

OAXACA

TRAVEL GUIDE



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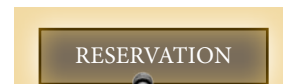


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oaxaca

Fiesta de Arte y Color

Oaxaca is the most diverse state in Mexico. It has peaks that reach more than 3,000 meters high, caverns that are among the deepest in the world, virgin beaches, secluded forests, and sunlit valleys. Oaxaca is rich in traditions and customs and has the largest ethnic population found in Mexico.

The City of Oaxaca, the state capital, is famous for its architecture and for its rich cultural traditions. Oaxaca is also graced by a splendid and varied cuisine and spring-like weather year round. UNESCO declared the city a Cultural Heritage Site.

The historic heritage catches the eye when traveling through the city; you can visit the ancient Main Plaza, the Government Palace, the art nouveau-style kiosk, the Cathedral with its baroque façade and the portals with stores and restaurants. The cafes that line the sidewalks are a favorite spot of locals and tourists alike. Here you can enjoy, under the shade of huge laurels from India, the famous chocolate from Oaxaca as well as the mezcal with orange juice and worm salt. This is also a common venue for concerts or fireworks displays.

Oaxaca's museums and galleries hold many of the region's most valuable treasures: from the jewels of Monte Albán to contemporary internationally distinguished artists. The small storefront art galleries are replete with wonderfully unique and provocative offerings. And the markets offer an incredible variety of colorful designs. Oaxaca is one of the richest places for arts and crafts in Mexico.

Climate goes from semidry-semiwarm in the valleys, to humid in the east mountain chain. The average year temperature in the city of Oaxaca is 22°C.





TOUR 1

Xochimilco Archs

This aqueduct was built between 1727 and 1751. These green-quarry stone arches are approximately 300m long. The aqueduct lines the road to San Felipe del Agua, ending just at the corner of the Carmen El Alto Temple. Today to the corner of, long strips of the aqueduct remain wholly intact. It's a pretty section of the city for a stroll.



Oaxacan Institute of Handcrafts (A.R.I.P.O)

It is located in a nice colonial mansion. The greatest variety of handicrafts made in the state are exhibited and sold within this shop. All the objects are of good quality.



Casa de Juárez" Museum

this is an 18th century building. It belonged to someone named Antonio Salanueva, but Juárez lived here during his childhood, after his arrival from San Pablo Guelatao. The museum displays documents related to his presidency, ordinary artifacts from that time period, some of which belonged to Juárez, as well as furnishings designed to recreate the environment of that period. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 to 19:00 hrs.





The Church and Ex-Monastery of Del Carmen Alto

The complex were completed at the end of the 17th century. The Carmelite Temple and Monastery was built in the same place and with the stones of a pre-Hispanic pyramid. The name “Alto” (high) was because this was a temple exclusive for persons born in Spain or of pure Spanish descent, “criollos”. There was another temple named “Bajo” (Under) for people with mixed ancestry, mestizos, and mulattoes, since during the colonial time the caste system was fierce and strict. In the façade there is an impressive relic of the Virgin. The interior has been remodeled several times. South of the church is The Plazuela de Carmen Alto.

Graphic Arts Institute of Oaxaca (Instituto de Artes Gráficas de Oaxaca)

Its collection shows the best of the universal and contemporary graphic art. The institute was founded by famous artist Francisco Toledo, and hosts a large collection of artwork from all Latin America. It has a library, a photography center, a store and a gallery. Open daily from 9:30 to 20:00 hrs.



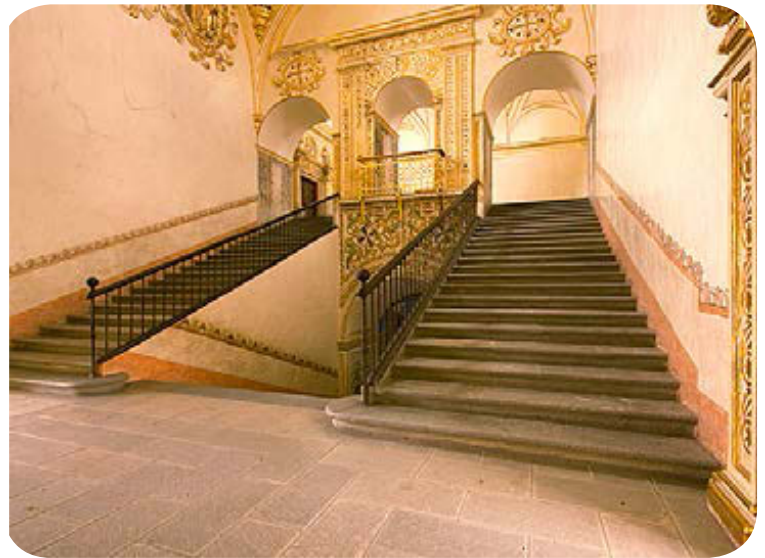


The Museum of Oaxacan Cultures (Museo de las Culturas de Oaxaca)

It is housed in the beautiful monastery buildings adjoining the Church of Santo Domingo. This is the best museum in Oaxaca. The rich displays take you right through the history of Oaxaca. The 14 rooms of the museum feature a valuable collection that offers its visitors an archaeological, historical and ethnographical panorama of the cultures of Oaxaca. The collection includes the Mixtec treasures from the Tomb VII of Monte Alban with a stash of beautifully worked silver, turquoise, coral, jade, amber and gold. The museum also has interactive multimedia areas to learn more about the popular art and crafts. Schedule: Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 to 19:00 hrs.

Santo Domingo Cultural center (Centro Cultural Santo Domingo)

This complex is located in the former convent of Santo Domingo, this is a not-to-be-missed sight on a visit to Oaxaca. Here is the Museum of the Cultures of Oaxaca; the Nestor Sanchez Periodicals Library, with an auditorium where exhibitions, conferences, forums and concerts are held; the Francisco de Burgoa Library with a collection of over thirty thousand volumes published between 1484 and 1940; and the Ethno-botanical Garden with more than a thousand species of the various Oaxacan environments from the most humid to the most arid. There are guided tours highly recommended for anyone interested in plants, natural history and culture.



The Church of Santo Domingo

The complex was built mainly between 1551 and 1608. This is an historical architectural monument of the Dominican Order consisting of the Temple, the Former Convent, the Orchard and a spacious cut-stone plaza, slightly elevated from the traffic-free cobblestone streets below. The church is one of the most magnificent examples of baroque in Mexico. It features a strong contrast between the sober exterior and its rich interior. The walls and ceiling are covered with paintings and murals, much like the Sistine Chapel, it is a dazzling and breathtaking vision. Most of the surfaces -walls, domes, and niches- are covered with stucco ornamentation in bright colors or gold gild. The vaulted entrance is covered with a gilded stucco genealogical tree of Santo Domingo de Guzmán decorated with polychrome paintings. The Rosary Chapel to the right of the nave echoes the entrance with its statue of the Virgin in the center of many branches. The lavishly-decorated altar with a figure of the Virgin Mary is also considered a jewel of Santo Domingo.



Parish of the Precious Blood of Christ (Templo de la Preciosa Sangre de Cristo)

Originally the site of the city's first cemetery, the church was built in the 17th century. During the holy week, the walking of the Procession of Silence starts in this church.



Philately Museum (MUFI)

First of its kind in Mexico and the only museum dedicated exclusively to mail art in Latin America. It is located in a beautiful colonial building with the most modern museology equipment, which guarantees preservation and appreciation of these little pieces of history. It has a collection of more than 200,000 pieces from all over the world, arranged in chronological order. The highlights might be the Black Penny, the first mexican stamp, and a collection of Frida Kahlo's letters to Dr. Leo Eloesser. It has a library and a gift shop. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 to 20:00 hrs.



Contemporary Art Museu of Oaxaca (MACO)

This colonial house is representative of the constructions of the 18th century. The museum shows masterpieces of Oaxacan painters in its large rooms, such as: Tamayo, Toledo, Nieto, Morales and Aquino among others. The ceiling of the stars is a vault with an interesting work from Francisco Toledo, one of Mexico's most famous contemporary artists. It also functions as a cultural center, screening films and hosting concerts. Open Wednesday to Monday from 10:30 to 20:00 hrs



Francisco Burgoa Library

A big building with beautiful corridors and graceful columns of green quarry built in the 17th century. It has 5 rooms with more than 6,000 volumes. This is a venue for cultural events and exhibitions.

Manuel Álvarez Bravo Photographic Center

It features a large photographic collection of important authors such as Francis Alÿs, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Hugo Brehme, Henri Cartier-Bresson, among others. There is also a library specializing in photography; and a Music Library with more than 3,000 recordings of various of various music genres (classical, jazz, blues, ethnic, etc.). Workshops, book presentations and portfolios, and guided tours are offered by the Center as part of commitment to promoting photographic work.





TOUR 2

San Agustín Church

The church was consecrated in 1596, but the present building and convent was completed in the 18th century. This is a rather peculiar construction, it is the widest church in the city and don't have a dome or bell towers. In addition to its handsome sculpted facade, houses the finest assemblage of Oaxacan baroque altarpieces in the city. The interior features three gilded and heavily ornamented altarpieces assembled from statues and paintings, from the colonial period.



Textile Museum of Oaxaca (MTO)

It is located in a fully restored 18th century mansion. This museum aims to promote Oaxaca's traditional textile crafts, characterized by its colors and beautiful designs, through exhibitions, workshops, films, presentations and a library. The collection consists of almost six thousand pieces from different places and periods. Open Monday to Saturday from 10:00 to 20:00. Sunday 10:00 to 18:00 hrs.

Government Palace

The splendid green quarry building was begun in 1832, and completed until 1887. The large-scale stairways murals by Arturo García Bustos depict famous Oaxacans and Oaxacan history. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 9:30 to 18:00 hrs; Sunday from 9:30 to 16:00 hrs.



Main Plaza / Constitution Park

The plaza has existed since the city was founded in 1529. This is the place to where The “zocalo” is the perfect place for promenades, band concerts and people-watching. This colorful plaza is beautifully shaded, lined with arcades and sidewalk cafes, and teeming with street vendors. The marimba bands play several nights a week. The Night of the Radishes (Noche de Rábanos) is celebrated every year on December 23 in this plaza, as well as the Independence Day on September 16.



Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption (Catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción)

Its construction was begun in 1535, and on July 12th of 1733 it was consecrated. It was dedicated to “La virgen de la Asuncion”, represented with a bronze sculpture made by the sculptor Tadolini and brought from Europe. Its facade is dates back to the 17th century and it is made of green quarry stone. In the interior it has an important painting collection. Among the most important is the canvass depicting Saint Cristobal dated in 1720 by an anonymous artist, and the oil canvasses in the sacristy.

Plazuela de León

It is located northwest of the “zocalo”. It was known as the Square of Jars (Plazoleta de los Cántaros) since this was a potters market. Today is a garden area.



Museum of Oaxacan Painters (MUPO)

It is located in a former 17th century mansion. It features spacious rooms where works by national and international artists are on exhibit. Works of Rodolfo Morales, Alejandro Santiago and Francisco Toledo are on permanent display. The museum features various activities like guided tours, children’s workshops, lectures and exhibition of local cultural activities.

Antonia Labastida Park

In 1881 the City Council named this place the “Square of

Order and Freedom”, and in 1894 was redesigned as a modern garden. Some years later it was named Antonia Labastida. It is a meeting point for artists and artisans of Oaxaca. Here you will find colorful handcrafts, beautiful altarpieces in scale and artwork at different prices.



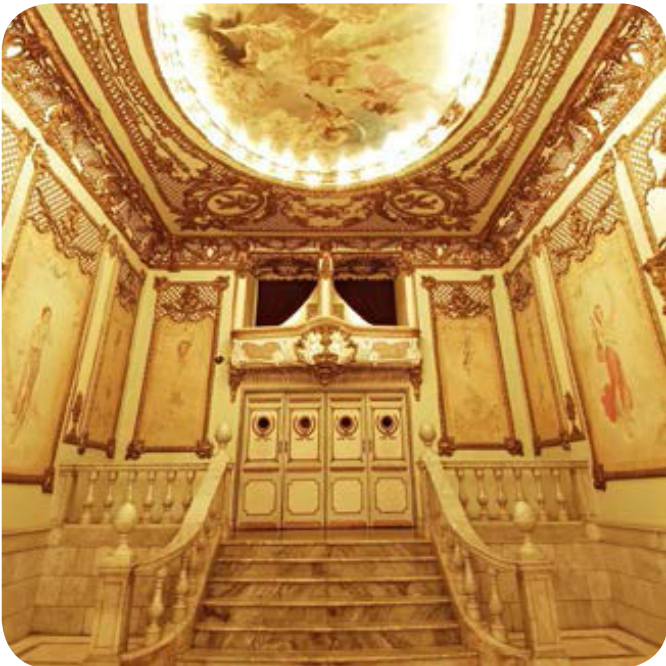
Macedonio Alcalá Theater

This structure was inaugurated on September 5th of 1909. Its Versailles style is characteristic of the Porfirio Diaz period at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. The main entrance is on the corner; it has three doors topped with green stone arches. The vestibule is Louis XV style with a white marble staircase and the main hall is in "Imperial" style. On the ceiling is an allegory of the Temple of Art. The curtain has pictorial composition of the Parthenon and Mount Parnassus.



Convent of Santa Catalina de Siena

Dating back to 1577, it has been a Convent, Municipal Palace, jail, and since 1976 the building became a hotel. The main feature is the "Lavaderos", located in the center of a nice patio. This is a set of twelve washbasins in an octagonal building crested with a Mudejar cupola. In the restaurant you will find a collection of colonial art.





TOUR 3

Church and former monastery of St John of God (Templo y Ex Convento de San Juan de Dios)

The Hermitage of Santa Catarina Martir was built here, the oldest church in Oaxaca. Because of the arrival of the Juaninos at the end of the 17th century, it was dedicated to San Juan de Dios. The temple's neoclassical facade has a portal and a tower. The church is best known for its large 17th-century oil paintings, which line the walls depicting scenes from events in the religious life of Oaxaca and the Urbano Olivera paintings on the ceiling.



20 de Noviembre Market

The history of the market dates back to the late 19th century. The market has dozens of food stalls where you can enjoy the smells, colors and flavors of the traditional Oaxacan cuisine. Here you will find moles, tlayudas, pan de yema (egg bread), fried grasshoppers, Oaxaca cheese known as “quesillo”, and of course the famous hot chocolate.

Benito Juárez Market

It is the most traditional market in the city. It offers flowers, handcrafts, leather goods, hats and knives. It is also the right place to buy the famous mezcal, moles, quesillos, chocolate and grasshoppers. Here you will find good prices and you can bargain.



Handcraft Market

The greatest variety of handcrafts of the State can be found here, such as: Carpets, huipiles, dresses, sarapes, bags and ceramic pieces, among others.

Church of the Company of Jesus (Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús)

In 1579 the Jesuits arrived to Oaxaca and built this church and convent in honor of the Immaculate Concepcion. When the Jesuits were expelled, the nuns of the Immaculate Conception occupied the temple. Much of the original Jesuit structure is no longer contained within the present building. Columns from the original church exist throughout the block. The facade is in a Baroque-style with Plateresque elements. The main altarpiece covered with gold leaf has kept some of its old traces.





TOUR 4

Carmen Bajo Church

The church constructed on this site in 1554, was named “Las Lágrimas de San Pedro” (Tears of San Pedro). It was the lower church ministered for the indigenous and mestizos populations. The church was heavily damage for an earthquake in 1801 and for a fire in 1862. Its exterior is rich with voluminous designs. In contrast, the interior has a simple decoration with some altarpieces of the 19th century, and some paintings of the early 20th century.



Rufino Tamayo Museum of Pre-Hispanic Art in Oaxaca (Museo de Arte Prehispánico Rufino Tamayo)

A 17th-century colonial building house a collection of over thousand archaeological pieces donated by the late, renowned Oaxacan-born artist Rufino Tamayo. It is considered one of the best collections of pre-hispanic ceramic and sculpture in the country. Open Monday to Saturday from 10 to 14 hrs. and 16-19 hrs. Sundays from 10-15 hrs. Closed on Tuesdays.

San José de Gracia Church

The church was constructed between 1588-1594. It was occupied by the the nuns of Saint Clare de Asis, better known as the capuchinas. Today this building is the Fine Arts School.



Basilica of Our Lady of Solitude (Basílica de Nuestra Señora de la Soledad)

It was built between 1682 and 1697. The church exhibits an extraordinary richly carved baroque facade resembling a freestanding folding screen; this is a unique design in Mexico's religious architecture. Inside the church, the rigid, triangular statue of the Virgin of Solitude, declared the patron saint of Oaxaca in 1909, sits perched above the altar. Every surface of the interior is filled with paintings, reliefs, statues, and stucco ornamentation. The west gallery contains a baroque pipe organ dated 1686. The Augustinian convent was renovated, and today it serves as the Municipal Palace. The Religious Museum attached to the church, contains a curious blend of pieces, it is worth a visit. A huge celebration on and around December 18 honors the Virgin.



Dance Square (Plaza de la Danza)

Located on the foothills of the Fortin Hill. This is a vast open area paved with green quarry stones. It was built for the folklore manifestations.





Sócrates Park (Jardín Sócrates)
It used to be the “Plazuela de la Soledad”. This is a nice place to relax and enjoy a fresh, cool “nieve” or shelbet recognized worldwide for its quality and variety of flavors.

San Felipe Neri Church

This church contains the most extraordinary examples of the baroque with

estipite (inverted truncated pyramid) columns from the end of the 18th century. Its golden altarpiece is a wonder of art and beauty. The Churrigueresque main altarpiece, completely intact, dating from the late 1700s, is one of the finest colonial altarpieces in the city covered with ornately carved, gilded wood. There are three large magnificent paintings made by Agustín de Santaella and the noted baroque painter José de Páez. Benito Juárez (former president of Mexico) married Margarita Maza here in 1841.



Belber Jimenez Museum

Exhibits a private collection of Federico and Ellen Belber Jimenez. There are magnificent pieces of jewelry from the pre-Columbian and colonial era, as well as some works of famous 20th century designers such as Antonio Pineda and William Spratling. There are also some pieces of Folk Art. Open Monday to Saturdays from 10:00 to 17:00 hrs.



San Cosme and San Damian Church

A church built in the middle of the 16th century and remodeled during the 19th century using two different types of quarry.

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TOUR 5

Paseo Juárez or El Llano Park

It is one of the oldest and largest parks in downtown Oaxaca.

Since the colonial period this park has been a social area where you can enjoy exercising, reading, walking or just relaxing. The park has wireless Internet connection so it is a meeting point for tourists and locals alike. During lent, El Llano hosts “Los viernes del Llano”, a tradition that dates back to the early 20th century. Girls walk around the park and the university students give them roses. The one who collects more roses became a beauty queen.



Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Chapel of Bethlehem

It was consecrated on December 12th of 1686. The Betlemitas friars occupied the convent. The Belem chapel was built in 1807 and today is a school.



San Matias Jalatlaco Church

An 18th century building with a simple but elegant façade. The main entrance are decorated with geometric motifs and rosettes carved in quarry stone. It is located in the neighborhood of Jalatlaco, one of the nine neighborhoods of the city of Oaxaca. The place takes you back in time with narrow cobblestone streets lined with low-slung colonial buildings.



Patrocinio Church

There is not much information about this temple. As many other temples in the city, it has been damaged and remodeled several times. The ornamentation of the facade is different from other temples in the city.

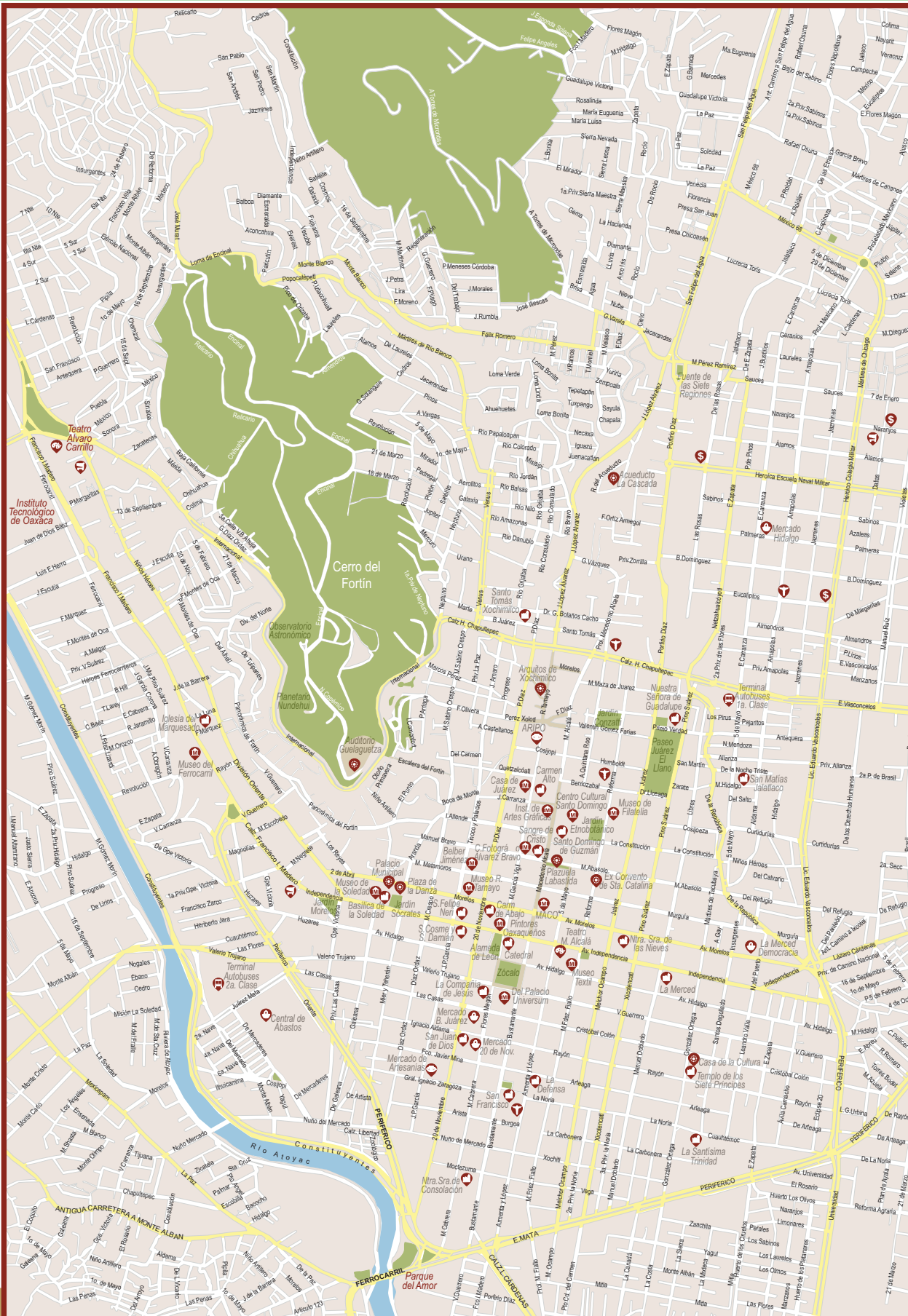


The Macedonio Alcala Tourist Walkway

This is the city's main pedestrian walkway. Walking down the corridor you can find museums, shops, restaurants, temples, galleries, as well as cafes and bars, making for an always-interesting stroll and a lively nocturnal scene.







SYMBOLS

-  Handcrafts
-  Bank
-  Church
-  Market
-  Museum
-  Attraction
-  Hospital
-  Theater
-  Bus Station
-  Grocery Store

SYMBOLS

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Airport | Mountain Biking |
| The Tule tree | Market |
| Colonial Architecture | Mezcal |
| Handcrafts | Bird Watching |
| Cabin | Orquidiario |
| Waterfall | Archeological Site |





ROUTE TO MITLA

Santa María del Tule

Here you can find one of Oaxaca's natural wonders, the massive 2000-year-old Cyprus tree "El Tule". It is about 630 tons, 120 feet high and 144 feet around the trunk, the widest girth in the world. Make sure you get a child tour guide to show you the innumerable images in the trunk. It is located in the atrium of the church of Santa María de la Asunción, a Baroque-style church built in the 18th century.





Tlacoachahuaya

A religious, historical complex built by the Dominicans in the 16th century. The temple features a Baroque-style façade. But Tlacoachahuaya is renowned for its beautiful Plateresque altars and especially for the painting of San Jeronimo by native artist Juan de Arrue. The murals decorating the walls were painted with cochineal seedling. Make a point of seeing the beautifully painted baroque organ in the choir loft.



Dainzú

This is a small archaeological site but very important historically. It dates as far back as 600 BC. It seems possible that the site was occupied some centuries before the foundation of Monte Albán. Here you'll find some carvings that may remind you of the Dancers' Gallery at Monte Albán; these, however, depict ball players in action with balls in their hands and dressed in fine outfits. The most spectacular sights are the well-restored ball court and the Tumba del Jaguar (Tomb of the Jaguar), with the head of a jaguar perched above the door.

Teotitlán del Valle

Weaving tradition in Teotitlán dates back to Pre-Hispanic times. For centuries the families of the Zapotec weavers of Teotitlán have handed down the weaving tradition to their children. Century-old recipes are still used in the production of the natural dyes, which are obtained from marigold petals, añil, pomegranate zest, cochineal bug, seedpods, moss and pecan. You will find brightly colored rugs, some with native indigenous motifs and other with modern designs such as reproductions of famous artists like Tamayo, Frida Kahlo, Miró, Matisse, Toledo and Picasso. The town has more than 100 workshops showcasing a large selection of handmade products, including rugs, wall hangings, handbags, pillow covers, jackets, ponchos and dresses.

There is a small community museum with an interesting exhibit of Pre-Hispanic objects and diverse objects related with the manufacture of textiles.

The Preciosa Sangre de Cristo Church is well worth a visit. Its construction began in 1581 and was concluded in 1758. There are pre-Zapotec motifs in the walls since early friars used pre-Hispanic stones to build the church. On the side of the church is a small archeological area.

Near to Teotitlán is El Pichacho Peak, considered to be sacred, and its peaks offers a panoramic view of the Tlacolula Valley. And the Piedra Azul Dam a perfect place for bird watching.



Lambityeco

Evidence suggests that Lambityeco was first occupied about 600 B.C. Its peak was between 700 A.D. and 750 A.D. Lambityeco was originally a major trade center. It is confirmed that this city was a salt production center and that it provided up to 90% of the salt consumed in the valley between 600 and 700 AD. The salt was extracted from dirt named “tequezquite” located in the southern part of the site. The archaeological zone comprises about 197 mounds but most of them are covered by weed. It is notable for the extraordinary artistic quality shown in the various urns, engraved bones and mural paintings in tombs. The two main structures at Lambityeco are Mound 190 and Mound 195. The first one is an elite residence with the entrance flanked by two imposing Cocijo (the Zapotec rain god) masks wearing an impressive headdress.

Santa Ana del Valle

A Zapotec community that has preserved its native language and traditions. There are weavers who produce beautiful woolen rugs, woven in the traditional way and dyed with natural colors. The small, but beautiful, 18th century temple has a Baroque altarpiece and interesting oil paintings. In the town plaza is the Shan-Dany Community Museum with four small exhibits, focusing on archaeology, the Mexican Revolution, the village's textiles, and the “Danza de la Pluma” (Feather Dance), where the dancers reenact the Spanish conquest. Open daily from 10:00 to 14:00 and from 15:00 to 18:00 hrs.





Tlacolula

On Sundays, don't miss the market in Tlacolula, an exquisite extravaganza of flavors, aromas and unmatched color with a strong indigenous character, where women dressed in traditional native garb come down from their hillside villages to buy and sell all manner of products. The Church of "La Asunción de Nuestra Señora", worth a visit. The parish was founded as a Dominican mission in the mid 16th century. Inside is the Baroque chapel dedicated to a crucifix called the Señor de Tlacolula, one of the most admirable jewels of Mexican baroque art.

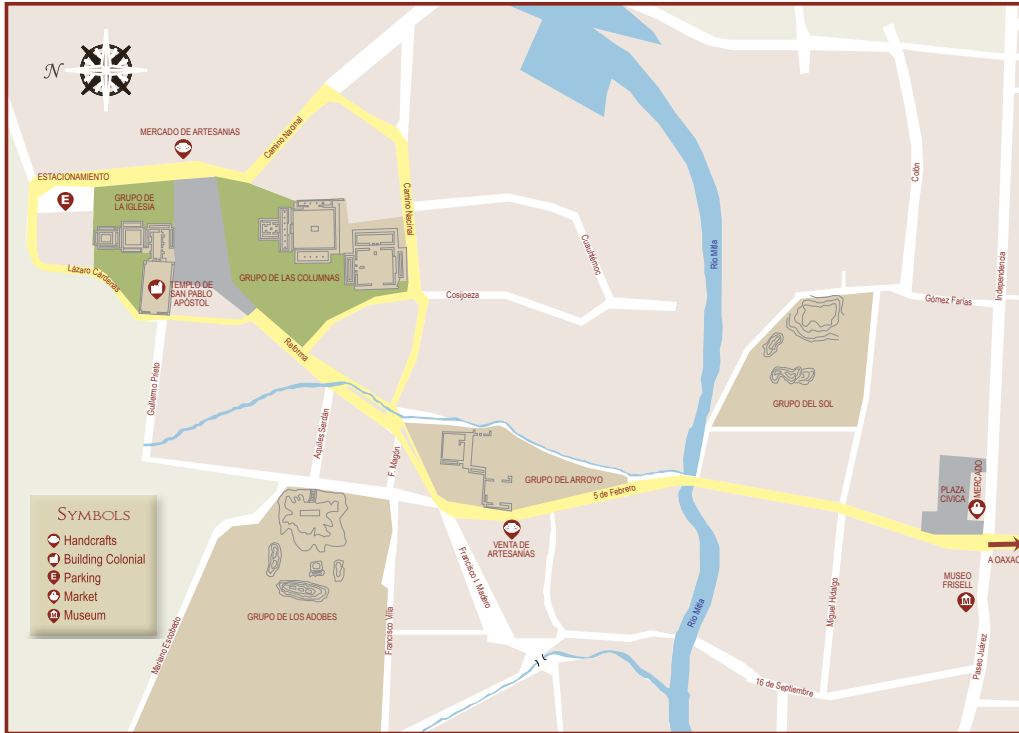
Yagul

A former city-state associated with the Zapotec culture. Evidence shows that Yagul flourished as an urban center after the downfall of Monte Albán (800 years A.D.). The site is set around a hill, and can be divided into three principal areas: The first is the fortress, located atop the cliffs, it has a breathtaking view over the whole Tlacolula Valley. The second, the Ceremonial center is an enormous man-made platform, with a number of large patios bordered by monumental architecture. And the third is the residential area. The most interesting features in the site are the Ball court, the largest in the Valley of Oaxaca, and the Palace of the Six Patios, a labyrinthine structure formed of an intricate complex of passageways reserved for the ruler or rulers of the city. Open Monday to Sunday from 9:00 to 17:00 hrs.



Mitla

The name is derived from the Nahuatl and means "place of the dead". Mitla was the main religious center, the residence of the ecclesiastical power. This site was at its peak between 950 and 1521 A.D. It is one of the architectural wonders of Mexico, is unique among Mesoamerican sites because the elaborate and intricate mosaic fretwork and geometric designs that cover tombs, panels, and even entire walls. These mosaics are made with small, finely cut and polished stone pieces, which have been fitted together without the use of mortar. There are five groups of buildings with a fence of cactus plants surrounding much of it. The five groups of constructions are called the South Group, the Adobe Group, the Arroyo Group, the Columns or Palace Group and the Church or North Group. The first two have been classified as ceremonial centers with central plazas surrounded by mound structures, and the other three have been classified as palaces with rooms surrounding square courtyards. In the 17th century the Church of San Pablo, was built on top of part of the ruins using some of the stones of the old Zapotec palaces.



Vierve el Agua

H Spanish for “the water boils”. It is believed to have been a sacred place of the

ancient Zapotec. This magical beauty features waterfalls, which seem to be melted crystal going down the mountains. There are two rock cliffs, one reaching down twelve meters and the other reaching down thirty meters. These formations are created by fresh water springs, whose water is over saturated with calcium carbonate and other minerals. There is a natural platform with four springs and pools in which visitors can swim in this thermal waters with breath-taking landscapes. Water temperature fluctuates between 71 and 77°F. There are bathrooms, dressing rooms, palapas (thatch-roofed, umbrella-shaped shelters), small eating facilities, and cabins to spend the night.



ROUTE MONTE ALBÁN - ZAACHILA

Monte Albán

Ancient capital of the Zapotecs, it was subsequently occupied by the Mixtecs prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. It has been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

During its maximum splendor, Monte Albán extended 6.5 square kms and had an approximate population of 40,000 inhabitants. The civic-ceremonial center is situated atop an artificially-leveled ridge, which with an elevation of about 1,940 m (6,400 ft.) above the seas level. The Main Plaza is delimited by large platforms, temples, elite residences, and ball courts. One characteristic of the site is the large number of carved stone monuments one encounters throughout the plaza, the so-called “Danzantes” (dancers), which represent naked men in contorted and twisted poses. Over 300 “Danzantes” stones have been recorded to date, and some of the better-preserved ones can be viewed at the site’s museum.

In the center of the Main Plaza is the building J and is undoubtedly one of the most interesting, because of its orientation and form, it is believed that the chamber to the rear was used for astronomic observations. The Palace is a structure with a central stairway and 13 chambers grouped around a central patio were used for priests and noble classes. The System IV, a temple-patio-altar complex, also features the talud-tablero (slope-panel) architectural style similar to those found in Teotihuacán. Standing just north of System IV, is the tallest stelae (5.8 meters) in the site; is generally

thought to have been used for astronomical and timekeeping functions, primarily the verification of midday and the dates of the solstices. The Southern Platform is massive structure with a majestic staircase, 40 meters in width, ascends 15 meters in height to the platform itself (140 meters north-south by 108 meters east-west), atop there are two pyramidal temples; the northeast and southeast corners of the Platform contain carved stelae depicting zoomorphs figures and glyphs. The Monte Albán’s Tomb 7 was discovered in 1932 with one of the richest archaeological deposits of funerary ceramics, gold, and silver in the Americas; the burial offerings are exhibit at Museo Regional de Oaxaca.

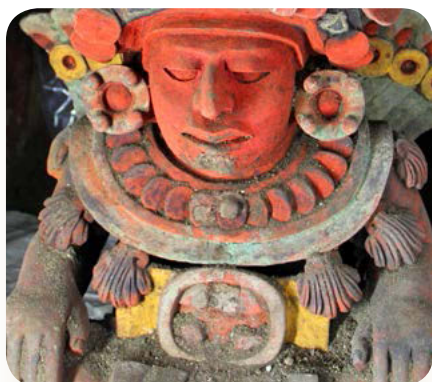
Monte Albán’s site museum is very modern, attractive and well worth your visit, with an exhibit of stelae and some other objects found in the site; it has excellent interpretive displays. Restrooms, a small bookstore, and a cafe are also available here.





Atzompa

This town has been a major producer of pottery since the Monte Alban period. If you're shopping for the glazed-green pottery, this is the right place. In the main plaza there is the "Casa del Artesano" (House of the Craftsman) where you can learn more about this one of a kind pottery. In 2012 was inaugurated the archaeological site called Atzompa Monumental Complex, located atop the Bonete Hill. The town was founded between as a satellite city to Monte Alban and was inhabited from 250 to 900 A.D. There are important structures like the Casa de Oriental (East House) and Casa de Altares (House of the Altars). However, the main find has been a 45-meter-long Mesoamerican ball court with two smaller courts next to it.



Parrazola

In this place, artisans produce fantastic wooden animals and creatures, made from copal wood. These beautiful handicrafts are exhibited and sold in the artisans' own homes.



Cuilapan de Guerrero

Majestic Dominican complex from the 16th century. Its main attractions are the unfinished Open Chapel, the church and the Ex-convent. The church has naves with lofty arches, large stone columns, and many frescoes. General Vicente Guerrero, military hero of Mexico's wars of independence, was shot here. Open daily from 10:00 to 18:00 hrs.



Zaachila

The site flourished from 1100-1521 AD. It was the last Zapotec capital but there is evidence that in the late urban era, when the Spaniards arrived, the Mixtecs had taken over. The archaeological zone has been partially excavated and includes a large man-made pyramid and a series of mounds with tombs. The Tomb 1 and Tomb 2 are the most outstanding. Tomb 1 is decorated with feline heads and stucco figures with representations of owls, a human figure covered by a tortoise shell and serpent headdress. Tomb 2 contained rich offerings, including gold and jewelry.

The site is in the middle of the modern town of Zaachila. Open daily from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The tianguis and markets are a tradition dating back to pre-Hispanic times, and Zaachila is known for its Thursday Tianguis Market, it takes place between the central park and the church. Colorful stands are set up with the most traditional crafts and food from this area peanuts, radishes and regional fruits. Zaachila has considerable cultural wealth with native music, dance, and gastronomy; you may enjoy the culinary variety of Oaxaca in the one of the many traditional restaurants found in town.





San Bartolo Coyotepec

The area was the settled homeland of the ancient Mesoamerican Zapotec civilization going back at least 2,500 years. The town is best known for its black clay pottery. The polishing method had made the pottery far more popular and many pieces are produced now for decorative purposes, you can find real works of art. There is a nice church from the 16th century, The Pottery Museum and the State Museum of Popular Art of Oaxaca.







San Martín Ticajete

It is historically a Zapotec indigenous community, the first settlements date back to 1150 BC. The community is best known for its production of "alebrijes", which are wood carvings of real or fantastic creatures painted in bright colors and intricate patterns. You can visit the Parish of San Martín, a nice colonial building. In April is held the Feria de Alebrije.

Ciudad de Oaxaca

SYMBOLS

-  Airport
-  Handcrafts
-  Building Colonial
-  Museum

Aeropuerto

Ánimas Trujano

Santa María Coyotepec



A ZIMATLÁN

N



San Martín Ticajete



Santa Ana Zegache

Santo Tomás Jalieza



A HUIXTEPEC

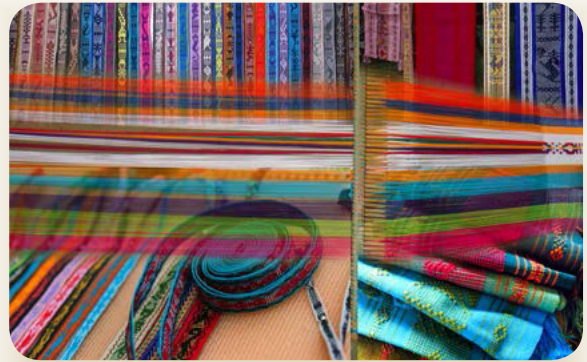
Ocotlán de Morelos



Carr. Nuevo a Minas

Santo Tomás Jalieza

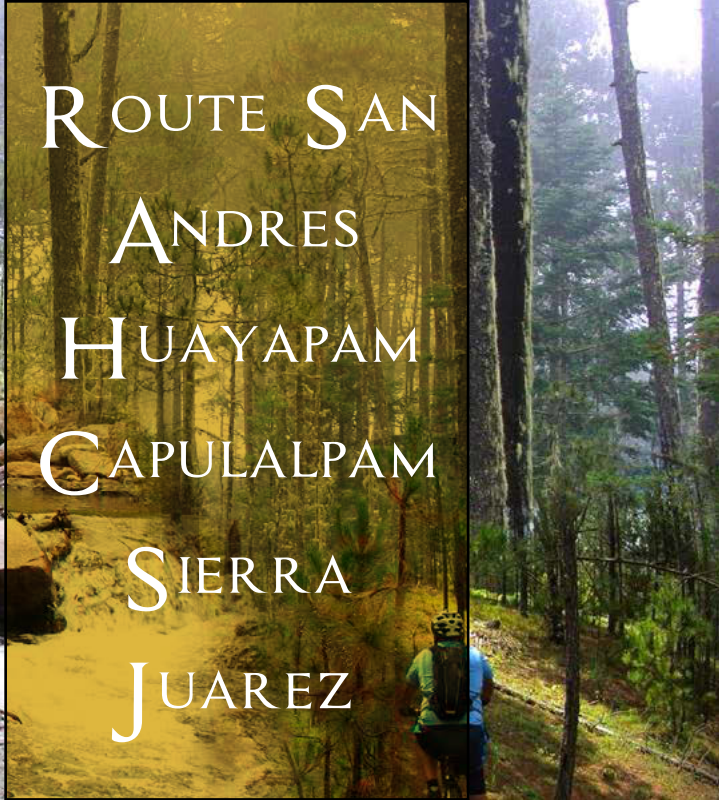
It is known as the “town of belts” for the attractive embroidered cloth and leather belts that are made here. There is a single many-stalled market in the middle of town where you can buy the belts and some other attractive crafts like “huipiles”, purses, bags, and “rebosos”.



Ocotlán de Morelos

The town's most important tradition is the weekly Friday market (tianguis), one of the oldest and largest in the Central Valleys region of Oaxaca where you can find many products like: food, ceramics, and of course the highest-quality mezcal. The city's main attraction is the Temple and Ex-convent of Santo Domingo de Guzmán. The complex was constructed in various stages between the 16th and 19th centuries. In both the church are a large number of colonial-era statues of saints, and the monastery was restored and converted into a museum that exhibits works by Morales (an internationally renowned artist), Oaxaca crafts, and artwork from the colonial period. The Rodolfo Morales house, an 18th century mansion, has been transformed into a cultural center with some works of the artist and an open-air theatre. The municipal palace has a sober Neoclassic façade and in the interior there is a mural done by Rodolfo Morales.

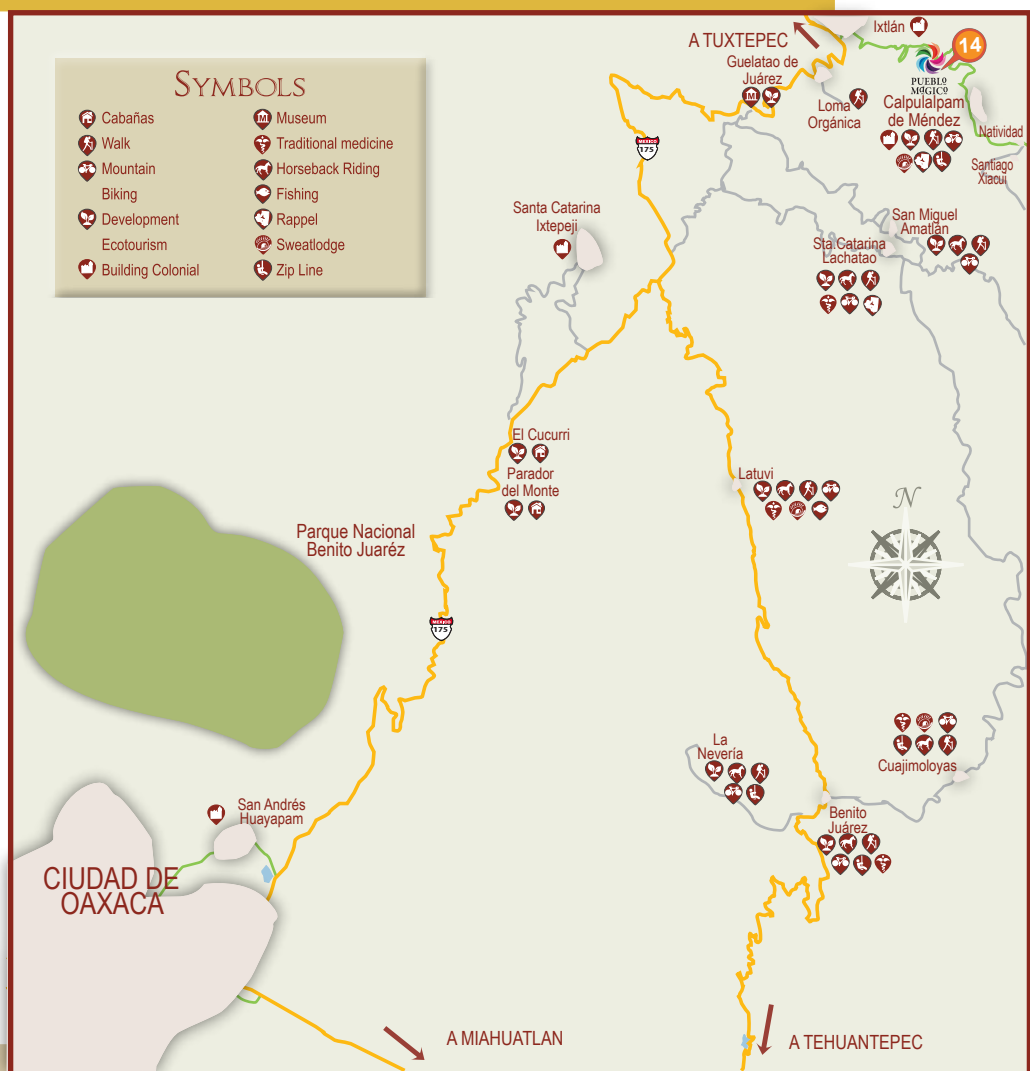




Ixtlán de Juárez

The village is surrounded by mountain landscape and is characterized by its architectural beauty. You may visit the Church of St Thomas the Apostle, a baroque building constructed 1640-1734. Ixtlán is now a center for eco-tourism. Its location, surrounded by cloud forest and pine gives it great natural landscape beauty.

Hiking trails link it to neighboring communities, and the Sierra Juárez Mountains are claimed to be home to around 500 bird species. The community produces interesting wooden handicrafts and pottery.



Sierra de Juárez

It is a range of mountains with an area of about 1,700 km². The mountains climb from 500m to 3,250m, with many large and deep ravines. It is one of Oaxaca State's wettest areas and richest in forest and fauna diversity. It has more than 400 species of birds, 350 and more than 6,000 plant species. These beautiful and spectacular natural areas are excellent for activities such as hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, and canopy. In the area, there are centers offering traditional healing process like the 'temazcal' (indigenous steam bath) plant therapy, sobadas (massages) and herbal baths. Here you can buy delicious preserved fruits like apple, hawthorn and peaches. There are several tours. In La Nevería there are tours to two natural viewpoints in bike or horseback riding. Llano Grande, is one of the cleanest communities in the country, ideal for mountain biking. Martha Latuvi, surrounded with spectacular scenery is a nice place for biking or horseback riding; the specialty is trout stuffed mushrooms. One of the most enchanting hikes is along the 15km high-altitude footpath between the isolated villages of Latuvi and San Miguel Amatlán, which passes through mystical cloud forest and is believed to be part of a larger pre-Colombian route that connected the Zapotec cities. Santa Catarina Lachatao, is a heavily wooded area. Almost every community offers simple accommodation, local guides and places for camping.



San Andrés Huayapam

It is a picturesque town with peaceful environment, cobblestoned streets and beautiful landscapes of the mountains. The 16th century church built by Dominican priests is a hidden jewel with impressive paintings like "The Last Supper", an incredibly beautiful altarpiece remarkable for the intricacy of its ornament, and a historic organ from the 18th century.

Huayapam is famous for the millennial drink called tejate. This pre-Hispanic drink is made out of cacao, corn and a flower called "cacao rose" (rosita de cacao). These are finely ground into a paste that is mixed with water. It is served cold with a touch of syrup in a colorful clay pot. The flor de cacao rises to the top to form pasty foam. Every year during Lent San Andres Huayapam hosts the Tejate Festival.

Capulálpam de Méndez

It was officially designated a “Pueblo Mágico” (magical town), it has been able to conserve, value and defend their historical-cultural heritage and manifest that in its gastronomy, handicrafts and music. You can stroll along the cobblestone streets lined with adobe and wood houses, as well as yellow quarry stone colonial constructions. The town has a beautiful 16th century church dedicated to St. Matthew, is particularly notable because the interior has 15 large, ornate, hand-carved altarpieces (retablos) from the 16th and 17th centuries. Here you can find beautiful embroidered dresses, blouses, napkin and blankets. You can also visit the Art and Toys Gallery. There is Traditional Medicine Center with healers who provide medicinal plant therapy, massages, temazcal (a sweat lodge used to purify the body), ritual cleansings, and an herbal pharmacy that offers basic training courses about the medicinal plants. From 11 to 22 September,



the town celebrates the annual fair in honor of St. Matthew the Apostle with the traditional calenda (a festive parade, usually with a band and people dancing), rodeos and fireworks.

Natural beauties surround Capulálpam so you can take pleasant walks or bike rides and admire the pine landscape, the colorful bromeliads and varieties of wild birds and diverse floral species of this beautiful forest area. There is a Management Unit for white tail deer, where the children can interact with this noble animals. In The Sabinos (The Cypress) you can rest under the shaded of these old trees. El Calvario (The Calvary), is lookout with a spectacular view of the town and the surroundings. The Cueva del Arroyo (Cave of the Creek), with a multitude of capricious forms and figures. The Recreational Center Los Molinos (The Mills) with an exceptional 100 meters (330 ft.) zip-line suspended 30 meters (99 ft.) above the river. In the Cerro Pelado (Bald Hill) you can walk through a path or “Camino Real” (Royal Road) used in the colonial time to connect the different towns of the Northern Sierra.





ROUTE MIXTECA

San José Mogote

It was the largest and most important settlement in the Valley of Oaxaca during the period that goes from 500 to 500 BC. San José Mogote is possibly the oldest stone city in Mesoamerica. Trade with the Olmec culture is evident in the ceramic and stone pottery. The archaeological zone is composed of a square surrounded by many pyramidal platforms. There is a community museum in a restored hacienda, with an exhibit of interesting objects found in the site and the history of the hacienda.



San Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca

The Renaissance-style Templo y Ex-Convento de San Juan Bautista is a wonderful complex built by the Dominicans in 1576. It includes the open chapel, the temple, the cloister and a churchyard. The interior of the sanctuary is perhaps the best preserved of the Dominican churches in the region. The church's patron saint stands guard over the intricately carved altarpiece. The graceful open chapel bears Mixtec religious symbols like serpents and eagles.



Villa de Etlá

Here is the church and former monastery of San Pedro y San Pablo. The complex was completed in 1636 and consists of three parts, atrium, temple and monastery.



Tlaxiaco

This picturesque town has the Nuestra Señora de la Asunción Church built in 1548. The construction is a classic statement of the Dominican high style and similar to the one in Yanhuitlán. The church offers a sober and well- balanced façade but the interior is especially elegant, with a five-tier chandelier hanging from the dome. The main square has a nice clock and the weekly market draws people in from a broad, highland region.

San Pedro y San Pablo Teposcolula

The Dominicans were established here in 1541, and founded a convent in 1538. The complex includes the open chapel, the temple, and the convent house or cloister, and is one of most impressive in the region. The meticulously restored open chapel, also called the Indigenous Chapel, is the pride of Teposcolula, is remarkable for the design of its spaces. The roof resembles the vaulted ceiling inside the sanctuary, but between the ribs it's open to the sky and the underside is studded with gleaming gold medallions. In the temple you will find some beautiful paintings by Andrés de la Concha and Andrés Pereyns. The monastery is a small museum with a pleasant rose garden ringed by small rooms and few restored monks' cells. The sprawling churchyard was built for the evangelization of thousands of Mixtecos. The other interesting structure in Teposcolula is the Casa de la Cacica, (House of the Priestess); the Spanish built this stone building for a Mixteca leader and is a perfect combination of pre-Hispanic and colonial architecture; today has been restore and is a public library.

Not far from Teposcolula is the archaeological site of Pueblo Viejo (Yucundaa) on a mountain ridge. This site flourish between 1000 and 1550 AD.



Santo Domingo y Yanhuitlán

During the colonial era it was an important trade center. The magnificent 16th-century Templo y Ex Convento de Santo Domingo de Guzmán and its adjoining monastery sit on a hill overlooking the village. It was built atop an old Mixtec religious site. The sheer size of the structure is one of its stunning features; its vaulted ceiling soars to almost 25 meters (82 feet). The gold-leaf Baroque altarpiece, behind the main altar, has five levels, each depicting various saints and some paintings by the Spanish master Andrés de la Concha. Don't miss the Mudejar (Moorish) designs suspended beneath the choir loft and the impressive 18th-century pipe organ. The Regional Museum of the Ex Convento de Santo Domingo Yanhuitlán features an interesting exhibition of religious art and the facsimile of the codex Yanhuitlán. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 9:00 to 17:00 hrs.





MEZCAL ROUTE

The word mezcal comes from Nahuatl *metl* and *ixcalli* which mean ‘oven cooked agave’. It is a distilled alcoholic beverage made from the maguey plant. Traditionally, mezcal is handcrafted by small-scale producers in Oaxaca, and is still made from the heart of the maguey plant, called the “piña,” much the same way it was 200 years ago, in most places.

Mezcal is highly varied, depending on the species of agave or maguey used, the fruits and herbs added during fermentation and the distillation process employed, creating sub-types with names such as *de gusano*, *tobalá*, *pechuga*, *blanco*, *minero*, *cedrón*, *de alacran*, among others.

There are also creams of mezcal, a product of a double distillation of the agave which joins the mezcal slow with a select fruit, a very unique combination of flavors, for example with coffee, maracuya, mango, coconut, strawberry, piña colada, capuccino, passion fruit, just to mention some.

Mezcal Route includes the Southern Highlands, a mountainous region, with forest landscapes with. This is an important coffee-growing region.

Matatlán – It is one of most important mezcal producers in the state. There are a number of mezcal factories and stands. It is known as the “World Capital Of Mezcal”. You can also visit the church of St. James built in the 17th century, with two bell towers. Heading north of Matatlán, there is an archeological zone, but it hasn’t been explored yet. Here is held the Annual Fair of Mezcal.

Tlacolula – The picturesque town feature one of the most beautiful chapels in Oaxaca. The Church of La Asunción de Nuestra Señora was completed in the 16th century. It is also famous its Sunday open-air market with an almost ritual and mystical atmosphere. Tlacolula is famous also for its excellent bread, exquisite mezcal and its tasty barbecue.

Yautepec – In addition to sample the mezcal of the region, you can also acquire some of its beautiful textiles, pottery clay and the various crafts of palm.

Sola de Vega – Also famous for its mezcal, the population also produces beautiful embroidered blouses and different pieces of pottery.

Ocotlán – The city’s main attraction is the Templo y Ex-convento de Santo Domingo de Guzmán. The church is fronted by a very large atrium fenced by a stonewall. The main facade has two bodies and a crest with both Baroque and Neoclassical styles. There are also Neoclassical elements inside the temple. Other attractions are: the City Hall built in 1913 and a community museum located in the former convent of the Dominicans.

Ejutla – Among the most important buildings in the town are the Templo de Santa María de la Natividad, with impressive altarpieces. You can also visit the picturesque arcades surrounding the town “Zocalo”.

Miahuatlán – Here you can visit the parish church, the pillar, the municipal palace, the archaeological zone, the Yoolveo ravine, the Loma de los Nogales (walnut trees hill), and the central garden.

Salina Blanca – Its name comes from the fact that around the region there are salt formations. The cliff present white rock formations which look like waterfalls, this is a unique view from the banks of the Quiechapa river. Eighty miles downstream from here there some fresh water springs, whose water is over saturated with minerals; as the water runs down the slope, the excess minerals are deposited. All the area is an excellent option for camping, hiking and for nature lovers.

Zimatlán – This is one of many Zapotec towns of the area. It has been inhabited since the era of Monte Albán. It is famous for its production of mezcal.



The Oaxacan gastronomy takes you on an amazing journey into one of the most outstanding and colorful cuisines in the world. Oaxacan food is among the most varied and delicious in Mexico, UNESCO has declared it Humanity's Cultural Patrimony.

Oaxaca's gastronomy incorporates elements of pre-Hispanic cuisine, and lively imagination has created combinations that amaze by the color, the aromas and the flavors. The list of dishes that characterize this cuisine is endless, however, we can mention: Oaxacan Mole in its 7 varieties depending on the type of chili used, Chapulines, (dry roasted, spiced grasshoppers), tlayudas (large tortilla spread with the remaining of the lard and beans), maguey worm sauce, chiles rellenos (stuffed chilies), and of course the famous Oaxacan tamales in banana leaves.

Oaxaca cheese is a soft white string cheese, which is similar to mozzarella. It is sold in "ropes" which are wound onto themselves into balls, and eaten cold or lightly melted on quesadillas is considered among the best in the world.

Chocolate, plays an important part in the Oaxacan cuisine; the cacao beans are ground then combined with sugar, almonds, cinnamon and other ingredients to form bars. Pieces of these bars are mixed with hot milk or water and drunk. Oaxaca is also an important producer of coffee; it has the third place nationwide.

Other special drinks are waters of Casilda, a beverage made of horchata with tuna and walnuts, chia or grated lemon, among other fruits; and Tecajete, a drink made of corn and cocoa served cold.

Of course you can enjoy a good glass of mezcal, the traditional drink in Oaxaca. There is a saying attributed to Oaxaca regarding the drink: "para todo mal, mezcal, y para todo bien también" (for everything bad, mezcal, and for everything good, as well).



The City of Oaxaca boasts a rich, diverse history and culture dating back several thousand years. Nowhere is this more evident than in the city's original hand-made arts & crafts sold on just about every corner. The variety of cultures blended together is reflected in many art objects that defy the imagination. If you want to have a true Oaxacan shopping experience, you're better off seeking one-of-a-kind treasures at open-air markets or small boutiques and jewelry stores.

In Oaxaca handcraft is not just a tradition, it's an ancient heritage. Whether you are seeking jewelry, woven rugs, shawls, ceramics or elaborate wooden figures, the famous alebrijes, basketry, beautiful jewelry, you could be overwhelmed by the variety and quality of local crafts.

Several downtown galleries bloom with the sculpture and paintings of masters, such as Rufino Tamayo, Rodolfo Morales, Francisco Toledo, and a host of up-and-coming local artists. In an Oaxacan art gallery, the experience will be memorable.

There are also tons of excellent Oaxacan markets; here you will find something to please everyone. There are countless beautifully handcrafted objects for everyday use, textiles, fruits, vegetables,

flowers, chocolate, cheese, grasshoppers, meat, wood and metal objects, and of course the famous mezcal.

Oaxaca's artisans lived from the work of their hands and their marketplaces for a thousand years. If you don't speak Spanish, show your appreciation somehow. Make it a point to buy something; asking for a discount is okay and usually expected. That heritage can go home with you, in a rainbow of wonderful inventions, colors and memories.





TRADITIONS IN OAXACA

LA GUELAGUETZA

Of Mexico's many historic festivals La Guelaguëtza is among the most evocative. The word Guelaguëtza comes from the Zapotec language and is usually interpreted as the "reciprocal exchanges of gifts and services".

This great cultural event involves re-enactments of legends and celebrates traditional music, dance, costume, craft and gastronomy from the seven regions and the different ethno linguistic groups in the state of Oaxaca: Valles Centrales (Central Valleys), Sierra Sur, Sierra Norte, Cañada, Mixteca (Mixtec), La Costa (The Cost), El Istmo (The Isthmus) and El Golfo (The Gulf).

During the festival, different ethnic groups wearing their traditional clothing perform folk dances that are particular to their region. At the end of the performance, each performing group distributes typical items from their region among the spectators.

There is an opening "calenda" or parade. Later as part of the celebration, there is also the presentation of the Legend of Donaji on each of the Monday nights in the Guelaguëtza Auditorium. The Legend of Donaji is the story of the last Zapotec princess, full of light, sound, fireworks and drama.

The dances, concerts, art exhibits, culinary events, painting and theater create the cultural mosaic of this festival. It has earned a great reputation for its high artistic content and for presenting the races of the town of Oaxaca in an excellent manner.

Each year the Guelaguëtza is celebrated on the two Mondays immediately following July 16, except when the first Monday falls on July 18, the day on which Benito Juárez the great Zapotec leader and first indigenous president of Mexico died. Out of respect for Oaxaca's most revered native son, the celebrations are postponed for one week, falling on July 25 and August 1.

The celebration takes place in the Auditorio Guelaguëtza, an outdoor auditorium that sits on a hill in Oaxaca city called Cerro del Fortín. This is a very special feature, because the spectators looking down at the stage can also appreciate a gorgeous view of the city below. The theater seats nearly 11,000, and is commonly used for musical, theater and art events. The auditorium has recently had a tarp-roof added to protect both spectators and performers from the hot sun. Nonetheless, taking sunscreen and a sunhat is advisable.



NOCHE DE RÁBANOS (Night of the Radishes)

This is one of the most unique celebrations in the world and takes place each December 23rd in the main square in the city of Oaxaca. The origin of this traditional contest is lost in the mists of time, but the first official celebration was in 1897. The official viewing begins at 5 p.m. and continues throughout the evening. It's also a good idea to visit the zocalo in the early afternoon, and you'll be able to watch the artisans put their masterpieces together. The event only lasts a few hours but draws most of the city's population and the visitors, to the main square to look at the creations.

Local artisans show off elaborate artworks made of radishes. Dozens of booths display carvings representing elaborate religious or cultural scenes, like the complete nativity scenes,

Day of the Dead scenes, dancers at the Guelaguetza, musicians at a parade, cathedrals, miniature villages, agave farms, markets, mythological figures and even a radish version of painter Frida Kahlo. Trying to enrich the festival, in recent years, there are two other categories of folk art. The artisans fashion flor inmortal (dried flowers) and totomoxtle (corn husks) into a multitude of fanciful decorations that one can buy to take home.

Artisans of different neighborhoods or towns compete to win prizes, but mostly they compete to keep this feast of color and creativity alive. Once a winner has been chosen the Mexican skies light up with festive fireworks. The festival is filled with music, traditional dancing and lots of food, including deep-fried doughnuts drenched in syrup.



MAP OF OAXACA



SYMBOLS

- Handcrafts
- Waterfall
- Development
- Ecotourism
- Colonial buildings
- Estate coffee
- Grottos
- Swimming
- Sea Turtles
- Bird Watching
- Boat Ride
- Fishing
- Archeological Site
- Surf

REGION	FROM OAXACA TO	DISTANCE KM.	APPROXIMATE TIME
CENTRAL	Bahías de Huatulco	277	5:30 h
	Lagunas de chachahua	352	6:50 h
	La Escobilla	242	6:00 h
	Laguna de Manialtepec	266	6:20 h
	El Mazunte	264	5:30 h
SOUTHERN	Puerto Ángel	252	6:00 h
	Puerto Escondido	250	6:00 h
VALLEY	Teotitlán del Valle	30	20 min
	Santa Ana del Valle	34	25 min
	Monte Albán	12	20 min
	Santa María El Tule	13	20 min
	Mitla	33	25 min
MIXTEC	Coixtlahuaca	113	1:40 h
	Huajuapán de León	203	2:30 h
	Santiago Apoala	125	2:30 h
	Tepecolula	123	1:20 h
	Tlaxiaco	175	3:00 h
	Yanhuitlán	93	1:15 h

REGION	FROM OAXACA TO	DISTANCE KM.	APPROXIMATE TIME
SOUTHERN	Benito Juárez	54	1:00 h
	Capulápan de Méndez	70	1:00 h
	Cuajimoyas	56	1:00 h
	La Nevería	62	1:15 h
	Ixtlán de Juárez	61	1:10 h
	Santa Catarina Lachatao	64	1:30 h
	San Miguel Amatlán	62	1:20 h
	Santa Martha Latiui	53	1:30 h
ISHTHMA	Santiago Comaltepec	112	2:15 h
	Tehuantepec	251	4:15 h
OTHER	Salina Cruz	267	4:20 h
	Ciudad de México	465	4:30 h
	Guadalajara	996	10:18 h
	Puebla	320	3:00 h
	Tuxtla Gutiérrez	538	8:30 h
	Villahermosa	602	6:40 h
	Veracruz	370	4:30 h
	Acapulco	654	7:35 h

