

Destinations

How to Spend the Holidays in Mexico

by [Ana Figueroa](#) | Nov 28, 2017 10:55am



Winter brings unique opportunities to explore [Mexico](#)'s cultural and natural attractions. Both abound in **Yucatan**, the state is home to **UNESCO World Heritage** sites such as **Chichen Itza** and **Uxmal**, the **Magic Towns** of **Valladolid** and **Izamal** and the "White City" of **Merida**.

"This area is particularly strong in winter because our winter is very mild. We get almost no rain. It's more comfortable to be walking and climbing pyramids in this condition than in a humid, warm summer," **Fernando Ceballos**, director of tourism and promotion for Yucatan State, tells [Travel Agent](#).

The winter season, said Ceballos, begins with **Dia de los Muertos** at the beginning of November.

"The animated movie, '**Coco**,' that just came out, is calling attention to the deep roots of our Mexican traditions. Here in Yucatan, we celebrate in such a beautiful and magical way. There is so much to engage visitors this time of year, it's fantastic," said Ceballos.

One destination he recommends this time of year is the **Celestun Biosphere Reserve**, about 56 miles from Merida.

“It is flamingo season now. You see hundreds of them flying all over in very colorful groups. The biosphere is a fishing village. During flamingo season, the fishermen use their boats to take people into the jungle mangroves,” said Ceballos.



After touring the reserve, he suggests returning to the village of Celestun for a late seafood lunch and then wait for the sunset.

“You can stay overnight in Celestun. Seven miles away is **Hotel Xixim**, which just received the award for best Eco tourist hotel in Mexico,” said Ceballos.

Yucatan’s capital, Merida, is completing its year as **Cultural Capital of the Americas**. New developments are underway for 2018 and beyond: The **Yucatan International Convention Center Powered by Samsung** opens in March; an expanded tourist corridor, retail plaza and cultural center are also in the works.

Sixteen new hotels will open there within the next 18 months.

This coming month, **Christmas** celebrations get underway throughout Mexico. Foremost among them is **Las Posadas**, taking place from December 16 to 24. The candlelit, song-filled processions re-enact the journey of Joseph and Mary through **Bethlehem** seeking shelter

“Here we have our own way of doing Las Posadas. Yucatan in the early 1800s was an independent country from Mexico. That spirit lives on,” said Ceballos.

Yucatan, of course, isn’t the only destination with attractions for the winter visitor. **San Miguel de Allende** is known for its festivals, parades and concerts.

“During the holiday season, San Miguel de Allende welcomes locals and visitors alike,” **Guillermo Gonzalez**, director of the **San Miguel de Allende Tourism Board**, tells Travel Agent. “They can walk cobblestone streets colorfully decorated in bright colors and sit in plazas where Nativity scenes come to life and choirs rejoice. I would invite everyone to try our traditional drink, the atole de cascara and visit the arts and crafts market where they will find one-of-a-kind gifts for loved ones.”

Winter in **Puerto Vallarta** and the **Riviera Nayarit** has its highlights as well.



“Winter brings the ideal weather to each destination. We have warm, sunny days with cool evenings to enjoy an early sunset,” said **Divina Araiza**, eCommerce and guest relations manager for **The Adventures Group**.

Outdoor adventures continue in full force during the holidays. Water sports such as snorkeling, kayaking and scuba diving have the added allure of humpback whale sightings in the **Bay of Banderas**.

“Activities such as off-roading and zip-lining are the favorite of active families and couples throughout the year. **All Terrain Safari** is a brand-new adventure in Puerto Vallarta which will begin this winter season,” said Araiza.

Traditions take on their own unique twist in Puerto Vallarta.

Thousands arrive each year during the period from December 1-12. They take part in celebrations for the **Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe**, the city’s patron saint.

Afterwards come Las Posadas. And **Christmas Eve** is marked with another pilgrimage for a special mass and celebration at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

“The traditional festivities in Puerto Vallarta are an unforgettable experience. Having the opportunity to co-mingle with the local culture by participating in one of the promenades or by walking along the **Malecon** while listening to the choirs of children singing carols is possible during this time of year. It is an honor for us to be able to share these festive, harmonious times with all our guests,” **Alessandro Stifani** tells us.

Stifani is general manager of the **Villa Premiere Boutique Hotel & Romantic Getaway** in Puerto Vallarta. The 80-room beachfront property is near the El Malecon boardwalk. It’s an adults-only hotel offering both European Plan and all-inclusive options.