

Church of San Francisco in Mexico City

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The highly-ornate facade of a Catholic church sits at the end of a sunken courtyard. Several people are walking toward the stone entrance of the three story church. The church of San Francisco is a small colonial church built in the sixteenth century by some of the first Catholic missionaries to arrive in the new Spanish colony. Originally, the building acted as a monastery as well as a church, and it also was the site of one of Mexico's first schools of arts and trades. Importantly, the school was established to educate Indian youths to enable them to participate in the growing colonial system. Mexico City is the capital of the country of Mexico. It is known as the D.F., or Distrito Federal (Federal District). When Cortes and his Spanish conquistadors destroyed the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan in 1521, they built their new city on the foundation of the old. The original city was built on an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco. The lake has since dried up, as the city has grown to be one of the largest in the world. The sprawling city continues to grow and incorporate surrounding areas. These areas may retain much of their rural character for a while, before being fully integrated into the urban city.



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