



# Holiday 2018 to Mexico and Cuba

John Cable, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018.

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# 1. Introduction

Exciting isn't it? In 2018, we are embarking on a whistle-stop two-week holiday to 2 countries bordering on the Caribbean: Mexico and Cuba. These are both countries on my personal bucket-list of places to go to so I am excited to be doing this!

I decided to produce this eBook to both practice what I already knew about creating these things and to make sure I recorded somewhere all of the stuff that I had found out and needed to pass on or remember. Who knows - maybe this can act as a template for future holiday stuff?

This eBook is divided into 3 main sections, namely:

- Stuff to read about and do before we go,
- The trip itself, and
- Coming home at the end

If I think of any other stuff I'll put it into appendices at the end. So, without further ado, let's crack on!

## 2. Before We Go

Well before we start our trip, there are a few things to think about and do. I have split these up as follows:

- Background: why we are going at this time of year, weather, distances etc.
- Health: what we need to do before we go (in terms of inoculations, tablets etc.)
- Travel: what our outbound long-haul flight details are, any considerations about time left on passports etc.
- Money: what the local currencies are, advice from journey planners re use of credit cards etc.

I have also included as an Appendix what I envisage packing for the trip (excluding clothing - I am sure everyone can make up their own minds about clothing!).

### Background

Both Mexico and Cuba have coastline with the Caribbean. The Caribbean area is warm for most of the year (the Gulf Stream kick starts here) so temperatures

are generally pleasant, but it is humid at times. Additionally, this area suffers each year from a period of high hurricane probability, generally from August through to mid-November.

Takling this into account, and taking advice from the major tourist web sites, we are timing our holiday just after the hurricane season finishes and just before temperatures rise. This is also the best time to visit as it precedes the major tourist season from late December through April. We fly out of the UK on **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November** and return on **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December**.

While we are away we will cover quite large distances as we travel around (and between) Mexico and Cuba, both by air and by road. The table below gives you some idea of the distances involved.

## Health

## Travel

Mexico and Cuba are in different time zones:

- Mexico - GMT -6 hours
- Cuba - GMT -5 hours

We are travelling significant distance during this holiday, both by air and by road. The table below shows the main travelling and what the distances involved are for each major trip. *(if I have time I'll put in a summary table showing comparative holiday travelling for other long-haul holidays as well)*

Air Journey	Distance (miles)
London to Oaxaca via Mexico City	5819
Oaxaca to Merida via Mexico City	1101
Chichen Itza to Havana via Cancun	440
Havana to Mexico City	1108
Mexico City to London	5532
TOTAL air miles	14000

And also scheduled journeys by road - excluding airport transfers and any we do ourselves:

Road Journey	Distance (miles)
Oaxaca to Monte Alban and Hierve el Agua	98 (circular)
Merida to Chichen Itza	74
Chichen Itza Mayan tour with cenotes	98 (circular)
Chichen Itza to Cancun Airport	126
Havana to Trinidad and return	392
Teotihuacan pyramids and Guadalupe shrine	70 (circular)
Puebla, Tonantzintla and Cholula	182 (circular)
TOTAL air miles	1040

## Money

Both Mexico and Cuba have the peso as their unit of currency but they are separate currencies with separate exchange rates, similar to US and Canadian dollars in that respect.

Mexico has a more developed ATM and credit-card

capability. Not sure how useful the FairFX card will be  
- need to check with them. You are recommended to  
let your bank know that you will be using your card(s)  
in these countries before you leave

Current exchange rates (as at Friday 17 August) are:

- Mexican Peso: 24.28 pesos per UK £
- Cuban peso: 1.27 pesos per UK £

## 3. The Trip

Each day of the trip is listed in its own mini-section below. Where I know these details, I've tried to include times for any travelling we do on the day and the main sights we are seeing. The itinerary has been developed in conjunction with Journey Latin America and the contact details for them are included at the end of the book.

The long-haul travel days are also mentioned in the [Before We Go](#) and [Coming Home](#) sections of this book.

### **Day 1 Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November UK to Oaxaca**

Our flight from London Heathrow is AeroMexico flight number XXXXXX which departs at 2340 from London HeathRow. Check-in must be done by 2140. Each person can have one suitcase (for placing in the hold - maximum 23kg) and one carry-on bag / backpack - normal for long-haul flights.

### **Day 2 Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November Oaxaca**

We arrive in Mexico City airport at about 0420 in the morning and have to catch an internal flight to Oaxaca



at 0605 (our bags transfer automatically, I think). We then arrive in Oaxaca airport at about 0720 and will be able to check-in to our hotel on arrival.

**Half-day excursion to Monte Alban and Hierve el Agua**

### **Day 3 Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November Oaxaca**

**Half-day Oaxacan street food and Mezcal tasting**  
Morning excursion - pick-up from the hotel at 0900.  
Food included.

### **Day 4 Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November Oaxaca to Merida**

Hotel Boutique Casa Lucia in Merida.

Arrive at Merida airport at approx. 1328. Afternoon at leisure after hotel check-in.

### **Day 5 Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November Merida**

Merida city tour

Two to three hour excursion (*No start time specified*)

## **Day 6 Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November Merida to Chichen Itza**

Two and a half hour drive to Chichen Itza, arriving around 11am (so leave hotel at about 0830). Private air-conditioned vehicle - lunch included during or before the half-day excursion to Chichen Itza ruins.

## **Day 7 Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November Chichen Itza**

Ek-Balam & Valladolid with Ik Kil & Samula cenotes. Full day private excursion.

## **Day 8 Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November Chichen Itza to Havana**

Private transfer to Cancun airport leaving at about 0800. Flight from Cancun at 1354 to Havana, arriving at 1512. Transfer to Hotel Inglaterra for 3 nights.

## **Day 9 Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December Havana**

Half-day walking tour of Old Havana - prepare to start early! Most cafes and coffeehouses are in the Old Town so smile!

Afternoon shared excursion to the Rum Museum - this is a one hour tour we will share with other holidaymakers. Various start times in the day.

## **Day 10 Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December Havana**

Day at leisure so maybe do the Cuban SArt Gallery and Christopher Columbus (Colon) cemetery and the taxi to the Hemingway Museum?

**Day 11 Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December Oaxaca**

**Day 12 Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December Oaxaca**

**Day 13 Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December Mexico  
City**

**Day 14 Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December Mexico  
City**

**Day 15 Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December Puebla**

**Day 16 Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December Mexico  
City**

Our flight today from Mexico City is AeroMexico flight number XXXXXX which departs at 2340. Check-in must be done by 2140. As for the outbound long-haul flight, each person can have one suitcase (for placing in the hold - maximum 23kg) and one carry-on bag / backpack - normal for long-haul flights.

We have a late checkout from our hotel today so we retain the use of the room up until tea time - good news for freshening up for the long journey home! We

will be picked up from the hotel by our airport transfer at any time between 7.30 and 8.00 pm

## **Day 17 Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December UK**

We arrive back in the UK at London HeathRow at approx. 3.50pm.

## 4. Coming Home

## 5. Appendix 1 Personal Packing Checklist

For what it's worth, my personal holiday essentials list is included below. Adapt for your own needs, of course!

### Holiday Essentials

#### Passport Details

Name on Passport	Passport No.	Expiry Date
John Brinley Cable	534663386	1 May 2026
Lesley Anne Cable	464103862	19 June 2019
Sophie Vinetta Cable	465469170	22 August 2020
Emily Beatrice Cable	527280869	6 September 2025

## Preparation

- Clear out
- Charge up camera batteries
- Charge up juice-block
- Unload current camera memory cards
- Download any programmes to watch to iPad
- Sort out device charging leads - iPhone, iPad, FitBit, juice block
- USB charging plug
- Multi-way charging block
  - Sunglasses and spare pair of ordinary glasses
  - Cap (optional)
- Sort out documents: passport, travel documents, immunisation certificates
- Travel adapter
- Check and buy if necessary:
  - travel sickness tablets
  - insect repellent
  - travel-size toiletries

## Packing

- Put USB and charging leads in protective Tupperware
- Put charging block in base of case
- Tablets for the trip - hip etc.



- Backpack:
  - throw-away fiction book
  - iPad + headphones
  - Travel sickness tablets
  - Small pack tissues / cleansing wipes
- Pack into carrier bags:
- Underwear
- Socks - incl. sports socks
- Swim stuff\*
- Shirts + trousers / shorts
- Shoes + sandals ( + flip-flops\* )
- Pyjamas - in outside case pocket.
- Pack toiletry bag:
  - Razor + blades
  - Shaving foam
  - Toothbrush head?
  - Spray\*\*
  - After bite + Savlon
  - Headache tablets
  - Hairbrush

Don't forget to weigh case - safe maximum is 20KG.

Camera (in backpack) is hand luggage

Note for neighbours

N.B.

\* optional - depends on the holiday

\*\*\* may purchase in Duty Free at airport

\*? may be packed with family toiletry bag

## **6. Appendix 2 Contact Details for Journey Latin America**