

Enter La Chinantla, Oaxaca

Textile Traditions

Chinantla, Tehuacan & Oaxaca

October 19-28, 2014

Trip Highlights

- Learn of Indigenous Textile Traditions of the Chinantecos & Mazatecos of Oaxaca
- Meet weavers & coops in remote communities of Valle Nacional, Ojitlan, Usila, Ixcatlan, Soyaltepec in Chinantla & the Papaloapan.
- Explore the Tehuacan Bio Reserve and meet the Mixteco Palm Weavers and Burnished Potter Masters of Reyes Mezontla.
- Experience "Caldo de Piedra" River Stone Soup!
- Purchase collection quality textiles
- Meet weavers and dyers from Teotitlan del Valle who continue to develop their ancient traditions
- Learn of the History of Cochineal
- Take a Guided Tour of the Museo Textil de Oaxaca
- Explore Ancient Zapotec and Mixtec sites of Mitla and Monte Alban
- Visit Tlapanochestli to learn about R & D & efforts to produce & market cochineal
- Eat delicious regional Oaxacan cuisine
- Visit shops, coops & markets in Oaxaca!



Summary

This trip is an extraordinary journey into a region rarely visited in Oaxaca's Papaloapan Basin. The Papaloapan is a cultural / natural region located between Veracruz and Oaxaca and is where the coastal plain begins dropping off from the Sierra Juarez mountain chain leading to the Gulf of Mexico. The natural landscape is varied, between lush tropical (think mangoes and pineapples) to higher elevations where coffee grows and deciduous forests begin. The cultural landscape of this region is comprised of Chinanteco and Mazateco communities that we will be visiting. Some of them include: Valle Nacional, Ojitlan, Usila, Ixcatlan and Soyaltepec. Their textile traditions are among the richest in Mexico, combining unique iconography in woven and embroidered cloth to make huipiles. This trip also goes to the fascinating region of Tehuacan, Puebla where we will meet with the Mixteco palm weavers, venture into the Valley of Tehuacan and visit the famed potters of Reyes Mezontla. Our journey culminates in one of our favor-

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



Oct. 18, Sat. Please arrive in Veracruz one day before tour begins! We will arrange transfer and hotel!

Oct. 19, Sun. Day One: Sunday, **Transfer to Tuxtepec, Oaxaca.** We will transfer you from Veracruz to Tuxtepec, a two hour drive that takes us through Veracruz's Sotavento region, crossing into Oaxaca. En route, we will stop in Alvarado, Veracruz to see this important port and shrimp capital of Mexico. Then, we will go to the UNESCO town of Tlacotalpan on the shores of the Papaloapan River. Here, we will learn about the "son jarocho" music and will enjoy an "arroz a la tumbada, a famous dish in Veracruz and Mexico's answer to paella! Arriving in Tuxtepec, we check into our hotel, El Gran Hotel Tuxtepec, to freshen up prior to our exciting and colorful evening welcome event! **Welcome Event:** we will receive our first introduction to **La Chinantla.** Events for this night include: **Fashion show of "traje regional" from the primary Chinanteco and Mazateco regions of Oaxaca's La Chinantla.** Communities represented include **Usila, Ojitlan, Valle Nacional, of the Chinanteco and Mazateco communities such as Jalapa de Diaz, Ayautla, Huautla de Jimenez, San Pedro Ixcatlan and Soyaltepec.** We will learn about dress as a cultural identifier and see versions of "daily", "semi-gala" and "gala" dress from the same community. This orientation will help us prior to our journey deep into some of these communities to meet the weavers! **A "tasting" of regional foods, to include the regional version of mole, Amarillo, tamales, plantains, mojara fish** and other delicacies. We will experience more of these dishes and ingredients throughout our journey! Overnight: Gran Hotel Tuxtepec. (L,D)

Oct. 20, Mon. Day Two: Monday, **Travel to Valle Nacional and to the community of Rancho Grande.** Today we meet the extraordinary community of Rancho Grande, originally founded by individuals who left their homeland near Usila to found a new community. Today the small hamlet nestled in the hills overlooking Valle Nacional consists of 40 families. While a small community, it remains very vibrant and they are dedicated to the preservation of their ancestral heritage. Here, they grow **organic coffee** (some of the best roasted coffee in Mexico), **vanilla** (remember, this region is near Veracruz!), beans and maize. Their weavers and embroiderers are dedicated to preserving the ancient brocade (supplemental weft) technique that has made their huipiles among the finest in all of Mexico. Arriving in Rancho Grande we will be met by members of the community and will visit their community center for a culinary banquet, huipil and textile display! We'll visit their coffee growing and processing region and we visit some of the families in their homes. You will not want to leave! Returning to Tuxtepec, we rest and relax at our hotel. Overnight: Tuxtepec (B,L)

Oct. 21, Tues. Day Three: Tuesday, **Ojitlan & Ixcatlan & Soyaltepec** Today we venture deeper into La Chinantla. Our first stop is in Ojitlan, a vibrant community with a bustling market and many weavers who maintain their traditions in weaving and dress. We will visit one particular coop that we believe are among the best weavers in the region. We will have the opportunity to purchase huipiles of the Ojitlan style, including "diario" (daily), "media-gala" and "gala. From Ojitlan, we travel briefly to Ixcatlan, where we will enjoy lunch of mojara (fish) and other delicacies from the region, as we sit by the blue waters of the "presa" or dam. After lunch we visit some of the extraordinary embroiderers of the region, who will tell us about their iconography of flowers, birds and the church bell that we see in town! We take a sunset boat ride across the lake (dam) to the now island Mazatec community of Soyaltepec. Here, we will be met by the talented embroiderers of this community who will greet us with fresh hand made tortillas, delicious beans and gorgeous huipiles masterfully embroidered on "manta" or muslin fabric. We will enjoy an expo venta of huipiles as we watch the sunset. We overnight in Ixcatlan (B,L)

Oct. 22 Wednesday Day Four: **Usila** Today a true adventure is in store, as we go deep into La Chinantla by visiting Usila. Usila is a remote Chinanteco community of almost 10,000 people. Given its remoteness some of their cultural and ancestral traditions are maintained. However, some are visibly at risk of disappearing. As in many communities, the younger women and girls are no longer wearing traditional garb, opting for jeans or gym shorts instead. There are many factors that contribute to this: time to weave, cost of hand woven garments, outward migration, trends, among other factors. Our morning begins with a mid morning "tasting" of delicious regional foods such as: mole Amarillo, tamales, tortillas de yucca among other things. From here, we will walk in the neighborhood visiting a few select weavers we have identified to be among the best. Again, we will be able to select from the rich iconography of the daily wear or the full gala huipil. Or, we might select just a weft strip to hang on our wall or one of the rebozo / shawl designs they are beginning to create! After we visit a few homes, we move to the central garden / courtyard where all of the weavers of the community have been invited to show us their craft and art for a grand expo-venta! From here, we make our way to the **Usila River** for an extraordinary display and lunch of a regional delicacy that is made in very few places, and Usila is one of them: **Caldo de Piedra, or Stone Soup!** The special white river stones are brought to high heat in a bonfire, and later placed into gourds filled with the soup ingredients (shrimp, fish, tomato, herbs, onion, garlic) in order to cook the soup! It is one of the ancient ways of cooking food. We are free to swim and frolic in the refreshing waters and enjoy the stunning scenery of Rio Usila. Overnight Usila.(B, L)

Oct. 23 Day Five: Thursday, **Usila to Tehuacan** Today we leave the Chinantla region and make our way to Tehuacan. Arriving in Tehuacan we relax at our garden and spa hotel, before a city tour and dinner in Tehuacan. Overnight Tehuacan (B, L, D)

Oct. 24, Day Six: Friday, **Tehuacan-Oaxaca, This morning we visit the Museo del Agua** where we will learn about the revival of **amaranth.** Here, we enjoy an expo-venta of the **fine palm weavers of this Mixteco land,** and in San Gabriel Chilac we will visit have an expo venta of their beautiful blouses and huipiles of this region. Then we make our way to Oaxaca! Arriving in Oaxaca we will check into our hotel and then set out on foot to visit the **Museo Textil de Oaxaca.** Evening is at leisure. (B, L)

Oct. 25 Day Seven: Saturday, **Ocotlan, Southern Craft Route** Today we visit the extraordinary **Rodolfo Morales Museum,** a former convent that was lovingly restored by the Ocotlan, Oaxaca native, artist Rodolfo Morales. Traveling back towards Oaxaca City, we visit San Antonino to see the charming and colorful floral embroidered blusas that were very popular in the sixties and seventies (remember peasant blouses? These are the good ones!). One final stop is in Santo Tomas Jalieza to see fine backstrap woven cotton belts and bags. (B,L)

Oct. 26, Day Eight: Sunday, **Mitla, Tlacolula Market, Teotitlan del Valle** Traveling into Oaxaca's Eastern Valley, our first stop is to visit the ancient ruins of Mitla where we see the carved stoned frets known as grecas & caracoles, design motifs that have transitioned from carved stones to woven tapestries. With our expert guide, we will learn why this ancient Zapotec and later Mixtec site was known as "The Place of the Dead". From here, we attend the most vibrant and colorful of markets in the region: The Sunday market at Tlacolula, where we will meet women making tlayudas and tasa-jos and see baskets and pottery for sale. Finally, we visit the extraordinary tapestry weaving community of Teotitlan del Valle to learn of the Zapotec weaving traditions that formerly were done in cotton and on backstrap looms, but following the arrival of the Spaniards, transitioned to wool and treadle looms. At the Centro de Arte Textil Zapoteco Bii Dauu, we see how natural dyes are being resurrected and used to produce brilliant hues of blue (indigo), red (cochineal) and yellow (pericon). The silk weavers from San Pedro Cajonos will pay a visit for a demo of their silk rebozos!(B,L)

Oct. 27 Day Nine: Monday, **Monte Alban,** Today we enjoy a guided visit to one of the earliest urban centers of Oaxaca, Monte Alban. Here, we learn