

AJIJIC

A CULTURAL IMMERSION INTO OLD MEXICO



Colourful buildings in Ajijic

Unpack once – so much variety from one base – do as much or as little as you want – soak up the ambience of this delightful village which includes an active and engaged ex-pat community who chose it for its perfect climate, artistic community and friendly and welcoming locals. Ajijic nestles in Mexico's Sierra Madre Mountains on the northern shore of Lake Chapala. Only 30 minutes from Guadalajara international airport, Ajijic remains a quaint cobble-stoned village, a rustic reminder of an earlier time but with all the normal services of the 21st Century. This is 'slow travel' at its very best as we are drawn into the rhythms of daily life.

Highlights

- Small group – maximum 15 guests
- Unpack once
- Escorted walking tour of Ajijic
- Full day tour of Tequila and the historic Mundo Cuervo distillery
- Transfer for day trip to Tlaquepaque
- Cooking class
- Optional special interest activities including photography, painting class, birding
- Behind the walls tour to private homes and haciendas
- Unique opportunities to meet ex-pat locals to discover more about life in a Mexican village

Days 1-8 Ajijic

Arrive at Guadalajara international airport. Private transfer provided to our hotel, La Nueva Posada, in Ajijic. Meet your fellow travellers for a welcome cocktail followed by a casual dinner at the hotel.

Day 2: Guided walking tour of Ajijic. Wandering along the cobble-stoned village streets is the best way to experience Ajijic. You will find that the houses are typical of old Mexico with simple village homes with colourful walls fronting the cobblestone streets as well as the elegant haciendas hidden behind the high walls. Dotted throughout the town are magnificent murals depicting social and historical scenes created by famous Mexican artists – many of whom are based in Ajijic. Following lunch the remaining afternoon is at leisure to further explore. For dinner choose from our selection of local restaurants offering traditional Mexican food or opt for a light supper in the hotel.

Day 3: After breakfast we'll head to the Maestros del Arte Fair in Chapala which is a unique event and the largest artisan fair in Mexico. Organized by an array

of volunteers, artists do not pay fees or percentage of sales to attend. They are hosted by local ex-pat families and their participation forms part of a unique community event. For many artists it is their first contact with the outside art world. All are masters of their mediums; clay, paper, fabric, print, wood, stone, silver, alpaca wool and other traditional materials. Feria Maestros del Arte brings you an opportunity to meet the artists and witness demonstrations of these ancient crafts. Why not explore the lakeside town of Chapala before heading back to Ajijic. Dinner tonight is in one of Ajijic's finest restaurants.

Day 4: Today is your special personal day where you have an opportunity to explore the local villages and surrounds or join one of a selection of guided activities. We offer a specialised photography day trip to surrounding villages to meet local artists guided by an internationally renowned photographer living in Ajijic. Or you may want to partake in a hands-on cooking class. Lunch is naturally included. Or try your hand at a local art class or go birding. Please inform us at the time of booking if you are interested in any of these personalised activities.



Our hotel in Ajijic, La Nueva Posada



Sunrise over tranquil Lake Chapala



Local artisan at the Maestros del Arte Fair

Dinner tonight is in the neighbouring village of San Juan Cosala at 'Viva Mexico', owned and run by Agustin, one of the area's local heroes due to his charitable work in the community and a master Mexican Chef.

Day 5: After breakfast we'll depart for a full day tour to Tequila home to a 300 year old distillery still producing high quality tequila. We will travel through Maguey plantations along our route to the only area where tequila is manufactured. A private escorted tour through Mundo Cuervo family distillery will be followed by a tour of the gardens attached to the family's hacienda which features a selection of surrealist sculptures by the artist Leonora Carrington alongside works by Juan Soriana and Sergio Bustamante. After lunch there will be time to explore the village of Tequila before our return to Ajijic. Dinner at leisure in one of our recommended restaurants.

Day 6: Today is market day in Ajijic. It's located approximately 10 minutes' walk from our hotel and is an excellent place to interact with locals. Following the market go "Behind the Walls" with a visit to some of the privately owned magnificent colonial haciendas. The Spanish style architecture features central courtyards, colourful tile work, lush gardens and modern and antique furnishings, many designed and made locally. This is a unique opportunity to meet home-owners and gain insight into some of the town's private art collections. The afternoon is at leisure to further explore Ajijic or take in a spa or massage. This evening we will have dinner in one of our favourite restaurants.

Day 7: Today we head into one of Guadalajara's oldest village, Tlaquepaque. With over 40 specialty shops and exclusive art galleries, shopping becomes a joyful

revelation of fabulous art treasures and distinctive gifts around every corner. Tlaquepaque is filled with spectacular one-of-a-kind experiences in every medium from Western and eclectic bronze sculptures, functional and traditional ceramics, breathtaking glass blown creations, fine contemporary jewellery and designer casual wear in silk and leather. Just walking around Tlaquepaque is an adventure in discovery. Tonight is free – dine around options are provided.

Day 8: Your last full day to wander the village, sit in the plaza and watch the world go by, do some last minute shopping or take a local bus to explore one of the other local towns or villages. Tonight we'll dine together in one of Ajijic's finest restaurants to celebrate the end of a memorable tour and our immersion into the life and spirit of this wonderful community.

◇ *La Nueva Posada, Ajijic*

Day 9 Depart Ajijic or extend

Guests leaving us today will be provided a group transfer to Guadalajara airport.

Those guests joining us for our extension tour will depart the hotel after breakfast for their transfer to San Miguel de Allende which takes approximately 5 hours.

San Miguel de Allende & Mexico City Extension

Managing to be both quaint and cosmopolitan at the same time, with its cobblestone streets, leafy courtyards and fine architectural details, San Miguel de Allende is arguably the prettiest town in Mexico.

◇ *Casa Rosada Hotel*

Mexico City is a fascinating capital and many of its attractions are concentrated in the historic centre, Zocalo, near our hotel. The National Palace, Metropolitan Cathedral, Templo Mayor and Palace of Fine Arts are all within a few minutes walk.

◇ *Gran Hotel de la Ciudad*

Inclusions

- Individual transfers from Guadalajara airport to the hotel
- 8 nights' accommodation in Ajijic
- English speaking guide for walking tours and excursions
- 8 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 4 dinners
- Full sized air conditioned motor coach for longer excursions
- Air conditioned van for local transfers
- Group transfer to Guadalajara airport
- Tips for drivers and guides
- Entry fees for scheduled visits
- Charitable donation

Dates & Prices

9 days/8 nights

Fri 11th to Sat 19th November 2016

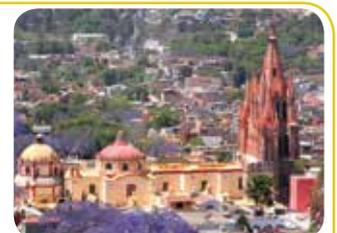
Sat 4th to Sun 12th November 2017

Tour Price: AU\$4,000 per person

Reductions available for twinshare

Not included: Air fares to and from Mexico

“ What an amazing experience! You could actually put your arms around this village, Ajijic. Thanks to Big Yellow Suitcase every day had a WOW factor. The exceptional local knowledge of the tour leaders was willingly shared amongst the group. A great experience, great company & amazing tour leaders – I can't wait for the next tour. ”



6 days/5 nights

Sat 19th to Thu 24th Nov 2016

Sun 12th to Fri 17th Nov 2017

Tour Price: AU\$2,600 pp

For details, [click here to visit our website](#)