



## Phoenix Wisdom

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### General Information

**Fitness information/Health/Physical handicaps:** Mexico City and Teotihuacan (Teo) are at altitudes above 7,000 feet. While most people are not subject to altitude sickness there, it may take a day or so to acclimate to the higher altitude. Although temperatures are moderate year-round, the sun can be very intense. We strongly recommend that you use sun block liberally and drink plenty of water while there. Considerable walking and stair climbing should be expected on this trip. We will provide transportation to the grounds at Teotihuacan if you cannot walk there. In Mexico there are few (if any) accommodations made for handicapped access – low door thresholds, ramps, and elevators are rare except in large cities.

**Meals/Food/Water.** Breakfasts and dinners are included in your trip fee. Dinner is generally served in the late afternoon so we suggest you bring some snacks such as trail mix, candy, or power bars in case you get hungry between meals. While the cuisine is expected to be “Mexican,” you will find it very similar to what we have here in the US – not particularly spicy (unless you want it that way!). Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions or concerns.

Stories abound about intestinal upsets in Mexico. In our experience, these tend to relate more to over-indulgence and over-exertion than bad food. We believe the food served at The Dreaming House is healthy and nutritious. Fruit and vegetables prepared there should be fine to eat. Restaurants in the area generally serve safe food (we’ve had many great meals around Teo). Bottled water and beverages may be regarded as safe. Packaged candy, cookies, snacks, ice cream, etc., are also safe.

You will be provided a reasonable amount of bottled water during the trip. While the local tap water is treated, our intestinal tracts are unused to typical Mexican organisms (note that Mexican visitors sometimes get sick when they drink US tap water). You should use bottled water for brushing your teeth and avoid swallowing significant amounts of water in the shower. Ice at The Dreaming House is as safe as that in the US. In general, be cautious, but don’t spoil your trip by over-obsessing about food and drink.

**Baggage/Packing:** We strongly advise that you pack adequately but lightly and limit baggage to an amount you can handle on your own. The accommodations we expect to use do not have elevators. Consider bringing a collapsible bag in case your luggage “grows” while in Mexico.

**Clothing/Special items:** We never exactly know how the weather will be at Teo, so it’s a good idea to bring diverse types of clothing. Days can be mild to quite warm in the sun; night temperatures are usually cool to chilly. Dressing in layers is a good idea and light raingear could come in handy as September is toward the end of Teo’s rainy season and afternoon showers are possible.

Jeans and t-shirts are appropriate for the grounds; shorts work but we’ve found the grounds can be rocky and dusty. Light shoulder wraps or long-sleeve shirts are good whether temperatures are warm or cool. Comfortable shoes are a must – don’t bring shoes that aren’t completely broken in. Flip-flops can be worn, but you better be an expert at navigating in them. Hiking boots are unnecessary. Evenings are often cool, so long sleeve shirts and/or a sweater or sweatshirt is a good idea. Fancy dress isn’t necessary, though a nice casual shirt or dress is a good choice for evening relaxation – comfort is key!

*Hats are absolutely indispensable on the grounds at Teotihuacan. If you don’t believe that, you can always purchase an inexpensive straw hat after your first sunburn. An umbrella can be helpful, too.*

Some other items to consider are sunglasses, cane or walking stick (if needed), camera (common types of film and batteries are available locally), snacks and chewing gum, backpack or fanny pack, waterless hand cleaner, tissues, moleskin (for blisters), Benedryl cream for itches and insect bites, a miniature flashlight, toothbrush/toothpaste, favorite pillow, pictures of your sweetie or pet.

**Medications:** Do not expect to purchase prescription drugs in Mexico without a prescription from a Mexican doctor; common over-the-counter items like Pepto Bismol, Motrin, Tylenol, etc., are easy to find. If you are on any medications, be sure to bring enough for the entire trip and put them in your carryon luggage so they arrive with you. Drugs in prescription bottles usually aren't questioned.

**Funds:** Theoretically, you can attend this trip without spending a penny from the time your plane takes off for Mexico City until the time you touch back down at home. However, there will be many opportunities to sample local food and drink and to purchase souvenirs and handcrafted items. We recommend that you change your US money into pesos at the airport – we will be happy to assist you with this after you are through Immigration. Prices in Mexico are generally shown in pesos (\$). A rule of thumb is that \$10 in pesos equals US\$1 (10 pesos to the dollar). Thus a \$250 meal really costs US\$25. If you're in doubt, just ask. Although not required, we recommend that you budget US\$3-5 per day for tips to be left for the staff of The Dreaming House. Customary tips are 10% – please avoid over-tipping.

Be advised that we are not bankers and will not have funds to loan you. If you find yourself short of funds, you may be able to visit an ATM in a local town. The ATM supports major funds networks (like CIRRUS), but you will need a Visa/Mastercard with a PIN number to access it. US currency may be used at the airport and is accepted by many merchants around Teo at a 10:1 ratio (they don't like bills larger than US\$10).

**Phones:** There is a phone at The Dreaming House, but no phones in rooms. Long distance calls to the US are usually expensive, so we ask that you avoid using The Dreaming House phone. Emergency calls may be made at US\$5.00/minute (pay Alberto on the honor system). To call any US number from within Mexico, use the prefix "001" – from Mexico, Ron's cell phone number would be "001-602-881-9044". If you get stuck in Mexico, you are welcome to call his cell phone.

Cell phone coverage at Teo is good for Verizon, but we have no experience with other carriers. The cost is about 70 cents per minute on our plan. If you think you might want to use your cell phone, call your carrier before you leave and make sure your plan includes Mexico roaming. The town we're staying in is known as San Juan Sebastian or San Juan Teotihuacan in Estado de México (the state of Mexico).

**Arrival in Mexico City:** Plan to arrive in Mexico City no later than 3:00 pm on September 7. If your flight's scheduled arrival time is after 3:00 pm, please contact us so we can discuss options with you. (Note: US Airways/America West has direct flights leaving Phoenix at approximately 9:48 am, which arrive in Mexico City at approximately 2:56 pm.) Since you will provide us your airline itinerary on your Trip Application form, we will be watching to see if your flight is delayed. Short delays may be accommodated, but we intend to transport the group from the airport as soon after 4:00 pm as possible.

On the airplane you will be given a Tourist Visa to fill out (the 190 peso fee for the Tourist Visa is included in your airfare). Follow the instructions carefully for filling out the form and list the address noted below (under "Ground transportation") as your location while in Mexico; for length of stay, write "90 days." Upon deplaning, follow the signs to the Immigration area. Note that there are separate areas for travelers from North America and those arriving from Europe – go to the correct area.

Your passport and entry form will be processed by an immigration officer. NOTE: Do not lose your Tourist Visa – you will be charged US\$30-US\$40 for a replacement. When your documents are approved, exit the immigration area toward your left and claim your luggage. One more hurdle... proceed through Customs where your baggage may be subjected to a random search. Leave through the glass doors and bear right. You will find the "Freedom Cantina" a few yards to your right, down the busy causeway. If you aren't traveling with a Phoenix Wisdom teacher this is where you will wait until you are met.

This is a good time to choose one of the many windows to change your US currency into pesos. You want to come out near zero upon your return as you lose about 10% when you change pesos back into dollars. If you're on a tight budget, figure about US\$10 per day, plus US\$25 for souvenirs you can't live without. If your budget is a bit more liberal, you might allow US\$15 per day and easily spend US\$100-US\$200 for souvenirs, shirts and dresses, embroidery work, tablecloths, carved obsidian, etc.

**Ground transportation:** Ground transportation will be provided to and from the airport when you travel with the group. If you are unable to travel with the group, we recommend that you allow us to arrange transportation for you to ensure your safety. The address of The Dreaming House is:

La Casa de los Suenos/Alberto Hernandez  
Calle Libertad No. 15  
San Sebastian, Xolalpa  
Teotihuacan, Mexico

phone: 01-59-49-56-39-69  
cell: 01-55-16-55-39-51  
Ron's cell: 001-602-881-9044 (toll call)

If you are unable to accompany the group, taxi fare to the airport is approximately US\$50 (tip included). While the vehicle may be shared with more than one person, an additional US\$5 tip per person wouldn't be a bad idea. Taxi fare from the airport to The Dreaming House is US\$10-US\$15 higher due to parking fees and waiting time. Taxi fares in and around the grounds at Teotihuacan range from US\$2 for short trips (like to and from the grounds) to US\$5 to go into town.

**Departure from Mexico City:** Departure guidelines vary depending on your departure date – please read the following carefully. If you plan to leave on September 12, your scheduled airline departure should be no earlier than 1:00 pm (we will have you at the airport at least two hours early). If you are extending to September 13, your scheduled airline departure should be no earlier than 3:45 pm. Again, if your travel plans differ from these guidelines, be sure to discuss this directly with us.

When leaving Mexico City your checked luggage will be hand-searched at luggage check-in (no exceptions). Generally, unopened bottles of alcohol in checked luggage will be left alone. However, bottles of alcohol with broken seals (or without official seals) in carryon luggage are usually confiscated at security checkpoints.

**Customs:** On the return flight, you will be required to complete a US Customs Declaration. Generally, you may bring items back with you having a total value of up to US\$800 per person duty free. However, there are some restrictions on tobacco products and other items. We suggest you visit the US Customs website at: [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/dutyfree\\_exemption.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/dutyfree_exemption.xml) for details. If your flight lands in Arizona, be aware that Arizona law limits you to bringing in one liter of alcohol per person, regardless of whether or not you planned to pay US duty on it. Fresh fruits and vegetables are forbidden, too

**Our daily itinerary:** We will be spending most of our time around the pyramids of Teotihuacan. However, the precise itinerary is left intentionally vague to allow for unexpected opportunities for exploration which might arise. A typical day will begin with breakfast at 8:00 am followed by a brief class. We will walk or ride to the main grounds at Teo or other selected sites in the area. We will spend 4-6 hours in various activities then travel together back to the Dreaming House. We will usually have an early dinner around 4:00 pm followed by a little free time before class in the evening.

Although you will see many wonderful things, this is not a site seeing trip – with a few exceptions, you will stay with the group as your teachers guide you through activities and practices which create maximum potential for inspiration and self-discovery. When the group is finished at Teo in the afternoons, you are free to stay longer, eat at local restaurants, and make your own way back to our lodging (at your own expense). We simply ask you to commit to coming to classes and participating in all group activities.