



CAE 2423

# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CORTES AND MEXICAN GULF CULTURES

## 10 days / 09 nights

Hernan Cortes de Monroy y Pizarro Altamirano, 1st Marquess of the Valley of Oaxaca is the most famous Spaniard who conquered Mexico and confronted the Aztecs under the command of Moctezuma. In February 1519, Hernán Cortés set sail from Cuba to Mexico with 11 ships and 550 men. Four months later, Cortés founded Villa Rica de la Veracruz, the first city on American continent. The conquistadores set course for the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan, where they were received by Montezuma II. They would capture and kill the Aztec emperors, destroy the Aztec civilization and claim the empire for Spain. He brought large portions of what is now mainland Mexico under the rule of the King of Castile in the early 16th century. Cortés was part of the generation of Spanish explorers and conquistadors who began the first phase of the Spanish colonization of the Americas. Cortes's invasion route started in the coast of Veracruz to the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. On his way to Tenochtitlán -the present-day Mexico City, Cortés made alliances with indigenous peoples such as the Totonacs and the Nahuas. The Otomis and the Tlaxcalans were first enemies but later join him as allied. Cortes saw also the magnificence of the indigenous architecture. All these details are included in our tour that you will discover with your local guides. Starting in Mexico City where you will see the remains of **Tenochtitlán**. It follows **Teotihuacan**, 50 km from Mexico City. Its important constructions are the Sun Pyramid, the Moon Pyramid, the Palaces of the Jaguars and the Plumed Snail and Quetzalpapálotl. We continue to **El Tajín** related to the people of Papantla. Once in Veracruz, where Cortes's story began, you will see **Tlacotalpan**, related to the Totonac Empire. More information about the Mesoamerican cultures will be given at the Museo de Antropología in Xalapa. in Oaxaca where you will see **Monte Albán**, a pre-eminent Zapotec socio-political and economic center and **Mitla**, a sacred burial site long before the Christian Era, probably by the Zapotecs.

### DAY 1 DEPARTURE TO MEXICO

Arrival at the international airport in Mexico City. Reception by our partner, and transfer to the hotel in the city center. You will have the rest of the day at leisure for private activities. Overnight at the Plaza Florencia Hotel.

### DAY 2 MEXICO CITY

Breakfast at the hotel Today you will have a guided tour of Mexico City visiting the main attractions of the capital of Mexico: The Cathedral built on top of an Aztec temple by the Spaniards, the Government Palace with its famous frescoes by Diego Rivera, one of Mexico's most famous artists. Continue through El Paseo de la Reforma, the most important street in Mexico City and its main artery in east-west direction. On their route are numerous roundels with monuments of famous personalities. The road was built at the behest of Emperor Maximilian, because he wanted a direct connection between the Castillo de Chapultepec, occupied by him and his office at the Zócalo. Consequently, the road was first called Calzada del Emperador (road of the Emperor). After he was deposed, it was renamed in view of their statues located in it as Paseo de los Hombres Ilustres (promenade of famous men) before finally adopted in 1861 its present name in honour of President Benito Juárez's reform legislation. You will pass close to the Palacio de Bellas Artes, the Palace of Fine Arts and the Monumento a la Revolución. Finally you can see the Castle of Chapultepec and panoramic visit of the residential district of Polanco as well as the famous Masaryk Street. Before we finish the city tour, you will visit the main room of the Anthropology and History Museum. Back to the hotel. Overnight at the Plaza Florencia Hotel. (B)

**PRICE PER PERSON IN DOUBLE OCCUPANCY**

**EUR 2.466.-**

Surplus single room + EUR 382.-  
DISCOUNT triple room - EUR 59.-

**DEPARTURES EVERY DAY**

**Jan 08 – Dec 15, 2024**

**PRIVATE SERVICES upon request**

### INCLUSIONS

- ✚ Private transfers airport and sightseeing tours
- ✚ Public transportation for connections.
- ✚ 09 nights in selected 4\*\*\*\*
- ✚ 09 breakfasts and 1 lunch
- ✚ All excursions and transfers mentioned in the program.
  - City tour in Mexico City, Veracruz, Puebla
  - Excursion to Guadalupe and Teotihuacán
  - Archaeological sites of Tajin, Monte Albán, Mitla,
- ✚ Local english-speaking guide in all excursions
- ✚ All entrance fees to national parks, museums and excursions
- ✚ 24 h. support (Hotline)

### NOT INCLUDED

- ✓ **International and domestic flights**
- ✓ Local airport taxes
- ✓ Tips for Guides, drivers and Porters
- ✓ Personal expenses
- ✓ Optional tours
- ✓ Other services not mentioned in the program







### DAY 3 MEXICO CITY – POZA RICA    Guadalupe and Teotihuacan

Breakfast at the hotel. Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the BASILICA DE GUADALUPE, religious complex in honour of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Patroness of Mexico. Located on the Cerro del Tepeyac, indicates the approximate place of the apparitions of the Virgin to the Indian San Juan Diego; the place is a complex of the Antigua Basílica (now Templo Expiatorio a Cristo Rey, completed in 1709); the Capilla del Pocito (a small building completed at the end of the 18th century); the Templo y Ex Convento de Capuchinas next to the ancient shrine and the Nueva Basílica (dedicated in 1976). After this visit, we will continue to TEOTIHUACAN, archeological site and UNESCO's World Heritage site since 1987, located at 50 km from Mexico City. Founded around the 5th century BC, the site was abandoned by its first settlers, the Teotihuacans. Among its important constructions are the Pyramid of the Sun, the Pyramid of the Moon, the Palaces of the Jaguars and the Plumed Snail and Quetzalpapálotl, the latter having preserved remains of mural painting. It seems to have been occupied by Toltecs at a time after the XVII century, testimony of which is the Great Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl. It is believed that it was the Aztecs who called the main street Calzada de los Muertos (Street of the dead). After the city, the tour continues to Poza Rica where we will check-in at the next hotel. Overnight at the Fiesta Inn Hotel. **(B) (L)**

### DAY 4 POZA RICA -TAJIN - VERACRUZ

Breakfast at the hotel. Today we have the visit of the archaeological site of El Tajín in the program. Located in the state of Veracruz, El Tajín was at its height from the early 9th to the early 13th century. It became the most important centre in north-east Mesoamerica after the fall of the Teotihuacan Empire. Its cultural influence extended all along the Gulf and penetrated into the Maya region and the high plateaux of central Mexico. Its architecture, which is unique in Mesoamerica, is characterized by elaborate carved reliefs on the columns and frieze. The 'Pyramid of the Niches', a masterpiece of ancient Mexican and American architecture, reveals the astronomical and symbolic significance of the buildings. El Tajín has survived as an outstanding example of the grandeur and importance of the pre-Hispanic cultures of Mexico. We will continue to Takisukut Theme Park, where we can learn about traditions, customs, gastronomy and everything related to the mother culture of the people from Papantla. In the early afternoon we continue through the Costa Esmeralda to Veracruz. Upon arrival check-in and free time. Accommodation at the Veracruz Centro Histórico Hotel. **(B)**

### DAY 5 VERACRUZ – TLACOTALPAN

Breakfast at the hotel. Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave, simply known as Veracruz, is one of the 32 states that make up the United Mexican States. Its most populous city is the port of Veracruz. In pre-Hispanic times, the Olmec, Huasteca and Totonaca civilizations inhabited it. The first Spanish contact was in 1518, through an exploration led by Juan de Grijalva on the Tonalá River. As an example of its cultural importance at international level, it houses two out of 35 places considered World Heritage Sites in Mexico: the Pre-Hispanic City of "El Tajín" and the area of historical monuments of Tlacotalpan. Panoramic visit of Veracruz that include among others the lighthouses of Venustiano Carranza and Juárez, the post and telegraph buildings, the theater, Atarazanas cultural center, the temple of the Good Traveler. After the sightseeing, we continue to the picturesque town of Tlacotalpan, on the shores of Papaloapan River, one of the most beautiful cities in all of Mexico. It was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1998, full of color, joy and traditions. Its history dates back to pre-Hispanic times, when it was part of the Totonac empire during the twelfth century. After the visit and short free time, return to Veracruz. Accommodation at the Veracruz Centro Histórico Hotel. **(B)**

### DAY 6 VERACRUZ – COATEPEC - XALAPA

Breakfast at the hotel. Departure to Coatepec, Magical Town, famous for its coffee and orchids. We will visit the Coffee Museum where we will know the origin and process of coffee making. We will take a tour of the plantations to end with a tasting. We continue our way to the ex Hacienda El Lencero, the former residence of General Antonio López de Santa Ana, a military and political leader who served as president eleven times during the course of his remarkable career.







He was the central figure in Mexican public life during the second quarter of the XIX century. We continue to Xalapa, capital of the state, where we will visit the Museum of Anthropology, which houses the treasures of the Totonaca, Huasteca and Olmec cultures. In the afternoon free time with possibility to visit the IMAX room of the Interactive Museum, walk through the Paseo de los Lagos or through the alleys and small streets of its Historic Center or enjoy a concert in the theater. Accommodation in Xalapa at the Mision Express Xalapa Centro Hotel. **(B)**

#### **DAY 7 XALAPA – PUEBLA – OAXACA**

Breakfast at the hotel. Departure to Puebla, a World Heritage city. Panoramic visit of its Historic Center: the Plaza de Armas, the Cathedral, the Chapel of the Rosary, Casa de las Muñecas, Compañía de Jesús, University, the Parian. Free time to eat before continuing our way to Oaxaca. Accommodation at the Casa Conzatti Hotel or similar. **(B)**

#### **DAY 8 OAXACA Monte Alban**

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the airport for your flight to Oaxaca (ticket not included). Upon arrival in Oaxaca, transfer to your hotel, check in and time at leisure to explore the city on your own. In the afternoon, you will take part of a guided tour to Monte Albán. Besides being one of the earliest cities of Mesoamerica, Monte Albán was important for nearly one thousand years as the pre-eminent Zapotec socio-political and economic center. Founded toward the end of the Middle Formative period at around 500 BC, by the Terminal Formative (c. 100 BC – AD 200) Monte Albán had become the capital of a large-scale expansionist polity that dominated much of the Oaxacan highlands and interacted with other Mesoamerican regional states, such as Teotihuacan to the north. Among others, you will visit the monumental center of Monte Albán, the Main Plaza, used for ceremonial rites, the impressive stairs leading up to the South Platform, many carved stone monuments throughout the plaza known as "Danzantes" (literally, dancers), the building J and many other issues that your professional guide will show and explain to you. After the visit, back to Oaxaca City and the hotel. Accommodation at the Casa Conzatti Hotel or similar. **(B)**

#### **DAY 9 OAXACA Mitla and El Tule**

Breakfast at the hotel. Visit of the archaeological site of MITLA. In its building there is evidence that there was mural painting. In its structures and the type of decoration that was used to decorate its temples, made of stone lace (vedi Uxmal, El Tajín), the absence of anthropomorphic motifs, very frequent in the ornamentation of other cultures, is noted. It comprises five groups of monumental architecture: North Group, of Adobe, of the Columns, of the Stream and of the South. The sets of Adobe or Calvario and the South, for having been built in previous times, reproduce the tradition of squares surrounded by palaces on platforms, in the style of Monte Albán. For the construction of the other buildings, large monoliths were used as lintels. Continue to SANTA MARÍA EL TULE. Famous for hosting the Tree of the Tule, a giant ahuehuete, 'cypress swamp, sabino' more than 2,000 years old that has become one of the main attractions of the State, visited by national and international tourism. Over the centuries, its branches and bark have created whimsical shapes in which, with a little imagination, you can see profiles of people, animals and even fantastic beings. Back to Oaxaca. In the afternoon, guided visit of Oaxaca which was founded in the heart of a wide valley at 1500 meters above sea level. The Church and Ex-Convent of Santo Domingo are exquisite examples of the Baroque style. The former convent attached to the church today houses the Museum of Cultures, with notable collections of pieces from the Zapotec and Mixtec Cultures, including the famous Treasure of Tomb 7 of Monte Albán. The solid construction of the cathedral is an example that buildings in Oaxaca had to be built to withstand the centuries. Overnight at the Casa Conzatti Hotel or similar. **(B)**

#### **DAY 10 OAXACA – RETURN HOME**

After breakfast, free time to enjoy the last moments of this beautiful city. On-time transfer to the airport in Oaxaca for your connecting flight home or extension of your stay in Mexico. We suggest Huatulco or Puerto Escondido for a relaxing stay at the beach and to get to know the Mexican southeast. End of our services. **(B)**

**(B)** Breakfast **(L)** Lunch **(D)** Dinner

