



**CDMX**  
CIUDAD DE MÉXICO



**January 11-16, 2026**

**Discover Mexico City with Ohr Shalom: A Journey of Culture, History, and Heart**

“A Tale of Two Histories: México City and Its Jewish Community”

### **The Myth of Chicomoztoc and the Origins of México City**

The myth of Chicomoztoc is a foundational legend in the cosmology and origin stories of several Nahuatl-speaking peoples of central México, especially the Mechica (Aztecs). Chicomoztoc (pronounced CHEE-KOH-MOZ-TOK) means "Place of the Seven Caves" in Nahuatl: CHICOME = seven OZTOTL = cave -c = locative suffix, meaning "place of."

According to the legend, seven original tribes—often associated with Nahua peoples—emerged from this sacred place. Each tribe inhabited one of the caves and eventually migrated south, founding influential cities and civilizations such as Tula, Texcoco, and, ultimately, Tenochtitlán. The seven tribes traditionally linked to Chicomoztoc include Mechica (Aztecs), Acolhua, Tepaneca, Tlaxcalteca, Huexotzinca, Chalca, and Xochimilca.

The emergence of these groups from the caves symbolizes the birth of civilization in central México. Their migrations led to the establishment of major city-states throughout the Valley of México. The legend culminates with the Mechica, the last tribe to leave Chicomoztoc, arriving at Lake Texcoco. There, they witnessed a prophesied sign from their god Huitzilopochtli: An eagle perched on a cactus, devouring a serpent.

This vision marked the site where they would find their capital, Tenochtitlán, on an island in the lake. This iconic symbol remains a part of the Mexican flag today.

## From Tenochtitlan to México City

México City, the sprawling capital of México, sits atop the ruins of Tenochtitlán, one of the greatest cities of the pre-Columbian Americas. Founded in 1325 by the Mechica, Tenochtitlán was a marvel of engineering and urban planning, featuring raised causeways, canals, and chinampas (floating gardens). In 1521, Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés conquered the city, bringing an end to the Aztec Empire. The Spanish razed much of Tenochtitlán and built their new capital, México City, atop its foundations—making it the capital of the Viceroyalty of New Spain.

For more than 300 years, México City was the political and cultural heart of Spanish colonial rule in the Americas. In 1821, México gained independence, and the city became the capital of the new republic. Since then, México City has evolved into one of the largest and most dynamic cities in the world, celebrated for its deep historical layers, Colonial and modern architecture, and thriving culinary and arts scenes.

Today, the city is home to over 150 museums, encompassing a wide range of topics, from pre-Hispanic archaeology to contemporary art, folk traditions, design, and unique niche collections. Fun Fact: México City has more museums than Paris—making it one of the world's top cultural capitals.

## Jewish Presence in Colonial México

The Jewish presence in México dates back to the **16th century**, during the early years of Spanish colonization. Many **Conversos** (Jews forcibly converted to Christianity) came to the New World to escape the Spanish Inquisition. However, the **Mexican Inquisition**, which lasted until 1820, actively persecuted Crypto-Jews (those who secretly maintained Jewish practices). The Inquisition forced early Jewish settlers to hide their faith, and many aspects of their identity were lost or obscured over generations.

## **Modern Jewish Immigration**

A true revival of Jewish life in México began in the **late 19th and early 20th centuries** with the arrival of new immigrants:

- **Ashkenazi Jews** from Eastern Europe fled pogroms and economic hardship.
- **Sephardic Jews** from the former Ottoman Empire, particularly **Turkey, Syria, and the Balkans**, sought economic opportunity and political stability.
- In the 1930s and 1940s, Jews fleeing **Nazi persecution** in Europe found refuge in México.

Most of these immigrants settled in **México City**, which became the center of Jewish life in the country. They established **synagogues, schools, youth organizations, and businesses**, contributing to the city's economic and cultural vitality.

## A Jewish Community Flourishing in Modern México City

Today, the Jewish Community in México City is one of the most vibrant in Latin America, comprising approximately **40,000 people in a city of over 22 million residents**. Most live in neighborhoods such as **Polanco, Bosques de las Lomas, and Tecamachalco**. The Community is well-organized and diverse, with institutions supporting a range of religious practices:

- **Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform synagogues**
- **Jewish day schools and community centers**

- The **Centro Deportivo Israelita (CDI)**, a major cultural and sports complex
- The **Museo de Memoria y Tolerancia**, which educates about the Holocaust and human rights

Despite being a small minority in a predominantly Catholic country, Jewish Mexicas have made significant contributions to national life in various fields, including **business, medicine, law, academia, and the arts.**

### **A Community Rooted in Two Worlds**

The Jewish Community of México City stands as a testament to resilience and adaptation. With roots reaching back to ancient Spain and the Middle East and branches firmly planted in the soil of México, Jewish Mexican are a unique blend of heritage and modernity. As México City continues to evolve, so too does its Jewish Community, preserving its traditions while embracing its identity as both proudly **Jewish** and proudly **Mexican.**

At the beginning of the 20th century, Jewish families arrived in México seeking a better future. It was mainly attracted by the open-door policy of President Porfirio Díaz, who sought to encourage foreign immigration to the country.

The reasons for these migrations were many and varied. Some were escaping persecution, while others left their countries in search of better economic opportunities. Some families came to México hoping to obtain visas to enter the United States later, but finding themselves well received by relatives and friends already there, they decided to stay.

In June 1912, Jews in México decided to form a mutual aid group to improve their living conditions. Thus was born the Monte Sinai Alliance Benevolent Society, which would provide shelter to all Jewish families residing in México.

The problems that needed to be addressed were numerous and varied, but the primary focus was on assisting the new immigrants who were arriving. They were provided, as appropriate, with a place to live, opportunities to work, and legal support to regularize their stay in the country, among other things.

The Monte Sinai Alliance, initially comprising only fifty families, was the first Jewish group in the Mexican Republic. Together, they made possible the purchase of land on the Mexico-Tacuba Causeway in 1914 for a cemetery, one of the Community's most pressing needs. To cover the cost of the land, it was decided to charge a monthly fee of twenty-five cents per family.

In 1918, the Community acquired a house at 83 Justo Sierra Street, where a beautiful temple was built, which also served as the Society's headquarters. The temple still exists and continues to operate. Having a synagogue and a meeting place helped keep families united.

That year, the Monte Sinai Alliance Charitable Society received legal status from the Venustiano Carranza government. Over time, the institution grew richer with the arrival of Jews from all over the world. Eventually, the Community fragmented due to cultural differences between different social sectors, particularly between Ashkenazi Jews and Sephardic Jews . Thus, the various Jewish institutions that exist today in México were formed: the Magen David Community (representing Jews from Aleppo, Syria), the Sephardic Community (representing Turkish and Greek Jews), and the Ashkenazi Kehillah. Later, the Beth Israel Community Center (which initially brought together American Jewish families living in México) and

the Bet-El Community emerged. The Monte Sinai Alliance remained the Community representing Jewish families from Damascus, Syria, and Lebanon.

Throughout the 20th century, the Jewish Community as a whole grew, creating numerous organizations to address the social, cultural, religious, humanitarian, and professional needs of its members. In 2012, Alianza Monte Sinai, along with the entire Jewish Community of México, celebrated 100 years of institutional Jewish life in México.

Over the course of five days, we will immerse ourselves in a city that is both majestic and complex, imposing yet delicate. This place has been shaped by nationalism and prejudice, marked by the Spanish legacy and the knowledge of the marginalized Aztecs. México's divisions are evident in the various shades of skin tones, as well as in its deep-rooted faith and intellectual vibrancy. Its colorful history reflects a blend of cultural brilliance and periods of governmental oppression. And yet, México City embraces all who choose to embrace it. This is why the **Jewish Community** has not only endured but flourished, leaving a profound and lasting mark on the fabric of Mexico's history.

### **Proposed Itinerary:**

#### **Day 1**

#### **Travel Day (Sunday)**

Our group will meet at CBX and together will travel to México City

Upon arrival at the CDMX Airport, we will be greeted by a transportation company, and our group will be transferred to the host Hotel via private transportation.

Registration and hotel check-in at the Presidente Intercontinental, located in Polanco.

#### **Welcome Dinner**

---

#### **Day 2 –**

#### **Mexico City Jewish Heritage & Culture Itinerary**

**Morning:** Breakfast at the host hotel

- **City Center Tour (3 hours)**

Begin at Santo Domingo Square, site of the 1571 Inquisition. Journey through the downtown district where Jewish immigrants settled over a century ago. Visit:

- Two historic synagogues: a **Sephardi synagogue (1923)** and an **Ashkenazi synagogue (1941)** (*external visit only due to October 7 security*)
- Former sites of the kosher butcher, house of study, public school, rabbi's residence, and immigrant-run businesses like tailor shops and groceries
- "Vecindades" – traditional communal housing shared by immigrant families of various backgrounds
- The first Yiddish school and a market decorated with murals by **Diego Rivera's students**, including a theater once used for Yiddish plays in the 1930s

- o End the tour at the beautifully restored **Historic Justo Sierra Synagogue (Nidjei Israel)**
  - **Lunch:** *El Cardenal* – renowned for traditional Mexican cuisine
  - **Afternoon Visit:** *Museo Memoria y Tolerancia* (Museum of Memory and Tolerance)  
Explore this powerful Holocaust and human rights museum, dedicated to teaching tolerance through the history of genocides, including the Holocaust, Rwanda, Guatemala, and others.
  - **Walk by Bellas Artes, Cathedral and Palacio Nacional**
  - **Evening:** Dinner
- 

### Day 3

#### The Syrian Jewish Community in La Roma

- **Morning:** Breakfast at the hotel
  - **Polanco & La Roma Tour (2.5–3 hours)**  
Discover the story of **Syrian Jewish families** who moved from the Historic Center to La Roma in the early 1930s. Explore:
    - o Tree-lined French-style streets where families from **Aleppo and Damascus** settled
    - o The first **Mount Sinai Zionist school**, a bakery, a café, a community park
    - o Two synagogues including the historic **Rodfe Sedek (1931)**
    - o Visit the **Centro de Documentación e Investigación Judío de México (CDIJUM)** — home to a rich archive and modern facilities designed by Ezra and Alan Cherem
  - **Lunch:** In the La Roma neighborhood
  - **Evening:** Evening visit **Museo Nacional de Antropología**, Mexico's most visited museum and home to the famed Aztec Calendar and Xochipilli statue
  - **Evening:** Dinner
- 

### Day 4

#### Xochimilco, Coyoacán, Frida Kahlo, and Jewish Connections

- **Sunrise:** Visit to Xochimilco canals 6:00-9:30 AM

**10:00 AM:** *Museo Frida Kahlo (La Casa Azul)*

#### The Frida Kahlo Museum

The group will travel to one of the most famous homes in CDMX La Casa Azul, The Frida Kahlo Museum (Spanish: Museo Frida Kahlo), also known as the Blue House (La Casa Azul) for the structure's cobalt-blue walls, is a historic house museum and art museum dedicated to the life and work of Mechica artist Frida Kahlo. It is in the Colonia del Carmen neighborhood of Coyoacán in México City. The building was Kahlo's birthplace, the home where she grew up, lived with her husband, Diego Rivera, for a number of years, and where she later died in a room on the upper floor. In 1957, Rivera donated the home and its contents to turn it into a museum in Kahlo's honor.

The museum contains a collection of artwork by Kahlo, Rivera, and other artists, along with the couple's Mechica folk art, pre-Hispanic artifacts, photographs, memorabilia, and personal items. The collection is displayed in the rooms of the house that remain much as it was in the 1950s.

While Frida Kahlo's father had German Jewish ancestry, she was not Jewish in a religious sense. Her mother was Catholic of Spanish and Indian descent. Kahlo's father, Guillermo Kahlo, was of Hungarian-German descent and had Jewish roots. Although Kahlo identified with her Jewish heritage and spoke out against antisemitism, she was not raised Jewish or practiced any Jewish traditions.

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera were a married couple who were both prominent Mechica artists during the 20th century. Frida Kahlo was renowned for her captivating and sometimes disturbing self-portraits, while Diego Rivera was celebrated for his large-scale murals, which often depicted Mechica history and political

- **Shopping:** At the colorful **Coyoacán Market**
- **Lunch:** In Coyoacán
- **Afternoon:** Return to hotel to rest
- **Evening Visit:** *Museo Tamayo* – featuring modern art collections
- **Evening:** Dinner

---

## Day 5

### Ancient Mexico – Teotihuacán

#### Travel to Teotihuacán

**Teotihuacan** pronunciation: [teotiwa'kan]; modern Nahuatl pronunciation) It is an ancient Mesoamerican city located in a sub-valley of the Valley of México, which is located in the State of México, 40 kilometers (25 mi) northeast of modern-day México City. Teotihuacan is known today as the site of many of the most architecturally significant Mesoamerican pyramids built in the pre-Columbian Americas, namely the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon. Although close to México City, Teotihuacan was not a Mesoamerican city, and it predates the Aztec Empire by many centuries. At its zenith, perhaps in the first half of the first millennium (1 CE to 500 CE), Teotihuacan was the largest city in the Americas, with a population of at least 25,000, but has been estimated at 125,000 or more, making it at least the sixth-largest city in the world during its epoch.

The name TEŌTĪHUACĀN was given by the Nahuatl-speaking Aztecs centuries after the fall of the city around 550 CE. The term has been glossed as "birthplace of the gods", or "place where gods were born," reflecting Nahua creation myths that were said to occur in Teotihuacan. Nahuatl scholar Thelma D. Sullivan interprets the name as the "place of those who have the road of the gods." This is because the Aztecs believed that the gods created the universe at that site.

The original name of the city is unknown, but it appears in hieroglyphic texts from the Maya region as PUH, or "Place of Reeds." This suggests that, in the Maya civilization of the Classic period, Teotihuacan was understood as a Place of Reeds similar to other Postclassic Central Mechica settlements that took the name of *Tollan*, such as *Tula-Hidalgo* and *Cholula*.

We will enjoy a private tour, where you can take in the view, or if you're brave, ascend the Pyramid of the Moon and/or the Sun.

- **Morning:** Excursion to **Teotihuacán**, the “City of the Gods”
    - Explore the **Pyramid of the Sun** and **Pyramid of the Moon**
    - Learn about this once-massive urban center, predating the Aztecs by centuries
    - Discover Nahuatl mythology that calls Teotihuacán the “birthplace of the gods”
  - **Lunch:** Restaurant
  - **Afternoon:** Return to the hotel for rest
  - **Farewell Dinner:**
- 

**Day 6:**

**Travel day or option to stay Friday and Saturday** (additional fees will apply).

**Rates for the trip are as follows:**

**Single Occupancy:** \$3,700.00

**Double Occupancy:** \$2,900.00 per person

Included in your trip package will be:

- Airfare through CBX-Tijuana Airport to Mexico City and from Mexico City back to CBX-Tijuana Airport
- Airport transfers for seamless travel from arrival to departure
- 5 nights of hotel accommodations in Mexico City at Hotel Presidente Intercontinental [www.presidenteicmexico.com](http://www.presidenteicmexico.com)
- All land transportation to ensure smooth transfers throughout the journey
- Medical insurance for your peace of mind while traveling
- All activities and education that offer an in-depth exploration
- Delicious meals
- We have a few surprises and gifts along the way to make this experience even more memorable!

Due to the financial commitment required by the hotels, transportation, and to book the best airfares available, we must confirm participation as soon as possible.

Cancellations will be accepted with the following refund policy (based on January 11<sup>th</sup> dates)

From the time of Registration:

- Cancellations until **September 18, 2025:** **100% refund** (minus credit card fees)
- Cancellations until **October 16, 2025:** **75% refund** (minus credit card fees)
- Cancellations until **November 13, 2025:** **50% refund** (minus credit card fees)
- Cancellations after **December 2, 2025:** **0% refund** (minus credit card fees)