

## **MORELIA**

Delighting with stunning buildings like the cathedral will simply be sensational!

It is an example of majesty throughout the continent, its very well laid out centre, its historical monuments that stand out for their beauty as well as the harmony of the complexes and different architectural styles and its squares make the old Valladolid an excellent example of heritage for the world.

To delight the eye with imposing buildings such as the cathedral, the Clavijero Palace, the former College of St. Nicholas or the Government Palace will simply be sensational. Inscribed on the World Heritage List on 13 December 1991

### **City Heritage**

271 hectares, 219 blocks, 15 squares and 1,113 monuments constitute the Historic Center of Morelia, which is a complex of great value for the formal characteristics of its buildings, and for the harmony, constructive quality and plastic unity that represent the different architectural styles, which are living testimony to the history of Mexican architecture.

## **EXPLORE THE CITY**

### **Morelos Birth House Museum**

It's a historical building of neoclassical style, is the place where was born, on September 30, 1765, the hero of the Independence of Mexico, Jose Maria Teclo Morelos Perez y Pavon, better known as Jose Maria Morelos y Pavon, favorite son of the ancient Valladolid and for which the city bears the current name of Morelia, since September 12, 1828.

It exhibits documents and belongings of Generalísimo Morelos and has a library and auditorium. Among the objects on display are documents with the holographic signature of Morelos, coins that the hero had minted and several paintings related to it, especially those made by Alfredo Zalce.

Schedule: Monday to Sunday from 9:00 to 20:00 hrs.

Location: La Corregidora #113, corner of García Obeso, Historic Center, Morelia.

Contact: Tel. 01 443 312 2793

### **Cathedral of Morelia**

Its construction began on August 6, 1660. It was designed by the Italian architect Vicencio Barroso de la Escayola. It was completed in the year 1744, 84 years later.

Because of its height, 66.8 meters, the towers of the Cathedral of Morelia are positioned in fourth place among the highest in Mexico, on which stand two crosses, one of iron, which symbolizes the divine nature of Christ, and the other of stone, which represents the human nature of Jesus.

The Cathedral of Morelia is dedicated to the Transfiguration of the Lord, so you can see this biblical passage in the relief that is in the center of the main doorway of the building, as well as inside, behind the main altar is a monumental oil painting, work of the Morellian Jesus Perez Busta, which combines the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ painted by Michelangelo with a panoramic view of the city of Morelia in

One of the characteristics that makes the Morelian Cathedral even more special is its monumental tubular organ, "San Gregorio Magno", in the Churrigueresque style, with 4600 flutes, it was made in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century and is the second largest in Mexico, surpassed by the organ of the Cathedral of Zamora, Michoacán. The quality of its sound is such that it is one of the best in this continent.

Schedule: Monday to Sunday from 9:00 to 21:00 hrs.

Location: Av Francisco I. Madero Pte S/N, Centro, 58000 Morelia, Michoacán.

### **House of Culture**

The complex formed by the Temple and the former Convent of El Carmen is one of the oldest and most monumental in the city of Morelia. Its construction began in 1593 and lasted until 1619. It has a unique architectural style, born from the Spain of the counter-reform, which mixes the sobriety of the Herrerian with a restrained European Baroque style.

Because of the large size of this complex, which covers the entire block, it sometimes served as a prison, parking lot for cleaning trucks, commercial warehouses, and bus station. Between 1974 and 1976, it was recovered, restored and the Casa de la Cultura was founded there.

At present, in what were once the sober cells of the friars, different artistic workshops are held, or they function as exhibition halls and classrooms for art and culture. The refectory, still with 17th century frescoes, the dressing room, which is now a library, the bookstore, famous in the region for offering the most varied and extensive offer of cultural, regional, ethnic and classical music, and the famous Museo de la Máscara (Mask Museum), where two large collections with pieces from 20 Mexican states are exhibited.

Schedule: Monday to Friday from 10:00 to 14:00 and from 16:00 to 20:00, Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 to 14:00 and from 16:00 to 18:00

Location: Av Morelos Norte 485, Historic Center, 58000 Morelia, Michoacán

Contact: Tel. 01 (443) 312 8898

## **College of San Nicolás de Hidalgo**

The building of the Colegio de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, located in the heart of the city of Morelia, was built in the seventeenth century during the viceroyalty period and has since functioned as an educational institution, first under the name of Real Colegio de San Nicolás Obispo and later as Colegio de San Nicolás de Hidalgo. It was one of the most important study centres in New Spain. It currently houses a high school dependent on the Universidad Michoacana.

In this place he studied, taught and was the rector Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who contributed to making the school an avant-garde place in the artistic and scientific aspects. The building underwent various reconstructions throughout its life, although the façade managed to preserve a certain sober baroque style, which harmonizes with the rest of the surrounding buildings. The school had two types of students: boarders, who were Spanish and lived there, and outsiders, who were indigenous and mestizo, whose parents had worked on the construction of the building that housed the institution in Patzcuaro. Thus, its function was to acculturate the indigenous population in the foreground.

In 1887, President Porfirio Díaz donated the monument dedicated to Miguel Hidalgo to the school, which since then has been the center of the main courtyard. The monument was inaugurated on September 15 of that year as part of the commemorative celebrations of National Independence. The statue is the work of the sculptor Primitivo Miranda and the pedestal of the engineer Gustavo Roth.

In 1930 the building of the Colegio de San Nicolás de Hidalgo was declared a National Monument. In 1932 the two murals located on the side walls of the second floor of the building were painted, one entitled "The defence of sovereignty" and the other entitled "The Constitution of Apatzingán", both by the artist Fermín Revueltas, originally from the state of Durango. In 1934, the mural entitled "The Life of the Tarascan People" was painted on the front wall on the second floor of the schoolyard courtyard by artist Marion Greenwood.

Some of the school's outstanding students are Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, José María Morelos y Pavón, Ignacio López Rayón, José Sixto Verduzco, José María Izazaga and Melchor Ocampo, whose heart, books and other objects that belonged to this naturalist, politician and ideologue of the Reformation era are preserved in the room that bears his name.

Schedule: Monday to Friday during school hours, Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 to 17:00 hrs.

Location: Avenida Francisco I. Madero Poniente, Historic Center, 58000 Morelia, Michoacán.

Contact: 01 (443) 312 01 67

## **Source of fertility (the-tarascas)**

At the meeting point of the Aqueduct and Calle Real, today Avenida Francisco I. Madero, is the most famous fountain in the city of Morelia: the Fuente de las Tarascas. A bronze sculpture dating from 1984, depicting three Purepecha women with their torso uncovered, carrying a

large tray full of fruit, is speculated to refer to the indigenous princesses Atzimba, Eréndira and Tzetzangari.

In 1931, the municipal president of Morelia, Major Rafael Miguel Pedrajo, ordered the construction of the first Fuente de las Tarascas, the work of the plastic artist Antonio Silva Díaz and the sculptor Benigno Lara. The sculpture was made of cement and iron rods, adorned with different colours, placed on a fountain decorated with snails as a representation of man (in native hieroglyphics) that declared their handmade nature. This source remained in place for 34 years.

Just after the fountain was placed it had no name, and the people began to call it the Fountain of the Indies; later it took the name of "Fountain of the Tarascas" because it was the state of Michoacán, the purépecha territory par excellence, and according to Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, the Purépecha people were given the name of Tarasco.

At first, the image of three half-naked women was not very pleasing to the Morelians, but little by little it became part of the city and the people. At the beginning of 1967, the monument was removed from its place and moved to the State Public Works warehouse. The following year, it was taken to the city's Fairgrounds, located at the exit to Salamanca.

The current Fuente de las Tarascas is the work of the sculptor José Luis Padilla Retana and was placed in its place on 18 May 1984, according to the plaque alluding to the fact that it was placed at the base of the sculpture.

As a curious fact, the old sculpture of Las Tarascas can be found in the current Exhibition Centre located at the exit to Charo.

### **Public Library of the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo**

The building that houses today the University Public Library was originally the temple, which during the time of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, was part of the convent complex of the Society of Jesus in Valladolid, today Morelia, which also included the annex Colegio de San Francisco Javier, today Centro Cultural Clavijero.

The building dates from the seventeenth century and has the baroque style of the time, is built in a pink quarry and has a Latin cross plan, the main facade of the building is facing east where we find on the window of the choir the figure of the pelican, related to the sacrifice of Christ to redeem humanity, because it is said that lacking fish, this bird used to bleed his chest with the beak to feed his

In what used to be the atrium of the temple there is a garden with two small quarry fountains in an eclectic style, as well as planters with bronze busts of characters related to the University of Michoacán: Manuel Martínez Solórzano, Natalio Vázquez Pallares, and a small obelisk in quarry on the south side.

The Biblioteca Pública Universitaria was founded in 1930, and preserves an ancient bibliographic collection of 22,901 volumes, from the 15th to the beginning of the 20th century. It is considered the third largest antique collection in Mexico owned by public universities. As a

museum, these volumes are exhibited on 3 floors of antique shelving made of fine wood and are only available to researchers and historians.

### **Palace of Clavijero Old College of San Francisco Javier**

The Palacio Clavijero is one of the most important architectural monuments of the city; its large courtyard, with seven arches on each side, is the largest among the Jesuit buildings in Mexico.

This majestic baroque style building dates from the mid-17th century and was originally the headquarters of the Jesuit school of San Francisco Xavier, a function that it performed until 1767. It even had the most innovative educational infrastructure: classrooms, laboratories, astronomical observatories and library.

Since its remodeling and opening, it has hosted a series of important exhibitions of great historical, anthropological and artistic value, with works by Diego Rivera, Javier Marín, Feliciano Béjar and Francisco Toledo, to name but a few.

As a curious fact, one of his students was the young Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla and among those who taught at this school is the New Spanish scientist, historian and philosopher Francisco Xavier Clavijero, whose name was already taken in our time for the building.

Schedule: Tuesday to Sunday: 10:00 to 18:00 hrs

Location: El Nigromante #79, Historic Center, Morelia.

Contact: Tel. 01 (443) 312 04 12 and 01 (443) 313 44 23

### **Alfredo Zalce Museum of Contemporary Art**

The building that occupies the museum is a late nineteenth century mansion with two levels and surrounded by gardens. It was founded as an art gallery by a group of artists of the entity among which was J. Jesús Escalera and Manuel Aguilar de la Torre, opening on September 30, 1971 under the name "Galería de Arte Contemporáneo de Michoacán". In 1972 it changed its name to "Museo de Arte Contemporáneo" and from 1993 it was renamed Alfredo Zalce (MACAZ), in honour of this Michoacan artist. The building has been remodeled several times, the first between 1980 and 1984, the second between 1998 and 1999, and the last in 2013.

The MACAZ collection of more than 3,800 plastic works includes a selection of works by the painter Efraín Vargas and other contemporary artists from both Michoacán and Mexico; however, due to the small space of the building, the works are not permanently exhibited in the museum, so they are kept in warehouses and temporary exhibitions are held continuously.

Schedule: monday to friday of 10:00 to 20:00 hrs. Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from 10:00 to 18:00 hrs.

Location: Aqueduct 18, Historic Center, 58000 Morelia, Michoacán

Contact: Tel. 01 (443) 312 5404 and 01 (443) 312 4544

### **Sanctuary of Guadalupe (Temple of San Diego)**

It is an 18th century building with a sober Baroque façade. Its construction lasted eight years, starting in 1708 and ending in 1716. He belonged to the Franciscan Order of the Diegans.

The characteristic that makes this temple special is its interior magnificently decorated by the local craftsman Joaquín Orta in 1915, full of diverse floral forms where pink, red and gold colors predominate. The opulent decoration that can be seen on walls, vaults and domes is a combination of the clay sculpture technique of the indigenous tradition with the European plasterwork technique.

In the viceregal period, the temple was located on the outskirts of Valladolid, as the city of Morelia used to be called, so a pedestrian walkway was ordered to be built to lead directly to the church in 1732, the Calzada de Fray Antonio de San Miguel.

Location: Avenida Tata Vasco s/n, Historic Center, Morelia, Michoacán

### **Equestrian Statue of Patriot Morelos**

The magnificent sculpture that currently adorns the largest square in the city of Morelia, is an equestrian monument of the Generalísimo Don José María Morelos y Pavón, in honor of whom the large garden, formerly called the "Alameda", bears the name, and by which the City changed its name.

The work was made by the Italian sculptor Giuseppe Inghilleri. Made in bronze, the horse shows a raised front leg which means that the character who mounts it died shot, this sculpture rests on a thick quarry pedestal adorned with allegorical sculptures representing the homeland and freedom, as well as a pair of reliefs also in bronze representing the Site of Cuautla and the promulgation of the Constitution of Apatzingán.

Location: Plaza Jardín Morelos: Avenida Acueducto corner with Tata Vasco, Historic Center, Morelia.

### **Palace of Justice**

The old Palace of Justice, in Morelia, is a beautiful building with a French façade and an eclectic style that today functions as the Museum and Historical Archive of the Judicial Branch of Michoacán. This was the first Historical Museum of the Judicial Branch in Mexico and was inaugurated on May 18, 2004.

In the place where this building is located today, the Governing Board of the Spaniards was established in the old Valladolid, which is why it was called the Town Hall, which functioned until the time of Independence.

Around 1812, the building functioned as a Mint, where copper coins were minted with the emblem of the Army of the South, commanded by Don José María Morelos y Pavón.

After the integral remodeling of 1884, the front building was established as the formal seat of the Supreme Court of Justice of Michoacán as the "Palace of Justice".

Schedule: Monday to Friday from 10:00 to 13:00 and 17:00 to 19:00 hrs.

Location: Portal Allende #267, Historic Center, Morelia, Michoacan.

Contact: Tel. 01 (443) 310-95-12

### **Church of Capuchinas**

This architectural complex belonged to the Order of the Capuchin Poor Clare Sisters and was intended for the religious daughters of the indigenous chieftains of the region, since they could not enter the same convents as the Spanish or Creole women.

The building does not have the distinctive characteristics of a temple for nuns because the Order took advantage of an 18th century construction to establish the convent; however, thanks to constant remodeling and architectural styles, the site had functionality for the Order. The original convent was demolished in the early 20th century and a neoclassical building was built in its place.

Timetable: Free

Location: Calle Juan Ortega y Montañez No. 242, Centro, 58000 Morelia, Michoacán.

### **Antigua Alhondiga de Morelia**

The building was originally built to house the city's grains, a function it maintained and was known as such throughout the 18th century.

In the 19th century the structure was modified to become part of the city's prison, so many legends circulate around this building.

It was the Belgian engineer Guillermo Wodon de Sorinne who was commissioned to make the modifications to the building to make it look as it does today.

On the façade of the building is the eclectic style, which makes it a unique construction in a Historic Center, prominently baroque.

Inside you can see murals depicting the war of independence, and passages from the struggle of the prodigal son of Morelia, José María Morelos y Pavón.

### **Aqueduct**

One of the most representative architectural elements of the city of Morelia is, without a doubt, the Aqueduct. This architectural piece dates from the end of the 18th century and stands out for its construction quality, design and aesthetic and artistic appreciation.

The Aqueduct of Morelia is the one that is kept in the best state of conservation and has the largest original structure of those that remain in Mexico. It was a very important element for the Historic Center of Morelia to be declared a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1991.

The Aqueduct was in operation until 1910. It has a length of about 1700 meters and has 253 arches that reach a height of almost 8 meters at its highest point.

As a curious fact, the Aqueduct of Morelia is present on the back of the 50 peso bills.