



KARLA MARTÍNEZ DE SALAS' GUIDE TO

MEXICO SOCIETY

The head of editorial content for *Vogue Mexico* and *Latin America* takes us on a tour.

By Nora Walsh

Raised in El Paso, Texas, and spending summers in Mexico, Karla Martínez de Salas has long straddled both cultures. After working in New York as a fashion market editor at *Vogue*, *W* and *T Magazine*, she relocated with her husband to Mexico City in 2015, and she soon became head of editorial content for *Vogue Mexico and Latin America*. From her base in Polanco, Martínez de Salas has embraced the city's transformation from a niche destination into a top cosmopolitan stop on the world map. "When I first moved here, there were only two major galleries that were well-known internationally — now there's around 10," she says. "People really took a chance on the city, and brands began to recognize how important the Mexican market is."

We recently asked Martínez de Salas to share her go-to picks in CDMX, from dining and design destinations to cultural experiences.





THIS PAGE (FROM TOP):
INSIDE AZOTEA STUDIO,
PHOTO COURTESY OF
THE STUDIO; A DISH AT
VORAZ, PHOTO COURTESY
OF THE RESTAURANT.
OPPOSITE PAGE: A TABLE
AT MALCRIADO, PHOTO
COURTESY OF THE CAFE.



NEIGHBORHOOD CHARM

I live in Polanco, which is very central and walkable — something that is really important to me. I have also lived in San Miguel Chapultepec, which is quaint and less commercial than most neighborhoods. Both sit in front of Chapultepec Park, which has become a kind of extended backyard for my family. I can easily go for a run, and my kids have open green space to play.

Some of my favorite places in Polanco are Malcriado, a great cafe with delicious matcha, and Café Ruta de la Seda. I am a big tea drinker, so I'm always sampling their green tea varieties. For dining, Entremar, the sister restaurant to Contramar, has two floors and a big open space.

Order the *salpicon* or *sopes* with shrimp. Er Rre un Bistró has a handful of tables and feels like a New York City bistro. Don't skip the potato bread topped with caviar. Ticuchi is my neighborhood bar of choice. The Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo is not far from my home and offers a massive collection of international works. Plus, a famed Odette bakery recently opened across the street.

DINING AND DRINKING

For a classic Mexican breakfast, head to El Cardenal. The location in Lomas feels quiet and residential, with pared-back décor and delicious food. Order the *bolillo* bread with anything on the menu. There's also a downtown outpost, though I only go there if I'm already in the area.

Eno is a great neighborhood spot that also has locations in Roma, Condesa and Juarez. It's a modern take on the Mexican cafeteria. Order the *chilaquiles* or *huevos rancheros*.

I adore Bar Nino in Condesa. It reminds me of a classic Italian restaurant in Milan, with tables that spill out onto the corner outside. I am happy with any of their salads and rustic sourdough bread, but it's the baked fish that keeps me coming back.

Bar El Bosque is a typical cantina near the Castillo de Chapultepec in San Miguel Chapultepec. Casual, no-fuss, but full of character; I always go for the potato quesadillas and the fish baked in salt.

A Northern Mexico-inspired gastropub in Roma Sur, Voraz has a stripped-back warehouse feel with an open kitchen; minimal, raw aesthetic; and a terrace. My choice dish on the menu is the pork belly taco.

Sukai is a stylish Japanese spot by chef Klaus Albert Mayr on a corner in San Miguel Chapultepec. Sit inside or outdoors on the terrace and order a few nigiris and grilled vegetables.

SHOPPING AND DESIGN

My three favorite Mexican designers are Lorena Saravia, Patricio Campillo and Grigoydi. They are all really special. Lorena is a minimalist designer, but with a cowboy edge. Patricio has suits and jackets with an interesting interpretation of charro style that are perfect for everyday wear. Grigoydi is very classic and beautiful and a bit more dressy.

AGO Projects is a gallery and design space co-founded by Rudy Weissenberg and Rodman Primack in Juárez. They have a great mix of design with local craftsmanship.

Bomboti is a locally owned gallery and design store with everything from furniture to ceramics. It's in my neighborhood, so I pass by often, and there are always new and interesting pieces in the showroom.

I'm drawn to Azotea Studio in San Miguel Chapultepec for its amazing vintage furniture and contemporary pieces that aren't insanely expensive. Owner Esteban Caicedo often upcycles and restores many of the pieces himself, making each one feel original and personal.

Mariane Ibrahim Gallery in Juárez is one of my favorites. It's housed in a late-19th-century building with Porfirian elegance and a modern edge. She has a stellar program that focuses on artists of the African diaspora alongside artists like Clotilde Jiménez, who lives and works in the city, and French artist Eva Jospin.

I really like Campeche in Roma Sur. It's a compact gallery in the art deco Kin Pech building, because they support so many young Mexican artists and underrepresented voices.

Galería Mascota in Roma Norte is another intimate gallery showing the work of emerging foreign artists in dialogue with Mexico City.

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Reigning at the top of my list is Museo Anahuacalli. Diego Rivera designed it to house his vast collection of pre-Columbian art. I always follow up a visit there with a stop by the studio of Rivera and Frida Kahlo (the Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo), then lunch and a margarita at San Ángel Inn.

Mercado de Jamaica is always fun to visit, especially to catch the flower deliveries. Thousands of blooms arrive daily from across Mexico, filling the aisles with colorful stacks of roses, carnations and marigolds headed to florists all over the city.

The Centro Histórico is home to three of Mexico City's most important cultural institutions (Museo Nacional de Arte (MUNAL), the Franz Mayer Museum and the Palacio de Bellas Artes) all within walking distance of one another. Pair a visit with lunch at El Danubio, a classic seafood restaurant.



I love heading downtown and making a full day of it. Rent a bike and ride along Paseo de la Reforma on a Sunday. Enjoy breakfast at El Cardenal, then visit the Metropolitan Cathedral and the Templo Mayor just behind it, and peek into the old Palacio Postal afterward. If you have time, visit La Lagunilla Market. Be sure to take a guide so you don't get lost in the maze of stalls overflowing with vintage gems.

ROAD TRIP

We have a place in Puerto Escondido, so I'll admit I'm biased: Grab your car and drive to Puebla. Stay the night, eat dinner at the Casareyna hotel restaurant (formerly La Reyna) and visit her pottery shop, too. Continue on to Oaxaca City. Stay overnight at Hotel Escondido or Otro Oaxaca and enjoy a meal at Tlamilani by Abigail Mendoza or Criollo by Enrique Olvera, then head to Puerto Escondido on a full stomach.

THIS PAGE (FROM TOP): THE MUSEO CASA ESTUDIO DIEGO RIVERA Y FRIDA KAHLO, PHOTO COURTESY OF STOCKCAM AND GETTY IMAGES; INSIDE THE AGO PROJECTS GALLERY AND DESIGN SPACE, PHOTO COURTESY OF AGO PROJECTS. OPPOSITE PAGE (FROM LEFT): LA LAGUNILLA MARKET, PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT MEXICO; THE VIEW FROM HOTEL ESCONDIDO, PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HOTEL.

