Here’s a list of the art supplies I’m recommending for the Retreat in San Miguel de Allende. I’ve given you different options so you can make choices of which supplies to get. You can spend about $300 for your supplies, or you could spend about $50. Both options will give you completely decent materials you can do everything with. If you want to talk over your options, feel free to get in touch. I’m comfortable with your choosing anything from this list.

**Watercolor sets:**

All three of these are completely fine. They are in order of quality and expense (art supplies work like that – the most expensive ones are almost always the best quality). I’m fine with your getting any of these as they are all fine quality.

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| [01683-1249](https://www.dickblick.com/items/01683-1249) | Daniel Smith Watercolor Half Pan Set - Metal Box, Set of 24 Colors | $114.37BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | expensive |  | * remove this item from this list |
| [01755-0189](https://www.dickblick.com/items/01755-0189) | Sennelier French Artists' Watercolor Set - Half Pan Metal Case, Set of 12 Plus 6 Free | $69.41BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | Also expensive, just fewer colors |  | * remove this item from this list |
| [00337-1109](https://www.dickblick.com/items/00337-1109) | Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolor Set -Blue Box Half Pan, Set of 12 | $31.38BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | Least expensive |  | * remove this item from this list |

**Watercolor Paper:**

Paper makes a HUGE difference in watercolor. It has to do with absorbency, toughness, ability to get rid of a stain, etc. One of the best papers out there is Arches. Cotman is a good paper for beginning exercises, though it is nowhere near as good as Arches. If you want to do any larger size finished pieces, I recommend getting pieces of Arches paper in the size you think you’ll want. For the class, I’d like you to get a pad of the Cotman paper listed as we’ll be doing exercises on it so you can learn about the qualities of watercolor and how to use it.

(Cold press is the most common type of paper used. It’s textured. Hot press is smooth and a bit more difficult to use but very helpful if you want to smooth surface. I recommend cold press for the Canson pad. You decide with the Arches!)

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| [10173-1123](https://www.dickblick.com/items/10173-1123) | Canson XL Watercolor Pad - 9'' x 12'', Wirebound, 30 Sheets | $8.10BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | required |  | * remove this item from this list |
| [10183-3009](https://www.dickblick.com/items/10183-3009) | Arches Watercolor Pad - 9'' x 12'', 140 lb, Hot Press, Fold-over, 12 Sheets | $16.47BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | Better paper, nice to have |  | * remove this item from this list |

For going out-and-about sketching, I use an Arteza watercolor sketch pad, 8.25” x 8.25”. The paper is good enough and I like how it looks, how sturdy it is, etc. If you find one you like better, please just be sure it has heavy duty watercolor paper in it and at least 25 sheets. Here’s the book I have enjoyed using: <https://arteza.com/dp/art-watercolor-book-beige-hardcover-8-25x8-25-pack-of-2>. They have lots of different sizes so feel free to choose the one that is most appealing to you!

**Watercolor Brushes:**

There are two distinctly different ways you can go with brushes. I’ve been used to using some combination of the following brushes:

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| [05472-1000](https://www.dickblick.com/items/05472-1000) | Princeton Aqua Elite Series 4850 Synthetic Brush- Round, Size 0, Short Handle | $7.13BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  |  |  | * remove this item from this list |
| [05472-1004](https://www.dickblick.com/items/05472-1004) | Princeton Aqua Elite Series 4850 Synthetic Brush - Round, Size 4, Short Handle | $9.71BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  |  |  | * remove this item from this list |
| [05475-1034](https://www.dickblick.com/items/05475-1034) | Princeton Aqua Elite Series 4850 Synthetic Brush- Wash, Size 3/4'', Short Handle | $22.77BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  |  |  | * remove this item from this list |
| [05472-1010](https://www.dickblick.com/items/05472-1010) | Princeton Aqua Elite Series 4850 Synthetic Brush - Round, Size 10, Short Handle | $16.85BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  |  |  | * remove this item from this list |
| [05472-1012](https://www.dickblick.com/items/05472-1012) | Princeton Aqua Elite Series 4850 Synthetic Brush - Round, Size 12, Short Handle | $20.73BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  |  |  | * remove this item from this list |
| [09324-1040](https://www.dickblick.com/items/09324-1040) | Raphaël Soft Aqua Brush - Quill, Size 4, Short Handle | $27.48BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  |  |  | * remove this item from this list |

As you can see, they are a bit expensive. They are also excellent brushes, a real delight to work with! It’s important to have brushes that are comfortable to hold, but, most importantly, you need brushes that will do what you want them to do so the *brush* isn’t the thing holding you back! That means you want it to have a good tip that goes where you want it to go, doesn’t splay, etc.

Brushes come in different shapes and sizes. I’d like you to have a Wash Brush (the third one in the list) that’s ¾” – 1”. It can be less expensive than this one. You’ll use it to create backgrounds like the sky or other large areas.

I’d also like you to get some round brushes in different sizes. How detailed and exacting you are as a painter will determine how small a brush you’ll want to have. For my purposes, a 4 is small enough, and a 12 is large enough, but you should take a look and see what you think you’ll like working with. You want to consider how large you like to paint (the sketchbook is only so big!). You’ll want different sizes so you can fill in areas of different sizes with the paint.

I’ve recently discovered the Raphael Soft Aqua brushes and really love using them. They are like mops! They hold so much water! They’re really fun to use to cover big areas and for dynamic abstract work. They’re fun!

Recently I took a class on Urban Sketching and was surprised to see that the teacher was using cheap plastic brushes which have reservoirs for water in them. He didn’t even have to have a water container with him because the water was in the brushes! I bought a few of them and have been using them and am finding them surprisingly good and quite nice to use because of the water reservoir. They’re also very inexpensive! If you decide to go this route, please still get a wash brush of some kind so you can paint large areas easily. Here’s the listing for these brushes:

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| [06005-1039](https://www.dickblick.com/items/06005-1039) | Royal & Langnickel Aqua Flow Brushes - Set of 3 | $4.37BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | Least expensive |  | * remove this item from this list |

As you can see, they are a crazy-inexpensive option. I can’t find any down side to them yet, so, if they’re appealing to you, go for it!

**Other Supplies:**

A palette is helpful to have, especially in class, so you can mix up colors. Sometimes it’s nice to mix up a lot of paint at once. This helps with that also.

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| [03086-1009](https://www.dickblick.com/items/03086-1009) | Plastic Palette - 7 1/8'' x 3 5/8'', 9 Well | $1.50BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | Very helpful |  | * remove this item from this list |

You may enjoy having a drawing board to lean on. I tend to just put the sketchbook in my lap and draw like that, but a drawing board could also hold your paints and could make the process a bit easier. Any board will do – Masonite, whatever. Here’s an option Blick offers.

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| [22945-1007](https://www.dickblick.com/items/22945-1007) | Blick Sketch Pad Board - 15'' x 16'' | $9.37BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | Useful, not necessary |  | * remove this item from this list |

If you think you’ll want to draw with a pencil, you’ll need an eraser. Kneaded erasers are best for watercolor paper as they don’t tend to damage the paper much.

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| [21587-1002](https://www.dickblick.com/items/21587-1002) | General's Kneaded Eraser - Large | $1.54 |  |  | Required |  | * remove this item from this list |

Some people like to add to their drawings with color pencils after they’re done with the watercolor. It can help make the colors more intense or add details that are hard to get with the brush. I won’t really be teaching this aspect of it, but you’re welcome to bring some color pencils if you want to. Here’s a good set: (AC Moore used to have these on sale for $10 sometimes. I don’t know if Michaels has that sale or not.)

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| [20508-2409](https://www.dickblick.com/items/20508-2409) | Prismacolor Premier Colored Pencils - Set of 24 | $26.40BLICK everyday sale price! - additional discounts will not apply to this item (click for more details) |  |  | Not required. Only if you want them |  | * remove this item from this list |

We will be using fine liner pens to draw what we see before we use watercolor to paint it. I used to use Micron pens, but recently I discovered uni pin pens and am liking them much better. The tips don’t bend, so I don’t have to replace them all the time! They’re excellent. If you already have Microns, by all means, bring them! But if you don’t have any pens you love yet, get a couple of each size of these uni pins and have fun!

[81703-2021](https://www.dickblick.com/items/81703-2021)Uni Pin Fine Liner Pen - 0.1 mm, Black$2.54 very good, sturdy, excellent water and fade proof ink. thinner

* remove this item from this list

[81703-2025](https://www.dickblick.com/items/81703-2025)Uni Pin Fine Liner Pen - 0.5 mm, Black$2.54 very good, sturdy, excellent water and fade proof ink. thicker

Bring a pencil of whatever softness you prefer.

**Other things to consider:**

I’ve just picked up a light folding stool which I may bring with me so I can sit wherever I want to. Coleman used to make one that folded up to the size of a water bottle, but the only one I could find at Dicks is twice that tall so it won’t fit into my backpack. I haven’t taken it out sketching with me so it remains to be seen if I want to bother – steps are often available, after all. But consider what you will want so you can feel comfortable. We won’t necessarily have tables to draw at all the time, and we might not have chairs. I got my stool at Dick’s for $10.

Suntan lotion

Sunglasses

Good walking shoes. If you have accessibility issues, taxis are inexpensive in San Miguel so you’ll be able to take one if need be to wherever we’ll be painting. I will be wearing tennis shoes and maybe sandals, but wear whatever you’re comfortable in. The town is a bit hilly from what I understand, so please plan accordingly!

Clothes – it’s cool in the early morning and evenings. “March is in the spring in San Miguel de Allende and is typically the 6th coldest month of the year. Daytime maximum temperatures average around a comfortable 26°C (79°F), whilst at night 10°C (49°F) is normal.”

Camera – in case you don’t have time to finish a scene, you might like to have a camera to record what you’re seeing so you have the option of working on it in the studio.

There are a couple of art stores in San Miguel, but I would suggest bringing things will you so we can start painting right away!