

MAZATLAN CENTRO HISTORICO

Self Guided Walking Tours

There are several ways to explore Mazatlan besides taking a Ship Sponsored Tour.

(You can follow along on these Tours on Google Maps Satellite View.)

Right outside the shopping area is a parking lot full of open air Pulmonias (same base word as pulmonary in English – means air passage). Normally, those can be rented with driver for twenty-five USD per hour and will accommodate up to four passengers. Price is for the trip – not per passenger. Ask for a driver who speaks English well and make your deal before you enter the vehicle, or you can ask for the price for a one-way trip to some specific place. Pay at the end of the ride. You can specify what you want to see or ask the driver for the tour – takes about four hours – about 100USD plus tip – we usually do 10USD per passenger.

One Suggestion:

Take a Pulmonia to El Centro, get dropped off at the Central Market. The large market, formally known as Jose Maria Pino Suarez Market has several entrances off Aquiles Serdan. Take either one; you'll see juice stands, vegetable and dairy stalls, the meat section where pig's heads are proudly displayed along with other hanging meat. In 1900, this market was moved from the Town Hall Square to this art nouveau style iron structure. There have been fires, floods and construction additions over the 111 years so it's difficult to appreciate the lavish iron work. There is a second story packed with local restaurants, but we are only going up the stairs to check those out and then walk straight through to the street called Benito Juarez. Just before you reach that street you'll see a "tourist section" to the left and to the right with dresses, sandals, silver, jewellery, purses, blankets, pottery and t-shirts. The tour won't bring you back here, so if you fall in love with an item, buy it now. We usually have pesos with us when we visit Mexico, if you don't, be sure to ask if they can make change in \$US.

After exiting, you'll be standing on the busy street of Benito Juarez, and facing the fabric store Parisina. Turn left and stay on the market side of the street, cross Leandro Valle, and you'll walk by the Burger King and the Panama Bakery (clean restrooms), and past the department store Fábricas de Francia (clean restrooms on the 3rd floor.) This is an extremely congested area with local buses, tour buses, Pulmonias, mothers with strollers, dogs, and often beggars sitting on the sidewalk. There is nothing to see in this stretch so stay focused on what's happening around you.

Catedral Basílica De La Inmaculada Concepción

To your right you'll see the spires of the Cathedral. Before you cross observe the six upper windows facing you. Look closely and you'll notice the Star of David – there's a total of 28 Stars of David, the world's only Roman Catholic Church to display the Star of David. Be careful crossing Jose Maria Canizales; don't assume a bus, a bicycle or a car will ever stop for a pedestrian. The building of the Cathedral took place in stages: from the early 1850's until 1894. It's very proud of its fine organ, believed to have been built in Paris, and played for the first time in 1889. Exterior and interior restoration is an on-going process, but today you can admire the gothic and baroque three naves, the main altar and side altars murals from 1942, and the large chandelier over the main altar from the 1950's. Like any Mexican, city the Cathedral represents a strong ecclesiastical and economic power. Why the Stars of David? Economic help from the Jewish community during early construction prompted the Parishioners to include them, ironically there is no synagogue today in Mazatlan. Think about it: the population of Mazatlan in the late 1800's was about 14,000, yet the town had this grand Cathedral to worship and meet in.

Town Hall Square, Plaza Republicá

Across the street is the Town Hall Square, which was the old market. You'll see many shoe shine stalls surrounding the 1909 kiosk. This is where locals bring all their shoe and purse repairs; it's inexpensive, fast and top quality. The City Hall building is 140 years old and if you go through the main gates and up the stairs there are two interesting murals depicting Mazatlan's Bicentennial (1810-2010) and the 1910 Revolution of Sinaloa painted by Aarón Zamudio. These are typically vivid scenes of religion, war generals, political struggles and eventually peace.

Back on the square, turn right and walk along Angles Flores. When you see the bright red Santander Bank sign, you'll cross the next street 5 de Mayo and keep walking until you come to Calle Carnaval, turn left and walk one block to cross Mariano Escobedo; cross over to the empty parking lot side and look at the aging, empty, Medrano Building. It has just been given a fresh coat of yellow paint. It's pie shape entrance on two corners indicates wealth; an inefficient and expensive entrance. This was an elegant structure built in the late 1910's, you can still see garland ornamentations around the windows.

Lizarraga House

Cross Carnaval again to the side of the blue Medrano building and just before you reach the Plazuela Machado you'll notice a long yellow two story building, the house of Rafael Lizarraga. This is also from 1910 with individual balconies, unusual for that period.

Juarez Building

Today, the popular restaurant Pedro y Lola's occupies the space, but in 1830 there was a hospital, conveniently close for business men who regularly met in the square in the 1830's

The Imprenta Building

You are now at the edge of the Plaza Machado on the corner of Carnaval and Constitution. Look up and there's the Imprenta (printing - with the clock on the corner) Building built by the owner, Manuel M. Retes, of the local newspaper and dedicated to the reporter and poet Amado Nervo. Amado was also known as Juan Crisóstomo Ruiz de Nervo and was the Mexican Ambassador to Argentina and Uruguay. Nervo was one of Mexico's most beloved and important poets; while in Mazatlan he worked as a reporter for El Correo de la Tarde (The Evening Mail). Imagine 1840 in the square - no Wi-Fi but you could take a mining meeting, buy a newspaper hot off the press and check yourself into the hospital!

The Angela Peralta Theatre

Stop! Don't go right, we aren't going into the square yet, we are following a pedestrian only portion of Carnaval along to the Angela Peralta Theatre. Running adjacent to the theatre is the

Fine Arts Municipal Center which houses the music and dance school. The ground floor dates from 1840, and in 2011 the school expanded along Constitution. Not much to see, but you may hear the music students practicing. Like many buildings in Mazatlan, the theatre has had several owners, and several phases of construction. It was first named Teatro Rubio and opened in 1874. The columns you see outside are the only remaining original architecture. It changed owners in 1880 and the lights were on for 50 years. It was one of the best known performing arts centres in western Mexico: opera, drama, orchestras, masquerade balls, festivals, boxing matches, and even films were shown in the theatre. In 1943 it was renamed the Angela Peralta Theatre in honor of the opera singer who died in 1883 – although The Mexican dove, The Mexican nightingale never sang on its stage. From a movie theatre, to 1978 hurricane, to a tug of war between the private and the public sector, it went dark from 1978 until 1992. The restoration began in 1988 and the theatre reopened under the city government in 1992. During 2011, Cultura, the government arm who manages, invites and stages all productions for the theatre, hosted hundreds of events ranging from opera, to ballet, to symphonies, classical music and local Mexican productions. School kids attend (often for free), as do teenagers, adults, and seniors; it's their cultural heartbeat. Mazatlan's award winning contemporary dance company, Delfos, uses the space for rehearsals. It's never dark now and always alive with talent. Once inside you'll appreciate the open courtyard leading into the classic U shaped formation with three tiered levels, 840 seats. It's Italian in style with ornate wrought iron balconies and railings. The building also has two art galleries. (clean restrooms, on the ground floor) Upstairs, is the Galeria with revolving art exhibits and the permanent photographic exhibit depicting the history of the theatre. Downstairs, is Galeria Rubio which also has eclectic art shows from all over the world. Walk back to the Plazuela.

Plazuela Machado and the Portales de Cannobio

Walking through the Plazuela Machado, this kiosk was restored in 2010, you'll see on the west side, Heriberto Frias, the arcade known as Portales de Cannobio. Luis Cannobio was an Italian pharmacist who settled here in 1899 and established one of Mazatlan's largest pharmacies. Part of his fortune is attributed to his elixir, "the goddess Venus", which promised eternal youth. The entire Machado was recently restored in April 2015 new benches, pretty gardens, and all new lighting. There are not only graceful palm trees lining the square but also golden rain trees, which in the spring do indeed bloom long golden rods.

The German Notions Store Building

Leaving the Machado. you'll continue walking along Constitucion and make a right turn on Belisario Dominguez, walking two short blocks and you'll see a large yellow building with a brown door on the corner of Mariano Escobedo and Belisario Dominguez. No need to cross, you can't get in it, but this is the 1904 German Notions Store Building. At the time it was a huge dry goods emporium selling everything from pianos to typewriters.

The Reynaud Building

You are still on the right side of Belisario Dominguez (east) and now you'll cross Mariano Escobedo and you'll face the impressive yellow and white, Reynaud Building. Dating from 1847, once an office to a powerful French merchant, who declared bankruptcy in 1900, it was then bought by Luis Reynaud. He was also French, and the French Consul in Mazatlan for years, as well as being a prestigious and wealthy merchant who constructed the two buildings in 1904 Now owned by a Canadian, this structure has been lovingly restored and transformed into The Culinary Market (closed on Sundays, open Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., clean new bathrooms with thanks to Fresh Boutique Produce, Héctor's Bistro/Krema and is also home to Athina Spa. Inside, don't miss the cobalt blue and ochre talavera tiles from Spain, 1900. Even the hand painted wooden beams have been preserved in Athina's Spa as well as original "tile artwork." Outside, you'll notice greater importance has been given to the second storey; they have elaborate tiled window frames, and the balconies are made of wood, a rarity in a city building.

Garcia House, Casa Garcia, or Garcia Mansion

Cross Belisario Dominguez, walk on left side and turn right on the first street, Mariano Escobedo. Proceed along Mariano Escobedo, and turn left on the next corner, Niños Heros. #1511 is the Garcia House and this structure dates from 1876. Multiple owners, Germans and Spanish used this magnificent house for various trading activities. Today, a prominent Mazateco family has restored the entire inside and opened two restaurants, El Presidio and the upscale Cantina, Compañía Minera. Both are open every day from 1 p.m. on.

Museo Arqueologico de Mazatlan, The Archaeological Museum

Continue walking south on Niños Heros (you'll pass The Melville Hotel, 1880, and the restaurant Mil Amores) cross Constitucion and walk for another block and turn right onto Sixto Osuna. Look for the boutique shop Casa Etnika (well worth a visit for Mexican crafts, upscale jewellery, clothes and other souvenirs) proceed down Sixto Osuna (west towards the ocean), cross Venus, and on the right side (north) you'll encounter Museo Arqueologico de Mazatlan just behind the three petroglyphs displayed outside. Only one is real, can you spot it? The Archaeological Museum is open from Tuesdays to Sundays, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. with various special exhibits. A small peso fee may be charged, clean restrooms.

Museo de Arte, The Museum of Art

Now you are facing a small cobblestone boulevard dotted with black olive and laurel trees. Walk along and to your left is the entrance to the Museo de Arte (opposite the pub Macaws). This imposing and beautiful one storey building is from 1896, and served as the headquarters of the Hidalgo family. The family owned hardware stores, construction supplies, and were important ship owners. There are three galleries: the permanent collection is in the Sala Antonio López Sáenz. The first revolving exhibit gallery is Sala Roberto Perez Rubio, and second exhibit gallery, across the courtyard with the ancient banyan tree, to the left, is Sala Carlos Bueno. The exhibits are all free, and are usually varied and thought provoking. The museum supports local talent as well as sculptors, photographers and interesting art installations from around the world. Hours are from Monday to Saturday, opens around 10 a.m., clean restrooms. Walk back to Sixto Osuna This is a fun street, Sixto Osuna, so take your time: visit Tippy Toes Salon, LOOK Gallery, Casa Etnica and La Rosi, a marvellous Mexican gift store.

The Freeman Hotel

Smell the sea? Still on Sixto Osuna, you walk west and pass the Bancomer, opposite the popular watering hole, Puerto Viejo. The melon colour Bancomer dates from 1872, and again you'll see wooden balconies similar to the ones in the Reynaud Building. But we aren't going banking. You are now officially on Olas Altas (high waves) or the Malecon (the four mile boardwalk to Valentino's in the Golden Zone), Turn left and pass Puerto Viejo, and you'll see The Freeman Hotel, with a Best Western logo. In 1940, this was Mazatlan's first skyscraper. Take the elevator to the 9th floor, (clean restrooms) walk up two flights of stairs and a 360 degree view awaits you on their roof top bar. Be kind and buy a drink while you soak up this first class view. Some suggest the landscape is "the Tropic of Cancer meeting the Mexican Riviera." When you depart the Freeman, turn right and walk along Paseo Olas Altas past many Shops and Sidewalk Cafes until you reach El Shrimp Bucket and El Fish Market Restaurants, opposite you will see the Deer Statue - Mazatlan means "Land of the Deer". The Tourist Information Building is just across the street. Here you can flag a Pulmonia to go to the Golden Zone or back to the ship.

Shopping on the side streets:

If you have time and want to squeeze in more shopping here are a few suggestions. They all open at 11 am

Gandarava Galeria, Constitucion # 616, closed Sundays, large selection of hand made Mexican crafts, closed Sundays

Nidart, Libertad #45 pottery and leather masks, closed Sundays, open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Nautilus Galeria (right beside The Machado Museum) Constitucion #77, gallery, jewellery, one of a kind pieces, open every day.

LOOK Vintage and Modern Gallery, Sixto Osuna #59, closed Sundays, open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed from May until October.

Casa Etnika, (across from LOOK) great clothes, gifts, furniture

Golden Zone

If you opt to visit the Golden Zone, hail a Pulmonia and agree on a price before you get in – probably about eight or ten USD. We usually visit Pancho's for food or libation – try to get table beach side on the bottom floor. Across the street is the Shell Factory – worth visiting. After walking around a while, take a Pulmonia back to the ship - as always negotiate the fare before you enter the vehicle – pay when you get out – tip if you like.

Another Suggestion:

A group of American and Canadian volunteers have organized themselves in Mazatlan, Mexico, to provide a warm welcome for visitors. Ready with free information, maps and their own working knowledge of the pretty port town on the Sea of Cortez, the blue-shirted Mazatlan Tourist Aide Volunteers dispense smiles along with down-to-earth information about their adopted city.

Walk the Blue Line from the port to El Centro. (The Blue Shirts say it is safe, no matter what you hear.) The city has made that very easy. It is about a 3/4 mile walk which can be done in around a half hour. The route the city and Secretary of Tourism have come up with is the "**Blue Line**". It is the most direct, heavily patrolled, and enjoyable route to Old Town. There is even a blue line painted in the street so you can't get lost. Plus, there are usually have a few volunteers (the Blue Shirts) along the way to answer questions. PLUS, volunteers from the school of tourism at the college. PLUS, special 'Tourist Police' patrolling the route.

What does it look like? You will first be walking through a couple neighbour hoods where the locals (And some of the 'Ex-Pat' community) live. Here is what you will see:



When you exit the gate of the cruise ship docks, you will see this arch in the middle of the street - Playa Azul. This is where the 'Blue Line' starts.



There are usually a couple of volunteers there to answer questions, provide you with maps, and help point you in the right direction.



Two short blocks west you will come to the second arch. (Notice the 'Blue Line' in the street.) There may be a couple volunteers there also.



One more block west and you can see the 'Blue Line' turns north. This street is 'Carnaval' and in the next couple blocks you will find a couple small stores selling snacks, cold soft drinks and bottled water. There is usually a volunteer here also.

In 9 short blocks you will come to "Plaza Machado" which is the heart of Old Mazatlan. There are many restaurants with inside and outside seating to sit and relax. Plus of course, the MTA "Blue Shirt" volunteers. The plaza dates back to the early 1800's.

After resting and a libation under the trees in one of several restaurants, continue on Carnaval

to Calle Angel Flores, turn right and in a couple blocks you'll come to the Plaza Republica on your left, walk across the Plaza and across the street to explore Catedral Basílica De La Inmaculada Concepción.

Exit the Cathedral, turn left to Aquiles Serdan then left again three blocks to explore The Central Market – Mercado Municipal Jose Maria Pino Suarez. After exiting the Market onto Aquiles Serdan again you could turn left and in six blocks you'll come to the Shrimp Ladies. Here you will see an amazing block long line of stands selling of shrimp of all sized, and four blocks more you'll come to the whole square block of the Flower Market, but after exploring the Central Market, we usually hail a Pulmonia to return to the ship. We've seen the Shrimp Ladies and the Flowers several times before.

As I said at the top, follow along on Google Maps – Satellite View – Enjoy!

