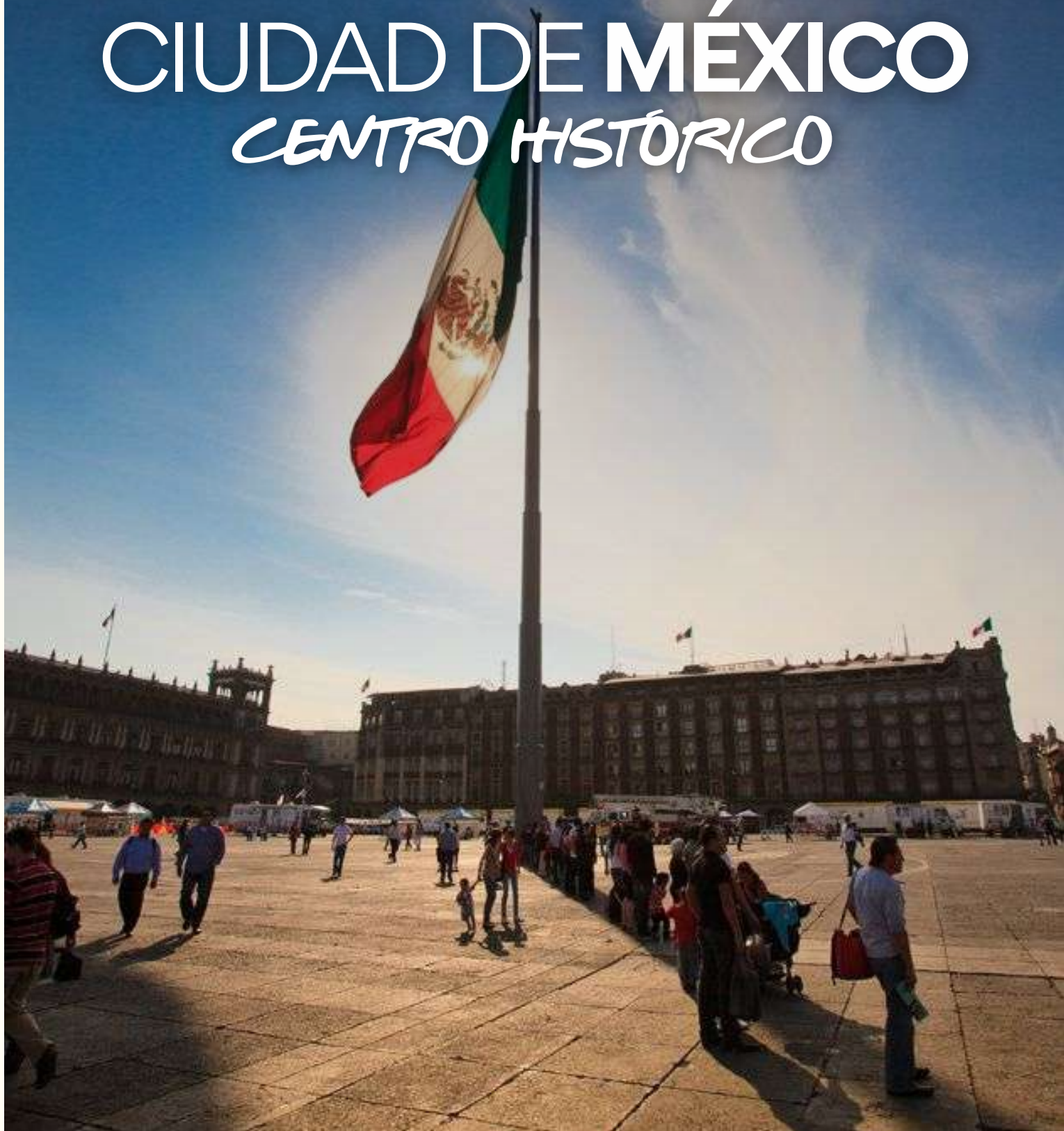




CIUDAD DE MÉXICO

CENTRO HISTÓRICO





Covering an area of nearly 4.6 hectares, this public square is one of the largest and most important in the world. Surrounded by some of the city's most iconic buildings, the square offers a glimpse into pre-Hispanic, colonial, and modern Mexico. From the time of the Mexica people to the present day, it has been the political, religious, cultural, and social **heart of the country**.

Before the arrival of the Spanish, this site was part of the ceremonial center of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. After the conquest, the pre-Hispanic buildings were replaced by colonial structures, making the Zócalo the main hub of the new capital of New Spain.



In the center of the plaza, a huge Mexican flag—one of the largest in the country—flies. Every day, a flag-raising and lowering ceremony is held, a solemn event that often attracts the attention of both domestic and foreign visitors.

The name “Zócalo” comes from **the pedestal of a monument** to Independence that was never actually built; only the base (zócalo) was constructed, and over time that name came to refer to the entire plaza.

Throughout the year, the Zócalo serves as the setting for **major celebrations and events**, such as the Cry of Independence every September 15, massive concerts, cultural exhibitions, fairs, festivals, and the traditional ice rink and Christmas decorations during the winter.

Christmas Decorations



Christmas Decorations



Independence Day celebration



Day of the death decorations



NACIONAL PALACE

Located on the eastern side of the Zócalo, the National Palace has been the **seat of political power for nearly five centuries**. Construction of the building began in 1522 by order of Hernán Cortés, on the ruins of the former palace of the Mexica emperor Moctezuma II. Over the centuries, it was expanded and remodeled, becoming **the residence of the viceroys during the colonial era** and, later, of various presidents of Mexico.



Today, the National Palace houses federal government offices, **important historic halls**, and some of the **country's most famous murals**, created by the renowned artist Diego Rivera between 1929 and 1951. These works chronicle Mexico's history from pre-Hispanic times through the 20th century and are considered one of the greatest expressions of Mexican muralism.



One of the building's most iconic features is the **presidential balcony**, from which the President of Mexico delivers the traditional **"Grito de la Independencia"** (Cry of Independence) every September 15, accompanied by the ringing of the **historic Bell of Dolores**, the same bell that Father Miguel Hidalgo used in 1810 to launch the struggle for independence.

SOME OF **THE PALACE'S** ROOMS



CONFERENCE ROOM



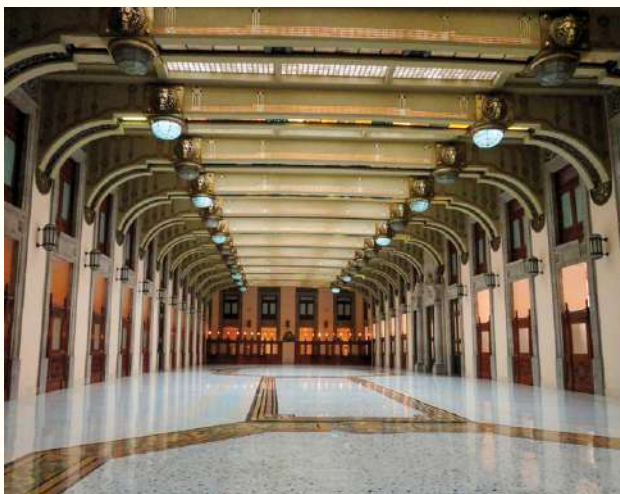
GREEN ROOM



BLUE ROOM



PURPLE ROOM



TREASURY OFFICE



MOORISH HALL

SOME OF **THE PALACE'S** ROOMS



PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE



PARLIAMENTARY COMPLEX



AMBASSADORS' HALL



PRESIDENTIAL DINING ROOM



COURTYARD OF **HONOR**



Located on the south side of the capital's Zócalo, the Old City Hall is **one of the oldest civic buildings** in Mexico City.

This is where **the first sessions of the city council**—responsible for administering the fledgling colonial city—were held. Over the centuries, the building suffered from floods, earthquakes, and fires, the most devastating of which was the riot of 1692, which forced the reconstruction of much of the building between 1720 and 1724.

Its construction was ordered shortly after the conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, around 1522, to house the city's **first City Council**. Its elegant cantera façade and Baroque architecture reflect the splendor of the viceregal period.

Inside, the building features courtyards, staircases, and historic halls, particularly the Salón de Cabildos, where for centuries the city's authorities met to make decisions that shaped the capital's development.

Today, the building remains part of the Mexico City government and houses **historic spaces** open to the public, such as the Salón de Cabildos Museum, as well as **temporary exhibitions and cultural activities**. Like the rest of the Historic Center, this building has also been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987.

The 1692 Uprising was a significant event during the viceregal era. Following a severe corn shortage and rising hunger among the population, thousands of people gathered in the Plaza Mayor to demand food and better living conditions. The protest turned into a riot that culminated in the **burning of several government buildings**, including the Viceroy's Palace and the Old City Hall.

The damage was so severe that both buildings had to be **restored and rebuilt** in the following years, giving rise to much of the architecture we can admire today.



MUSEUM OF THE TOWN COUNCILS





SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE BUILDING

Located on the southeast corner of the Zócalo, the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (SCJN) building is the seat of **Mexico's highest constitutional court** and one of the country's most important public buildings. From this venue, the rights established in the Constitution are interpreted and protected, ensuring the balance of powers within the State.



Construction of the current building began in 1936, during the administration of President Lázaro Cárdenas, and it was inaugurated in 1941 by President Manuel Ávila Camacho. It stands on the site of the former Plaza del Volador, a **historic space** that at various times served as a market, a public square, and the setting for important events in the city.

Its architecture combines Art Deco elements with the monumental style typical of mid-20th-century government buildings. Inside, it houses **valuable works of art** by some of Mexico's most important muralists, making it an important cultural venue as well.

Currently, the Supreme Court offers guided tours during which visitors can learn about the building's history and architecture, understand how the judiciary operates, and admire its most iconic murals and sculptures.



BRONZE DOOR



PART OF THE MURAL
"THE HISTORY OF JUSTICE IN MEXICO" BY RAFAEL CAUDURO



Located on the southwest corner of the Zócalo, next to the Metropolitan Cathedral, the Nacional Monte de Piedad is one of the oldest social welfare institutions in the Americas.

The building stands on the site of the **Palace of Axayácatl**, one of the great Mexica rulers. It was precisely in this palace that Hernán Cortés and his men were housed when they arrived in Tenochtitlan in 1519. After the conquest, the building was converted into Cortés's residence and, centuries later, gave way to the building we know today.

The institution was founded on February 25, 1775, by Pedro Romero de Terreros, the first Count of Regla, with the aim of **providing secured loans to people of limited means**, thereby preventing them from turning to moneylenders who charged excessive interest rates. Since then, the Monte de Piedad has remained committed to its mission of **social support** and continues to operate as a private, **nonprofit assistance institution**. Unlike a commercial pawnshop, it functions as a Private Assistance Institution (I.A.P.); **any surplus it generates is allocated to social programs** and to support other charitable organizations.

The building was acquired by the institution in 1836 and retains an elegant viceregal-style façade. Inside, highlights include courtyards, a historic chapel, and various spaces that reflect more than two centuries of social work benefiting millions of Mexicans.

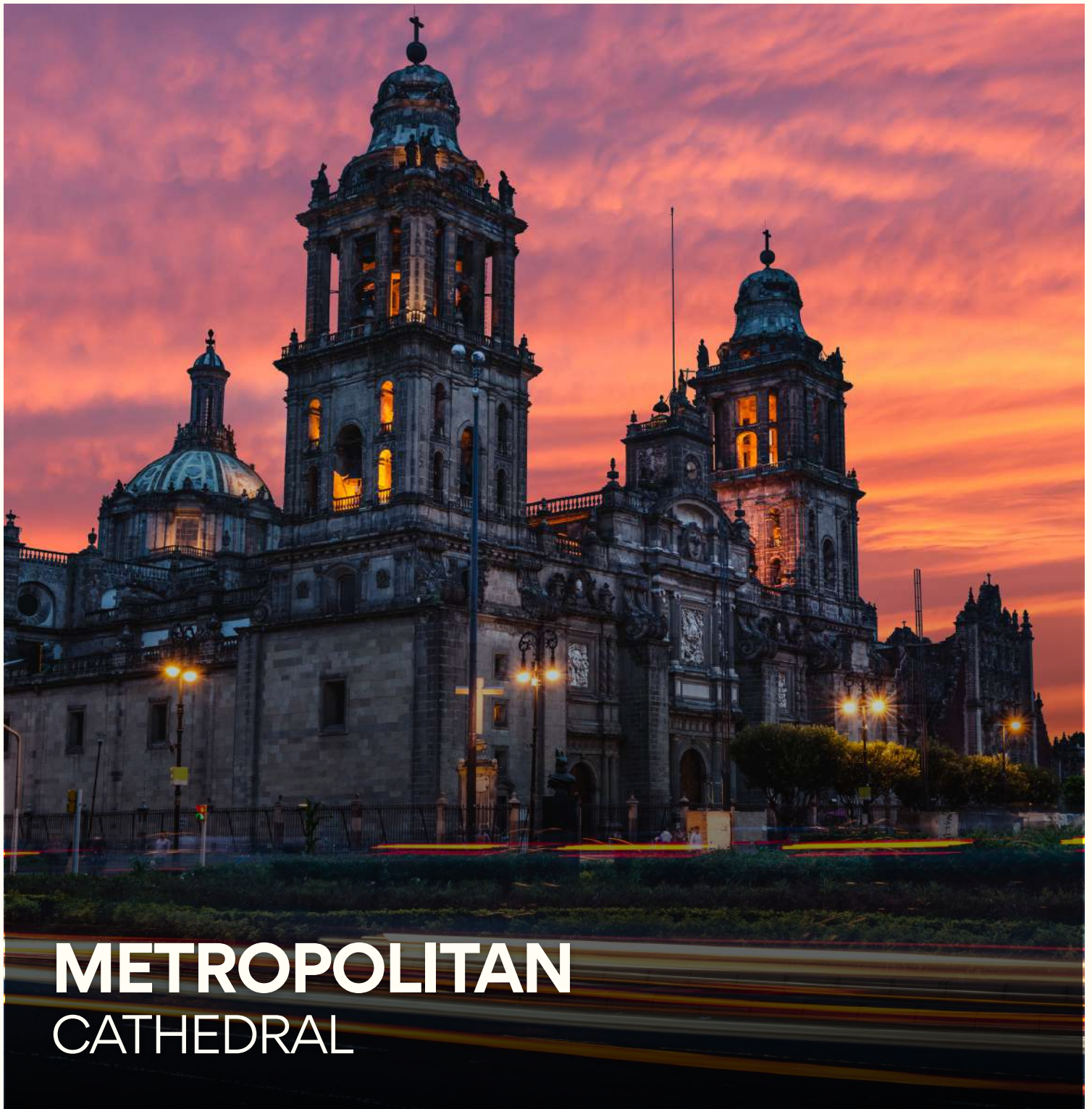


MUSEUM EXHIBITION HALL



SKYLIGHT IN THE **MAIN LOBBY**





METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

Located on the north side of the Zócalo, it is **one of the most important** Catholic churches in the country and one of the largest and most impressive cathedrals in the Americas.

Construction began in 1573 on the site of the ancient sacred precinct of Mexico-Tenochtitlan and was completed in 1813, meaning **the project spanned 240 years**. This lengthy construction period resulted in an extraordinary blend of architectural styles, including Renaissance, Baroque, Herrerian, and Neoclassical.

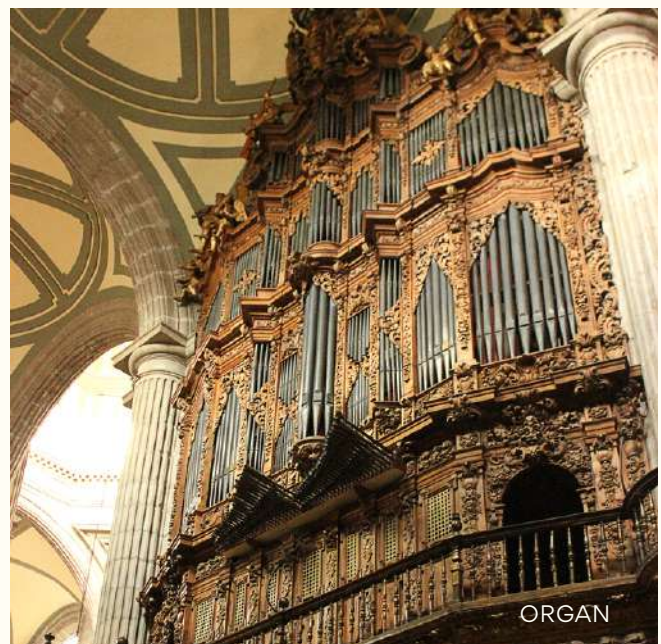


ALTAR OF THE KINGS

The cathedral was built on the very site where part of the Mexica ceremonial complex once stood. **Stones from ancient pre-Hispanic temples** were used in its construction, a common practice during the early years of the viceregal era. Traces of the first cathedral and pre-Hispanic structures can still be seen through the archaeological windows located in the atrium.

The building features five naves, 51 vaults, 74 arches, 40 columns, two bell towers, and a majestic central dome. Inside, it houses some of Mexico's **most valuable works of religious art**, including the Altar of the Kings, covered in gold leaf, and the imposing monumental organ.

Its two towers house 35 bells, some of which are over 300 years old; the largest, known as Santa María de Guadalupe, weighs about 13 metric tons.



ORGAN

THE HIGHLIGHTS



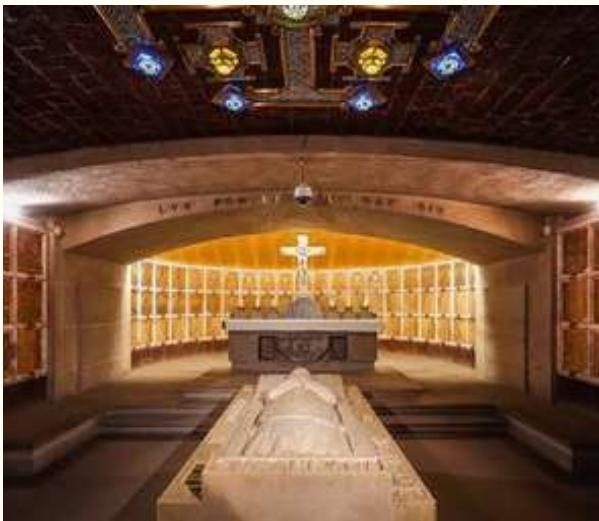
ALTAR OF FORGIVENESS

According to tradition, those who entered here, having repented of their sins, could **receive the sacrament of reconciliation**, or “forgiveness.”



CHOIR

The magnificent wooden choir stalls, among the finest examples of the New Spain Baroque style, feature 59 upper seats and 45 lower seats.



ARCHBISHOPS' CRYPT

Located beneath the Altar of the Kings, this is the resting place of the archbishops and cardinals who have led the Church in Mexico from the colonial era to the present day.



METROPOLITAN SHRINE

It is a separate church connected to the cathedral. Its façade is one of the finest examples of Baroque architecture in Mexico, built of red tezontle and white chiluca stone.



TEMPLO MAYOR

It was the **main ceremonial complex of the Mexica people** and the most important building in Mexico-Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Mexica Empire. It was located in the center of the city, exactly where Mexico City's Historic Center stands today

Construction began shortly after the founding of Tenochtitlan in 1325, and it was expanded in at least seven major phases by various Mexica rulers. Each new tlatoani covered the previous structure with a new, larger, and more monumental one, so the temple **continued to grow for nearly two centuries.**

TLÁLLOC



HUITZILOPOCHTLI

One of the most fascinating features of the Templo Mayor is that it had two temples at the top, each dedicated to one of **the principal Mexica deities**: Huitzilopochtli, god of the sun, patron of the Mexica and of war—necessary for expanding and protecting the empire—and Tláloc, god of rain, water, and fertility—indispensable for agriculture and feeding the population.

It is estimated that the Templo Mayor reached a height of 45 meters—equivalent to a 12- or 13-story building—and was painted in various colors, especially red, blue, and white. The temple was part of a vast walled ceremonial complex that covered **nearly 15 hectares** and contained around **78 buildings**, including several temples, altars, a ball court, and priestly schools.

When Hernán Cortés and his men arrived in Tenochtitlan in 1519, they were impressed by **the size and beauty** of the Templo Mayor. In their letters to King Charles I, they described a city with wide avenues, canals, markets, and temples, comparable to European cities of the time. After the fall of Tenochtitlan in 1521, the conquerors destroyed much of the temple and reused its stones to build the colonial buildings that today surround the Zócalo, including the Metropolitan Cathedral.



For centuries, it was believed that the Templo Mayor had **disappeared**; however, in 1978, workers were excavating on Guatemala Street when they discovered the enormous **monolith of Coyolxauhqui**. This discovery led to the creation of the Templo Mayor Archaeological Project. Thanks to the excavations, hundreds of structures and sculptures, as well as thousands of offerings, were unearthed.

HIGHLIGHTS OF TEMPLO MAYOR MUSEUM



COYOLXAUHQUI'S MONOLITH

Goddess of the Moon, sister of Huitzilopochtli.
It is more than 3.2 meters in diameter.



TLALTECUHTLI'S MONOLITH

Deity of the earth. It measures 4.17 × 3.62 meters and weighs about 12 metric tons.



XIUHCÓATL (FIRE SERPENT)

The legendary weapon of Huitzilopochtli, with which he defeated Coyolxauhqui and the Centzon Huitznáhuac



HUEY TZOMPANTLI

A ceremonial structure where the skulls of sacrificed individuals were strung up for public display.

THE LEGEND OF HUITZILOPOCHTLI & COYOLXAUHQUI

The goddess **Coatlicue** ("The one with the Skirt of Serpents") became miraculously pregnant when a ball of feathers descended from the sky and landed on her chest. This event enraged her daughter **Coyolxauhqui**, the goddess of the Moon, and her 400 children, known as the **Centzon Huitznáhuac**, who represented the stars of the south.

Convinced that their mother had brought dishonor upon the family, Coyolxauhqui gathered her siblings to climb the hill of Coatepec and **kill Coatlicue** before the baby was born. However, during the attack, another miracle occurred: **Huitzilopochtli was born fully armed**, with a shield and a fire serpent named Xiuhcōatl. Newborn, Huitzilopochtli **defeated his siblings**. He beheaded and dismembered Coyolxauhqui, whose remains rolled down the hillside. He then pursued the 400 siblings, turning them into the stars in the sky. For the Mexicas, **this myth represented the dawn**: the daily triumph of the Sun (Huitzilopochtli) over the Moon (Coyolxauhqui) and the stars (the 400 siblings).

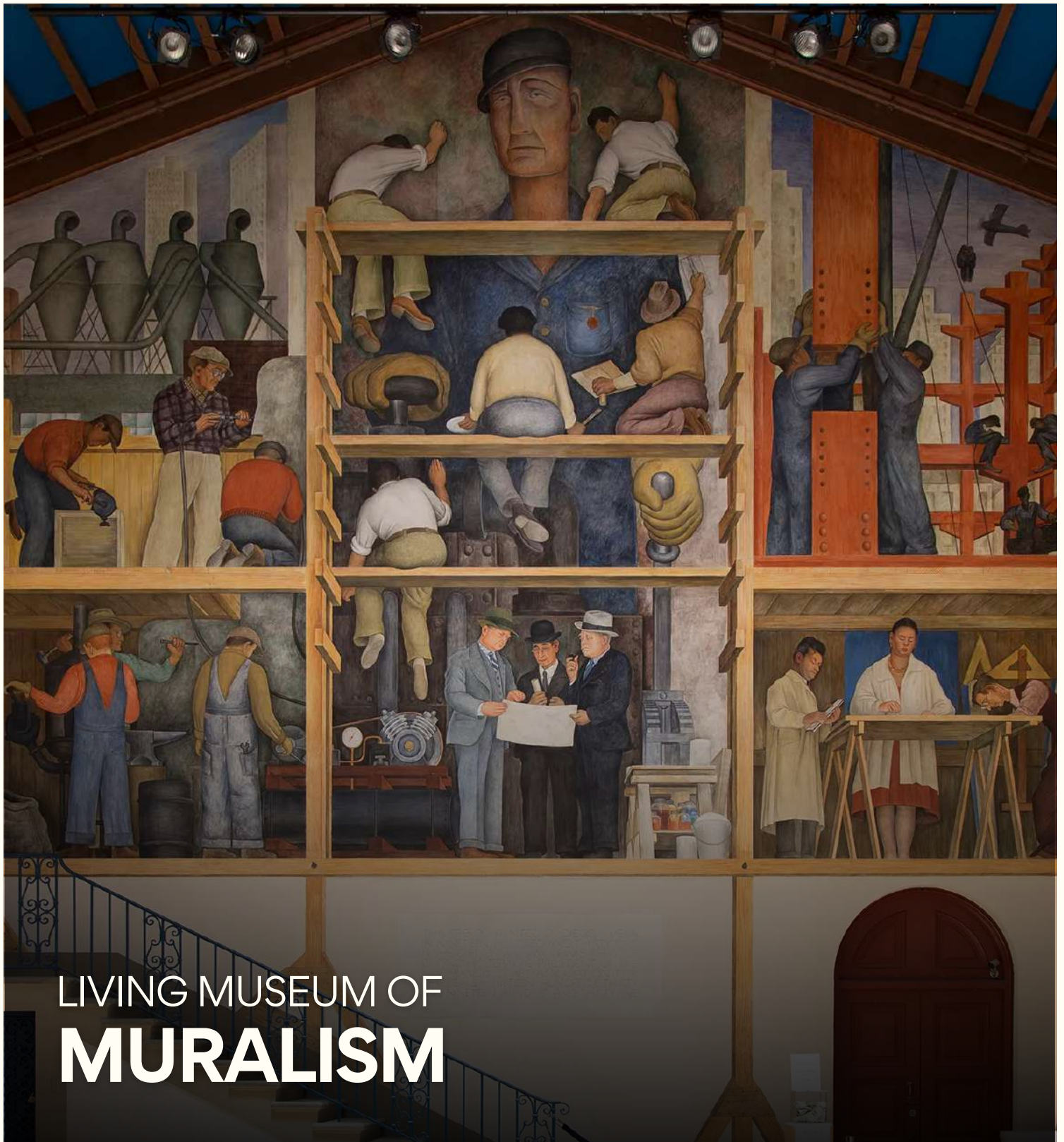
This legend served as the **inspiration for the design of the Templo Mayor**. The enormous monolith of Coyolxauhqui was placed at the foot of the staircase dedicated to Huitzilopochtli. During certain ceremonies, the bodies of the sacrificial victims were carried down the staircase, symbolically reenacting Coyolxauhqui's fall from the hill of Coatepec.



Left: Huitzilopochtli is born from Coatlicue, armed with the xiuhcōatl, "serpent of fire," and tlatzontectli, "arrows." Right: Huitzilopochtli fighting the centzonhuitznáhuac. Florentine Codex, Book III, fol. 3v.



Sculpture of Coatlicue, National Museum of Anthropology in Chapultepec Forest.



LIVING MUSEUM OF MURALISM

Its goal is to introduce the public to the Mexican muralist movement and highlight **one of the country's most important collections of murals**. The museum doesn't just display murals: the building itself is considered a historical and artistic treasure of immense value. The building is also part of Mexico City's Historic Center, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This museum does not move the murals to an exhibition hall. Instead, it invites visitors to **walk through the same hallways, courtyards, and rooms where they were conceived more than a century ago**. This allows visitors to appreciate the works in their original context and understand the vision of Diego Rivera and José Vasconcelos: that art should be accessible to the entire population and form part of everyday life.



DIEGO RIVERA

One of Mexico's most important artists and a **leading figure in Mexican muralism**. His works tell the story of Mexico, pre-Hispanic cultures, the Mexican Revolution, the lives of peasants and workers, as well as ideals of social justice. **He painted more than 230 mural panels** in the building of the Ministry of Public Education. He believed that art should belong to the people, which is why he preferred to paint in public buildings rather than solely in galleries.



JOSÉ VASCONCELOS

Mexican philosopher, writer, lawyer, and educator. He was **Mexico's first Secretary of Public Education**. After the Mexican Revolution, the country had a high illiteracy rate. José Vasconcelos **believed that art could teach history, values, and national identity even to those who could not read**. For this reason, he invited artists such as Diego Rivera to decorate public buildings with large murals so that everyone could see them.



LAYOUT OF THE MURALS



WORK COURTYARD

Here, **Mexico's working and productive world** was depicted through scenes featuring laborers, miners, blacksmiths, farmers, artisans, and teachers.

One of the best-known murals is **La Maestra Rural** (The Rural Teacher), a symbol of the effort to bring education to the country's most remote communities.

FESTIVAL COURTYARD

This courtyard showcases **the most joyful and colorful aspects of Mexican culture**, such as the Day of the Dead, folk festivals, traditional dances, markets, music, fairs, and indigenous celebrations.

Its purpose was to highlight the country's immense **cultural richness**.



HISTORIC HALLS

- José Vasconcelos's Office.
- The Ibero-American Hall.
- The Benito Juárez Hall.
- The Justo Sierra Hall.
- The Zapata Hall.

OTHER AREAS

- 📖 Aurora Reyes Flores library
- 📖 Luz Jiménez children's reading room
- 📖 Bookstore
- 🎤 Auditorium

THE MURALISTS

In addition to Diego Rivera, the museum also displays works by other great muralists:

DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS



ROBERTO MONTENEGRO



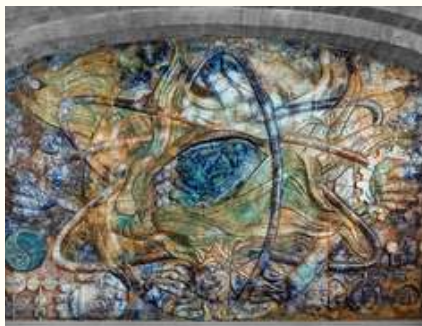
AURORA REYES



JEAN CHARLOT



LUIS NISHIZAWA

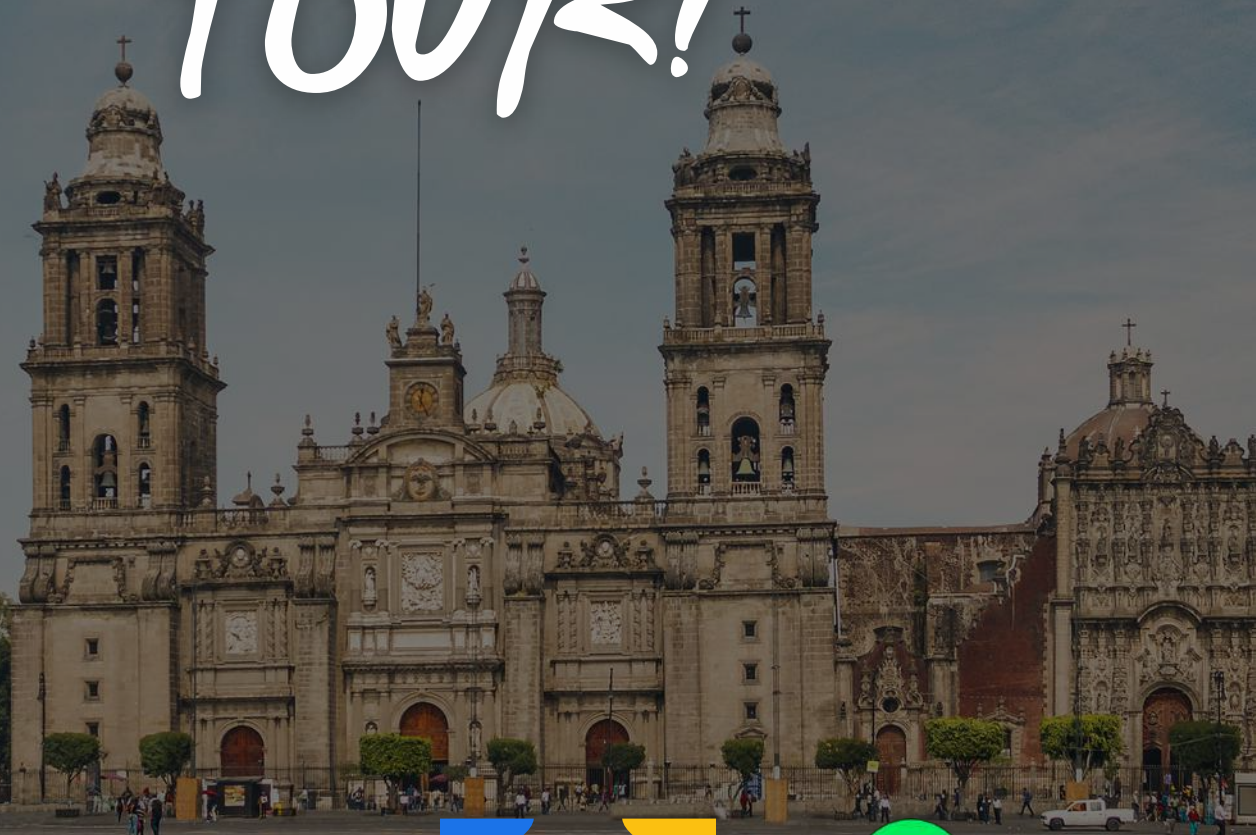


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