

Celebrate Christmas holidays in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, part one

For a memorable and festive Christmas holiday, the colonial city of San Miguel tops many a traveler's list.

Boasting year-round Spring-like temperatures, San Miguel provides visitors with a powerful mix of small town friendliness peppered with the cosmopolitan pleasures of a colonial Mexican city. Festivities begin on December 16 with the traditional "Las Posadas." Church bells ring. Processions abound. Fireworks explode. Children swing at pinatas on the Plaza Principal. Holiday rituals are reenacted outdoors as families and neighbors in traditional costumes march through the streets with caballeros on horseback in the lead. It all comes to an end on January 17 with the seasonal Blessing of the Animals.



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Reflecting the city's convergence of art, cuisine and culture, San Miguel's shops, restaurants and cafes are especially festive this time of year. The city's musical pace reaches a crescendo with spontaneous live music emanating from the plaza's open arcades as mariachi bands gather. The State Orchestra performs gratis on the plaza in front of San Miguel's storied cathedral. Cafes host classical guitar solo serenades. Shops and art galleries vie for gift buyers' pesos with brilliant displays of original artistic creations and exhibits. It's a great time to find unusual gifts while gaining insight into the local culture.

Where to Stay: From cozy casitas to opulent haciendas, San Miguel offers travelers an abundance of choices. First time visitors, especially, would be wise to choose accommodations in or near El Centro, thus maximizing time spent enjoying the myriad activities centered on the main square and the cobblestone streets fanning out from the center. **Here are my two personal favorites:**

Dos Casas: Behind an unassuming facade just three blocks from the Playa Principal, [Dos Casas](#), meaning two houses in Spanish, links contemporary luxury with elegant Spanish colonial architecture. Seven guest suites boast canopy four-poster beds and fireplaces. From each room views open onto vine-draped courtyards. Atop the spacious roof lounge, a bird's eye view of San Miguel and its fabled churches unfolds.



Though intimate in size, one could easily enjoy three meals a day in the hotel's gourmet restaurant. Eating breakfast at [Dos Casas](#) is akin to being served all your favorite specialty foods from an organic market, cooked to order. Each day, the hotel's on-site kitchen prepares homemade marmalade and jams made from fresh fruit, red and green tomatillos, guava, rose hips, jalapenos and more, all sweet and piquant.

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Order mini-tastings with a side dish of goat milk yogurt and house-made bread. It all comes to your table with a gracious dollop of traditional old world hospitality. Equally superb are the lunch and dinner menus. After a day spent browsing the Mercado, and the surrounding silversmith jewelry shops, Dos Casas' intimate Writers' Bar offers a calm oasis in which to transition into the evening's activities.



Look for more tips - including my other recommended lodging- in San Miguel in [Part Two..](#)