

MAGIC OF MEXICO

SOLOS ONLY 40 Years and Over



17 DAYS / 16 NIGHTS

This is a trip jam-packed with culture, colour and authentic experiences while discovering the magic from Mexico City to the Yucatán Peninsula. As your discovery comes to a close, enjoy the relaxed pace of the Caribbean with your final two nights of stay at Playa del Carmen.

Begin your adventure in the pulsating Mexico City, a melting pot of history and culture where the ancient past and contemporary present blend uniquely as if with a foot in both worlds. From Mexico City, take a flight to the beautiful city of Oaxaca. The city is World Heritage listed with fine examples of archeological sites and a captivating colonial setting. As your discovery continues to San Cristobal de las Casas, you'll find a marked contrast from the cities before, and this city in the state of Chiapas, a highland community with a distinct and colourful indigenous Mayan culture, plus an awe inspiring visit to the Sumidero Canyon.

Then onwards to Palenque to visit an incredible Mayan site, before reaching the Yucatan Peninsula that spans across three states and boasts ancient ruins, rainforests, underground caves, and traditional haciendas. Stays in the state of Yucatan include Campeche, Merida, Chichén Itzá and Playa del Carmen.

Touring highlights includes the perks of a small group with a professional tour guide escort, authentic dining,

enriched cultural discoveries and the diversity of visits and stays in cities, and small towns. There is also the premium inclusion of a flight between Mexico City to Oaxaca to ease the burden of long road travel.

October 2023 dates connect with >>
Vivid Guatemala 8 days / 7 nights

FELLOW TRAVELLERS

You will enjoy this group experience with a maximum of 16 travellers. This is a Solos Only tour (couple free). You are welcome to join with a friend, but couples do not join this tour.



TOUR INCLUSIONS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

- 16 nights hotel stay (superior 3 & 4 star)
- 16 breakfasts
- Special Café Package, Mexico City hotel stay days 1-3 ^
- 5 lunches; three course set menu including a bottle of water or soft drink
- 3 dinners; including 2 highlight dinners, and with a glass of house wine, beer or waterFood tastings in Coyocan
- Bottled water during tour days
- 1 welcome drink on day one

SIGHTSEEING & GUIDES

- Entrance fees for visits stated in the itinerary
- Bilingual English & Spanish speaking locally based tour guide, escorting the group day 1 to day 15
- Tipping for tour personnel; group guide, group drivers, local guides, bellboys and room attendants
- Private group touring and driver/s

TRAVEL

- Touring vehicle with air conditioning
- Private boat tour, Mexico City
- Private boat tour Sumidero Canyon
- One way economy airfare Mexico City to Oaxaca
- Arrival transfer Mexico City International Airport to group hotel #

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- Portage in and out of hotels included where available
- Small group, not more than 16 travellers

Meet all flights on day 1 of tour, or pre tour if booked group hotel with us as part of your package

Travel insurance is a mandatory requirement for joining this tour.

Not included:

- International airfares (unless requested)
- Departure airport transfer
- Travel insurance
- Excess baggage
- Visa fees if applicable
- Any tips not mentioned with inclusions
- Meals and beverages not specified on itinerary
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry & medical expenses
- Incidental expenses such as taxi fares, telecommunications

TOP 5 REASONS TO JOIN

1. Age-matched holiday groups
2. Travel with like-minded solo travellers
3. Small groups
4. Early bird savings with many tours
5. Roommate matching option

ABOUT US

At Encounter Travel we offer holiday groups for solo travellers. All trips are age-matched so there's more chance you'll share your journey with like minded travellers. Visiting destinations across Australia and around the globe, choose from short escapes to adventure trips and leisurely touring.

We are a multi award winning tour company; two time winner of the global Solo Travel Awards, winner in the Australian Travel Awards 2019 in the specialist category, LUXLife 2021 Hospitality Best Specialist Solo Travel Agency – Australasia, and LUXLife 2022 Travel & Tourism Best Solo Traveller Tour Operator - Australia. We are ATAS accredited and a member of the Australian Council of Tour Operators (CATO). Encounter Travel is a registered trademark of A Rendezvous Group Pty Ltd ABN 23 119 642 992.

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Our website has full trip details and content in this flyer is only a part of the information. For full details please refer to our website.

TRAVEL DATES

25 APR - 11 MAY 2023

10 - 26 OCTOBER 2023

Connects with Vivid Guatemala October 2023

TOUR PRICE Magic of Mexico

Includes your own room (not sharing)

APR 2023: AUD\$8395

OCT 2023: AUD\$8395

SHARE & SAVE:

Ask us about our share and save option with our roommmate matching option.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Easy pace arrival with a three night stay Mexico City
- Group welcome dinner at one of the oldest restaurants in North America
- Visit Frida Kahlo Museum 'Casa Azul'; Frida Kahlo - an iconic art figure of Mexican history
- Visit a traditional neighbourhood, Coyoacan
- Succumb to the tranquillity of the the Xochimilco Canals with a scenic journey through the ancient waters on a traditional pre-Hispanic boat
- Three nights in World Heritage Listed city of Oaxaca
- Take a trip from Oaxaca to Monte Alban site
- Experience Sumidero Canyon, featuring vertical walls as high as 100 metres on a private boat tour
- Be enchanted by the colonial town of San Cristobal de las Casas
- Visit the largest Mayan township of Chiapas, San Juan Chamula rich in the traditional culture of the indigenous people of the region
- Witness the spectacular Agua Azul falls
- Visit the Palenque pyramids, one of the



most popular sites for tourists visiting from around the world

- Tour Uxmal, a world heritage site and one the most magnificent of ruins
- Enjoy a traditional lunch at a local Mayan family restaurant
- Stay in Merida, one of the Yucatan Peninsula's most authentic towns
- Visit the iconic and UNESCO Heritage site, Chitzen Itza
- Visit Hacienda Sotuta de Peon, what was once a fully operational Henequen Hacienda
- Enjoy traditional, regional cuisine included with meals, throughout the itinerary
- Visit the leading archaeological sites of the Mayan world
- Enjoy a two night stay in Playa del

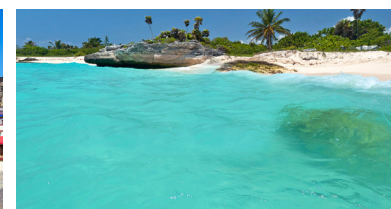
Carmen, with leisure time to soak up the Caribbean seaside location

PRE AND POST TOUR STAY

Consider arriving a day before the tour starts or staying on after the tour ends. The cost of the additional night/s of stay applies. Ask our travel team about this option, and the additional costs.

THE PACE [3 out of 5]

There 1,2 and 3 night stays throughout the itinerary. Mexico is a vast country and it's why we opt for the premium inclusion of a flight between Mexico City and Oaxaca.



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THE ITINERARY

DAY 1 Arrival to Mexico City

Bienvenido a Mexico! The day is at your leisure. In the evening we meet for a welcome drink at the hotel with your tour guide, and fellow group members.

Famed the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, Mexico City is one of the most populous and vibrant modern cities in the world. Travellers to Mexico City find themselves in a melting pot of history and culture. Packed full of incredible museums, popular tourist attractions, award-winning restaurants, and endless possibilities for adventures, Mexico City is a world-class destination for visitors.

Meals: Welcome Drink, Café Inclusions

SPECIAL NOTES:

Mexico City hotel stay days includes café food and drinks at no additional charge. The offer excludes room service and orders must be collected from the café. Excludes alcohol. Some other exclusions may apply. (tips not included)

DAY 2 Mexico City Sights & Museum

Today we uncover some of Mexico's Mesoamerican, Colonial, and Revolutionary history, while exploring the historic centre of the capital. We visit the Palace of Fine Arts, the Zócalo area (the city's hub) and the Palacio Nacional. We also enter the Cathedral and visit the Templo Mayor from above. In the afternoon, we visit the National Museum of Anthropology and History, considered one of the world's best museums, holding pieces and artefacts that tell the story of Mexico's great civilisations. Tonight, enjoy a wonderful welcome dinner for authentic Mexican cuisine.

HIGHLIGHT DINNER:

Dinner is in a setting characteristic of Mexico; brightly coloured tiles, handmade furniture, stained glass windows, wall murals and large archways. Housed in a former convent, the restaurant is one of the oldest restaurants in North America's largest city. At all hours, mariachis walk through the dining room serenading guests. The restaurant is rich with corn(maize)-based meals, an indigenous ingredient that survived Spain's 300 years in power, typically used in tamales, atole, and enchiladas.

Meals: Breakfast, Café Inclusions, Welcome Dinner

SNAPSHOT – WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- A day touring the city and sights
- A lunch break back at hotel between morning and afternoon touring
- Highlight group welcome dinner

SPECIAL NOTES

Since the pandemic started, Palacio Nacional does not allow any public visits, it is unclear if they will ever open again to public. If it's not possible instead we will visit the Diego Rivera Mural Museum.

DAY 3 Museo Frida Kahlo, Coyoacan & Xochimilco

This morning we depart to the south of the city to visit Museo Frida Kahlo, otherwise known as Casa Azul (Blue House) where the surrealist artist Frida Kahlo was born, grew up and later lived with her muralist husband Diego Rivera. We then visit Coyoacan, a traditional neighbourhood of pebbled streets, colonial churches, noisy little markets, coffee shops and quiet squares. We will visit the local market, and sample some local snacks such as churros, tostadas and elotes. Our journey continues to the peaceful waters of the Xochimilco Canals. Enjoy a relaxing, scenic journey through these ancient waters on a traditional pre-Hispanic boat past vibrant floating gardens, and little floating kitchens that offer traditional Mexican food.

Meals: Breakfast, Café Inclusions, Food Tastings

SNAPSHOT - WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Museo Frida Kahlo 'The Blue House'
- Visit Coyoacan
- Food tastings/snacks in Coyoacan
- A scenic journey by boat of the Xochimilco Canals

DAY 4 Mexico City to Oaxaca

Today we say goodbye to Mexico City and fly to Oaxaca, another of Mexico's World Heritage cities. With appealing cultural and culinary scenes and a beautiful

colonial core of lovely, tree-shaded streets, Oaxaca is one of Mexico's most captivating cities. Artists and artisans alike are inspired by the area's creative atmosphere, indigenous traditions and bright, clear light. Oaxaca has top-class museums, fascinating markets and its own subtle version of Mexican cuisine. The city boasts beautiful sights such as the main square (Zócalo), the ancient Cathedral, and all of them connected by a charming pedestrian street overlooked by rich colonial buildings.

Later today in Oaxaca, join an easy paced walk from our hotel to the Cathedral; our introduction to beautiful Oaxaca and her beautiful streets.

Meals: Breakfast

SNAPSHOT - WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Avoid long travel distance by road with a one way flight Mexico City to Oaxaca
- Afternoon walking tour, Oaxaca
- Easy paced day with time at leisure

DAY 5 Monte Alban. Oaxaca.

After breakfast, we head out to explore Monte Alban, a significant pre-Columbian archaeological site, a world heritage site and inhabited across 1500 years by the Olmecs, Zapotecs and Mixtecs. We return to Oaxaca City with the afternoon at your leisure to enjoy this picturesque city.

Meals: Breakfast

SNAPSHOT - WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Monte Alban archaeological World Heritage site
- Afternoon at leisure

DAY 6 Explore Oaxaca

As one of Mexico's iconic destinations, we've dedicated a day at leisure to explore more of beautiful Oaxaca at your own pace.

Meals: Breakfast

SNAPSHOT – WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast

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- Day at leisure

DAY 7 Oaxaca – Teotitlan del Valle – Mitla - Tehuantepec

This morning we head to Teotitlan del Valle. This deeply Zapotec community is famous for its rugs woven on hand-operated looms. We meet a family of weavers and are educated on their tradition of weaving. We will also make a stop at a local mezcal distillery, to learn all about it and of course, if you like, to taste some mezcal, fondly referred to by as 'the elixir of the Gods'. Our third visit of the day is Mitla. The name Mitla is derived from the Nahuatl word "Mictlan", which means "Place of the Dead". Archaeological evidence indicates that, the site was actually inhabited as early as 900 BC. Later, enjoy lunch a local traditional restaurant then continue on to reach Tehuantepec for our overnight stay.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

SNAPSHOT – WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Local restaurant for lunch
- Visit a Zapotec community, Teotitlan del Valle
- Visit a mezcal distillery
- Stop to visit Mitla archaeological site
- Local restaurant for lunch
- Transfer by road from Oaxaca to Tehuantepec

DAY 8 Tehuantepec – Sumidero Canyon – San Cristobal de las Casas

Today we travel from Tehuantepec to San Cristobal de las Casas. En route we will explore Cañon del Sumidero. The Sumidero Canyon is a national park located just outside of the capital of Chiapas State, Tuxtla Gutierrez. We make our way by boat through the canyon along the Grijalva River for a boat ride, just short of a few hours, which extends across the states of Chiapas and Tabasco and flows into the Gulf of Mexico. The canyon is home to a plethora of wildlife, including crocodiles, monkeys and marine birds and your guide will be one hand to help you spot them. There are also a number of unusual rock formations to observe as you jet along this blue green river and take in the view of this natural

phenomenon. After the canyon, it's not too far by road to reach San Cristóbal de las Casas (about 65km).

San Cristóbal De Las Casas is a great spot to head out and find a local meal and take in the atmosphere of this charming town in Chiapas state, close to a border of Mexico and Guatemala. It's here in San Cristóbal De Las Casas that tradition and daily life closely resembles parts of Guatemala.

Meals: Breakfast

SNAPSHOT – WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Transfer by road from Tehuantepec to San Cristobal de las Casas
- Visit the Sumidero Canyon including a boat tour

DAY 9 San Cristóbal De Las Casas and Surrounds

After breakfast, we take in a city tour of the cobbled streets. San Cristóbal is characterised by its peaceful and welcoming atmosphere, coupled with an artistic and bohemian flair. The colonial streets and alleyways beg wanderers to explore.

There are many Mayan villages near San Cristóbal and today we visit San Juan Chamula. This is a fascinating typical native town, where the people still keep their traditions, language, customs, beliefs as well as their social structures. Arriving here you feel that you have stepped back five hundred years in time. We visit the church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist. A simple white church with turquoise coloured trim, you find the pagan beliefs of the indigenous Mayan people intermingled with the Catholic faith. Stepping into the dimly lit church you see families in colourful costume huddled in small groups on the floor, praying behind an assortment of candles. The church is illuminated by the soft glow of hundreds of candles. The scene of old customs is by no means a tourist presentation – it's authentic and everyday life for the people of San Juan Chamula. Continuing, we then visit San Lorenzo Zinacantán a town known for its traditional textiles and majority indigenous population. We will visit a local family, where you will have the chance to learn how to make tortillas.

Back in San Cristóbal take in an interactive talk held on Chiapas gastronomy, history and culture at a local restaurant. Your host explains the local ingredients and how the traditional dishes are created. Lunch is taken at the restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

SNAPSHOT – WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Walking tour of San Cristobal de las Casas
- Return transfers by road to nearby villages
- Visit nearby villages San Jaun Chamula and San Lorenzo Zinacantan
- Local family visit in San Lorenzo Zinacantan, and learn how to make tortillas
- Culinary experience at a local restaurant

DAY 10 San Cristobal de las Casas to Palenque

We leave San Cristobal behind and start travelling north towards Palenque. The road weaves around the hills and is windy but with pretty scenery along the way. There is a stop to view the pretty Misol Há waterfall. Film buffs may spot that Misol Há was the waterfall that Arnold Schwarzenegger jumps from in the 1987 film, Predator. You will have the chance to walk along a path underneath the waterfall to feel its power and get soaked by its spray. Next onto the waterfalls of Agua Azul. From Agua Azul, we carry on by road to reach Palenque for our overnight stay.

Meals: Breakfast

SNAPSHOT – WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Road transfer from San Cristobal de las Casas to Palenque
- Visit Misol Há and Agua Azul waterfalls

DAY 11 Palenque to Campeche

This morning we have a guided tour of the impressive Mayan site of Palenque. The jungle-covered complex is one of the most famous in Mexico and is located in

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the low hills of Chiapas. The pyramids, sanctuaries and temples are probably the finest surviving examples of Mayan buildings. In the afternoon, drive to the historic fortified city of Campeche, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which boasts incredibly well preserved colonial architecture. Most impressive are the city walls, built to protect the city from the constant attacks of English and Dutch buccaneers and pirates during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Meals: Breakfast

SNAPSHOT – WHAT’S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Guided tour of the Mayan site of Palenque
- Transfer by road from Palenque to Campeche (about 5 hours)

DAY 12 Campeche - Uxmal - Merida

Depart Campeche for the fascinating Mayan ruins of Uxmal. Uxmal dates back to the late classic period, having been built by the Xiu tribe. We take a traditional lunch at a local Mayan family Restaurant including Pollo Pibil/Cochinita Pibil; a classic meal in the Yucatan peninsula, a true gastronomic jewel! The main ingredient in this dish is the Achiote paste, also known as “Recado Rojo”, an essential ingredient and the base of many dishes in Yucatecan Cuisine.

From Uxmal drive to the bustling colonial city of Mérida. Many of its buildings were constructed using stones from the Mayan city which existed on the site. The city flourished following the conquest and the 19th century homes designed in French style contribute to the attractive appearance of the historical centre. We arrive in the middle to late afternoon.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

SNAPSHOT – WHAT’S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Travel by road Campeche to Uxmal (about 2 hours)
- Visit the ancient site, Uxmal
- Take a tour of the Hacienda Sotuta de Peon
- A traditional lunch
- Travel by road Uxmal to Merida (about 90 minutes)

DAY 13 Merida

From Merida we drive out of the city to reach Hacienda Sotuta de Peon, where you will experience the history of the “green Gold”. This working Hacienda is a restoration project located in the heart of the ancient henequén zone in the Yucatan state, and gives a true glimpse of what was once a fully operational Henequen Hacienda in the grand style and tradition of this period. When touring Sotuta de Peon, visitors have a sense of travelling back in time; transported on wooden platforms called “Trucks” which are pulled by ‘mules’ over Cauville rails, as were originally used by the workers. We will enjoy a traditional lunch at this historical place. In the afternoon, return to Merida.

HIGHLIGHT DINNER

This evening dine at a unique restaurant that promotes cultural and gastronomic richness. It is located in the heart of downtown Mérida. A visit takes you to the past through a magical journey through the history of our gastronomy, where you can discover the authentic smells and flavors of the perfect fusion of two cultures.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Highlight Dinner

SNAPSHOT - WHAT’S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Highlight visit to Sotuta de Peon with lunch
- Highlight dinner, Merida

DAY 14 Merida – Izamal – Chichen Itza

After breakfast, tour the historical centre of the city of Mérida, founded in 1542. From the main square of the city (Zócalo), explore the oldest Cathedral in the Americas, Government House with paintings by Fernando Castro and the Municipal Palace. Then, we drive along Paseo de Montejo, the main thoroughfare into the city, modelled on the Champs-Élysées and lined with trees and large colonial houses, once the city homes of rich Hacienda owners.

We then continue to Izamal, once a Maya settlement meaning ‘Place of the God of Medicine’. It is now a ‘pueblo mágico’ or ‘magic town’. The town, in which every building is painted yellow and white, is

known for the 16th century Franciscan monastery that was built upon the base of a huge Maya pyramid. Exploring the monastery you will learn about the Maya written history that was burnt just after the monastery was constructed. Lunch today is at a local restaurant. Afterwards, we continue to the UNESCO Heritage Site of Chichen Itza for an overnight stay close to the archaeological site.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

SNAPSHOT – WHAT’S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- City tour of Merida
- Visit the town of Izamal
- Lunch at a local restaurant
- Transfer by road from Merida to Chichen Itza

DAY 15 Chichen Itza - Playa del Carmen

Early at sunrise a unique visit to Chichen Itza! Exploring the ancient Maya city along with your expert guide prior to its opening is an unforgettable experience. This site is world renowned for the sophistication of its structures and the high level of astronomical and engineering accomplishments. The site comes alive with the expert interpretation of your guide adding colour and contour to the sprawling site. We return to the hotel for a nice breakfast and some time at leisure before departing for Playa del Carmen.

After settling in, your guide will give you a quick overview of Playa del Carmen, just before the farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Tonight, farewell your guide.

Meals: Breakfast, Farewell Dinner

SNAPSHOT – WHAT’S INCLUDED:

- Sunrise visit to Chitzen Itza – miss the crowds!
- Hotel breakfast
- Transfer by road, Chichen Itza to Playa del Carmen
- Farewell dinner

SPECIAL NOTE:

Since the pandemic started, early sunrise visits have not been authorised. In case the Authority does not change this status the group will visit during the regular opening hours.

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DAY 16 Playa del Carmen – Day at leisure

Today is at leisure. Explore Playa del Carmen on your own; time to shop, wander and enjoy time in this Caribbean town.

Meals: Breakfast

SNAPSHOT – WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Hotel breakfast
- Day at your leisure

DAY 17 Departure

Farewell Mexico. Services come to an end after hotel check out.

Onward Journeys

See our Getting There page for details/options for hotel to airport transfers.

Meals: Breakfast

GETTING THERE

Starts: Mexico City
Ends: Playa del Carmen

First Day Information

The group first comes together in the evening for a welcome drink with the group guide. If you arrive on the same flight as our group members, expect to share the transfer from the airport to our group hotel.

Final Day Information

There are no tour excursions on the final day and the itinerary comes to an end at the time of hotel check out.

Closest Airport

Start: Mexico City International Airport (MEX), officially Aeropuerto Internacional Benito Juárez

End: Cancun International Airport (CUN)

Hotel Check In/Out Times

Consider the hotel check in time on arrival and the hotel check out time on departure. If you arrive prior to the check in time, the hotel will store your luggage until the check in time and can also store your luggage until you are ready to depart for your onward journey.

MEXICO

Hotel check in: most hotels have check in from 3PM

Hotel check out: expect hotels require check out by 10AM, 11AM or 12 midday. Check with your hotel of stay at the time of your visit.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Arrival

A premium inclusion; we meet all flights on day 1 of tour, or pre tour arrival, when transferring to the group hotel. Note: hotel stay must be booked with us as part of your package.

Departure

Hotel to Cancun International Airport at the end of the tour is not included with tour package and is an optional extra.

Send Us Your Flight Itinerary

If you made your own flight arrangements you must provide your full flight itinerary as issued by the airline no later than 40 days prior to the commencement of the your travel start date. If not provided within this timeframe the transfer services may be forfeited without refund, or additional service fees apply.

Where we have booked your flights for you, we have your itinerary, and this step is not required.

DISCLAIMER

Any content in this publication maybe subject to change or correction, and without notice.

We have taken great care to prepare and publish the trip information and in good faith we believe it to be accurate at the time we published the information. However, as is the nature of travel, plans may need to change from time to time and often unexpectedly.

If trip details need to change, in most cases your final documentation issued prior to your departure will be updated. However, it's also possible that an itinerary change may be necessary while on the trip. It could be related to unexpected weather or road conditions or another example could be an announcement of a closure of a facility we planned to use. In these cases, we will make all best endeavours to provide an alternative, of equivalent or similar standard.

Information in this publication is in part, and for full trip details please refer to our website. Full terms and conditions are available on our website and provided when a quote is issued.