

## **MEXICO IN-DEPTH, 11 DAYS**

### **DAY 1: Travel to Mexico \* Oaxaca**

We depart from your home airport for Oaxaca, Mexico, situated in a large valley (alt. 5,070') surrounded by the summits of the Sierra Madre del Sur. After we get settled into our hotel, our guide, Dr. Ward Albro, gives us an orientation session, and recommends local restaurants for dinner. Overnight at Hotel Camino Real.

### **DAY 2: Monte Albán \* Oaxaca**

This morning we board our luxury touring coach for the drive to Monte Albán, ruins of a beautiful ancient city of the Zapotec Indians, inhabited for almost three millennia, 1500 B.C. to A.D. 1400, and one of the most important archaeological sites of Mesoamerica. After a guided visit to the Great Plaza, with its beautiful view of the green Oaxacan valley, the Ball Court and other ancient monuments, we stop at the village of Arrazola at the base of Monte Albán, home of the famed wood carver Manuel Jiménez, whose colorful carved animals have inspired an entire generation of wood carvers in the village. Evening free. Overnight in Oaxaca.

### **DAY 3: Tlacolula Valley \* Oaxaca**

After an opportunity to attend Mass, we begin our tour to the Tlacolula Valley. Along the way we see the largest tree in the world, a 2000-year-old water cypress in the churchyard of Santa María del Tule. We visit the ruins of Mitla, a 1000-year-old Mixtec town. On our return trip, we have the chance to see the Sunday market and the extraordinarily beautiful Dominican Fathers' chapel in Tlacolula. Evening free. Overnight in Oaxaca.

### **DAY 4: Oaxaca Folk Dance Festival**

Today we attend the Guelaguëtza at the amphitheater on the Fortín hill in Oaxaca - this is the largest and most famous folk dance festival in Latin America - Towns and villages from all over the state are represented in the colorful dances presented for the governor and other notable Oaxacans. Evening free. Overnight in Oaxaca.

### **DAY 5: Oaxaca - Puebla**

After breakfast we travel on our bus to Puebla, winding through beautiful mountains, dipping into valleys of mango trees, ascending hillsides crowded with giant cacti. After check in to the Hotel Camino Real in Puebla, (alt. 7,049') Dr. Albro guides us on a walking tour of the historic center of the city, including the Cathedral, the opulent Rosario chapel at the Santo Domingo Church, and some of the many talavera factories and shops. Evening free. Overnight in Puebla.

### **DAY 6: Cacaxtla \* Tlaxcala \* Puebla**

We travel to nearby state of Tlaxcala, Mexico's smallest, to visit the 1st millennium archaeological site of Cacaxtla, with magnificent murals, and the recently discovered site of Xochitécatl. We pass through the picturesque Indian city of Tlaxcala and visit its historic colonial center before returning to Puebla. Evening free. Overnight in Puebla.

#### DAY 7: Cholula \* Mexico City

As we head north again this morning, we visit enroute the pyramid of Cholula, largest by volume in the world, and then the incredibly ornate baroque church at Santa Maria Tonanzintla. We continue on to the Hotel Camino Real in Mexico City (alt. 7,240'), once center of the Aztec culture. Evening free. Overnight in Mexico City.

#### DAY 8: Mexico City

This morning we visit the National Museum of Anthropology, one of the finest museums of this type in world, both esthetically and educationally, to gain an overview and understanding of the Indian peoples at the base of Mexico's unique culture. We lunch in the area and then visit the historical museum at Chapultepec Castle, built in the 1780's and remodeled by Maximilian of Habsburg in the 1860's, and located in the Chapultepec Park, one of the largest city parks in the world. Evening free. Overnight in Mexico City.

#### DAY 9: Mexico City

Today we visit the Bazaar Sábado in San Angel, the southern suburb of the City, with its fine folk art and other art on display. For the afternoon and evening we return to the Zócalo, the historic center of Mexico City, to visit the 16-17th century Metropolitan Cathedral, built nearly over the site of the Aztec Templo Mayor as a sign of Christianity's conquest of the Aztec deities. In the adjoining National Palace, we see the enormous murals of Diego Rivera. Other sights in the Zócalo area. Evening free. Overnight in Mexico City.

#### DAY 10: Coyoacán \* Mexico City

This morning we visit the Museum of Popular Cultures and Frida Kahlo's house in Coyoacán, where she lived with Diego Rivera from 1929 to 1954. We continue on to visit either Dolores Olmedo museum or floating gardens, both in Xochimilco. Opportunity to attend Mass in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This evening we have a gala farewell dinner together. Overnight at Hotel Camino Real.

#### DAY 11:

Departure from Mexico City to your home airport