

VOGUE

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Love San Miguel de Allende? Visit Mérida Next

AUGUST 3, 2017 4:06 PM

by MARY HOLLAND



City hall in Mérida,
Mexico

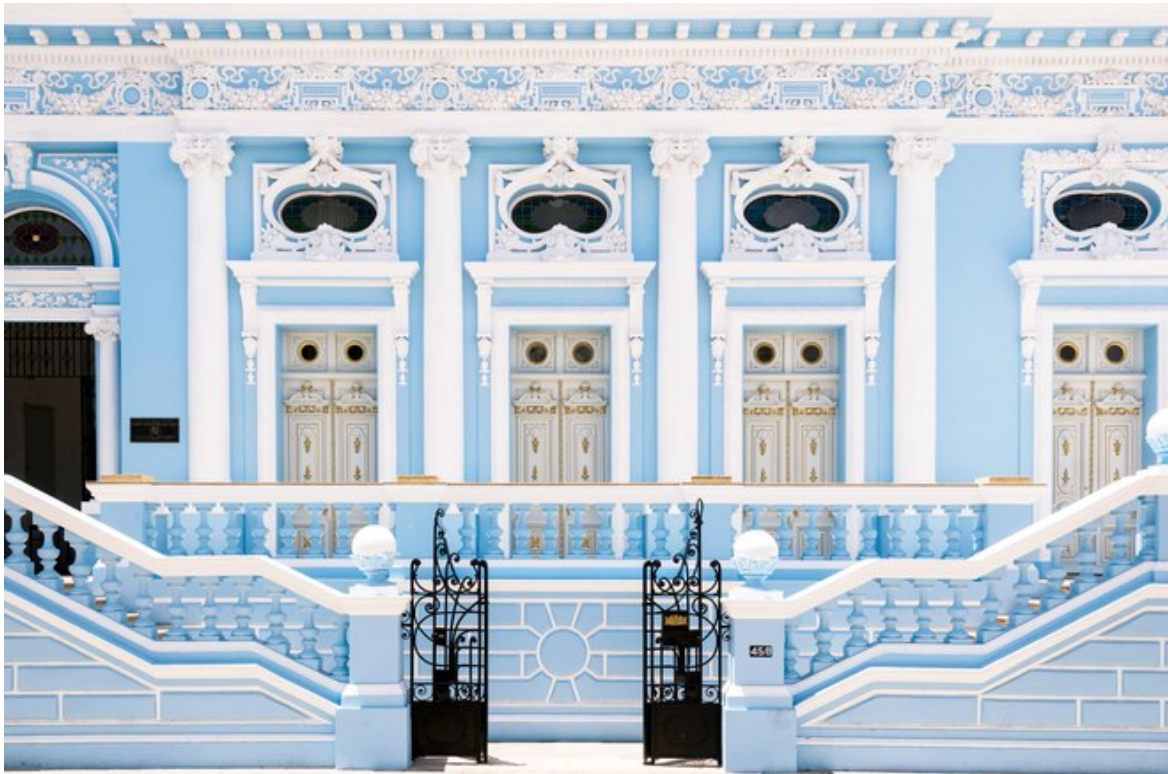
Photo: Alamy

Mérida, Mexico, looks like a city that hasn't changed in a century: The old buildings and slow pace of life seem to signal that your plane took a wrong turn and you landed back in 1900. Much like San Miguel de Allende to the west, the historic Mexican city is achingly charming; but unlike San Miguel de Allende, it hasn't made it to the top of every must-visit list (and that's a good thing). First-timers will surely enjoy the pretty squares and the unhurried people who fill them. They'll be astounded by the centuries-old mansions that line the many streets. They'll wonder: How does a place like this still exist? But scratch below Mérida's historic charm and you'll find a thriving city with a decidedly current culinary scene.

It's easy to get lost among the quaint streets in Mérida's small city center. And truly, wandering is the best way to explore. Meander past the old mansions and stop in a few notable sites like the Palacio Cantón, a lemony yellow mansion that's home to the Yucatán Regional Anthropology Museum, and the Governor's Palace, a limey green building that houses a large collection of paintings depicting Yucatecan history. Then, wander past Coqui Coqui, the famed perfume shop housed in a restored building with checkered tiles, and onto Dulcería y Sorbetería Colón, an ice cream shop opposite a main square where Meridian life casually rolls by.

After a day of walking, Casa Lecanda, a boutique hotel in a historic home in the center of Mérida, will offer a welcome respite. The property has been restored just enough so that it still resembles the home of a wealthy patron but has all the bells and whistles of a luxury hotel. The rooms have high ceilings, restored tiles, and furniture from all over Mexico; there's also a pool adjacent to a courtyard dedicated to hammocks. Further afield—around 25 minutes from the center of the city—lies Chablé Resort & Spa, one of the newer additions to the area. Set on a tropical garden estate, the hotel has a spa, two made-to-order ceviche restaurants, and 40 villas with private pools.

Staying outside the city has its perks: The surrounding area is flecked with cenotes (striking natural sinkholes), Mayan ruins, and abandoned haciendas which deserve a visit. But it's inside the city where all of the action takes place. And Mérida's excellent dining and nightlife scene is one you won't want to miss. Néctar, opened by Noma-alum Roberto Solís is a fine dining restaurant that creates innovative Yucatecan cuisine. Expect experimental dishes like chicharonne and tacos with burnt pineapple, and elevated Yucatán staples like tikin xic (fish prepared with achiote paste) and cochinita (pulled pork). For Oaxaca-meets-Yucatán cuisine, Apoala is one of the hottest spots in the city. If a laid-back dining experience is more your speed, Mercado 60 is an easygoing culinary market that kicks off every night at around 6 p.m. Food can be bought from the different stalls and eaten at long tables, and cocktails are available at the bars. The clincher here is the live music, which draws a vibrant crowd. Next, move to Malahat, a speakeasy behind Apoala. To gain access, speak to one of the hosts at Apoala, then make your way behind the service entrance to a hidden door. Inside, a groovy bar with killer cocktails and live music awaits.



A typical colonial building in Mérida, Mexico

Photo: Alamy



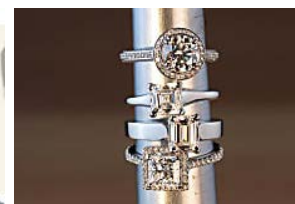
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Why Aren't Billionaires Yachting in St.-Tropez Like They Used To?

AUGUST 3, 2017 3:27 PM

by ELISE TAYLOR

Photographed by Mario Testino, Vogue, November 2007.

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When it comes to glamorous locales, St.-Tropez is at the top of the list: Since the 1960s, it's been *the* place to be for celebrities and jet-setters alike, thanks to its picturesque streets, intoxicating nightlife, and crystal-clear waters.

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Although its lavish hotels are a sight to behold, the real seen-and-be-seen spot is on one of the colossal yachts docked off the Côte d'Azur. Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire, Rihanna, Beyoncé, Jay-Z, and Ivanka Trump are just a few of the mega stars who've been spotted partying it up in "billionaires' harbor" the past couple of years. But, reportedly, the seaside town may be in troubled waters. It seems that the super rich just aren't that into it anymore—revenue at St.-Tropez's marina fell by 30 percent since the beginning of the year.

Why? Some blame France's strict enforcement of EU regulations and higher costs, which are driving boaters right into the bays Italy and Spain, which offer similarly stylish resort towns at a fraction of the price. In an open letter,

three French Riviera politicians begged French president Emmanuel Macron for the “urgent harmonization of tax and social regulations at the European level.”

“Refueling a 42-meter yacht in Italy (instead of France) gives a saving of nearly €21,000 [around \$25,000] a week because of the difference in tax . . . while the additional cost of maintaining a seven-person crew in France is €300,000 [around \$356,000] a year,” they said.

Yes, it’s strange that the .0001 percent is turned off by cost. But lest one forget, most yacht owners became billionaires (or at least, multi-multi-multi-millionaires) by being incredibly business savvy. And if there’s anything that is Economics 101, it’s a cost-benefit analysis.

But it’s not just the uber rich’s bank accounts at stake here. The yachting industry supplies tens of thousands of jobs to the region and a decline in traffic means a decline in work.

Looks like St.-Tropez really does miss the boats.

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