

Driftwood Adventures Explore Oaxaca Itinerary:

Dates: November 9th-16th, 2022

Itinerary Overview:

- **Wed, Nov 9: Arrivals, Welcome mezcal & tasting.**
- **Thurs, Nov 10: Cooking in the Campo: Tamales, Tortillas & Salsas. Alebrije-painting in the center.**
- **Fri, Nov 11: Monte Albán, Atzompa: Hands in Clay Experience, Free time to explore. Cycles and Celebrations Drink Walk**
- **Sat, Nov 12: Full-Day Mezcal Immersion Journey**
- **Sun Nov 13: Market Brunch, Relaxation/Free time. Oaxacan Chocolate-Making Experience**
- **Mon, Nov 14: Early Morning! Hierve el Agua, Dyeing and Weaving Demonstration. Group Dinner**
- **Tues, Nov 15: Quesillo-Making Experience. Free time. Group Dinner**
- **Wed, Nov 16: Departures**

Wednesday, November 9th:

Arrivals at the airport. Personalized pick-ups of individuals and small groups according to arrival times.

People settle into their rooms.

Introductory mezcal at your hotel in Oaxaca's historic centro. Meet the Tlayudona team, learn a bit about Oaxaca and our project, and have a "mezcalito de bienvenida". We will offer a mini-mezcal talk and tasting for those who wish to participate.

Time to be determined once everyone has their flight information.

Thursday, November 10th:

10 a.m. Tlayudona invites you to the home of Doña Juana, our Cooking in the Campo series host, to spend the day learning to make handmade tortillas, salsas, and tamales from scratch. We will pick you up directly

from your hotel and bring you the 20 minute drive to a local village called Yatareni, where you'll have an immersive experience on Juana's family's property, where their milpa (corn, beans, and squash) is grown and harvested. All of the components of the milpa are utilized by Juana's family throughout the year for sustenance, as well as to be sold when there's a surplus. You'll learn the ancestral grinding technique, and take a trip to the nearby mil to learn today's method. You'll taste tortillas made from Juana's corn, and get to make several types of salsa by chiles grown on the property. You'll snack along the way, but this experience will culminate into a giant outdoor luncheon, in which you'll get to chow down on the four types of tamales you've created (quesillo and squash blossom, pepper strips, chepil—a local herb, and beans with avocado leaves), accompanied by the delectable salsa also of your making. We can assure you that you have never experienced such whole, slow, and delectably-fresh food.

**You can rest or stroll around the center after lunch. Photography workshop available.

5:30 p.m. : Have you heard of the mystical creatures in Oaxaca called "alebrijes"? Our local artist will teach you the history and cultural context of this art form, and then you get to paint your own! It's a great hands-on activity that will give you some insight into one of Oaxaca's most remarkable crafts, and you'll end up with a perfect souvenir to commemorate your trip. It is hosted by a master alebrije painter from the village of Tilcajete, and more information can be found here: _

<https://tlayudona.com.mx/alebrijespaintandsip/>

Friday, November 11th:

8 a.m.: Visit the archeological site of Monte Albán and learn about one of Mesoamerica's most important pre-hispanic cities. Stroll around the pyramids at your own speed, or accompany one of Oaxaca's certified archeological guides for a historic tour. We can accompany you and translate! We need to get an early start in order to beat the lines, the Covid-relative capacity for entering the site, and the extreme midday sun. Regardless, it's important to bring a hat, sunscreen, and comfortable attire for walking.

12 p.m.: On our way back down to the valley from Monte Albán, we will stop at the village of Atzompa, known for its clay work. Doña Ana and her daughter will lead us through a presentation about the importance of clay in the region and the role that women play in their village's economy. You will each get to create something with clay, and your pieces will be fired during the course of your stay so that you can take them home with you at the end. More information about our Hands in Clay experience here:

<https://tlayudona.com.mx/handsinclay/>

4 p.m.: We will visit four local women-owned businesses to get a taste of some of Oaxaca's best flavors, tied in with cultural tidbits. This walking tour only spans one square block, but covers a lot of ground—you'll try some of Oaxaca's best coffee, artisan beer, mezcal, and ancestral chocolate. Snacks are included along the way, so the experience makes for a meal in itself.

<https://tlayudona.com.mx/cycles-and-celebrations-drink-walk/>

Saturday, November 12th:

8:30 a.m. We will take off from your hotel and begin our journey to Miahuatlán to visit an authentic palenque in the hills of Oaxaca. We will call ahead to get your coffee orders from Cafébre and have them ready for the drive. We'll also get artisan bread from a local bakery, so that no one has to start the day on an empty stomach.

11:15 a.m. We will arrive at the palenque. Our hosts will introduce their family and their ancestral mezcal project, and we will have a delicious breakfast made by the host family. In the past, they have served farm fresh eggs, blue corn memelitas (small, thick tortillas covered with beans and cheese) from criollo corn grown on-site, fresh seasonal fruit, agua de sabor (water mixed with seasonal fruit), and locally-made hot chocolate or atole (a thick, corn-based hot beverage traditionally served for energy in the morning prior to a long day in the fields). The menú is not fixed and will depend on which foods are locally and seasonally available, although it has always been absolutely delicious!

We will head out to the fields to take a tour of various types of wild (silvestre) agaves utilized to make some of Oaxaca's best mezcals. You will explore the different ways that agave is cultivated, and you will get the opportunity to participate in the process. Past experiences have included planting germinated seeds, transplanting year-old agaves into their new homes, or "shaving" (cutting down the agave until only the piña remains) the plants, depending on what needs to be done at the time. You'll get a feel for the range of differences amongst agave varieties, as there's a world of variation within the species! You will definitely want hats/sunscreen for this portion of the day. We will provide bottled water.

As we continue to explore the fields of agave, you will learn more about the artisan mezcal industry, the context of sustainability as it pertains to mezcal production, and some of the challenges that the industry is facing due to the recent surge in the international marketplace. You'll return to the palenque and get a comprehensive tour of the distillation process. You will learn each step in this process, and get to use sensorial input to learn about how the master mezcaleros determine when the various stages of the process are complete. Since there's no scientific formula for this, you'll see how watching, listening, tasting, smelling, and feeling are the "tools" used to distill a balanced mezcal.

Afternoon: We'll sit down with the distiller/s and learn about their experience in the industry. The family will talk about how they work in a pair to complete all of the tasks.

This is when the plants and the distillation converge with the human experience, and also when we'll get to smell and taste the culmination of such a long and laborious process of cultivating agave from birth to the bottle. You'll get to draw connections between the varieties of agave that you've seen in various stages of maturation in the fields to the unique, distinguishable flavors they each produce. You'll have the opportunity to purchase wholesale (en *granel*) mezcal directly from the distillers at their local price to bring back to the states if you'd like. (Or you can purchase what they've bottled and labeled for export.)

3:30 Lunch with the host family.

5:30 Journey back to Oaxaca City

Sunday, November 13th:

10 a.m: Brunch in the Merced Market. Taste the city's best Chilaquiles in this bustling market (or order from the day's offerings), which will be served in individual clay pots of boiling goodness. Tables are communal, and you'll get the feel for the market experience!

11:30 a.m: From the market we'll walk to Jalatlaco's colorful murals and cobblestone streets. We'll show you some optimal spots to take photos.

Free time.

3 p.m.: Chocolate immersion experience with our neighboring woman-owned business, *Flor Cacao*. We will experience sensorial bliss while we learn the bean-to-bar process of artisan chocolate-making. In the city center in her artisan shop, Denís will show us how she roasts the cacao that she transforms into absolute chocolate bliss. We will watch the process, listen to an explanation regarding the culture behind artisan chocolate in Mexico, smell the aroma of the cacao roasting, touch the skin of the cacao as we unpeel the beans in preparation for their grinding, and taste the expansive breadth of flavors found in artisan small-batch chocolate. Ultimately, you'll be able to make tablets of chocolate or your own confections, while tasting the range of delicacies that Denís creates out of cacao.

Monday, November 14th:

6:00 a.m. (Or 5 a.m. if the group is photographically-inclined) Early morning venture to the photographer's dream site of Hierve el Agua, where there are petrified waterfalls (and not-so-hot natural hot springs for anyone with an adventurous spirit who'd like to swim). We'll arrive as it opens so that you get a chance to take gorgeous landscapes before the tour buses roll in.

After Hierve el Agua, we will head to see Doña Josefina in the Zapotec village of Teotitlán. Josefina is a prominent figure in the natural dyeing and weaving community, and she will teach us how the range of colors is traditionally created using plants and other natural elements. She will

give us a demonstration of how the wool is spun, and how the yarn is dyed. Guests can get their hands in the mix grinding the natural colors into a powder and dyeing the wool.

Josefina's family will serve us a traditional brunch made with local ingredients.

12 p.m. Josefina will talk to us about her journey to becoming financially independent in a village where all money is generally handled by men, and where women were legally not allowed to participate in any voting, politics, or decision-making. She has worked together with other women in her village since the 1990's to revolutionize all of those things. We will have a snack and optional mezcal. Josefina will then show us her weaving techniques on the traditional looms. Visitors can purchase from her family directly if they want to bring back souvenirs.

1:30 p.m. Doña Josefina will take us to her village's market so that you can see other types of weaving and designs.

7 p.m. Group dinner at Teocintle. Teocintle is known for bringing a contemporary twist to locally-sourced ingredients and the young chefs' ancestral recipes from their grandmas in the Mixe region. They offer a 5-course tasting menu with non-alcoholic drink pairings. (Alcoholic beverages are sold separately). You can read more about the restaurant in this article:

<https://www.quepasaoaxaca.com/teocintle-indigenous-cuisine-as-cultural-resistance/>

Tuesday, November 15th:

10 a.m.: We will get to experience making Oaxaca's emblematic "string cheese" from start to finish with Doña Andrea. The experience will culminate in a delicious brunch made with all local, organic ingredients.

Free time.

8 p.m. Group dinner at Casa Oaxaca. It is one of Oaxaca's culinary pillars and an old classic that everyone appreciates. "Mediterranean herbs mingle amongst the flavors of Oaxaca. Basil and Rosemary share their hues with hoja santa, pitona, and shorobobo. Meanwhile, the

pomegranate, fish and seafood, venison and lamb alternate with the local chapulines, huitlacoche, and quesillo. This is a gastronomic experience for all five senses.”

Wednesday, November 16th:

Airport drop-offs for those who are leaving, in small groups, depending on flight times.