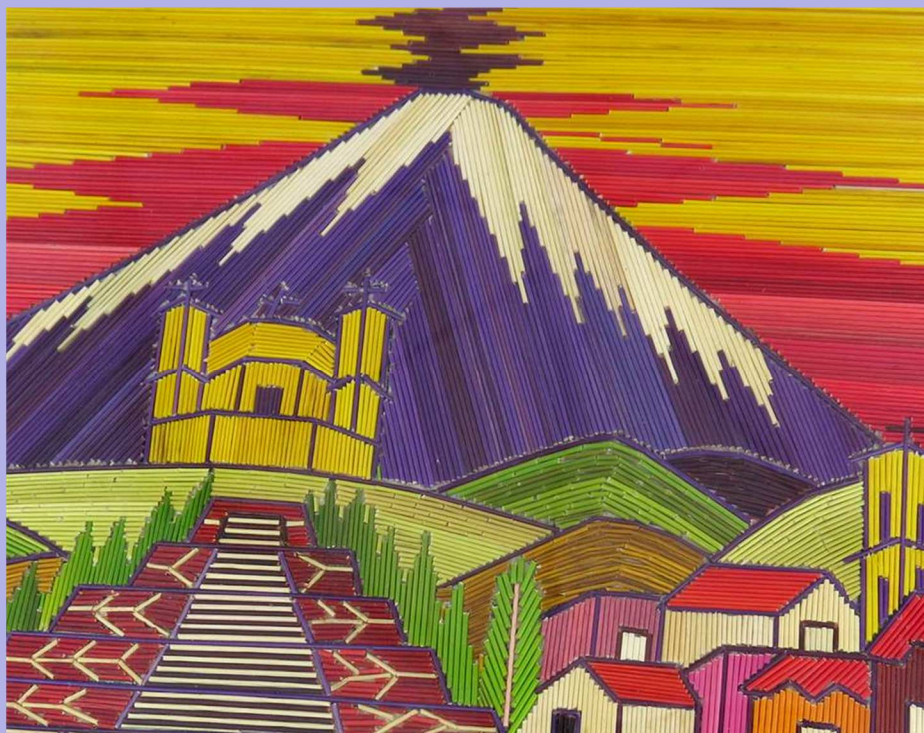


# Tia Stephanie Tours

## Essential Puebla

### Puebla, It's an Entire State!

8 Nights / 9 Days



Many states and cities in Mexico share the same name. In Puebla, the city is so iconic that sometimes Puebla the State is overlooked! Not at Tia Stephanie Tours! Recognizing that the State of Puebla has a great cultural and bio diversity, we decided to package a program that offers travelers the opportunity to experience and learn about the key natural and cultural wonders in Puebla! This journey is divided into three regions: **1.) Puebla/Cholula/Atlixco, 2.) Sierra Norte, Cuetzalan, Xochistlan, Hueyapan and 3.) The Valley of Tehuacan.** We invite you to experience all the Puebla has to offer!

**In Puebla/Cholula/Atlixco**, we experience Colonial Mexico, Poblano Cuisine, Markets, Talavera Tile

**In the Sierra Norte**, we meet Nahua communities to learn of their traditions and meet extraordinary weavers and artisans

**In the Valley of Tehuacan** we visit the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Biosphere Reserve, home to the largest number of cacti species in one region! And, we visit Mixteco palm weavers and potters of Los Reyes Mezontla. **Join us!**

#### Trip Includes:

- Accommodations
- Expert Guides
- Comfortable / Secure Transportation
- Welcome and Farewell Dinners
- Breakfasts
- Meals according to itinerary
- Water on Van
- Airport Transfers
- Entry Fees

#### Highlights

##### **REGION ONE: Puebla, Cholula & Atlixco**

- Explore Historic Puebla
- Savor the singular Poblano Cuisine!
- Learn about the ancient pre-Hispanic site of Cholula
- Visit “Talavera” or majolica tile workshop and showroom
- Visit Atlixco, a charming town at the foothills of Popocatepetl
- Visit regional markets

##### **REGION TWO: Sierra Norte (Cuetzalan, Xochistlan, Hueyapan)**

- Visit Cuetzalan on Market Day!
- See the famous “Voladores de Cuetzalan”
- Meet weavers from Nahua communities of Cuetzalan, Xochistlan & Hueyapan

##### **REGION THREE: TEHUACAN**

- Visit Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Biosphere Reserve to learn of cacti species.
- Meet Mixteco palm weavers
- Visit pottery town, Los Reyes



## Day 1: Thursday, Arrive Mexico City, Transfer to Puebla (D)

You will be met at the Mexico City airport and travel 1 1/2 hours, passing through Mexico's Volcanic Range, where, depending on the visibility, we will get great views of Mexico's famed volcanoes: Popo and Ixta. Depending on our arrival time, we will enjoy a relaxing, strolling walking tour to orient us to Puebla, a city that has become a great metropolis, while still retaining its spectacular colonial ambiance, making Puebla one of Mexico's most beloved cities. Puebla was and is an important crossroads between the Gulf of Mexico and Mexico's capital, Mexico City. We will visit the Main Cathedral, the charming Zocalo, visit important churches and chapels, and see the famous candy street! Our Welcome Dinner is at a Puebla favorite: Mural de Los Poblanos, where we will get our first introduction to the mouthwatering Poblano cuisine.

## Day 2: Friday, Cholula & Puebla (B, L)

After breakfast at our hotel, our day begins with an excursion to Cholula, a city contiguous to Puebla, but now considered part of the same metropolis. Cholula is also the name of an extraordinary ancient city, now archeological site, that is the largest base / mass pyramid in the Americas. Cholula was built and inhabited over many centuries, and it is by observation of the pottery styles that different periods or "phases" of civilization have been identified. We begin with a guided visit to the small but important Museum that will help us understand what was going on in Cholula before the Spaniards arrived on the shores of what is now Mexico. Then, we enter the Colonial Era by observing the church or temple that was built on top of the Cholula Pyramid and we visit an extraordinary "talavera" high temperature fired "majolica" tile artisan and workshop, Talavera Sta. Catarina, where Fernanda Gamboa will show us her masterpiece work. She is an expert at packing and shipping worldwide, so we can purchase larger pieces, should we choose to! From here, we visit the singular "syncretic" churches of **Santa María Tonanzintla** and **San Francisco Acatepec**, where we can appreciate the fusion between the Pre-Hispanic and Spanish worlds and views. We'll enjoy lunch before returning to Puebla to continue our City Tour. We will visit the Municipal Palace and the Capilla del Rosario and visit the Calle de Dulces to learn about (and enjoy!) the artisanal candies Puebla is so famous for.

## Day 3: Saturday, Atlixco & Puebla (B, L)

A great day is in store, as we depart Puebla for the charming town of Atlixco, that lies at the foothills of Popo and is known as the food basket of the region, growing all kinds of produce, flowers and plants. Given its proximity to the food chain, Poblanos always comment on how good everything tastes here. It was likely picked that morning, or the night before! We begin with a breakfast at our favorite hotel on the Plaza, **Antigua Alquería de Carrión**, where we will taste regional delicacies, including the famous traditional tamales de comino, that are only found here. After breakfast, we walk it off by visiting the historically significant and artistically rich temples and churches of Atlixco,

We'll visit one of our favorite regional markets in Mexico: the mercado in Atlixco is full of local charm, character with merchants selling their famous "cecina" cured beef for tacos, barbacoa, fresh produce, wonderful cheeses and more. Strolling musicians also make their presence! We enjoy delicious tacos de cecina, with fresh squeezed limes, chopped onion and cilantro. We return to Puebla, for a free evening to stroll.

## Day 4: Sunday, Cuetzalan (B, L)

Today we get an early start as we now embark on the second segment of our innovative travel program to get to know "Puebla, It's an entire state!" Now we head for what is called the Sierra Norte of Puebla, where the Nahuatl people live, who speak Nahuatl, the ancient language of the Aztecs. Sundays are important in Cuetzalan, as this is the day people from surrounding communities in the Sierra Norte come to Cuetzalan for their important market day to buy, sell and trade goods. This is a practice and social / commercial interaction that has taken place since the pre hispanic era. The custom of the "tianguis" or itinerant market persists to this day. We will be able to enjoy seeing people in their full regalia of indigenous dress, that in this region is very unique. White wrap skirts, embroidered "blusas" and finely woven capes cover the women's shoulders. The men are still seen wearing their traditional "manta" or muslin cotton pants and shirts. Also on Sunday, we will get to see the famous "Voladores", who engage in a ritualistic ceremony high above ground, as they "fly" to petition the gods who will bring the proper balance of the elements needed for agricultural abundance and a bountiful harvest. We will enjoy lunch in the surroundings of a fine artisan market: **Mercado Artesanal "Matachiuj"**, where we will be able to preview and purchase some of the rich textiles and crafts of this region. From here, we visit a special weaving coop in San Andrés Tzicuilan.

## Day 5 Monday, Xochitlan, Cuetzalan (B, L)

After breakfast at our lovely hotel, we visit the nearby community of **Xochitlán** de Vicente Suarez, where we will be met by local officials who have helped us gather the important bead work embroiderers of this region. Also, we will be introduced to the music of this region, called Huapango. It is one of Mexico's rich and diverse musical genres. From here, we visit a special textile artisan at his coop and design workshop, Pedro Martín. Here, we will view and can purchase very fine traditional and contemporary textiles from this region. We enjoy lunch at the coop! We return to Cuetzalan.

## Day 6: Tuesday, Cuetzalan, Hueyapan, transfer to Tehuacan (B, L)

Today, we depart Cuetzalan and make our way through the Sierra Norte going towards the Valle de Tehuacan. En route, we stop at **Yohualichan**, an archeological site, of the ancient Totonac people, and is said to resemble a small version of El Tajin in Veracruz.. From here, we travel to the

organic blueberries and other berries and fruits. We will visit textile artisans and coops before we depart for Tehuacan. Arriving in Tehuacan, we check into our hotel to rest and relax and have dinner at leisure at the hotel.

## Day 7: Wednesday, Reserva Tehuacan, Reyes Mezontla, Tehuacan (B, L)

Today we enter the Tehuacan Reserve, recognized by UNESCO World Heritage, as a single location that has among the most varieties, greatest diversity of cacti in the world. Traveling deep into this desert landscape, we make our way to the community of Los Reyes Mezontla, where few people venture, but we will in order to see the master potters who are known for their stunning brown burnished pottery. This is made the same way it was in the pre-hispanic era. We will visit a pottery workshop and some other homes and a regional museum to see and learn more about this singular pottery style. After lunch, we return to Tehuacan where we will enjoy a walking city tour to see historic landmarks such as the Municipal Palace, the Cathedral and the Del Carmen Cultural Complex. Evening at leisure.

## Day 8 Thursday, Tehuacan, transfer to Mexico City (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we visit the **Museo del Agua**, to learn about the efforts to conserve water in this desert region, and to learn about the revival of an important food in Mexico: amaranth. We enjoy a lunch based on using amaranth! From here, we say goodbye to the State of Puebla, as we make go to Mexico City, where we will check into our hotel before our Farewell Dinner.



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