



# LUXURY IN MEXICO CITY

Mexico City is at once ancient and au courant, gossamer silk and hammered silver, grand performances and small gestures of extravagance.

By Susan H. Burnell

Mexico's capital combines simple pleasures and monumental experiences with style. The eighth-richest metropolitan area in the world, Mexico City continues to grow in stature as a destination of choice for the discerning world traveler.

## Style, Silver and Gold

**Masaryk Avenue** is a magnet for the mega-sophisticated, offering an array of boutiques, jewelers and fine restaurants akin to those on Fifth Avenue and Rodeo Drive, with added *energía* and a vibe all its own.

The names you'd expect are here—Armani, Bulgari and Cartier, for example—and so are designers with truly Mexican origins. Picture yourself wrapped in one of the exotic designs of **Cristina Pineda and Ricardo Covalín**. Inspired by Mexico's rich culture and history, the duo interpret pre-Hispanic culture, Mexican traditions, Mexican history and nature themes into wearable art. Visit the Pineda Covalín mother lode in Mexico City for bold and exuberant silk ties, scarves, handbags and other accessories.

## Mexico City welcomes visitors with hotel accommodations and amenities for every taste.

For an above-and-beyond retail adventure, the **St. Regis Mexico City** offers a luxury Masaryk Avenue shopping excursion with private viewings and personal shopping arranged for you, concluding with a private dinner back at the hotel. Or schedule a trip to the city during Mercedes-Benz-sponsored Fashion Weeks for glimpses of next season's dazzling collections. To discover the work of an up-and-coming Mexican designer, make an appointment to visit **Mike Salas'** showroom.

Hammered, engraved and linked into gleaming wonders, Mexico's natural resources of silver and gold have been coveted for centuries. At **Tane**, aficionados of luxury and quality will find the ultimate in silver- and gold-smithing. Honoring the traditions of the craft and Mexico's historic link to the precious metals, Tane produces original fine jewelry, handbags, and traditional and modern sculpture with fanciful flair. Tane has a presence on Masaryk and Palacio de Hierro Durango in the district.

### Reasons to Stay and Savor

Mexico City welcomes visitors with hotel accommodations and amenities for every taste.

The **St. Regis** hotel brand, born in the Gilded Age, is translated elegantly throughout its 31-story tower overlooking the Paseo de la Reforma district property. Indulge your senses with a whiskey-and-chocolate pairing in the privacy of your Grand Deluxe room, topped with a revitalizing chocolate spa treatment. Or mix literature and cuisine by allowing the St. Regis to introduce you to one of Spanish literature's most renowned authors over dinner or tea.

Below: Lobby of the Presidente InterContinental México  
Inset: Habita rooftop bar and terrace



PINEDA COVALIN

Above: One of the exotic designs by Cristina Pineda and Ricardo Covalin

Left: A Tane bracelet, *Akbal*, designed by Lucila de la Lama

**Las Alcobas** is located in Polanco, at the heart of Mexico City's business district and Masaryk. This boutique hotel offers serene surroundings and signature services for frequent business travelers, including wardrobe storage between stays. Elite locals gather at **Dulce Patria**, the hotel's Mexican restaurant, for the authentic flavors presented by chef Marta Ortiz. Las Alcobas' **Anatol** features chef Justin Ermini, known for his epicurean mastery, thoughtful sourcing of fresh local ingredients and seasonal menus.

To experience the pulse of downtown—past and present—choose the **Gran Hotel de la Ciudad de México**. The five-star architectural jewel is within a short walk of the Zócalo, National Palace, Mexico City Cathedral and Palacio de Bellas Artes. Take in the panoramic view from the hotel's **Terraza Restaurante and Bar** as you enjoy a memorable weekend brunch. A \$25 million restoration in 2005 retained the hotel's breathtaking Art Nouveau interior.



Described as "a glass box floating over clouds," **Habita** offers a sanctuary for relaxation in the midst of the Polanco district.

Carlos Couturier and Moises Micha reimagined and completely renovated the 1950s structure, enveloping the hotel in a façade of frosted glass. Sleek and contemporary, Habita has a rooftop bar and terrace with nightly entertainment. Its **Aqua Spa** features a rooftop lap pool, a sauna and a menu of individual treatments.

## Fresh Renditions of Culinary Tradition

Mexico City's leading chefs continually bring gastronomic treasures to the table, with great emphasis on locally sourced fresh ingredients.

Chef Jorge Vallejo at **Quintonil** introduces modern flavor combinations to the diner's palate, starting with traditional favorites from the region. On a recent menu, the flavor of habanero peppers accented smoked crab on toast, while a reduction of pulque, an indigenous Mexican brew, partnered an entrée of Misuji beef. The restaurant also offers a good selection of mezcal and fine Mexican wine. Worth seeking out, Quintonil is a small gem tucked away on a quiet street in Mexico City's Polanco district. It's an excellent example of contemporary Mexican cuisine.

Bold and surprising renditions of regional dishes get top billing at the two upscale **Paxia** restaurants in Mexico City. Innovative and playful young chef Daniel Ovadia seeks to elevate the country's cuisine to world status, and his restaurant's accolades demonstrate his success. In addition to boasting a string of Star Diamond Awards from the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences, Paxia has been named one of the Top 10 restaurants in Mexico by Britain's *Monocle* magazine. The original Paxia is located in San Ángel, with a second location in the business district of Santa Fe.

**Los Danzantes**, located in the heart of the Coyoacán district, promises to stimulate guests' five senses with culinary specialties of Mexico. Adventurous diners request tacos filled with crunchy, chili-crustad chapulines (grasshoppers), while seafood enthusiasts may favor the shrimp with adobo of mezcal and a garnish of pineapple and roasted zucchini. Like some of its restaurant group counterparts, the Los Danzantes group also operates a distillery, producing handcrafted artisan mezcal using traditional methods.

## Aztecs, Arts and Tiffany Treasures

Mexico City offers glimpses of the luxuries of ancient civilization, along with objects that provide new insights into the pre-Hispanic Aztec people. Beneath the Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral, archaeologists

have discovered the Templo Mayor—a central point for the Aztecs. Archaeologists continue to unearth artifacts and structures at the site. Among the relics housed at the Templo Mayor Museum are figurines, masks, skulls, obsidian knives and a giant sculpture of the goddess of the moon.

A feast for the senses, the **Palacio de Bellas Artes** is home to the **Ballet Folklórico de México** and two museums. Temporary exhibits rotate at the **Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes** (Bellas Artes Palace Museum); while classics of Mexican architecture are chronicled within the **Museo Nacional de Arquitectura** (National Architecture Museum) on the building's top floor.

The grand domed palace also hosts exhibitions and theatrical performances. Its spectacular theater stage curtain was designed by Mexican artist Dr. Atl—also known as Gerardo Murillo—and built by Tiffany of New York. The folding panel is a Valley of Mexico landscape with its Popocatepetl and Iztacchihuatl volcanoes. Among the great Mexican artists whose work adorns epic murals on the palace's interior walls are José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo.

The **Museo de Arte Popular** (Folk Art Museum) in the Centro Histórico presents regularly updated displays and exhibitions, and its museum gift shop offers high-quality folk art pieces for sale. Plan a trip on a Sunday, when admission is free.

Many Tamayo pieces, along with a sizable collection of modern art, are housed in the nine exhibition rooms of the **Museo Tamayo**, not far from the **Museo de Arte Moderno**. The **Casa Azul** in Coyoacán is a must-see for fans of Frida Kahlo.

Art galleries dot the Roma district. Satisfy your passion for creative expression here—whether that's traditional, modern, surreal or intriguing new works by yet-to-be-discovered artists.

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Museo Nacional de Antropología (National Museum of Anthropology)

Museo Soumaya

