



# Cultures and Customs of CENTRAL MEXICO

Featuring Day of the Dead Celebration in Oaxaca; Art,  
Archaeology and History in Mexico City;  
and the Quintessential Charm of Old Mexico  
in San Miguel De Allende

Main Tour to Oaxaca  
October 27- November 3, 2025

Post-Tour to Mexico City  
and San Miguel de Allende  
November 3-11, 2025

This comprehensive, curated small group exploration of central Mexico's profound cultural, historical and artistic heritage features Oaxaca during the observation of Day of the Dead. A post tour to the historical and archaeological treasures of vibrant Mexico City and the charming Spanish colonial, artsy San Miguel de Allende completes the trilogy and will be the perfect ending of our explorations. In 2020, Travel and Leisure named Oaxaca "Worlds Best City" and San Miguel de Allende as #2. We will experience and appreciate the essence of these very special places, their history and evocative present day ambiance.

This small group cultural discovery tour is escorted by Steve Carr, owner of Meximayan Tours, LLC, an experienced tour leader and professional photographer. Professional local guides will enrich your experience helping you learn about and appreciate the rich cultural heritage of the places we will visit. Our boutique and/ or historical hotels ensure comfort and enhance the local ambiance.

We invite you to join us on this exciting exploration of the Cultures and Customs of Central Mexico. Space is extremely limited so call Steve now at 630-878-8594 to reserve your spot and for more information.

## Oaxaca

Well known for its elaborate, authentic celebrations of Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), offers us the perfect opportunity to experience this unique cultural event at the same time exploring some of Mexico's earliest history and archaeological sites. Our comfortable boutique accommodation, ideally located in the historic center, puts us in the heart of the celebrations and will be our base as we explore important pre-Aztec Zapotec archaeological. Oaxaca's indigenous origins express themselves uniquely through distinctive weaving, pottery and wood carving arts created in small surrounding villages.

## Mexico City

The vibrant metropolis and beating heart of the country, built literally upon the ruins of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, offers an unparalleled perspective of the complexity and diversity of Mexico. We will explore its pre-hispanic past visiting the Templo Mayor, Teotihuacan pyramids and complex, Bosque de Chapultepec, and Xochimilico Gardens. We will savor Mexico City's unique artistic heritage as we explore the excellent museums, Palacio Nacional, Palacio Bellas Artes and others where art from colonial times through the present is displayed. We will thrill to be in the presence of the massive, socially evocative murals of Rivera, Tamayo, Siqueiros and others. In Coyocan, a visit to Freida and Diego's studio/ homes will delight. We will experience Mexico City's vibrant present day ambiance in neighborhoods like Roma Norte, Polanco, La Condesa and others where sidewalk cafes flourish, excellent restaurants abound, and parks and green space invite one to partake of a few restful moments.

## San Miguel de Allende

A crucible of Spanish Colonial architecture, mecca for artists both local and from around the world is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. San Miguel is home to numerous well known art schools, the first founded by the well known muralist, David Alvaro Siqueiros as well as a large population expats from countries worldwide who bring present day culture and artistic inspiration in the form of internationally acclaimed art schools and galleries, poetry and writing workshops, opera performances - indeed all manner of visual and performing arts. Studded with galleries, restaurants, parks, and quintessential Spanish Colonial architecture, San Miguel de Allende is the perfect place to embrace the ambiance of old Mexico, to be inspired to learn and create, to enjoy the perfect year-round climate, and to just feel at home in very special place in Mexico.

# DíA de los MUERTOS

DAY OF THE DEAD: Exploring the Culture and Folk Art of Mexico's Oaxaca Valley. October 27- November 3, 2025

## Oaxaca- Hotel Casa Sierra Azul

DAY

1

### Monday October 27

Oaxaca

Arrive Oaxaca independently and transfer (included) to our comfortable boutique hotel in Oaxaca's Centro Historico. Transfers are provided upon arrival in Oaxaca and I will meet everyone at the hotel as they arrive. It is likely that many of us will arrive early evening (7pm- ish) and on different carriers/ flights depending on departure gateway in the US. Since it may be a long day of travel for some, our Welcome Dinner will be tomorrow evening.

DAY

2

### Tuesday October 28 B, L, D

Oaxaca

Oaxaca's rich history dates to the Zapotec culture, as early as the 8th century BCE. The pre-Columbian and Spanish colonial influences combine to infuse the art, textiles, food and customs of today's blended culture. Our UNESCO World Heritage Site Centro Historico walking tour this morning will reveal the subtle layers of the Oaxaca's rich past. We will visit the Zocolo, Templo Santo Domingo Guzman with its regional museum, Museo de Las Culturas and Tamayo Museum. Oaxaca's brightly colored preserved colonial buildings and cobblestone streets beckon us to explore beyond the main city center. Chocolaterias abound and we will see local chocolate making, sampling some of the finest. My favorite drink is the hot chocolate with Zapotec spices. Throughout the day, we will see early preparations for the coming Day of the Dead festivities including public and private "ofrendas" altars with offerings for and honoring the departed. Celebrating our first day in Oaxaca, this evening we will stroll the cobblestone streets to our Welcome Dinner.

DAY

3

### Wednesday October 29 B, L

Oaxaca

Today is an introduction to Zapotec history and culture as we explore the archaeological sites of Dainzu, Lambiteyco, Yagul and Mitla, the latter two being UNESCO World Heritage Sites and important in understanding the origins of civilization in Mezoamerica. Indeed, evidence was found of the earliest plant domestication in North America, dating back 10,000 years. Dinner will be independent tonight so we can have a chance to explore on our own and try some of the many savory Oaxaca delights. Mole, made with chocolate and spices from the ancient Zapotec culture, is Oaxaca's trademark specialty, and is served in a variety of flavors. Perhaps you will sample them all with the Plato de Siete Sabores (plate of 7 flavors) to decide which you like best. My favorite is the Colorado. Fabulous restaurants abound in the Centro Historico, and our most difficult task today may be choosing one.



# DÍ A LOS MUERTOS

DAY OF THE DEAD: Exploring the Culture and Folk Art of Mexico's Oaxaca Valley. October 27- November 3, 2025

DAY

4

Thursday October 30 B, L, D

Oaxaca

Perched on a 1300' hilltop overlooking the valley of Oaxaca, UNESCO World Heritage Site Monte Alban, is the pre-eminent Zapotec socio-political and economic center and one of the foremost archaeological sites of the New World. Although much smaller it is often ranked in importance with Chichen Itza and Machu Picchu. Once the Zapotec capital, it was continuously inhabited for over 1500 years. As we explore the great plaza, the palace, the ball court, the observatory and the north plaza, we'll see stele and Los Danzantes (stone slabs with carved figures representing war prisoners and sacrificial victims). The small but very good museum here is a great place to begin our visit, giving us a timeline and overall perspective of the site.

DAY

5

Friday October 31 B, L

Oaxaca

Today will be a feast for the mind, body and soul, a celebration of the arts unique to Oaxaca. We will visit artist studios and galleries to appreciate the expressions of artists here who interpret their world through painting, pottery, wood carving and photography. We will explore neighborhoods around town like Barrio Xochimilco, Barrio Jalatlaco and others, seeking out unique street art and murals addressing social equality, justice, ethnicity and historical roots (sometimes all in the same piece). We'll lunch on the sun-dappled patio at a small local restaurant.

DAY

6

Saturday November 1 B/L

Oaxaca

Exploring indigenous arts further, we go treasure hunting today as we visit the artisan villages surrounding Oaxaca. The weavings of Teotitlan del Valle are known and appreciated worldwide. Indeed, I have some great ones in my personal collection. The Zapotec designs passed down for thousands of years tell ancient stories with each warp and weft. San Bartolo de Coyotepec, a Zapotec community has been making pottery for over 2000 years. It is particularly known for its striking Barro Negro (black pottery) made with the uniquely colored local clay, and eloquent designs are fashioned by ceramic artist of the highest degree. Alebrijes are brightly colored Mexican folk art sculptures of fantastical, mythical creatures crafted of paper mache and wood. Although some say they represent spirit guides shown on the 20 day Zapotec calendar, these surreal creatures actually originated in the 30's, when a Piñata maker fell gravely ill and envisioned ethereal creatures in his dreams. Upon recovering, he began to create the surreal creatures which ultimately caught the eyes of Diego Rivera and Frieda Kahlo who commissioned him to create more, thus creating a permanent style of Mexican folk art. Arrazola is the village where making alebrijes is a tradition, and we'll visit the studio of one of the foremost artists.



# DíA de los MUERTOS

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DAY

7

Sunday November 2

B, L, D

Oaxaca

Oaxaca's unique cuisine dates from pre-Hispanic times, and our cooking class today is the perfect opportunity to learn more about the ingredients and preparation. We'll prep and cook along with a well known local chef at their home and savor our creations during lunch. Later, the afternoon is free to explore on your own and to observe the Day of the Dead festivities, parades, street fairs, face painting, and comparsas (carnival-like processions of people in costumes with music and dancing) happening all over town. This evening after a sumptuous traditional farewell dinner, we will experience the culmination of the Day of the Dead wandering the streets and cemeteries where families gather for candle lit vigils with offerings and prayers to celebrate the lives of their departed loved ones.

DAY

8

Monday November 3 B

Oaxaca/ Home or Mexico City

If you are leaving us today, transfer to the airport for your return flights to the US. If you are continuing with us to Mexico City and San Miguel de Allende, see below.



# MÉXICO CITY



Exploring the past and present in the vibrant heart and soul embodiment of all things Mexico. November 3-8, 2025

DAY

8

Monday November 3 B,L,D

Oaxaca/ Mexico City

Mexico City- Hotel Zocolo Central Mexico City We drive this morning from Oaxaca to Puebla where we meet our guide for the next few days and enjoy beautifully baroque Puebla during lunch before enjoying continuing our journey to Mexico City. Time permitting, we'll stop at the archaeological site of Cacaxtla a sprawling palace containing vibrantly colored murals painted in unmistakable Maya style. Arriving Mexico City we check in to our historic and perfectly located hotel on the Zocalo. and gather for dinner this evening at a terrace restaurant overlooking the main Plaza.

DAY

9

Tuesday November 4 B, L

Mexico City

Today is a full day exploration of the Centro Historico including the Museum of Anthropology, Palacio Nacional, Palacio Bellas Artes. The Museum of Anthropology with its unparalleled collection of Mexico's most famous art and artifacts will be a highlight. The exhibits, dioramas and monuments will provide context and add to our understanding and appreciation Mexico's lineage of pre-hispanic cultures including the Olmec, Toltec, Maya, Zapotec, Aztec and more. A restful lunch will energize us for the afternoon's explorations of the stunning murals of Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros in the Palacio Nacional and the Palacio Bellas Artes.

DAY

10

Wednesday November 5 B, L

Mexico City

The grand Aztec city of Tenotchtlan lies buried beneath the historic center of Mexico City. The the main temple, Templo Mayor, was discovered in 1978 when electrical workers unearthed an 8 ton stone disc of an Aztec goddess. In succeeding years, more parts of the Templo Mayor and the Aztec city have been excavated and archaeological explorations and studies are ongoing. We will visit the Templo and small but excellent museum this morning. We'll have lunch before heading to Coyocan, originally a small prehispanic town on the banks of Lake Texcoco, later a Spanish headquarters, and now a neighborhood within the city that still retains much of its colonial charm and character. It is home to the Frieda Kahlo Museum (Casa Azul) where she lived and worked for many years. We will visit her home/ museum and lunch in Coyocan. Later we drive to nearby San Angel to visit the studio of Diego Rivera, then continuing to our next hotel located at the foot of the magnificent Teotihuacan archaeological site.

DAY

11

Thursday November 6 B, L, D

Mexico City/ San Miguel de Allende

We will rise early while it is still cool to visit Teotihuacan. Dating 150 BCE to 700 CE, this UNESCO World Heritage Site was the largest city in the prehistoric New World. Known for its broad avenues and tall pyramids, it was a powerful political and religious center whose influence extended throughout Mesoamerica. It even conquered rich and powerful Tikal, the huge Maya city far away in the jungles of present day Guatemala. We will visit the Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon, the Temple of the Plumed Serpent and the onsite museum. Lunch at a local restaurant will provide a cool and welcome respite from our explorations. After lunch, we will rest on the drive to San Miguel de Allende, our home for the next 4 nights. Our boutique hotel, La Morada, is just 1 block from the Jardin (garden) which is the main plaza. We'll have a brief early evening walking orientation tour on the way to dinner.



# SAN MIGUEL de ALLENDE



Discovering a Spanish Colonial Jewel, a unique cultural and artistic mecca.  
November 8-13, 2025

## San Miguel de Allende- Hotel La Morada

DAY  
12

Friday November 7 B, L

San Miguel de Allende

We will get to know this picturesque city on our Centro Historico walking tour including the beautiful La Parroquia de San Miguel Arcangel; Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramirez which houses stunning murals by David Alfaro Siqueiros; the library- Biblioteca Publica- with its amazing painted ceiling, intimate Teatro Santa Ana and its artsy café; San Miguel's opera house, Angela Perlotta Theater; and La Fabrica- a riverside converted factory housing artist's studios and galleries.

DAY  
13

Saturday November 8 B, L

Guanajuato and Canada del Virgin

The colorful and picturesque hillside town of Guanajuato, often called Mexico's most beautiful city, and another UNESCO World Heritage Site, is our destination today. Surrounded by hills upon which climbs an eclectic assortment of homes painted in a bright, colorful cacophony of every imaginable hue. Guanajuato is an artist's inspiration and photographer's dream. Once a rich silver mining town that produced 1/3 of all silver in the world for 250 years, it retains its narrow winding Callejoneadas (back streets and intimate alleyways). We will walk Callejon de Beso, one of the best known, so named because it is so narrow the balconies on each side almost touch so that lovers can lean across and steal a kiss. Many fine examples of baroque and neo classical architecture delight as we stroll from one picture perfect plaza to another. The funicular provides a fun experience and perfect views. On our return to San Miguel after lunch we stop briefly at Canada del la Virgin, a recently excavated Otomi archaeological site.



# SAN MIGUEL de ALLENDE



Discovering a Spanish Colonial Jewel, a unique cultural and artistic mecca.  
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DAY  
14

## Sunday November 9

B, L

Dolores Hidalgo

In the early hours of September 16, 1810, Fra Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, ringing the bells of his church, uttered his famous cry Death to bad government! Mexicanos! Viva Mexico!! that resounded across all of Mexico and became the spark of the Mexican Independence. Today we'll leisurely explore this beautiful town and learn more about its important place in Mexican history. After lunch, heading back to San Miguel, we'll stop at Antoncillio, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the Sistine Chapel of Mexico because the ceilings are lavishly painted in the style Mexican Folk Baroque, truly a sight to behold.

DAY  
15

## Monday November 10

B, Farewell Dinner

San Miguel de Allende

Today is free to enjoy San Miguel on our own. We will gather for our Farewell Dinner this evening to share favorite tales from our exciting trip.

DAY  
16

## Tuesday November 11

Early morning (6am) drive to Mexico City's Benito Juarez airport, arriving by 11am to catch our afternoon international flights back to the US.

