

COLONIA JUÁREZ, MEXICO CITY

This once abandoned

While trendy Roma could be described as the Shoreditch of Mexico City, Colonia Juárez is its even cooler, personality-packed cousin. Known simply as La Juárez to locals, this triangle-shaped *barrio* starts from the outer corner of the vast Bosque de Chapultepec park and is bordered by busy Avenida Paseo de la Reforma to the north and Avenida Chapultepec to the south. Filled with art galleries, independent boutiques plus a new wave of cafés, world-class bars and restaurants housed in French colonial buildings, its appeal lies in its diversity. Here, traditional Mexican *fonda* eateries run by families who have lived here for decades sit side by side joints influenced by the large Japanese and Korean communities. Lively and colourful without a whiff of pretension or the price tags of nearby Condesa and Polanco, it's a great base for exploring the city's historic centre, with the iconic Zócalo main square and Palacio de Bellas Artes a short taxi ride away.

THE HISTORY

Once the most exclusive area in Mexico City, La Juárez was a hub for the wealthy elite in the late 19th century. One of the first residential areas with electricity, it developed a buzzy night scene, the spirit of which lives on today. The Mexican Revolution brought the end of its heyday, with many people abandoning homes and moving to Polanco.

In the 1960s, the area was revived when artists and writers began to move to the Zona Rosa, creating a bohemian feel and boosting culture with art galleries and bookshops. While the economic crisis and a devastating earthquake in 1985 led to further decline,

WHERE TO STAY

By far the swankiest address in the neighbourhood, the **Four Seasons Hotel Mexico City** fourseasons.com is a place to escape the buzz of the city, with a room and private balcony overlooking its tree-lined inner courtyard. A short hop from the park, expect an urban oasis with filled with tropical greenery, a peaceful rooftop pool and lush terrace. It's also home to Fifty Mils Bar, which draws a crowd for its classic and creative cocktails.

For a more low-key, boutique hotel vibe, book a room at **Stara Hamburgo**

starahotels.com a modernised colonial Spanish townhouse with quirky art and design features and plenty of exposed brickwork. The roof garden restaurant is a particularly relaxing spot for sundowners with views across the city. And just across Avenida Paseo de la Reforma is **Hotel Carlota** hotelcarlota.mx one of the city's trendiest boutique addresses, which is also home to famed Mexican pastry chef Sofía Cortina.

Clockwise, from top left: ode to the city; Juárez has an arty vibe; The Four Seasons Hotel; the hotel is a calm oasis in the city; relaxing in the street; the Palacio de Bellas Artes is one of the cultural highlights nearby; if you like it hot, you're in the right place; once in decline, the streets are now bustling with activity



Photos by Anders Schønnemann; Gabe Rebra/Unsplash; Christian Horan

barrio, victim to the Eighties financial crisis, is enjoying a bohemian revival. Laura Price discovers its heart and soul



the neighbourhood is seeing a gradual revival as top chefs choose the spot for exciting new openings, and arty types move back in, due to rising rents in Condesa and Roma.

WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

La Juárez offers plenty on the food front, with projects from some of the country's best chefs, but this isn't dining Polanca-style – while quality local ingredients lead, it's more laid-back here.

Start with coffee and *concha* bread – or eggs with herbs like epazote or *jocoque* (fermented yoghurt) – on the leafy terrace at **Café Nin** cafenin.com.mx a relaxed bakery from the lauded Elena Reygadas, whose flagship Panadería Rosetta is renowned. Beside it sits **Havre 77** havre77.mx a French-leaning brunch spot in a heritage space from fellow top chef Lalo García. Northeast is natural wine bar and farm-to-table restaurant **Amaya** amayamexico.com from the pioneering Jair Téllez. And, after the success of their 'dining fine' modern Latin American pop-up **Flavo**, up-and-coming chef Ricardo Verdejo and sommelier Anna Condax have just launched on Calle Dinamarca.

A stone's throw from the iconic Angel of Independence statue is Koreatown, a hub of Asian markets and restaurants. Make for **Goguina** goguina.com a lively Korean barbecue joint, or **Biwon** for traditional bibimbap.

For a taste of local history, stop by old-school **Café La Habana** for coffee and *chilaquiles* (breakfast tortillas) where Che Guevara and Fidel Castro are said to have planned the Cuban Revolution.

Round things off speakeasy-style with a mezcal-based riff on a Negroni Sbagliato at **Hanky Panky** hankypanky.mx where in-the-know chefs and bartenders hang out until late. Don't be put off by the members-only tag – it's open to all.

