



Authentic Oaxaca

November 12–20, 2017

ITINERARY

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Arrive in the city of Oaxaca by 4 p.m. Meet for program orientation and dinner. Oaxacan cuisine is world-famous, and excellent restaurants abound in the city center. Our scholar, David Yetman, Ph.D., introduces us to the diversity of Oaxaca's landscapes, from lush tropical valleys to desert mountains, and its people—16 indigenous groups flourish in this region. Overnight, Oaxaca. **D**

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Head north toward the Mixteca region of spectacular and rugged highlands. Along the way, we visit the archaeological site of San José El Mogote, the oldest urban center in Oaxaca and the place where agriculture began in this region. We also visit Las Peñitas, with its church and unexcavated ruins. Continue on 1.5 hours to Yanhuitlán, where we explore the Dominican priory and monastery—a museum of 16th-century Mexican art and architecture. Time permitting, we visit an equally sensational convent at Teposcolula, 45 minutes away. Overnight, Yanhuitlán. **BLD**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Drive 1.5 hours to the remote Mixtec village of Santiago Apoala. Spend the day exploring the village and the surrounding landscape—with azure pools, waterfalls, caves, and rock art, the valley has been compared to Shangri-La. According to traditional Mixtec belief, this valley was the birthplace of humanity. (Optional hike to the base of the falls.) We also visit artisans known for their finely crafted palm baskets and hats. Overnight, Apoala. **BLD**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Travel along a beautiful, mostly dirt backroad (2.5-hour drive, plus scenic stops) to remote Cuicatlán, where mango and lime trees hang thick with fruit. Along the way we visit a pulque (agave beer) producer and get a glimpse of daily life. Enjoy a walk to the ruins above town, followed by an excursion to a local market and time on your own. Overnight, Cuicatlán. **BLD**



The old market, Oaxaca. Eric Mindling



Yanhuitlán. Eric Mindling



Apoala waterfalls. Eric Mindling

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Today we get an early start and drive 45 minutes to the remote mountain village of Santiago Quiotepec. Hike uphill about an hour through forests of cardon and barrel cactus to a 2,000-year-old pyramid—the northernmost outpost of the Zapotec empire. From this hilltop, take in the breathtaking views: river and valley below, sierra above. Cool off in a river before returning to Oaxaca City (3-hour highway drive, with rest stop). Overnight, Oaxaca. **B L**

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

Take a breather. We've traveled far and wide. Today we slow down with a short walking tour of the city and a visit to the Santo Domingo Cultural Center. Option: visit the spectacular Ethnobotanical Garden. Enjoy a free afternoon and evening to explore on your own. Overnight, Oaxaca. **B L**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Today we explore Monte Albán, the ancient capital of the Zapotecs. For most of its occupation (500 B.C.–A.D. 750), Monte Albán was by far the largest city in the region, exerting considerable political control. Spectacular tombs, believed to be later Mixtec intrusions, prompt discussions about the fall of Monte Albán and the transformation of Zapotec civilization. Afterward, drive a short distance to the village of Atzompa, where people have been producing pottery since the time of Monte Albán. Here we meet Angélica Vásquez, an award-winning potter who creates sculptural pieces that interpret Oaxacan legends and myths. Return to our hotel; enjoy a free evening. Overnight, Oaxaca. **B L**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19

We visit the fascinating Tlacolula Sunday market, one of the country's most traditional *tianguis*. Indigenous people come from villages in the central valleys of Oaxaca to sell a wide variety of items—black clay pottery, embroidery, and more—much as they must have done in pre-Hispanic times. Afterward, we visit nearby Yagul, a city-state associated with the Zapotecs that peaked from A.D. 1250 to 1521. Time permitting, we stop at a mescal factory on our way back to the city. Enjoy a farewell dinner with the group. Overnight, Oaxaca.

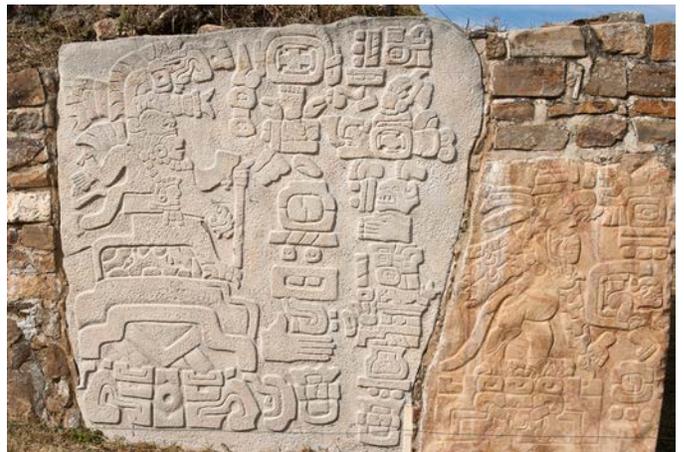
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20

Depart from Oaxaca city at any time. Shuttles provided to the airport. **B**

B = breakfast, **L** = lunch, **D** = dinner
Itinerary subject to change



Ethnobotanical Garden. Doug Knuth, Wikimedia Commons



Zapotec relief, Monte Albán.



A potter working in Atzompa. Friends of Oaxacan Folk Art, Wikimedia Commons

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