

10 Small Towns in Mexico for Natural Beauty, Arts, Culture, and Tequila

Mexico has 132 "magical towns" — here are 10 you need to visit.

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There's always a special magic about visiting a small town. The slow-paced lifestyle, a sense of community that welcomes you, long-established traditions and crafts to learn from, and dishes that tell stories. But in Mexico, there's a special concept behind some small towns.

In 2001, the Mexican government started a program that highlighted some towns as "Magical Towns" (*pueblos mágicos*) for their cultural and natural richness. In order to get this fantastic distinction, a town must have historic architecture, amazing landscapes, and rooted traditions. The symbolism, legends, and history behind these places give them a unique identity worthy of being discovered.

There are 132 magical towns throughout the country, and if you're up for an enchanting adventure, here are 10 to get started.

Tequila, Jalisco



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If you want to taste good tequila and witness the complete process that brings this drink to life, this is the place to do it. Its name actually comes from a *náhuatl* word that means "place of tribute" and here most places pay tribute to the art of turning the blue agave into a world-famous distilled beverage. There's even a tequila museum that explains the process and has some of the most iconic bottles on display. In the past, this town was known for having big traditional haciendas. Now, many original constructions remain, but they're now home to the most important distilleries, many of which are open to visitors. At José Cuervo's hacienda you can explore every step of the production, from cleaning the agave to an exclusive tasting. They also have one of the top attractions of the town, a train — José Cuervo Express — that parts from Guadalajara and takes travelers through Tequila all the way to the hacienda. Passengers on board get the full experience, including specialty drinks, music and amazing views of the agave plantations that contrast the red soil and the blue plant. But Tequila isn't just about the drink, it's also a town with a strong crafts culture, especially for pottery lovers. The place also has some beautiful natural landscapes like the Tequila volcano and the Big River, as well as historic Baroque-style buildings, at the Historical Center, where the Church of Santiago Apostol and its stained glass windows stand out.