



# Tia Stephanie Tours Educational Travel Programs

## FESTIVALS OF MEXICO

Night of the Radishes: Christmas in Oaxaca

### Program Highlights



- Witness the one of a kind, Night of the Radishes Radish Carving Contest.
- Participate in Posadas and Calenda Christmas Traditions and Parades.
- Explore Oaxaca City markets and surrounding villages on their once a week market day, such as Ocotlan on Friday and Tlacolula on Sunday.
- Buy Arts and Crafts directly from master artisans in Teotitlan del Valle, Coyotepec, Tilcajete and other villages located in the Central Valley.
- Explore Ancient Zapotec Ruins of Monte Alban and Mitla with expert guide, who will provide insight and historical information.
- Take a Cooking Class to learn of the Regional Cuisine of Oaxaca, such as mole sauce, tamales and tlayudas.
- Visit specialty shops and coops in Oaxaca City.
- Eat in some of Oaxaca's best restaurants to experience the variety of their regional specialties, such as "chapulines" or grasshoppers!

## Summary

Join us on an extraordinary journey to Oaxaca during this southern state's most festive and colorful time of the year. Highlighted by the quirky and one-of-a-kind Night of the Radishes, radish carving contest, we also enjoy the festive Christmas Posadas, where families go door to door in search of shelter, the Calenda Parade, where each neighborhood church decorates a float with angels, sheep, shepherds and more, and they circle twice around the Zocalo before celebrating mass at their respective locations. This journey also includes visits to fabulous local artisans, including weavers, potters, wood carvers and others. To top it off, we enjoy a cooking class where we will learn about Oaxaca's regional delicacies. Join us for this festive occasion!



### Trip Includes:

- Accommodations
- Expert Guides and/or Academics
- Comfortable / Secure Transportation
- Welcome and Farewell Dinners
- Breakfasts
- Meals according to itinerary
- Water on Van/Coach
- Airport Transfers
- Entry Fees



# Itinerary

- Day 1, Monday, December 21: Arrive Oaxaca City, where you will be met at the airport and transferred to your centrally located colonial style hotel. We enjoy a welcome dinner (D)
- Day 2, Tuesday, December 22: After breakfast, we take a guided walking tour for our introduction to this UNESCO Cultural Heritage City, dating back to the 1530's. Highlights of our tour include: the bustling Benito Juarez Market, the lively central Zocalo, the lovely pedestrian street, Garcia Virgil, the Santo Domingo Church and the Botanical Gardens. Our "comida" is at the famed Marco Polo restaurant, known for its fresh wood fired fish which is brought in daily. After lunch, we are free to continue ambling, shopping and people watching from the Zocalo. Free evening (B, L)
- Day 3, Wednesday, December 23: Today is dedicated to exploration of the first urban center (city) of Mesoamerica, Monte Alban. Mesoamerica is a cultural and geographic region that spans from NW Mexico to Central America. Great civilizations emerged and thrived in this region, among them, the Zapotec, who after the Olmec, were among the first cultural groups to develop into a civilization in this region. By civilization, this means they went beyond being nomadic hunter/gatherers and began to develop complex systems of religion, politics and commercial activity. Monte Alban was one of the first cities to develop in Mesoamerica. After we immerse ourselves in this early world, we come back to present day life and refresh ourselves in the on-site cafeteria and museum bookstore. From here, we visit Arrazola to see the whimsical wood carved "alebrijes". Lunch is family style at La Capilla. In the afternoon, we return to Oaxaca City to witness the most marvelous and creative carved radishes at the Rashish Carving Festival, where themes such as daily life, political characters, nativity scenes are depicted in radish art! (B, L)
- Day 4, Thursday, December 24: A special treat is in store today, as we will be led in a wonderful cooking class to learn about Oaxaca's regional specialties, such as mole, squash blossoms, tamales and more. Our morning begins with savoring delicious high altitude coffee known as Pluma Hidalgo, from the Sierra Madre del Sur mountain range. From here, we walk to the small local market, to buy our ingredients for our multiple course meal. After enjoying the fruits of our labor, we can either take a siesta or walk off our meal enjoying the book stores, coops, museums of Oaxaca City. In the evening, we position ourselves around the now familiar Zocalo to witness the Calenda Parade, where approximately 20 area churches decorate a float carrying children who dress as angels, and Jesus and Mary. These floats and church members parade around the Zocalo before heading to their respective churches for midnight mass. (B, L)
- Day 5: Friday, December 25: Nowhere are Fridays more vibrant and colorful than in the Ocotlan market. In addition to this favorite of markets, we visit the Rodolfo Morales Museum housed in a lovingly restored Dominican Convent. As we are on the Southern Craft route, we visit numerous artisan communities, including: Jalieza, where cotton belts and bags and table runners are woven on backstrap looms; Tilcajete, where we can visit several of the famed alebrije wood carvers; and to Coyotepec, famous for its black pottery, produced by firing in oxygen reduced kilns. Our evening is free to enjoy Oaxaca City (B, L)
- Day 6: Saturday, December 26: Today is a special day spent in the weaving and dyeing community of Teotitlan del Valle. A full day is dedicated in order for us to spend quality time with some of the weavers to better understand their natural dye materials and processes, as well as their master weaving techniques. We enjoy a walking tour of the town, including the church, local museum and other points of interest. We surely will spot many beautiful tapestries we will want to take home with us. (B, L)
- Day 7: Sunday, December 27: Today we travel in the Eastern Valley, beginning our day with a guided visit to Mitla, the post classic Zapotec and Mixtec site dedicated to the dead. We see the finely carved stone frets in various designs and configurations that express the Zapotec cosmology. Following our visit to this most unique site, we travel to another favorite market, the Sunday market or "tianguis" of Tlacolula. Once again, we see how villagers have traveled and engaged in commerce since the pre Hispanic era. We also visit the Tlacolula Dominican church and adjacent chapel, offering some of the finest examples of Baroque and Rococo architecture in the region. We enjoy a farewell dinner at Café Casa Oaxaca. (B, D)
- Day 8: Monday, December 28: Depart from Oaxaca City or extend your stay in the region



Transportation: Licensed, insured, comfortable and safe vans or coaches



Hotels: Centrally Located and Charming properties in Oaxaca City

(B) - Breakfast

(L) - Lunch

(D) - Dinner



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