

Itinerary for Mexico's Volcanoes

Day 1

Fly to Mexico City and meet your guide in the airport. From there, you will travel together in a private van through the pine forests and corn fields of El Estado de Mexico. Your destination for the evening is the lovely town of Amecameca. Your hotel is located near the town square, which comes to life every evening with an open-air market filled with excellent food. Amecameca's central cathedral is a beautiful structure, and has the mighty volcanoes Iztaccihuatl and Popocatepetl as its backdrop. You'll get to know your professional guide, driver and fellow adventurers over a delicious dinner that you can only find in this part of the country. Note: flights must arrive from the USA before 3 p.m. from Benito Juarez International Airport in Mexico, D.F.

Day 2

After a fresh cup of coffee or tea and a hearty breakfast, we'll organize gear and pack our bags for our first goal – Iztaccihuatl. We will drive to Paso de Cortes at 12,000 feet, then hike with daypacks to La Joya Valley, a beautiful campsite among giant lupines, mountain bluebirds and a trickling stream. This will serve as our 12,800-ft. basecamp over the next two days. You will sleep in tents (double occupancy) at the base of the seventh tallest peak in North America. Your professional guides will amaze you with their backcountry cuisine.

Day 3

We get off the beaten track by avoiding Ixta's popular ridge route, and hiking along the Ayoloco Route. The day begins with a hike to high camp (the Ayoloco alpine hut at 15,000 ft.), where we will enjoy lunch and admire the Ayoloco Glacier, our planned route toward the summit. We return to La Joya for dinner and another night of camping. This acclimatization day hike is an important part of the itinerary, and allows hikers to "climb high and sleep low," which has always been a rule in high altitude trekking to avoid acute mountain sickness (AMS).

Day 4

We pack our bags and head up the Ayoloco Route to high camp at the base of the glacier. You will walk through fields of giant purple lupine flowers, thistles, and other beautiful alpine plants. The afternoon will be spent relaxing above tree line and preparing for our early morning ascent. You are invited to sleep in the Ayoloco hut, built by Mexico's premier alpine club Grupo de los Cien, or in tents.

Day 5

We will wake before dawn to begin our summit attempt of Iztaccihuatl. The first hour of the route follows boulder fields and minor ridges toward the base of the Ayoloco Glacier. Once on the snow and ice, we'll put on crampons, harnesses, helmets and begin our roped

ascent toward the distant ridgeline. Once on top of the Ayoloco Glacier we will follow La Arista del Sol (the ridge of the sun) to the twin summits of Ixta. Weather always determines how long we'll spend on top, and after experiencing the spectacular views from the summit of this sacred peak, we'll hike back the way we came. After lunch at the alpine hut we'll return to La Joya Valley to meet our ride back to Amecameca. That evening, you'll bask in a hot shower and enjoy savory Mexican cuisine – the perfect end to a long day in the mountains.

Day 6

After sleeping in and enjoying a big breakfast, we will travel to the mountain town of Tlachichuca in the state of Puebla. Along the way we'll stop in Puebla (known as having the best food in all of Mexico) to eat lunch near the historic town square. Somewhere among the fields of agaves and nopales you'll get your first view of Citlaltepētāl (El Pico de Orizaba), the tallest mountain between Colombia and the Yukon. In Tlachichuca, we'll be greeted by Dr. Gerardo Reyes and his family, who have been hosting mountaineers from around the world for three generations. The century-old soap factory has been turned into a rustic B&B, which you will absolutely love.

Day 7

We will pack up our backpacks and travel to the base of the mountain on a rugged jeep road that few trucks can manage. Dr. Reyes's fleet of classic Dodge Power Wagons will deliver us safely to our campsite, near the Piedra Grande alpine hut at 14,000 ft. We will enjoy a big dinner together and watch the sun set over the shimmering Jamapa Glacier.

Day 8

With our biggest goal still ahead of us, we will spend the day hiking up the Ruta Norte (northern route), through rocks and snowfields toward the base of the Jamapa Glacier. This may be an acclimatization hike, and we will return to 14,000 ft. to sleep, or the group may opt to move to a higher camp on this day. Your guide will discuss the options with you, and will assist you in making the best decision to ensure a successful summit bid for tomorrow.

Day 9

Today is the day we go for the summit of the third highest peak in North America. We will walk by headlamp up toward the Jamapa Glacier, then rope up for the steep and arduous ascent toward the top of the mountain. Once on the crater rim, you'll be treated to brilliant views of the mountains of Veracruz, the Gulf of Mexico, Ixta-Popo and the rural pueblos that dot the landscape. That afternoon we'll retreat to the base of the mountain and will be back in Tlachichuca in time for a delicious dinner.

Day 10

We will enjoy breakfast together before returning to Mexico City and flying home. Note:

flights must leave after 4 p.m. from Benito Juarez International Airport in Mexico, D.F.

Trip Includes

Ground transportation in Mexico

All meals during the 10-day adventure

Modern hotel in Amecameca (double occupancy) for two nights

Historic climber's lodge in Tlachichuca (dormitory style lodging) for two nights

Professional Bilingual Mountain Guide from America

Professional Assistant Guide (for groups over 4)

Entry Fees to National Parks

\$25 donation to the Mex-Ambulance Fund in Tlachichuca

Trip DOES NOT Include

Round-trip airfare to Mexico City

Travel and/or Medical Insurance

Personal Gear (see attached gear list)

Gratuities for Guides, Drivers and other support staff