. Two centuries later she was named celestial patron of Latin America and empress of the Americas, and in 2002 Juan Diego was canonized by Pope John Paul II. Today the Virgin's image is seen throughout the country, and her shrines around the Cerro del Tepeyac are the most revered in Mexico, attracting thousands of pilgrims daily and hundreds of thousands on the days leading up to her feast day, December 12 (see [p13](#)). Some pilgrims travel the last meters to the shrine on their knees.

By the 1970s the old yellow-domed basilica, built around 1700, was swamped by

worshippers, so the new Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe was built next door. Designed by Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, it's a vast, round, open-plan structure with a capacity for over 40,000 people. The image of the Virgin hangs above and behind the main altar, with moving walkways to bring visitors as close as possible.

Stairs behind the Antigua Basílica (Old Basilica) climb about 100m to the hilltop **Capilla del Cerrito** (Hill Chapel), where Juan Diego had his vision, then lead down the east side of the hill to the Parque de la Ofrenda, with gardens and waterfalls around a sculpted scene of the apparition. Continue on down to the baroque **Templo del Pocito**, a circular structure with a trio of tiled cupolas, built in 1787 to commemorate the miraculous appearance of a spring where the Virgin of Guadalupe had stood. From

there the route leads back to the main plaza, re-entering it beside the 17th-century **Capilla de Indios** (Chapel of Indians).

MUSEO DE LA BASÍLICA DE GUADALUPE

☎ 5577-6022; admission M\$5; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; **M** La Villa-Basilica

The rear of the Antigua Basílica is now the basilica museum, with a fine collection of colonial art interpreting the miraculous vision. Various galleries on two floors display mostly large-scale works, including one of a procession along a causeway on Lago de Texcoco, one of the rare depictions of the lake before it was drained. The walls in the entry hall are covered with ex-votos – naive paintings on squares of metal that are done as an act of thanks for some miracle.

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