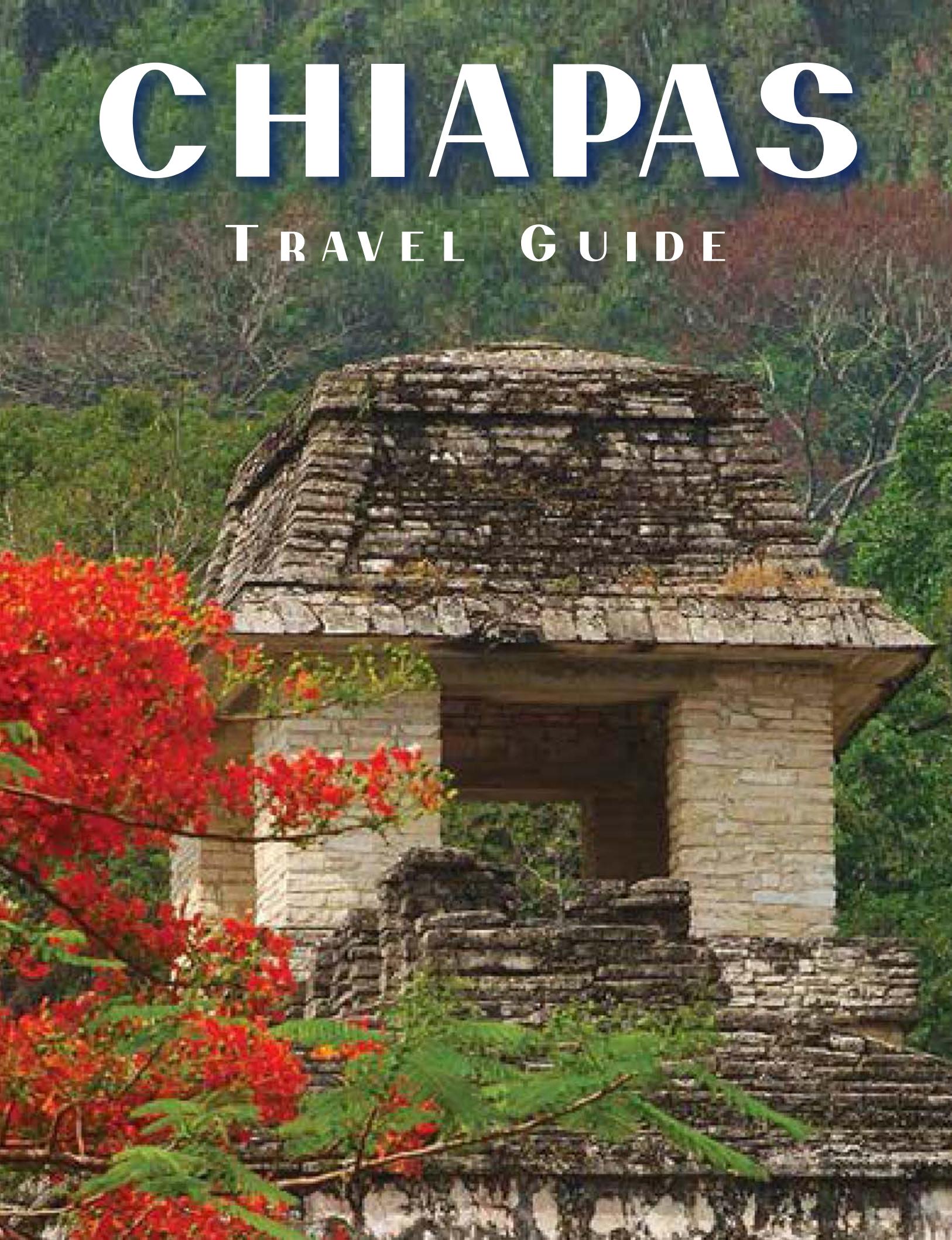


# CHIAPAS

## TRAVEL GUIDE



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# Chiapas iónate



Chiapas is one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity in the world. The lush green fields, forests and jungles, the unique flora and fauna, rare species and much more, are some of the attractions of this beautiful state.

Travelling from one destination to another is a real adventure. The Chiapas territory is a reminiscent of the Rocky Mountains in some locations and the Amazon Rainforest in others.

In Chiapas many ethnic groups have kept their traditions, languages and folklore alive. The colorful costumes of the ethnic groups in Chiapas are as varied as the countryside that surrounds them. A large number of their mythological figures are woven into their clothes. The traditions are shown in the famous handcrafts, the festivities and the local gastronomy.

1



Textile Art of Chiapas

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# DISCOVER CHIAPAS

## Tuxtla Gutiérrez



It is the capital city of the State of Chiapas. Its climate is hot and semi-humid with an average temperature of 72°F.

Tuxtla Gutiérrez is a modern city where culture and traditions of Chiapas blend together.

The streets in Tuxtla contain a combination of past and present. It is a beautiful city surrounded by lush vegetation. In downtown there is the Central Park and the beautiful Marimba Park. During the evenings you can stroll around this park and enjoy the marimba music played at the gazebo. There are many natural wonders nearby Tuxtla and the city offers very good touristic infrastructure, but most of all, the city offers the warm and kindness of the people.



### THINGS TO DO IN TUXTLA GUTIÉRREZ

Callejón del Sacrificio (The Sacrifice Alley) - Located behind the cathedral with nice sidewalk cafes.

Teatro de la Ciudad (City Theater) - The city's principal theatre, one of the best examples of contemporary architecture in the city.

Centro Cultural Jaime Sabines (Jaime Sabines Cultural Center) – This is a large complex and gathers different art and culture expressions. The bronze sculpture of the poet Jaime Sabines, is at the entrance inviting the public to visit the facility. This is a work by the sculptor Luis Aguilar, it has a contemporary design inspired by a poem from Sabines "My body is made of air and words". Inside, there are magnificent murals by five leading artists of Chiapas, all of them describe different aspects of this State: "The epic, magical and mythical culture of Chiapas" by Manuel Suasnávar; 'The Encounter" by Gabriel Gallegos; "Meditation about our origins" by Rodolfo Disner; "Cultural movement of indigenous peoples of Chiapas" by Juan Gallo; and "Every step I take is a string of Ages" by Luis Alaminos. The magnificent gallery presents exhibits from renowned plastic artists. The General Auditorium, for 184 persons, offers film festivals, lectures and concerts. The Children Auditorium presents children's plays and different artistic circuits. The Agora is for outdoor shows. The Public Central Library of the State, also part of the complex, provides historical and bibliographic information, seminars, and has an exhibit of historic documents. The cultural center also has a library and a cafeteria where you can taste delicious organic coffee.

Museo de Ciencia y Tecnología de Chiapas (Museum of Science and Technology) – It is an interactive museum with three halls: Earth and Universe, Life and Humans, and Communications and Tools, with topics such as robotics, biotechnology and nanotechnology. It also has a temporary exhibition hall and a playroom. Opening hours. Tuesday to Sunday: 9:00 to 17:00 hrs.



Marimba Park



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## THINGS TO DO IN TUXTLA GUTIÉRREZ

Catedral de San Marcos (Saint Mark's Cathedral) – The church was built in the second half of the 16th century, and it has had significant changes along the years. Today, the structure's current appearance, mostly in plain white, is a result of its last remodeling done in 2009. The German manufacture cathedral's clock tower with 48 bells tinkles out a tune on the hour to accompany a merry-go-round of apostles' images that emerges from its upper levels. The interior is Neoclassical. Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 20:00 and 21:00 hrs. a multimedia show is projected on the facade of the cathedral. In holiday season is projected every day in those same hours, except on Sunday (only at 21:00 hrs.). The show lasts 10 minutes and is a brief tour of colors and traditions of Chiapas.

Jardín Botánico Faustino Miranda (Botanical Garden) - Occupies 4.4 hectares along the Sabinal River. This place exhibits native species of the central region of the state, with special emphasis on the endemic species in the list of endangered and threatened. It has more than 900 species, of which, about 850 are endemic of Chiapas. Across the garden is the botanical museum. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday 9:00 to 16:00 hrs. Faustino Miranda Botanical Museum – The museum displays a large exhibition of the various wood trees of the state, including fossil woods. Opening hours: Monday to Friday: 9:00 to 15:00 hrs. Saturday: 9:00 to 13:00 hrs.

Museo de Paleontología Eliseo Palacios (Museum of Paleontology) - It contains exhibits of over 200 fossils, with range in age from 300 million to 10,000 years old. In the main hall there is a spectacular Megatherium, an extinct mammal. There is also a display dedicated to the amber of the state with pieces containing insects. Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 10:00 to

17:00 hrs. Saturday and Sunday: 11:00 to 17:00 hrs.

Museo del Café (Museum of Coffee) – Located in a colonial style building, the museum exhibit shows the origin of the coffee, the growing process and the production. The museum comes with a guided tour and a coffee tasting afterwards. Even if you don't love coffee, you can get a lot out of the experience. Opening hours Monday to Friday: 9:00 to 20:00 hrs. Saturday: 10:00 to 15:00 hrs.

Museo Regional de Antropología e Historia (Regional Museum of Anthropology and History) - It has two permanent exhibition halls: the first dedicated to the Pre-Hispanic towns of Chiapas, and the second dedicated to the history, art and ethnography of the 15th century with an important collection of colonial art. A third hall is devoted to temporary exhibitions. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 09:00 to 16:00 hours.

Centro de Convenciones y Polyforum Chiapas (Polyforum and Convention Center) - It is the modern complex of contemporary buildings housing diverse venues for cultural events, conferences, conventions, exhibitions and concerts.

Zoológico Miguel Álvarez del Toro (Zoo) - Located inside a natural reserve zone known as El Zapotal. It covers 109 hectares (240 acres) of semi-humid forest. The tour takes place on roads where there are only species of the regional fauna. The zoo exhibits more than 220 species in an ambiance similar to their natural habitat. This zoo is considered one of the best in the world. There are night tours that will give you a totally different experience. There is also the Crocodile Museum, unique in its kind, where the evolution and importance of these ancient animals is explained. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 9:00 to 16:30 hrs.

## THINGS TO DO IN TUXTLA GUTIÉRREZ

Instituto Casa Chiapas - Chiapas local crafts are sold here with The Chiapas Mexico Original distinctive brand, that pretends to raise the competition of products and services from Chiapas, to be ported not only with an sign of origin but also to ensure the highest quality of the products under that brand. There is also an ethnographic museum, which shows scenes representing the lifestyles of the various indigenous groups of Chiapas. Opening hours: Monday to Saturday: 8:00 to 20:00 hours. Sunday: 9:00 to 14:00 hours.

Museo de la Marimba (Museum) – It features a recreational room, a music library and an Audio Visual room where you can hear many famous pieces using the marimba. There is also an electronic keyboard of a giant marimba on the floor, where the public can play different songs, guided by the musical notes displayed on a monitor. There is also a room dedicated to Zeferino Nandayapa, which talks about the life and works of this virtuous marimba player, recognized as the leading exponent of this instrument in the country. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 10:00 to 21:00 hrs.

Parque Jardín de La Marimba (Marimba Garden Park) - At the central kiosk every night there are serenades with marimba bands, which often attracts older couples that come to dance. It is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful folk and cultural sites in the city. The band plays Monday to Friday 18:00 to 21:00 hrs. and during the weekend 18:00 to 22:00 hrs.

4



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Cathedral of San Marcos



Museum of Science and Technology



## THINGS TO DO IN TUXTLA GUTIÉRREZ

Parques Salomón González Blanco, best known as Joyo Mayu y Caña Hueca (Parks) - Beautiful green areas for fun, relax, and for outdoor activities.

Parque Bicentenario de Tuxtla Gutiérrez (Garden Park) – It has a spectacular flagpole 25 meters high. It was built in 1942 with pre-Hispanic details. There are two female figures shaking hands, recalling the 1824 agreement between the Federation of Chiapas and the Republic of Mexico. It has a playground and an area for public events.

Calzada de las Étnias (Walkway of the ethnic groups) – This modern walkway leads to important public spaces of the city. There are 6 sculptures representing the indigenous cultures of Chiapas.

Christ of Chiapas - Monumental statue that stands atop of the Mactumaczá hill. With a height of 62 meters (203 ft.) this monument exceeds the Christ the Redeemer Statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which measures 30 meters (98 ft.). The statue is made of stainless steel, and it has a dramatic lighting effect with color-changing effects. The monument can be seen from almost anywhere in the city.

6



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# MAP OF Tuxtla Gutiérrez



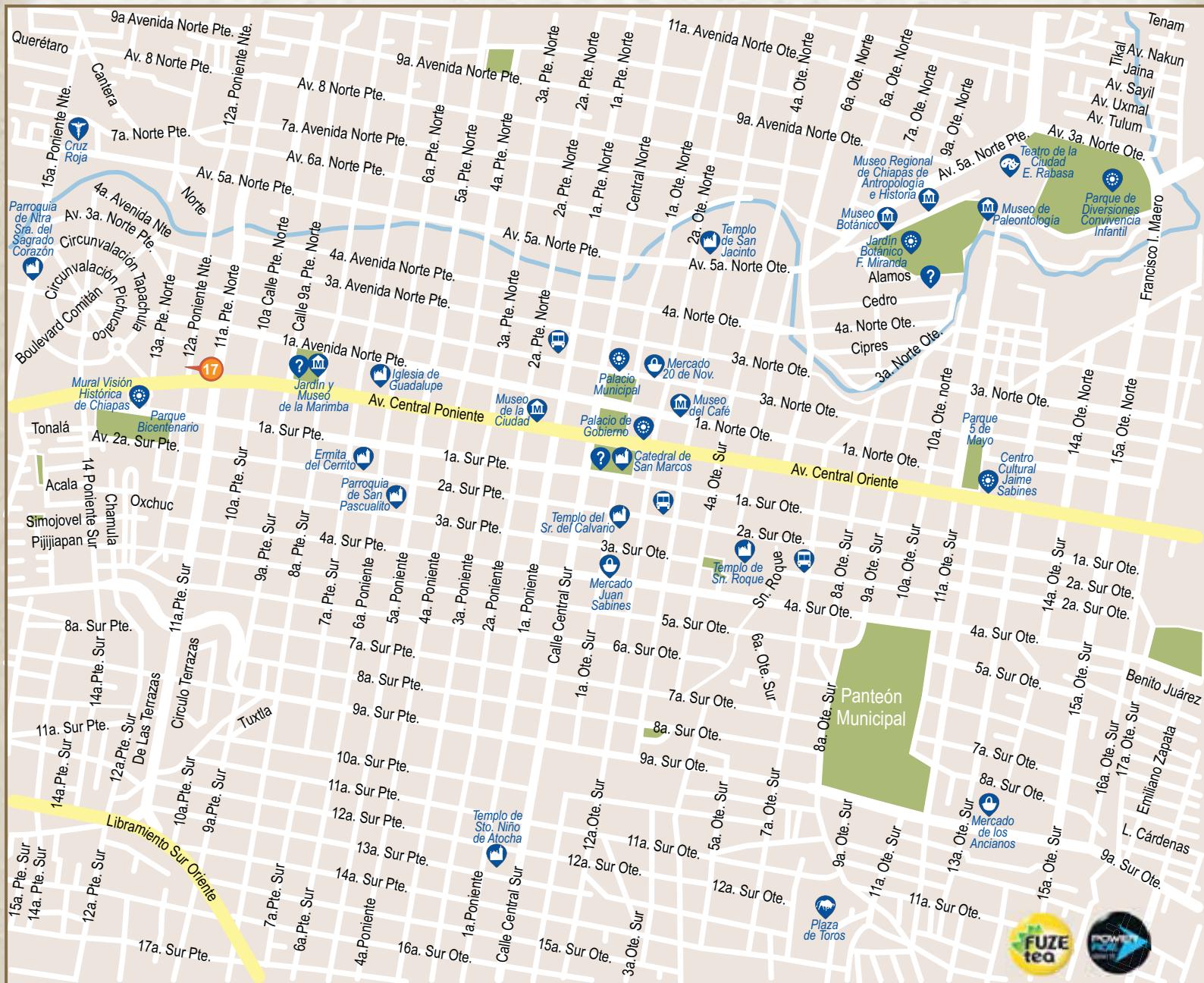
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# MAP OF DOWNTOWN Tuxtla Gutiérrez



## Symbols

- |  |                                     |  |                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
|  | Central de Autobuses<br>Bus Station |  | Tourist Information |
|  | Churches                            |  | Market              |
|  | Museum                              |  | Bullring            |
|  | Attraction                          |  | Theater             |

# DISCOVER CHIAPAS

## Tapachula



Tapachula is also known as "La Perla del Soconusco" (The Pearl of Soconusco), it is a modern city with beautiful buildings built in a classic style. Located just next to the border with Guatemala, almost at the foot of the volcano Tacaná. It does have an interesting combination of urban sophistication and tropical tempo. It was the settlement of immigrant groups from Japan, Germany and China. Amazing natural beauties surround the city, and you can visit the ecotourism parks offering a wide variety of activities.



### THINGS TO DO IN TAPACHULA

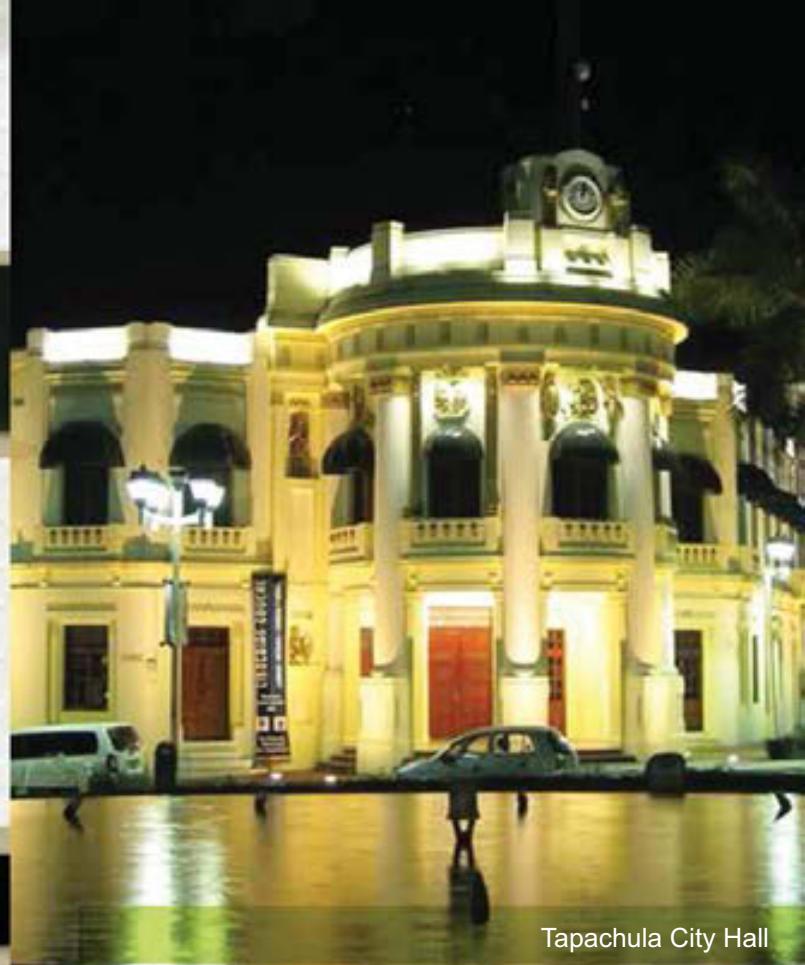
Miguel Hidalgo Park and Central Square – It is located between the Municipal Palace, the Temple of St. Augustine and the new City Hall. Locals as well as visitors get together in this nice park.

Bicentennial Park – This is a monument to culture, is a place to promote the traditions, especially the marimba, which is very representative of the city. Parish of San Agustin – It features a neoclassical facade, and has become a symbol of Tapachula. Inside there are beautiful pieces of contemporary sacred art.

Soconusco Regional Museum - Housed in the old city hall, facing the Central Square. Exhibits pieces from archaeological sites of the region, especially Izapa. Also on display are the remains of the Aztec and Teotihuacan cultures.

Banana Plantation - In the community of Miguel Aleman, in the Municipality of Suchiate, you can visit a banana plantation and learn the history of the region, its people and their traditions, as well as the banana growing and harvesting process. You can also visit for church and community center in the town.

Coffee Route - You can visit beautiful fincas (plantations) in the middle of the rainforest, a top destination for nature and coffee lovers.



Tapachula City Hall



Coffee Route



Izapa Archaeological Site



Coffee Route

## QUÉ VER EN TAPACHULA

The Beaches Route – Near Tapachula there are many attractive beaches to practice all kinds of water activities. But the best one is Playa Linda.

The Volcano Route - Includes: Izapa Archeological Zone, settled as early as 1500 B.C., it is a connective link between the Olmec and the Maya cultures. This was an important point in the trade routes for the exchange of cocoa and obsidian. Tuxtla Chico, is surrounded by tropical vegetation and has kept some of the main colonial monuments of the coast, nearby you can visit the Finca Rosario Izapa that conducts research on cocoa and tropical fruits.

Tourist Center of Santo Domingo, an old coffee plantation built in the early twentieth century in a California-style with an art nouveau decoration. It has a museum and restaurant. Unión Juárez, a picturesque town with houses made of wood in a style similar to that of Switzerland, will amaze you with breathtaking landscapes; it is the main destination for mountain climbing lovers in Chiapas. Nearby you can visit: the Muxbal and Monteperla cascades, the Pico de Loro rock formation, with panoramic views of the mountain range, the Tajamulco volcanoes (in Guatemala); and the Tacaná Volcano, a lava-capped peak, 13,425 feet high. In this trip you can explore different types of vegetation ranging from high rainforest to moorland.

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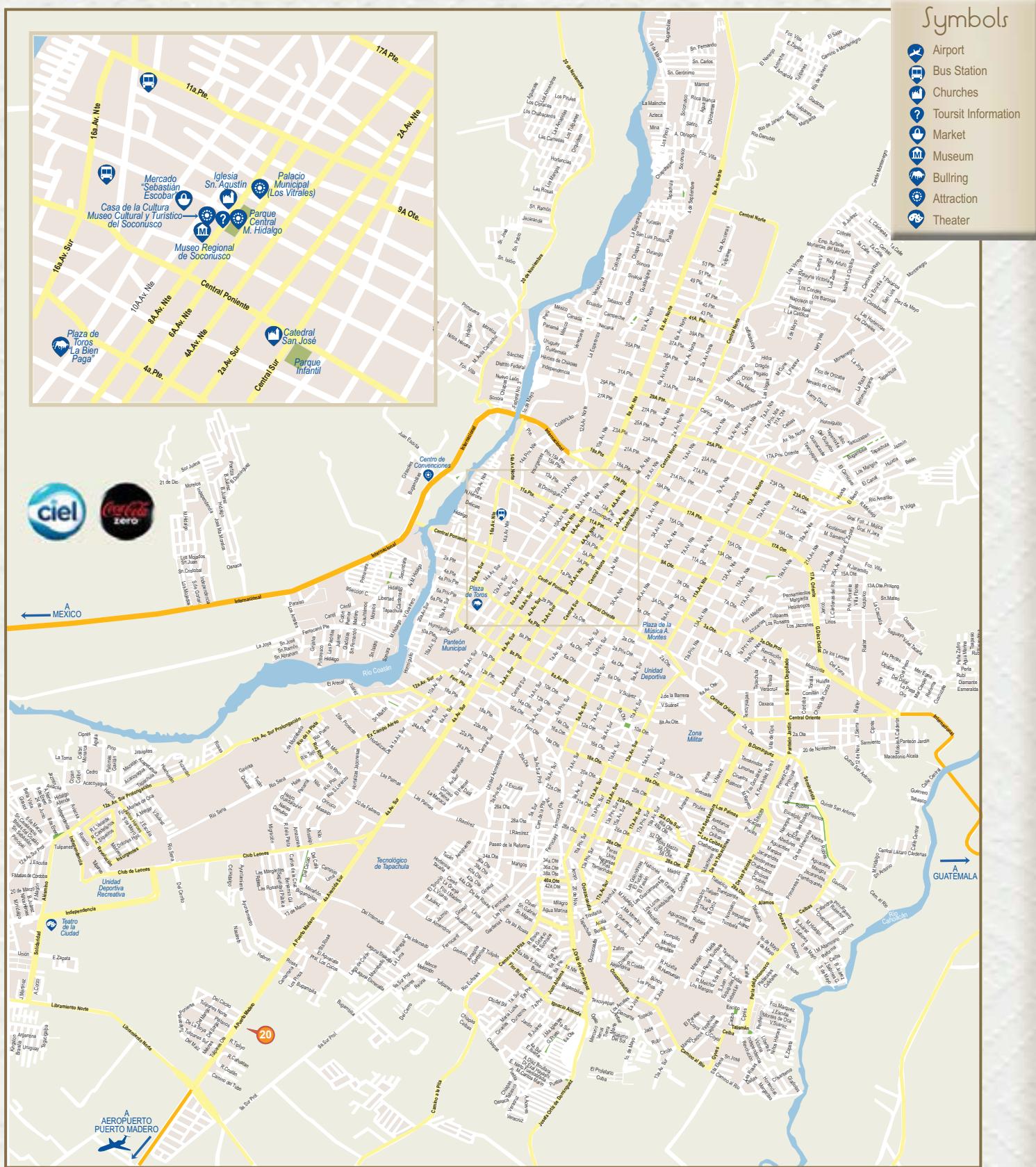
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# MAP OF Tapachula



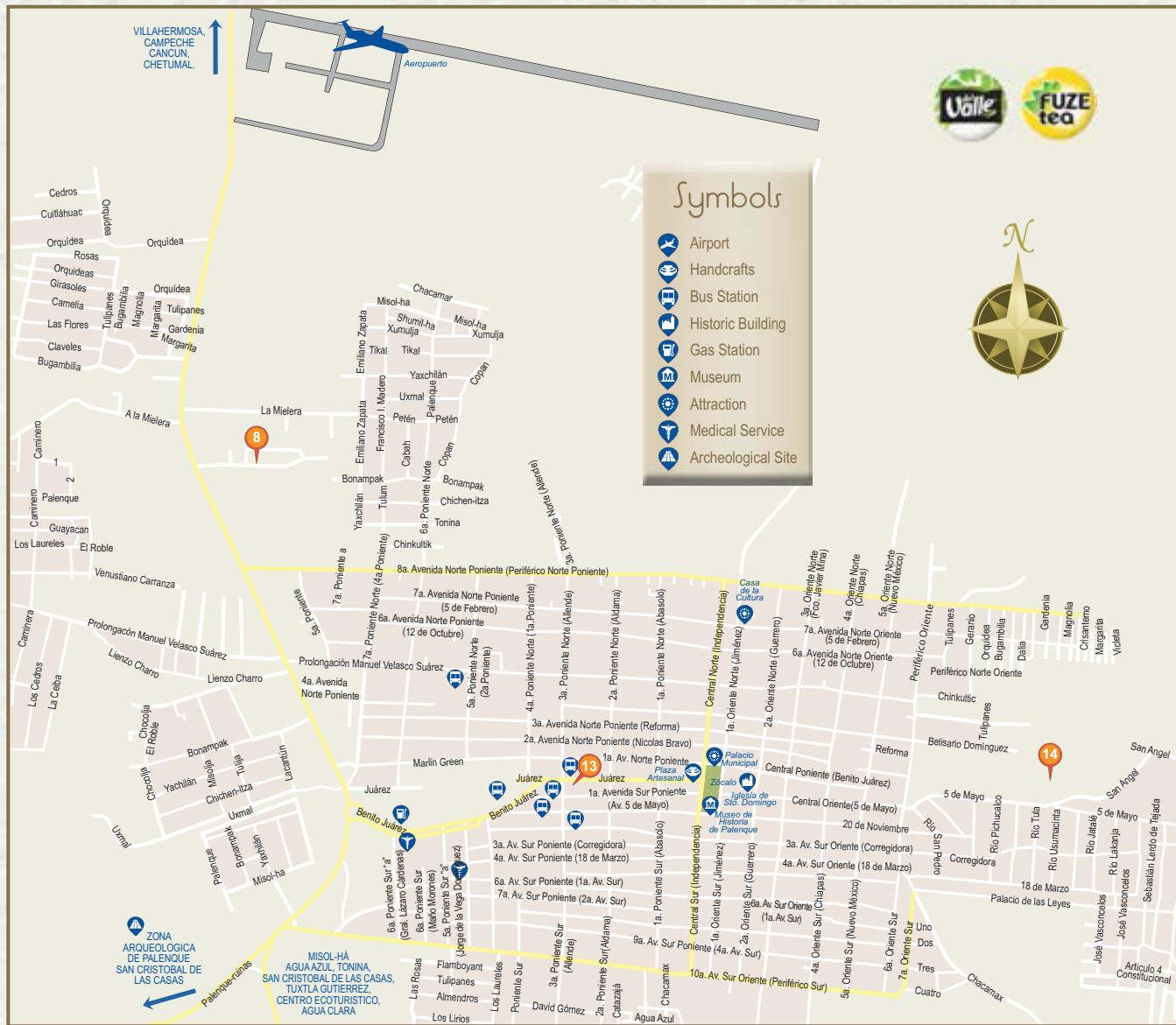
# DISCOVER CHIAPAS

# Palenque

Located in the heart of a tropical forest, it is about 290 km (180 miles) from Tuxtla Gutiérrez. The average annual temperature is 26 °C (79°F), with heavy rains during the summer. The city of Palenque offers good hotel and restaurant infrastructure.

The archaeological site of Palenque is the main attraction, and one of the most spectacular places in the world with amazing temples and buildings dating from the classical period, between 600 and 900 AD. Nearby you can go trekking and enjoy the exuberant jungle vegetation and the astonishing sights in the Palenque National Park.

There are a number of sites in the vicinity you can visit like the Agua Azul and Misol-Há waterfalls, as well as the Los Aluxes Ecopark.





Main Square



Iglesia Vieja Archaeological site

## DISCOVER CHIAPAS      Tonalá

One of the oldest villages in Chiapas and is full of history. It is a colorful city and that has kept the coastal architecture. Tonalá offers diverse attractions including, the Temple of San Francisco built in 1537, it features an elegant and sober altarpiece; the parks Esperanza, Matamoros and the courtyard of the Culture House exhibiting amazing pre-Hispanic sculptures; the Niños Héroes Park, offering fun and local cuisine; and the major pottery center founded in 1972. Archaeological vestiges also surround Tonalá, but the most interesting is Iglesia Vieja (Old Church).

In the surrounding area you can visit: Puerto Arista, with its beautiful beaches; the Madreal Ecotourism Centre, where you can fish, and have a wonderful boat trip admiring the majesty of mangroves; Playa del Sol, ideal for ATV tours on the beach; Paredón Bay, a nice fishing village where you can enjoy water sports; Boca del Cielo, with strong waves on one side, and calm water on the other, divided by the Barra de San Marcos, here you can go fishing, swimming, skiing, scuba diving, have a nice ride on a boat rides,

or just explore the local flora and fauna and visit the turtle camp and enjoy the best in regional gastronomy based on fresh seafood; and La Sepultura Biosphere Reserve, a great place for bird watching.

You can also visit Arriaga, beautiful place with warm weather. Among its attractions are: the Railway Museum, which displays pieces of the first railroads that reached the station and old photographs. The Poza Galana, located within the Biosphere Reserve La Sepultura, where you can admire the caves and a huge pool. Santa Brígida, located 32 Km from Arriaga is characterized by its calm waters ideal for swimming, boating or fishing, the place has restaurants offering typical dishes made with fresh seafood. Playa Aventura (Adventure Beach), has a unique beauty it is near the mouth of the Mar Muerto (Dead Sea). Isla de Pájaros (Bird Island) a sanctuary for various species of birds such as roseate spoonbills, gulls, ospreys, eagles, caracara, kingfisher, white ibis and black ibis. And UMA's Cabin, a green iguana farm, the most important in the region.

# MAGIC TOWNS San Cristóbal de las Casas



San Cristóbal de las Casas is one of Mexico's most beautiful colonial towns.

Through its peaceful cobblestone streets, flanked by houses with slanted red tiled roofs and patios full of flowers, one discovers religious monuments with influence from Mexican and Central American colonial art, giving it a peculiar frontier town character. Indigenous people come to its busy markets from the surrounding hamlets to offer textiles, ceramics, fruits and vegetables.

The climate is mild and sub-humid with a year average temperature of 68° F.



Street Scene in San Cristóbal de las Casas

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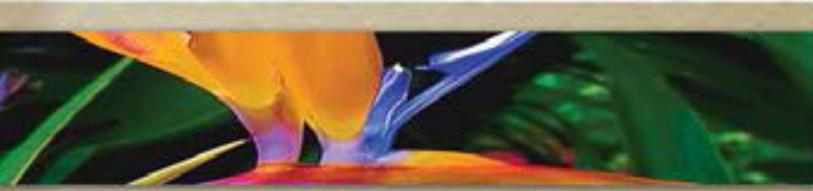
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# MAGIC TOWNS

## San Cristóbal de las Casas



### THINGS TO DO IN SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS

"José Manuel Rojas" Auditorium – An 18th century temple houses the auditorium. The Faculty of Law of the Autonomous University of Chiapas currently uses it.

Municipal Palace - A beautiful neoclassical building from the 19th Century. Zocalo or March 31 Main Square – It was a central meeting point throughout the colonial era and it was also the city's main market. Today it is centered on a kiosk and surrounded by the most important buildings.

Andador Guadalupano (Tourist Walkway) – You can walk along this tourist corridor and watch the traditional and unique architecture of this town. Here you will find many restaurants, bars and interesting shops.

Andador Eclesiástico (Tourist Walkway) – Wide pedestrian alley where you can find some of the main attractions in town, as well as souvenir shops, jewelry stores and restaurants.

Casa de la Sirena - Casa de la Sirena (House of the Mermaid) - Is an outstanding example of domestic colonial architecture still standing in the city. Diego de Mazariegos, the Spanish conqueror, probably built it during the 16th century.

Catedral de San Cristóbal (Cathedral) – It was built in 1528. Its present facade dates from the 17th century and has Baroque, Moorish and Neoclassical elements. It has a magnificent Baroque style decoration. Many are the treasures that the cathedral holds, deserving a careful visit. The pulpit is covered with gold leaf and beautiful Juan Correa paintings.

Temple and Ex-Convent of Santo Domingo – The complex was built between 1547 and 1551 and the façade is exquisitely decorated, in fact is one of the most ornate structures in Latin America. The interior has lavish altarpieces; an exquisitely fashioned pulpit carved of wood and covered in gold leaf and the Rosario Chapel.

Plazuela de Santo Domingo – In front of the beautiful temple there is a plaza with a large artisan market displaying colorful creations of local artisans as: amber jewelry, textiles, toys and more.

Santa Lucía Temple – It was built in the 19th century. The main altar is Gothic with Neoclassical and Art Nouveau elements.

Arco del Carmen – This elegant arch with a tower was constructed in 1597 in the Mudéjar (Moorish) style. It is considered the most striking colonial building in the city.

El Carmen Cultural Center – Located in the remains of the former La Encarnación convent. It was restored and transformed in a Convention Center, Public Library and Fine Arts Hall. The complex is a unique combination of ancient and modern buildings.

Sala de Bellas Artes "Alberto Domínguez Borraz" (Hall of Fine Arts) – It was built in 1974 with a colonial style. It is part of the Cultural Center El Carmen and the space accommodates a wide array of events, including dance, theatre, festivals, exhibitions, films and lectures.

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Cathedral



The Amber Museum



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## THINGS TO DO IN SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS

Museo del Jade (Museum of Jade) – The museum has an interesting collection where you can see carved-jade objects of the 8 major Mesoamerican cultures: Mokaya, Olmec, Teohihuacan, Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya, Toltec and Aztec. There is also a life-sized replica of the burial chamber of Kinich Janab Pakal, Palenque's most famous ruler.

Museo de las Culturas Populares (Museum of Popular Cultures of Chiapas) - The permanent exhibition hall presents the various customs and traditions of different cultures in Chiapas. It has an exhibition hall for temporary exhibitions and a gallery displaying works by local artists. The museum offers workshops and a handicraft store. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 10:00 to 17:00 hrs.

Museo de la Medicina Maya (Maya Medicine Museum) – This is a fascinating museum dedicated to the various techniques and practices of indigenous medicine, mainly from the tsotsil-tseltal in Chiapas. Along the museum you may learn about the uses of traditional medicine and its therapeutic resources. There is also an orchard with a large number of medicinal plants. Opening hours: Monday to Friday: 9:00 to 18:00 hrs, Saturday and Sunday: 10:00 to 17:00 hrs.

Daniel Zebadúa Theater - A neoclassical jewel with a capacity for 600 people.

Candy and Crafts Market – Here you will find a wide variety of sweets and handicrafts. Opening hours: Daily, 7:00 to 20:00 hrs.

Iglesia de la Merced y Museo del Ámbar (Church of Mercy and Museum of Amber) - The Church of Mercy was the first convent established in San Cristóbal by the Mercedarian Order. Today the convent houses the

Museum of Amber, which exhibits more than 350 exceptional pieces. There are about 30 different colors of amber in Chiapas, and the solid red amber is very rare and unique of this region, this is highly prized for its impressive color and transparency. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 10:00 to 14:00 hrs. and 16:00 to 19:00 hrs.

Church of San Nicolás Tolentino - Built between 1613 and 1621. The construction exhibits the Moorish style, and it currently houses the Historical Archive.

Templo de La Caridad (Charity Temple) - Its construction dates from 1712. It has a splendid Salomonic main altarpiece.

Na-Bolom Museum ("The House of the Jaguar") – Located in a building from the end of the 19th Century. The house is decorated with regional crafts, exhibiting Mayan ceramics and everyday objects of the Lacandones (inhabitants of the Lacandon jungle) in one of its halls. Another hall is devoted to the archaeological zone of Moxviquil, and yet another displays traditional textiles. Prior reservation is required for lodging and meals. Opening hours: Daily: 10:00 to 19:00 hrs. You may ask for the guided tours in English.

Sergio Castro e Hijos Museum - More than 90 original outfits are displayed here. This museum has an extensive collection of objects and garments related to the textile works of the Tsotsiles, Tojolabales and Lacandones. It also has a collection of musical instruments made and currently used by natives in Chiapas' mountains. You must schedule an appointment to visit the museum and the visit hour is only at 18:00 hrs, Tel 967 678 4289.

## THINGS TO DO IN SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS

Museo de Los Altos de Chiapas (Highlands of Chiapas Museum) – It is located on the ground floor of the former convent of Santo Domingo. It houses an interesting collection of art from the 17th to the 19th century. In the back of the top floor of the same building, is the Maya World Textile Center, the permanent showroom comprised around 2,400 items, ranging from textiles, clothing and crafts from various Mayan communities. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 10:00 to 18:00 hrs.

Arcotete – It is a gorgeous stone arch, sculpted by the calmed motion that Fogótico River water provided throughout time. Here you can go zip lining, rappelling, horseback riding and mountain biking. It is just 4 Km (2.5 miles) from San Cristóbal.

Grutas de Rancho Nuevo (Grottoes) – This natural attraction is located 10 kms from (6 miles) from San Cristóbal de las Casas, on State Highway 190 heading towards Comitán. Vicente Kramsky discovered the hollow mountains of San Cristóbal since 1947. It is a cave of one-entrance and side holes with a length of 10.2 kilometers (6 miles) and a depth of 550 meters (1,815 feet). Spectacular limestone stalactites and stalagmites are illuminated along a 750 meters (2,475-foot) concrete walkway inside the labyrinthine caves. The best time to visit this cave is during dry season (November through April). You can rent horses for a ride around the surrounding pine forest, or hiking and camping.

San Juan Chamula – Located in a beautiful valley at an altitude of 2,200 meters above sea level and only ten kilometers from San Cristóbal de las Casas. This town was founded in 1549, and has been characterized to preserve pre-Hispanic culture and customs. The community produces a variety of handicrafts made from sheep's wool (considered a sacred animal) as blouses, bags, shawls and blouses (huipiles).

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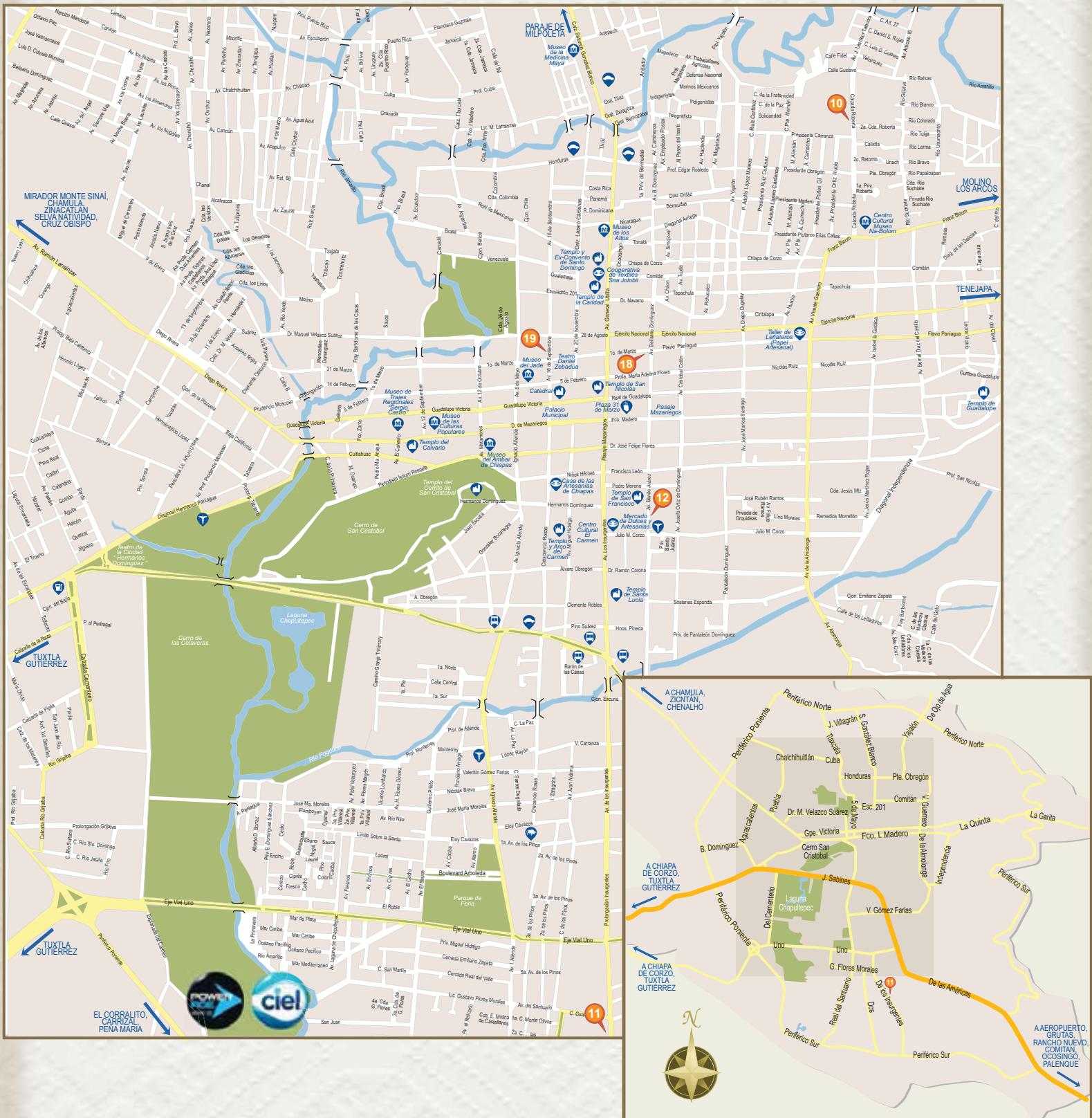
Among its attractions are: The Church of San Juan Bautista, composed of a single spacecraft designed to allow visibility of the main altar dedicated to St. John the Baptist patron saint of the community. And the ruin of San Sebastian, a former church built in the 16th century, located at the entrance to the community inside a graveyard.

Ocosingo - The most natural Municipality of Mexico, the gateway to the Lacandon Jungle, which also has cultural attractions, delicious food and excellent weather. It highlights the Parish of Saint Hyacinth of Poland, which was built in 1569, headquarters of the Dominican convent that ran Tseltal villages in the region.



The Santo Domingo Temple and former Convent

# MAP OF San Cristóbal de las Casas



# MAGIC TOWNS

## Chiapa de Corzo



Chiapa de Corzo, a Magical Town, is one of the most beautiful colonial cities of Chiapas, located just 15 minutes from Tuxtla Gutierrez, along the Grijalva River. It was the first city founded by the Spanish Conquerors in Chiapas in the sixteenth century. This is a place full of history, tradition and culture.

The city is also distinguished by its variety of crafts such as lacquer technique whose tradition dates back to Pre-Hispanic times and it is also known as maque, woodcarving, particularly Parachico masks, and embroidery. This beautiful work can be seen in the colorful costumes of Chiapas. You can stroll around the central square and enjoy this colorful handcrafts and enjoy exquisite local cuisine, including: cochinito horneado (cooked hog), the typical candy, such as the suspiros (breaths), the chimbos and the nuegados, and traditional the delicious beverage called "Pozol", a drink made from fermented corn dough.



Sumidero Canyon National Park



Colonial Fountain



### WHAT TO SEE IN CHIAPA DE CORZO

Pila fountain - This was constructed in 1562 in Moorish style, made of brick in the form of a diamond. It has eight arches and a cylindrical tower.

The Santo Domingo church and Former Monastery - Is the largest structure in the town, is one of the best preserved from the 16th century in Chiapas. It is based on the Moorish churches of the Seville region in Spain, but it also has Gothic, Renaissance and Neoclassical influences.

Its main bell tower has the largest bells in the country. The former Dominican monastery exhibits various art forms.

The Calvario Church – It is from the 17th century. It was remodeled in Gothic Revival architecture at the beginning of the 19th century. Another treasure of this church is a wooden relief illustrating The Descent from the Cross.

San Sebastian – It is a church in ruins located on the San Gregorio hill. It was constructed in the 17th century. Only its apse and facade remain with elements of Moorish, Renaissance and Baroque style.

Museo de la Marimba (Marimba Museum) – The museum belongs to the Nandayapa Vargas family, who follow the family tradition as manufacturers of this instrument. The friendly family will take you around the workshop to show you how this musical instrument is made.

Chorreadero Waterfall - Beautiful waterfall of 25 meters high, located just 9 miles from Chiapa de Corzo. The best season for visit the waterfall goes from November through March.

It is a geological fault formed about 30 millions of years ago. The vertical walls rising up to 1000m (3,000 ft.) are lush with plants, abundant waterfalls and caves, is one of Mexico's most spectacular landscape.



## Parachicos TRADITION

The Fiesta Grande de Enero (Great January Feast) takes place from 4 to 23 January every year in Chiapa de Corzo, to honor local patron saints Our Lord of Esquipulas, Anthony the Great and Saint Sebastian. The Fiesta Grande de Enero is a celebration, which joins a number of events that includes music, dance, crafts, food, religious ceremonies and other entertainment. But the main attraction is the Parachicos dancers. The Parachicos dress in a mask carved of wood and decorated with lacquer to mimic a Spanish face; a helmet or wig made of ixtle to mimic blonde hair; and a Saltillo style sarape. The dancers carry a type of maraca made of metal called chinchin to make noise along with the taping of their boot heels. The dancers go along the streets dancing with a drum and a "carrizo" also called reed whistle. These processions visit the various churches on their path, which are decorated with branches, on

which are hung breads, sweets, fruits and plastic decorations. Their dances begin in the morning and end at night.

There are so many parachicos dancers (more than 50 percent of the population go out for dancing), which require guidance, a "patron". The "patron" of the dances and processions has a mask with a severe expression, a guitar and a whip, and the musicians play flutes, drums and whistles. During the dance, the "patron" chant prayers and the Parachicos respond with cheers.

The dance is transmitted and taught during the festivity, children who participate in the festival, mimic the movements of adults, also the art of making masks is transmitted from generation to generation.

The festival has been included in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists on 2010, listed as "Parachicos in the traditional January feast of Chiapa de Corzo.



Juchavín Theater



Main Square

# MAGIC TOWNS Comitán de Domínguez

Comitan is one of the most beautiful colonial cities of Mexico and one of the best-preserved settlements of the border area of Chiapas. Originally the town was comprised of nine districts, a number that refers significantly to the former name of the city (Balun Canan, place of the nine stars).

To walk the streets of Comitan is to return to an old era, since you will find testimonies of many centuries of history combined with colorful houses and fragrances of its flourished gardens.

## WHAT TO SEE IN COMITÁN DE DOMÍNGUEZ

Santo Domingo Church – It was built between the 16th and 17th Centuries, with a Moorish style. The stained glass windows give accents of color to the sober interior. The celebration of Santo Domingo during August takes place in this temple. Its former monastic buildings next door are now the Centro Cultural Rosario Castellanos, which has a pretty wood-pillared patio, home of the Archaeological Museum of Comitan.

The San Caralampio Church – It was built in 1852 in a Neoclassic style, although the decoration has a native influence. One of the traditions of the place is to celebrate San Caralampio from 11 to 20 of February.

San José Church – Beautiful Gothic church built in the early 20th century combining the classic architecture with some typical elements of the culture of Chiapas.

San Sebastian Temple – The church construction dates back to the early 17th century. It has a Baroque style.

Dr. Belisario Dominguez Museum - A typical nineteenth century mansion that exhibits the life and work of this illustrious martyr. Opening hours: Monday to Friday: 10:00 to 19:00 hrs.; Saturday and Sunday: 9:00 to 13:00 hrs.

Hermila Castellanos Dominguez Art Museum – The museum exhibits works of artists such as Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Toledo and Gunther Gerzso. It has rooms for temporary exhibitions, for paint and plastic arts

workshops, and for concerts and conferences. Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday: 10:00 to 17:30 hrs.; Sunday: 10:00 to 14:00 hrs.

Museo Arqueológico de Comitán (Archaeological Museum) – Displays various objects found in archaeological sites in the region. Opening hours: Daily: 9:00 to 17:00 hrs.

Rosario Castellanos Cultural Centre – It is located in a former Dominican convent built in 1552. Today is a House of Culture, offering a variety of courses related to the visual arts, theatre, film and music.

Benito Juarez Park - Located in the heart of Comitan, is a beautiful place with trees, statues and a gazebo. Every Thursdays and Sundays you can enjoy live marimba music in the park.

Passage Morales – A pedestrian alley with candy shops, boutiques, cafes and much more.

Junchavin City Theatre - Built in the early 20th century, this theater host the most important events of the city.

The former convent of Copanahuastla - considered one of the most important colonial monuments in Chiapas.

Parador Santa Maria Museum - Located 30 minutes from Comitan, dates from the XIX century and its interiors are decorated throughout with period furniture and works of art covering many centuries, creating an evocative and exclusive atmosphere.

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN CHIAPAS

Tenám Puente - The nucleus of the settlement is composed of more than 60 structures. The majority and most important of these buildings are located in what is called the Acropolis. It was built in a strategic position that allows access to important commercial networks. This archaeological site represents the transition from classical to post-classical period. Opening hours: Daily: 8:00 to 17:00.

Chiapa de Corzo Archeological Site – It is one of the most important archaeological sites in the central region of Chiapas. At its peak, it counted about 200 structures, but was abandoned around 500 AD. Today the site has near 100 mounds. Recent excavations link this site with Olmec centers such as La Venta and the highlands of Guatemala. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 9:00 to 16:00.

El Lagartero - This paradise that combines the natural beauty of Lagos de Colón, with archaeological remains scattered among a number of clear ponds and small waterfalls. Most of the ruins are on small islands and peninsulas that project into the lakes. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 9:00 to 17:00.

Chinkultik – It is located 56 Km (34 miles) away from Comitan, in the heart of a pinewood forest and next to the Cenote Azul (Blue Sinkhole), considered an entrance to the Underworld by the Ancient Maya, and other small lakes. The constructions at the site were built against the hills that run alongside the first lakes of the Montebello lake system. The most

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outstanding structure from Group A is the Acropolis, here is located the structure built at the edge of the Blue Cenote (Ritual Well). The Group B, has a great plaza. The group C has a ball court. And group D has the prominent Building 20, known as "The Flat Stones Platform". Opening hours: Daily: 8:00 to 17:00 hrs.



Palenque Archaeological Site



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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN CHIAPAS

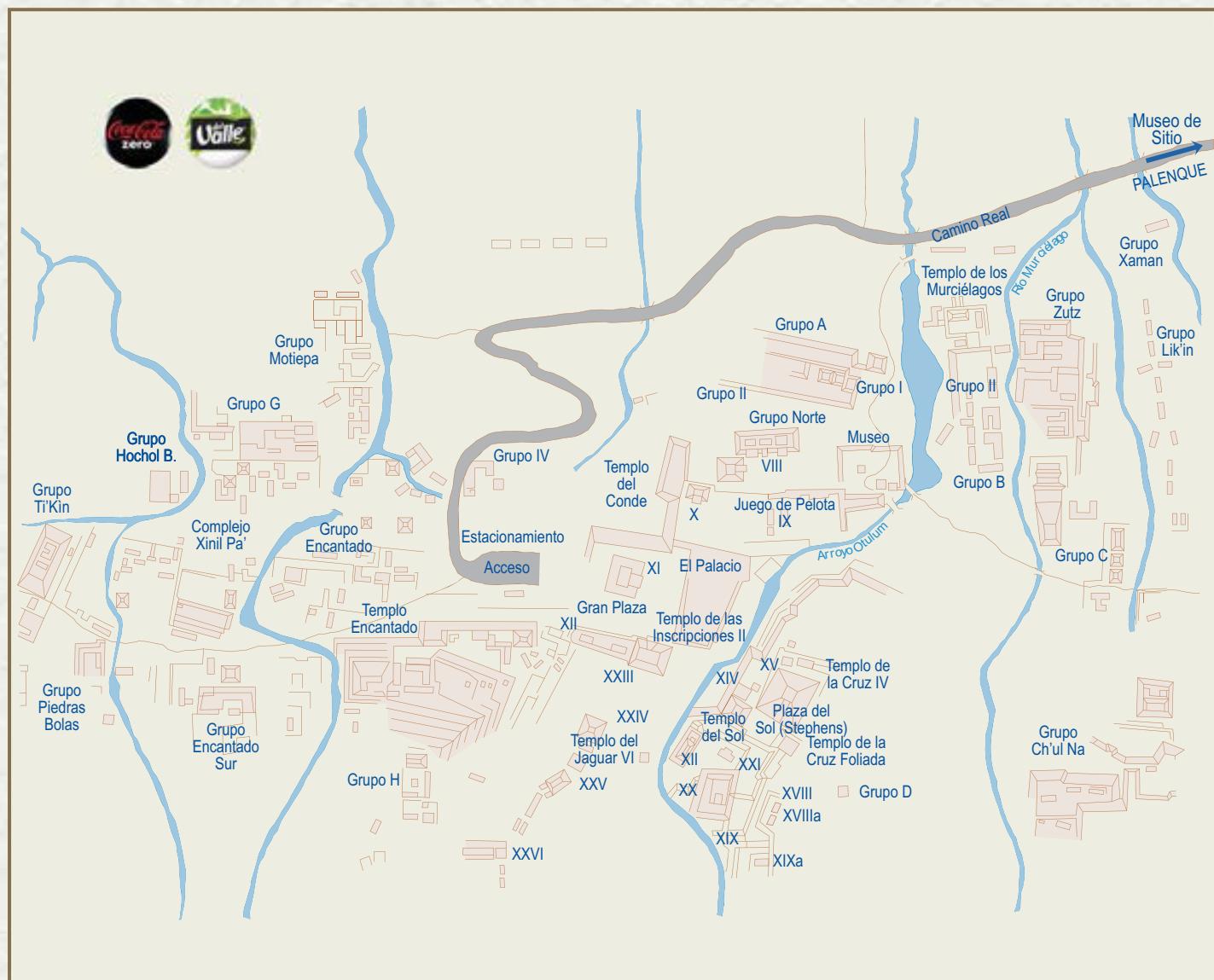


Palenque – It is remarkable because of its beautiful sculptural art, built by the Mayans in the late classic period (600-900 A.D.) Outstanding for its architecture is the complex known as the Palace and the Pyramid of the Inscriptions, where a funerary crypt was found in which the most important ruler of Palenque, King Pacal, was buried, accompanied by rich offerings. Also notable for its architecture are the Temple of the Red Queen, the Temple of the Sun, the Temple of the Cross, the North Group, and the Temple of the Foliated Cross. This site is located in the magnificent backdrop of the verdant jungle hills and considered by UNESCO as a site that represents the heritage of all humanity. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 9:00 to 16:45 hrs. There is a museum, with a small but exquisite collection of stone, ceramic, and stucco artifacts accompanied by well-written explanations. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 9:00 to 16:45 hrs.

Yaxchilán - Located in the left bank of the Usumacinta River surrounded by jungle vegetation. It is notable for the large quantity of sculptures in stone including steles and lintels. The most important structures are the Great Plaza, the Acropolis, the Small Acropolis and the South Acropolis. The lintels in Yaxchilán illustrate the dynastic history of the city. Opening hours: Daily: 9:00 to 17:00 hrs.

Bonampak - It is best known for its amazing murals. In the Great Plaza by the stairway that leads to the Acropolis there are several steles with richly dressed dignitaries - probably its rulers. Among the buildings of this ancient city, is the prominent building "I", its walls are adorned with the mural paintings, the best-preserved and most important of the classic Maya. Calendar inscriptions date the painted scenes between the years 790 and 792 CE. The city was abandoned shortly after, and the murals were never completed. Opening hours: Daily: 9:00 to 17:00 hrs.

# MAP OF THE Archaeological Site of Palenque





Bonampak Archaeological Site

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN CHIAPAS



**Toniná** - It was a ceremonial center with a great military might. The principal architecture is located in the acropolis. Outstanding is the third platform where the Underworld Palace is located and the fourth platform with the Palace of the Great Fretworks and The War Palace. The Palace of Frets is located on the fourth terrace of the Acropolis, one of the rooms of the palace contains a stucco decoration representing feathered serpents and crossed bones. The site museum has 2 exhibition rooms and exhibits sculptures of the city's rulers. Opening hours: Daily: 9:00 to 17:00 hrs.

**Izapa** – It was settled as early as 1500 B.C., which would have made it a contemporary of the Olmecs, Mesoamerica's first complex society. It was occupied for nearly 3,000 years before being abandoned in A.D. 1200. Izapa had more than 160 buildings including pyramids and platforms of up to 20 meters (65 ft.) high. The ruins are made up of about 80 structures, divided into three groups. The ruins are made up of about 80 structures,

divided into three groups. The main one, Group F, consists mostly of low-lying structures, a ball court, and a handful of weathered stele and sculptures. Group A and B, are made up of a number of uncovered mounds, stone sculptures, and stele. Opening hours: Daily: 9:00 to 17:00 hrs.

**Iglesia Vieja (Old Church)** - There are seven architectonic groups distributed on a hillside with at least 80 structures and 30 carved monuments. It is located about 4 km. (2.4 miles) north of the town of Tonalá. The settlement is distributed in five architectural groups, each one consisting of large- and medium-sized platforms, temples, sculptures, carved stele and pedestal bases with a construction system based in megalithic blocks plazas and their accesses. There are also about 30 sculptural monuments. It is located about 3 miles north from Tonalá. Opening hours: Daily: 9:00 to 16:00 hrs.

# NATURAL WONDERS IN CHIAPAS



Playa Linda and Pozuelos Lagoon – A wide sandy beach ending in an estuary called Pozuelos Lagoon, where you can take a tour by boat or go fishing, among a mangrove system with a wide variety of bird species.

La Encrucijada – A Biosphere Reserve with an area of 144,868 hectáreas. It is located along the Pacific coast with a beautiful combination of estuaries and mangrove systems. There are more than 90 species of birds and it is also the habitat for some endemic species of plants and animals, like the caiman, jaguar and spider monkey, among others.

Cañón del Sumidero National Park – It is a geological fault formed about 30 millions of years ago. The vertical walls rising up to 1000m (3,000 ft.) are lush with plants, abundant waterfalls and caves, is one of Mexico's most spectacular landscape. Spanning 32 km from the bridge to the Chicoasén Dam, a boat ride through this thrilling canyon is one of a kind experience. The two to three hours round trip will take you on a spectacular journey where you can see crocodiles, spider monkeys, and many aquatic birds. The boats leave from Chiapa de Corzo. The park has six lookout points accessible by land.

Laguna Verde - (Green Lagoon) - The water seems to have a bit of magic, as the color changes throughout the day. There are palapas and a restaurant.

El Aguacero Waterfalls - A natural park with a series of caves, one of the most important cave is El Encanto" with an underground river and a mossy rocks waterfall.

La Venta River Canyon – This canyon is approximately 80 km (49 miles) long with vertical walls of up to 400 meters (1,312 ft) high with caverns, rapids and waterfalls. The river, that in some sites has an 80 to 90 meter width, suddenly turns into a 10 meter funnel, and there is a part where the walls are so close together that form a cavern. The best time to visit is from January to May.

Cascada Welib-Ja – Located in the midst of the Lacandon jungle with blue-green waters, natural ponds and surrounded of extraordinary flora, is the perfect place to enjoy nature. There are palapas, trails, sanitary module and rustic cabins.

Sima de las Cotorras (Parrot's Sinkhole) – It is an impressive 520-feet (160 meters) wide, 460-feet (140 meters) deep perforation in the landscape. You will find petroglyphs painted on its walls. In addition, the area is the nesting ground for thousands of green parakeets that seek refuge in the trees at its base.

Agua Azul Waterfalls Ecoturistic Center - The Tulija River tumbles down natural limestone steps, forming a series of amazing cascades with pools in calcareous depressions. The turquoise-blue waters of this waterfall and river are one of the state's most beautiful and famous natural attractions. There are touristic services. You can swim in the pools, camping, hiking, among other things. There are rustic cabins and restaurants.

Las Nubes (The Clouds) Ecotourism Center - It is part of the swift Santo Domingo River where there are many turquoise-colored waterfalls and in many sections rapid currents ideal for rafting. It is a natural wonder in the middle of the Lacandon Jungle.



El Chiflon Waterfall



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Agua Azul Waterfalls

## NATURAL WONDERS IN CHIAPAS



El Chiflón (Big Whistle) Ecotourism Center - The El Chiflón Waterfall is a beautiful 120 meters (360 ft.) high waterfall located in a valley with reeds, sugarcane, mountains and rainforest. It is formed by the San Vicente River and has pools of blue water at the bottom, popular for swimming. About a half hour hike in from the walking entrance is the breathtaking view of the tallest of the falls called Cascada Velo de Novia (Bridal Vail). The trail continues up to three more falls. Next you will find some archaeological remains with cave paintings.

Cascada de Misol-Há - With a height of approximately 90 ft. among lush jungle vegetation with tall mahogany, Palo de Agua, chiczapote, and canshanes trees. Below the waterfall is a pool suitable for swimming. There are touristic services.

Grutas de Rancho Nuevo (Grotto de Rancho Nuevo Ecological Reserve) – A light-walking path leads to an enjoyable one-kilometer tour of capricious stalagmites and stalactites.

Nueva Palestina, Las Golondrinas - The sloping multipart Las Golondrinas falls—Swallows Waterfall—has several small pools popular for swimming and wading. At the entrance are several palapa umbrellas with small tables beneath them, plus bathrooms and a modest eatery. This place is ideal for swimming, fishing, kayaking, hiking and camping.

Las Guacamayas - It was created to preserve this species of Red Guacamaya birds. It has touristic services.

Tres Lagunas (Three Lagoons) - Alternative Tourism Center, where you can walk along trails in the Lacandon jungle. You can also have the experience of a ride in rustic canoes through beautiful lagoons, biking, crocodile night watch and guided visits to Bonampak. There are rustic cabins and a restaurant.

Frontera Corozal - A Touristic Center located in Frontera Corozal, a Chol community, located on the banks of the Usumacinta River, a natural border between Mexico and Guatemala. This is a nice stop if you want to visit Guatemala and the archaeological site of Tikal. It has tourist services. You have to take a boat trip from Frontera Corozal to visit the archaeological site of Yaxchilan.

Nahá - This is a Natural Protected Area with beautiful lagoons and a unique biodiversity. This area is where the oldest and most traditional communities of the Lacandon live. There are rustic cabins and restaurants.

Volcán Tacaná – It is the highest peak Southeast Mexico with 4,100 meters (13,320 ft.) high. This has been described as one of the most interesting hikes in region, leading up winding paths through lush rainforests, villages, up ancient magma flows, and rock filled temperate forests before reaching the top of the lowest caldera. The final stretch to the summit provides breathtaking views high above the clouds of several other volcanoes within the Central American Volcanic Arch.

# NATURAL WONDERS IN CHIAPAS

El Corralito Waterfall – The waterfall has a number of small natural pools under the shade of trees native to the region. There are walkways, parking lot and palapas.

Colen-há – As the flow of the Tulijá River drops, several natural pools of different sizes are formed. These turquoise pools of water are connected with tiny little waterfalls between each stepped pool. This place is surrounded with lush green vegetation.

Chukumaltic Sinkhole – One of the few cenotes where you can practice your high dive. It has crystal clear waters with a visibility up to 131 feet (40 meters) all year round. It has an average temperature of 75°F (24°C). There are petrified trees, caves, stalagmites, a shrine to Our Lady of Sorrows and several sulfur chimneys.

Catazajá Lagoons - An area of 20.000 hectares with a huge lagoon system. It is ideal for fishing and has tourist services. It is ideal for fishing sea bass, carp and prawns. In October there is a bass fishing tournament.

Montebello Lagoons National Park - Its beauty is without a doubt among Mexico's most spectacular, framed in lush pine & mixed forests full of bromeliads and orchids. The lakes are ancient natural wells that have become joined through time due to the corrosion and collapse of the limestone floor. Their number is uncertain, although it says there are 59 lakes in the Montebello Park. One of the most outstanding is the Tziscao Lagoon, which is one of the largest and deepest in Mexico, it is 45 m (147 ft.) deep. It offers the possibility of scuba diving, kayaking, swimming, boating and camping.

Miramar Lagoon - One of the spectacular wonders in the Lacandon jungle surrounded by lush vegetation, it has breathtaking colors, which change from indigo to emerald green. Here you can explore the islands, caves, rock paintings, admire the turtles in their natural habitat, the spider monkey, the crocodiles and some archaeological remains.

Lacandon Jungle - It is still the largest example of high jungle in Mexico. Its richness in flora and fauna is considerable, and so is its archaeological bounty. In order to explore the jungle you will need the gear, training, guides and permission. The Montes Azules (Blue Mountains) Reserve is the best-preserved area of the Lacandon Rain Forest. While on your journey you can swim in waterfalls and pools, boating and canoe, hiking, camping, observe the wonderful flora and fauna, and visit the archaeological sites.

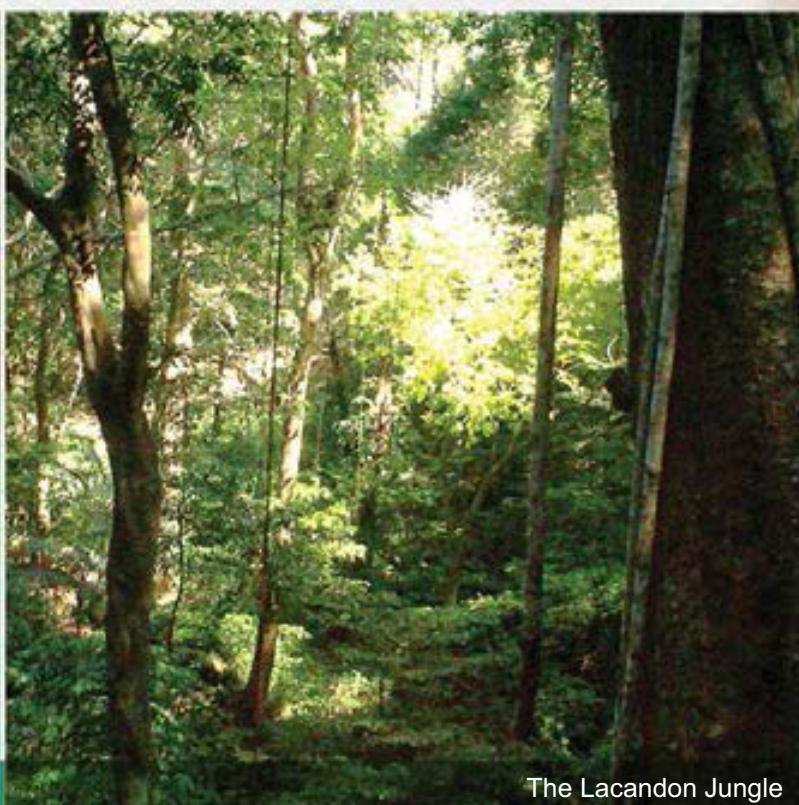
Metzabok - Located in the Lacandon Jungle with an area of 3.368 hectares is an ecosystem of high diversity and fragility. The Tzibana and Metzabok Lagoons are the most important of the 27 interconnected lakes that comprise the system of Metzabok. The Metzabok Lagoon means God of Thunder and Tzibana Lagoon means Painted House in Maya.

Lancanjá Chansayab - Unique natural place inhabited by the Mayan descendants who had kept their cultural traditions. It is located near the archaeological site of Bonampak. This is a nice place for camping, hiking, rafting and wildlife watching.

Nueva Palestina – A river with stretches with different classes of rapids and a pool of emerald green water, surrounded by lush vegetation. This is a nice place for swimming, fishing, kayaking, trekking and camping.



Metzabok Lagoon



The Lacandon Jungle

# SUN AND SAND



Pozuelos Lagoon – Laguna de Pozuelos – It has a quiet beach and amazing mangrove systems, habitat for a great diversity of birds. It has a restaurant, palapas and pools. You can take a tour by boat or go fishing.

Barra San Simón – It is a gorgeous wide sandy beach divided by a pristine river estuary surrounded by exuberant vegetation, where you will find a variety of aquatic birds. The spectacular ocean side beach has strong surf. It is connected with the Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve, in Las Palmas, by natural channels among a mangrove ecosystem.

San Carlos - A fishing village located within the La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve. San Carlos Ecological Group offers various adventures on beaches and the mangroves, recognized as some of the tallest mangroves on the Pacific coast of the Americas. Here you will enjoy the exuberant evergreen tropical vegetation and a rich fauna. The little town is full of history, legends and traditions, beside you can taste a variety of traditional dishes. There are accommodation services, restaurants and boat rides.

Chocohuital – Sits between the ocean and a coastal lagoon with mangroves. You can take a boat tour to experience nature first hand, watch the colorful and diverse species of birds and the local fauna like crocodiles and alligators. Here, you can practice fishing, swimming and kayaking. It offers accommodation, including an interesting concept for nature lovers, and restaurants offering delicious seafood dishes.

Boca del Cielo (Mouth of Heaven) - This beach is on a swath of land separated from the mainland by La Joya lagoon, a beautiful place to take a small motorboat to explore the mangroves home of a diverse species of birds. The beach has fine grey sand with palm-thatched seaside eateries serving the local specialties of fresh lobster and coconut water. Swim or wade in the inlet and sign up at the sea turtle protection post, where visitors are welcome to accompany staffers on nightly beach patrols in search of turtle nests. The nesting season goes from August to November and during December; thousand of newborn turtles are liberated.

Puerto Arista – This coastal town offers 32 miles of open sea beach in the middle of a mountain landscape, this is the main beach resort in Chiapas. The area is excellent for swimming, beach sports, horseback riding; motorcycle rides by the seashore, fishing and boat trips. Puerto Arista Turtle Sanctuary a state-sponsored turtle protection and preservation program located on a property with 500 hectares of mangroves and beaches; it allows visitors to participate in both the collection of eggs and liberation of hatchlings; even activities take place year round, most turtles come here to nest between July and November. Some of the nearby communities include Cabeza de Toro, which straddles the road linking Puerto Arista and Boca del Cielo (Mouth of Heaven) both on the La Joya Lagoon, which is separated from open ocean by a sliver of land or shoal broken in the middle.

Barra de San José – This place has a variety of unpopulated pristine beaches. It has a restaurant, cabins and swimming pool. Tourist attractions include jet-ski, a boat ride along the estuary, swimming and fishing. The area has fish and shrimp farms, so it is an excellent place to enjoy fresh seafood.



Chocohuital



Puerto Chiapas

## SUN AND SAND

Playa Azul – In order to get this broad, flat expanse of gray volcanic sand you have to cross an estuary. It is a safer swimming beach than most Pacific coast areas, because the waves break far offshore. Take a boat ride, enjoy water sports, or you can camp in this beautiful beach. It has a restaurant, palapas and a small pier.

Barra Zacapulco – Located on a sand bar inside the La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve, it has large areas of mangroves. There is an ecotourism center with cabins, restaurant and cayuco (kind of canoe) rides.

La Lupe – Small fishing village located just 3 km from the turtle camp in Barra de Zacapulco. In this town you will find decorations made of seashells and snails, and coconut carvings.

El Ballenato – There is an ecoturistic resort in this beautiful sandy beach. This place features a contemporary and environmentally friendly design. There is a restaurant with regional cuisine, bird observatory and kayaks and canoe tours.

Madresal Ecological Center - A nice place to enjoy wildlife, and admire animals as raccoons, alligators, eagles and porcupines, among others. It has cabins, restaurant and boat rides.

Palo Blanco Estuary – It is part of La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve, consisting of lagoons and estuaries that interconnect along the Pacific Ocean, it has the tallest mangroves on the Pacific coast of the Americas. Puerto Chiapas - The port receives various types of ships, including cruise liners. It has a 9-Km beach with dark gray sand and rough surf. In its surroundings you can visit: Playa Linda, ideal for fishing, hiking, boating and camping, it has palapa restaurants, and swimming pools. Playa San Benito, a nice place to see the natural flora and fauna of the perfect place to enjoy seafood. Playa Grande, are expanses of near-virgin beaches you can take boat rides and camping. It offers opportunities for cultural and historic tours, as well as eco-adventures; there are tours to coffee plantations, Tapachula, Tuxtla Chico, Union Juarez and the archaeological site of Izapa.



Colón Lakes



Lacaná

## ACTIVITIES & ADVENTURE IN CHIAPAS

Climbing and Rappelling – Climbing and Rappelling - Near Tuxtla Gutierrez are four great options: Sima de las Cotorras, an impressive circular ravine that is 140 meters deep, and halfway down the sinkhole there are 46 ancient images painted on the rocky cliff, home of thousands of parrots nesting in the place; La Venta Canyon River with great vertical walls up to 400 meters, this is also known as the Sacred Canyon because the numerous caves used for ceremonies during the pre-Hispanic period; the Chorreadero Cave-Waterfall at this 25-meter (82-foot) waterfall you can hike through a tunnel that lead you to a huge natural hall with stalactite and stalagmite, a stream runs along the cave creating subterranean waterfalls and shallow pools where you can swim; you can also rappel down the waterfall's rock formations; The Cañón de Sumidero National Park, there you can rappel extremely vertical of more than 600 mt (1,968 ft.) cliffs that require the mastering of the progressive techniques on rope descending, that is why you can contact a team of experts to try this adventure. Tapachula offers beautiful scenery between coffee plantations, in the Tacaná Park on its walls and mountain cliffs, in La Changa Ecotouristic Park where you can practice rappelling, or in the limestone walls in Poza Galana.

Mountain Biking - There are several options such as: The Sumidero Canyon and the Lacandon Jungle. Near Tapachula, in the Argovia Coffee Plantation, you can bike surrounded by a majestic mountain backdrop. And the Ecotourism Center La Changa, you will find landscapes of canyons and cliffs. Near Comitán, in Chiflón Cascades, there are interesting routes to go. The El Chiflón Waterfalls, half an hour away from Comitán, are surrounded by mountains and jungle and offer some paths with breathtaking views.

Speleology - The underground landscape of Chiapas is amazingly vast and includes: caves, subterranean rivers, vertical chasms and caverns, all of them rich in flora and fauna, much of which is endemic. Some of the best places are Río de la Venta with interesting caves, some of them were

Mayan ceremonial centers, however this is only recommended for experienced speleologists. The Caves of San Francisco, near Comitán, are a natural wonder with 500 meters long and are the natural home for birds, insects and native plants, also in the months from August to October, you can see thousands of bats. There are also caves in beautiful waterfalls like Misol-Ha and Chorreadero.

Kayak - In Chiapas there are plenty of rivers, lakes and ponds of great beauty where you can practice this sport as the Lacandon Jungle, the Guacamayas Ecotourism Center, Las Nubes Tourist Center, and the Montebello Lagoons.

Rafting - One of the most powerful rivers crossing the Lacandon Jungle is the Lacaná, this is not a river with rapids, but it is a scenic drive through waterfalls, archaeological sites such as Bonampak, and beautiful landscapes. Another option is Las Nubes Waterfalls, which are part of the mighty river of Santo Domingo with beautiful turquoise waters.

Diving – Among the best places are: The Montebello Lagoons, its 59 lakes and crystal clear waters of colors ranging from turquoise blue to emerald green are connected by underground rivers. Colón Lakes, including the Lagartos Lagoon with petrified trees and interesting rock formations. But the best place in Chiapas is the Chucumaltik Sinkhole, with a visibility of more than 40 meters (131 ft.) all year long, and a depth of 60 meters (196 ft) where you can see an altar for Our Lady of Sorrows, exotic fish and petrified trees.

Swimming in River – There are many options you can swim in the ecotouristic center Las Guacamayas located in the exuberant Lacandon near the mighty Lacaná River. Other options are Las Nubes or the Embarcadero Jerusalem both located along the shores of the Santo Domingo River, or the Ecotouristic Park Catay Maya near Tapachula.

# ARTS & CRAFTS IN CHIAPAS



Shops in Chiapas offer a wonderland of handicrafts. Chiapas is famous for its wide variety of crafts, and some of them are produced based on an antique Pre-Hispanic tradition.

**Textiles:** The indigenous people of Chiapas are known for their fine weaving skills that have been handed down from generation to generation. The beauty, delicacy and exclusivity from this manufacture faithfully follow the traditions, the weavers are trained since they are little girls. Cotton and wool textiles are found in daily use, and designs and symbolisms vary from one community to the other. Flower motifs, animals and men figures bond together give a special significance to the owner of this unique fabrics. Today, these textiles are raw material for a new line of stylish dresses, inspired by beautiful embroidery and fabrics.

**Ambar:** Experts have considered amber from Chiapas as the most beautiful for its texture, transparency and great variety of colors. Yellow is the most known color, but there are also less known ones such as red, cognac, green and pink. There is beautiful jewelry made out of ambar. Among the traditions amber was thought to chase away evil spirits.

**Pottery:** Amatenango village is famous for its clay pottery; they create jugs, small animal figures like jaguars and doves, and flowerpots among others. Other communities famous for its pottery creations are Ocuilapa, Suchiapa, and San Cristóbal de Las Casas. In the Lacandon Jungle the natives still make clay incense burners decorated with the face of a Lacandon deity like in the pre-Hispanic era.

**Wood Carving:** The artisans of Chiapa de Corzo produce excellent wood carvings, including sculptures, boxes, crosses and the traditional Parachico mask; in tableware, boxes, toys, masks and rattles, the artisans of Chiapa de Corzo are known by its singular perfection and beauty, along with a variety of bright colors. The tsotsil artisans produce excellent woodcarvings, furniture and traditional toys. In root carving, artisans from Tecpatán are unique. In the area of the Lacandon jungle the natives produce sticks and fill them with seeds, so when they move them, the sticks sound like the rain.

**Stone:** In Palenque some skilled craftsmen, experienced in Mayan culture, make detailed sculptures, lintels and stone carvings reproductions. In Chiapas there are important deposits of Jade near the border with Guatemala, and the artisans create nice pieces and jewelry.

**Metalwork and Saddlery:** San Cristóbal de las Casas is famous for its colonial-style wrought iron works used for balconies, window gates, benches, lamps, among other things. Beside, San Cristóbal along with Comitán create beautiful objects of leather like saddles and horsemanship and charro items, as well as wallets, belts, bags, portfolios, suitcases, etc.

**Waxworks (Candles):** In San Cristóbal de las Casas, in La Merced District there is an ancient tradition to create exquisitely beautiful works of wax. The artisans' hands transform the paraffin into subtle flowers with delicate leaves, sprinkled with gold dust.



Arts & Crafts



Traditional Cuisine of Chiapas

## CUISINE OF CHIAPAS

The cuisine of Chiapas is the result of cultural fusion between Spaniards and natives with a result of exotic flavors. The typical dishes integrates elements of the Hispanic and Spanish cuisine. Each region of Chiapas has its specialty, but some of the most famous are: the tamale made of masa (a starchy dough, usually corn-based) and seasoned with spices sweet, salty, spicy and regional fruits, the picotes or corn tamales, the delicious barbecue beef or lamb, the palatable pig (baked pork) or the peculiar chainfaina (made with pork and beef) black beans with salted beef, and the sispolá (beef with chickpeas and cabbage).

This rich gastronomy has also delicious drinks like Chía water and Pozol (fermented corn dough), either white or with cocoa. In the area of Comitán you can have a refreshing drink like Comiteco (fermented maguey drink) and the agua de tzilacayote, a drink made with a special regional fruit like mango, tejocote (small crab apple-like fruit) and plum. And of course, The Soconusco and Los Altos (Highlands), region offers a worldwide known coffee for their delicate aroma, medium body, natural chocolate flavor and bright acidity. Each region has its own specialities and variations. In Tuxtla Gutierrez, the corn-based dishes are the most common as tascalate (a drink made with corn, chocolate, nuts and vanilla) and tamales; in San

Cristóbal de las Casas, specialties are based mostly on cured meats such as ham and sausages, which are of Spanish origin, as well as sweets such as crystallized fruit and coconut candies; local specialties in Chiapa de Corzo, includes a suckling pig roasted seasoned with dried chilies and spices; Palenque is known for many versions of fried plantains, including filled with cheese, and for the shuti broth (small freshwater snail cooked in a broth flavored with hoja santa); in Tapachula, chipilin with shrimp and picotes, a fresh sweet corn tamale with cheese and sugar; in Tonalá, seafood is a strong component in many dishes like the macabil sausages and the famous tamales juacane (filled with a mixture of black beans, dried shrimp, and pumpkin seeds); and in Comitán, the chinculguaje, dough filled with beans and cheese, and the hearts of palm salad in vinaigrette. Cheese making is important, especially in the municipalities of Ocosingo, Rayon and Pijijiapan. Ocosingo has its own self-named variety, Queso Bola, a cheese with strong flavor with a creamy, crumbly texture. It is quite popular among restaurants and gourmet shops along the country. You can enjoy the cuisine in Chiapas. One suggestion for food is to accompany tourists listening to the harmonious sound of the instrument's most historic and popular in this region: the marimba.

# MEETINGS & EVENTS IN CHIAPAS

Chiapas has become one of the most attractive locations for congresses and conventions both national and international. There are several cities with a solid hotel infrastructure and a wide variety of venues.

Tuxtla Gutierrez is a safe and modern city where nature and tradition come together, showing the zoque essence. The city offers a wide range of hotels, quality services, transport facilities, museums and shopping centers. The city is connected by air to most major cities in the country, and by land there are several bus lines that travel across the state. The specialist DMC Magazine has considered Tuxtla Gutiérrez as one of the top 10 destinations for small events.

You will love the Chiapas Polyforum and Convention Centre, a striking, contemporary complex of buildings. With 3,300 m<sup>2</sup> distributed over nine rooms, offering capacities ranging from 50 to 1,500 people. The auditorium has a capacity of 3,875 spectators and features a cutting-edge audio system and computerized lighting; this is one of the most modern and exciting entertainment venues in the Southeast of Mexico.

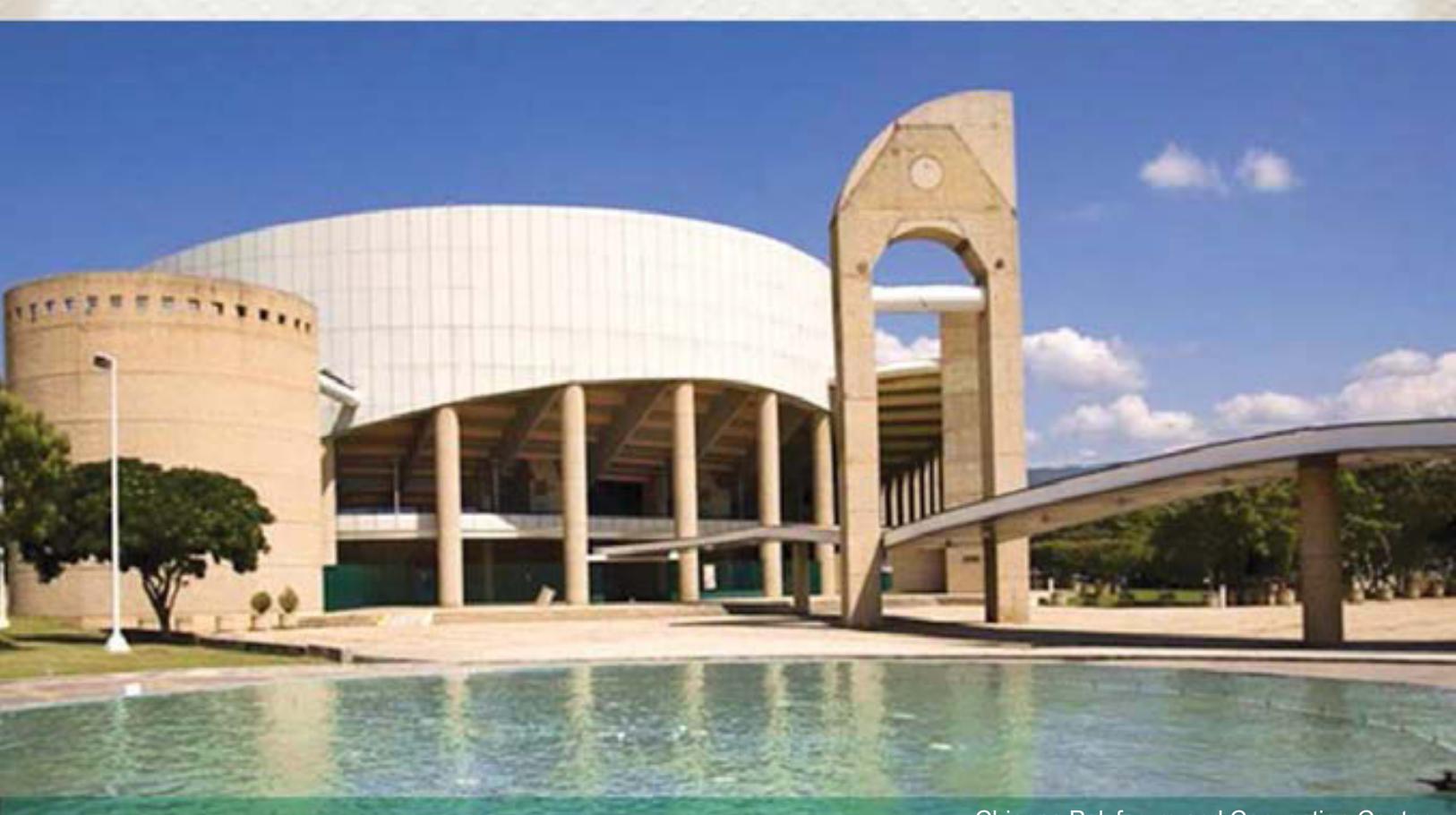
San Cristóbal de las Casas offers hotel accommodations for small and medium-size groups with facilities for all tastes and needs. This Magical Town features colorful traditions, crafts, festivals, cuisine and cultural

attractions as one of the oldest and most beautiful colonial cities in Mexico. The town will fill your event with its magic and two venues: The Casa Mazariegos Convention Centre, with a total area of 1,825 m<sup>2</sup> and four rooms; and The Carmen Convention Centre, a part of a cultural complex including the Fine Arts building and the Public Library. This restored colonial building offers 2,300 m<sup>2</sup> of meeting and event space; the large multipurpose room offers 1,243 m<sup>2</sup> with a capacity of 1,250 people.

Tapachula is also a beautiful destination surrounded by incredible natural wonders complemented with good tourist infrastructure. There are non-stop flights to Mexico City and other destinations in Mexico. The Hotel Loma Real Tapachula International Convention Center is one of the largest and best-equipped venues in Chiapas. It has the capacity to organize events of up to 1,500 participants in beautiful rooms surrounded by gardens.

Chiapas offers the best pre- and post-event activities, you can enjoy an adventure in the jungle along the Cañón del Sumidero National Park, La Venta River Canyon, or in the Tacaná Volcano; or you can live the Mayan culture in Palenque, Bonampak, Toniná...

The Convention and Visitors Bureau of Chiapas (OCV) supports the organization of events with information, paperwork and negotiations.



Chiapas Polyforum and Convention Center

# MAP OF Chiapas

Distances From Tuxtla Gutiérrez:							
				Other Cities			
Agua Azul	239	Comitán Vía la Angostura	165	Ocosingo	171	Puerto Madero	427
Boca del Cielo	202	Lagos de Montebello	228	Palenque	300	San Cristobal	85
Chiapa de Corzo	15	Cañón del Sumidero	23	Puerto Arista	195	Tapachula	400
Cintalapa	82					Tonalá	172
Campeche	664	Chetumal	785	México, D.F.	830	Villahermosa	289
Cancún	1205	Mérida	828	Oaxaca	545		



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