

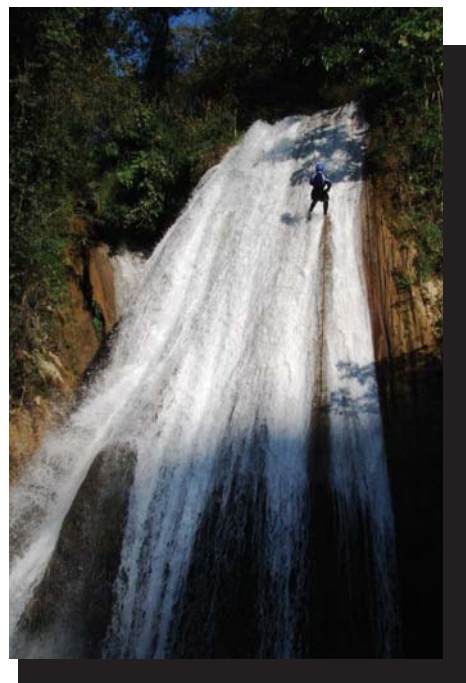


Ocean River Explorer

Adventure awaits in the Bays of Huatulco. The Ocean River Explorer takes us from the white **sandy beaches** of the Pacific coast to the rugged interior mountains of the State of Oaxaca. Combine whitewater **rafting, cascading, kayaking, surf** and **sun**. Join Esprit as we follow the Copalita River from source to sea, swim...splash...float...jump...rappel as we “cascade” our way down a series of miniature **waterfalls** and kayak freshwater lagoons amongst clouds of **tropical birds**. “Surfs up” at Barra de la Cruz, the finale of our journey. Renowned as one of Mexico’s best point breaks, we surf, swim and camp out overnight on the spectacular **deserted beach** under a blanket of southern stars. The adventure is not over when the sun goes down! At night, **discover** giant sea turtles laying their eggs and learn about the biologists’ efforts in protecting this endangered species. Sun, sand, surf and adventure make the Ocean River Explorer a true action packed holiday in a **tropical paradise!**

ITINERARY:

- Day 1: Arrival to Huatulco
- Day 2: Mazunte Sea Turtles & Mangrove Boat Tour
- Day 3: Ocean Tour & Snorkeling
- Day 4: Rafting the Copalita River
- Day 5: Cascading & Waterfall Rappel
- Day 6: Rafting to the Ocean - “La Bocana”
- Day 7: Zimatán Cliff Jumping
- Day 8: Departure



Ocean River Explorer Daily Itinerary



DAY 1: Arrival in Mexico

You will be arriving in Huatulco either directly into Huatulco International Airport or through a connection via Mexico City International Airport. Upon arrival in the airport, your Esprit guide will be there to meet you and provide transport to the ocean side resort of Huatulco. The 20 minute drive to town will take us through the western edge of the surrounding national park, winding through the coastal mountains and past stretches of tropical dry forest... a beautiful visual introduction to the region. Arriving in town, we'll settle ourselves into the easy, relaxed pace of Mexico and have a chance to explore the Crucecita (town center). Cold Margaritas and Cervezas await!

DAY 2: Sea Turtles, Crocodiles & Surf

A short drive to Mazunte along the scenic coastal mountain highway will bring us to the Playas Mazunte and La Ventanilla. In the morning we will visit the "Centro Mexicano de la Tortuga" (Sea Turtle Research Institute) and Mazunte Natural Cosmetics factory. Anita Roddick, the founder of "The Body Shop", established the factory as an alternative industry to the once infamous sea turtle slaughter in Mazunte. Lunch will be on your own at one of the beach front restaurants. In the afternoon we will visit La Ventanilla – an ecotourism project developed around a red mangrove swamp. Our boat tour will offer the opportunity to view crocodiles, iguanas and a wide variety of bird life in their native habitat. After a sunset dinner with one of the local family restaurants, we will explore the beach where we are likely to find giant sea turtles laying their eggs... an incredible and unforgettable encounter with nature. Overnight camp on the beach. Dinner included.



DAY 3: Ocean Tour & Free Afternoon

After an early morning breakfast with the sunrise, we will take a small "lancha" out into the ocean to view dolphins, sea turtles and possibly even whales in their natural habitat. For the avid fisherman, you can try your hand (literally) at hand reeling for tuna which are bountiful at this time of year. Stopping at a small cove near Zipolite, another famous beach in the area, we will swim and snorkel and view the colourful tropical fish beneath the surface of the water. After our refreshing swim we will return to Huatulco for lunch and a free afternoon to explore the markets of the Crucecita. In the evening, we will sample one of the restaurants in town. Breakfast included.

DAY 4: Copalita River Expedition

Breakfast will be on the run this morning as we get an early morning departure into the park to reach the Allemania section of the Copalita River. After a 2.5 hour drive through rural villages and spectacular mountain scenery, we reach our launching point for our 3 day descent towards the Pacific coast. A variety of class III-IV rapids await us as the river winds through narrow canyon drops. Overnight riverside camp at "La Hamaca." Breakfast, lunch & dinner included.



DAY 5: Swimming, Jumping, Rappelling

Today we will have an opportunity to try one of the most unique and fun adventure activities around. We will explore the Copalatilla River on a day of "Cascading". Essentially we will be hiking down a travertine stream encountering waterfalls we can jump off of into the pristine pools below. En route, we pass a Monarch Butterfly nesting ground as well as many picturesque jungle clad vistas. Our day culminates with a 30m rappel through the waterfall into the tranquil waters below when we reach the "Cascadas Magicas". After the rappel, we will return to our riverside camp at La Hamaca for dinner and overnight. Breakfast, lunch & dinner included.



DAY 6: Raft & Kayak to the Ocean

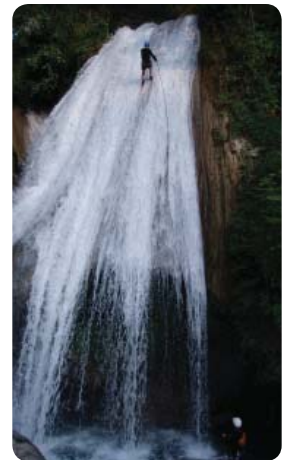
After a relaxing breakfast, we will break camp and head downstream on the Hamaca section of the Copalita River to the Cieba Bridge. This section is a relaxed class II-III paddle mixed with some challenging rapids and gentle pools. In the afternoon, we will continue by kayak along the final stretch of the Copalita River to La Bocana – the mouth of the river as it enters the Pacific Ocean. This short trip provides plenty of opportunity to soak in a variety of river life. Local children playing in the river, men fishing, women washing... as they have done for 100's of years. As we near the ocean we are enveloped by a wide variety of

seabird life including pelicans, rose breasted spoonbills, frigate birds, commerants, gulls and vultures. Ultimately the river flows into the Pacific where we can paddle out into the ocean waves as they crash into the sandy shores. An awesome way to complete our 100km journey along the Copalita River. Dinner & overnight will be in the Crucecita. Breakfast & lunch included.



DAY 7: Zimatan Cliff Jumping

After breakfast in the Crucecita, we will head south along the coastal mountain road to the Zimatan River. The Zimatan is a local favorite for cooling off from the hot, tropical sun. The deep, crystal clear waters of the Zimatan have carved a narrow canyon through the soft limestone riverbanks, providing a spectacular setting for both cliff jumping and simply relaxing in the refreshing water. After a picnic lunch of fresh tostadas, salsa and guacamole, we will head back into town for a free afternoon of last minute shopping, dinner and dancing. It will be a great night out on the town as we laugh and celebrate our adventures together! Lunch included.



Day 8: Departure from Huatulco

It is always a sad occasion to realize that the end of our journey together has come to a close. However, we'll say our good-byes at the Huatulco airport and make plans for our next adventure together!



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Esprit Mexico Trips - General Information (1of3)

Mexico is an extremely large country covering almost two million square km. Our trips concentrate on experiencing a small area very well rather than trying to see everything in just one week. The Veracruz region is famous for the rise and fall of many great indigenous civilizations from the Olmecs and the Toltecs, to the Totonacs and the Aztecs who eventually fell to the colonization of Spain under the leadership of Cortes in 1521. We will encounter many friendly people who are descendants of both ancient civilizations as well as “modern Mexico”. Spanish is the official language of Mexico. You will have plenty of opportunities to practice your Spanish and many people (especially students) will want to practice their English with you. The language barrier can immediately be broken by trying to speak even just a little Spanish and by smiling a lot!

Climate Considerations



Fortunately for us, the climate in Mexico is very agreeable! Veracruz is a mountainous coastal state. Generally, you can expect typical “mountain” weather of hot/sunny during the day and cool evenings. It is also typical for this region to experience a build up of humidity throughout the day leading to a tropical rain shower in the evening as the temperature cools. We like to think that this is a good thing, as the light rain supports the region’s rainforest and cloud forest vegetation as well as keeping the water levels consistent in the rivers we use for paddling.

In the tropics we recommend wearing light, loose fitting, natural fiber clothing. It is very important to protect against the sun. A good +15 sunblock, as well as, a hat will help keep you from getting burned. Drinking lots of fluids will help fight off dehydration, bottled water is readily available. Small, “no see-um”, mosquitoes are present during the day and light weight, long pants are recommended. In Jalcomulco, we will be in the hills of the Sierra Madre Oriental (mountains) and it can get cool enough in the evenings to require a jacket.

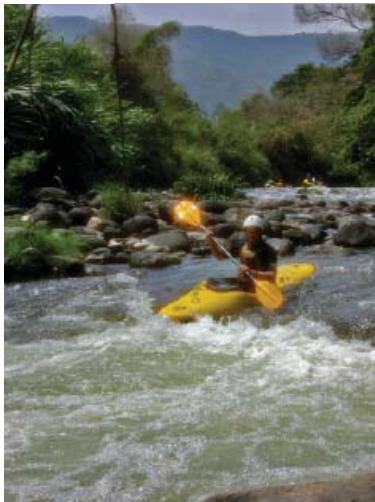
Official Documents & Travel Insurance



A valid passport with at least 6 months validation is required for travel to Mexico. At the time of writing Canadian and U.S. citizens did not require a visa for Mexico but we recommend checking with your consulate for up to date information. When flying into Mexico you will be issued a “tourist card”. **You will need to keep this card with you throughout your stay in Mexico and relinquish it upon departure from Mexico. Don’t throw this away!**

We require that you take out a personal travel insurance policy to cover you against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, unexpected alterations to travel arrangements, cancellations, etc. Please see your travel agent from whom your airline ticket was purchased to arrange for insurance. Please specify that you are planning to participate in an adventure travel itinerary which includes whitewater rafting and/or kayaking.

Money Matters



Hard Currency - As of July 2008 - 1 Canadian dollar fetches approximately 10 Mexican Pesos (NP). In general, exchanging US cash in Mexico is much easier than currencies of other countries.

ATM - The easiest way to exchange money is to use your personal banking card. All major urban centers that we visit have access to ATM machines from which to withdraw Mexican Pesos from your bank account. Jalcomulco does not have an ATM machine and we recommend that you pull Pesos from your account prior to leaving Xalapa. It is also recommended that, if you are using your bank card as your primary source of currency for your trip, you bring an extra \$100 US cash with you in case your card becomes lost or damaged.

Travelers Checks – Banks and Casa de Cambio’s are the only locations in which you can exchange travelers Checks in Mexico. They are not the easiest to travel with, as there are also only certain hours of the day in which you can exchange them. If you are going to travel with travelers checks, we recommend that you carry them in US currency and have either cash or your ATM card as a back up.

Esprit Mexico Trips - General Information (2of3)

Meals in Mexico



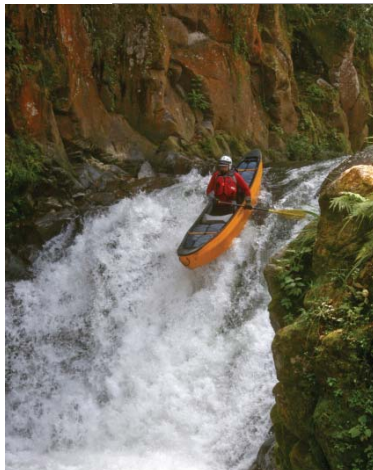
One of the delights about traveling to Mexico is the incredible food. Mexicans eat three meals a day; breakfast (desayuno), lunch (comida) and supper (cena). Traditionally “comida” is the biggest meal and supper a lighter meal. Mexican food can be very spicy as hot chilies are often a main ingredient. Many meals, however, can be tempered for faint hearted “gringo” tastes. Most meals are served communally so you can sample many different dishes. We will dine on a wide variety of local specialties including, beef, chicken, seafood, river lobster (many vegetarian dishes are available as well)... washed down with fresh tropical fruit drinks or an icy cold cerveza (beer). Bottled water is readily available and is safe to drink. Tap water or previously opened bottles are somewhat suspect and may pose a health risk. Your guides will make recommendations as to the “do’s and don’ts” of eating, drinking and staying healthy at the beginning of the trip.

Photography



We get many inquiries about photography. As a general rule, take a camera and lens that you are used to. If you are buying a new camera, get one well before departure so you can practice with it. For people with SLR cameras, we recommend you buy a Skylight filter to protect your lenses and also practice with it before departure. A waterproof disposable camera is a wise investment for taking snap shots during the river trips. For digital camera users, we recommend that you bring a minimum of two 256 MB cards with you. If you get stuck and run out of memory space, we can usually assist in downloading photos. For those who do not want to drag a fancy camera around with you or find that you are never in your own photos - we take high resolution digital photos throughout most of our trips. If you are interested in these - they can be purchased in advance at discounted rate! Check with the office for current pricing and availability on your trip.

Safety & Security



Safety - We do our utmost to provide high quality, fun, exciting, and secure trips. Whitewater paddling (and adventure travel in general) do contain an element of risk and events can arise which are beyond reasonable control. All participants must complete a participation agreement and medical questionnaire prior to the start of the program. These documents will be emailed to you in advance of your trip departure. Please fill them out and bring them with you to Mexico.

Security - It is important to carefully look after your vital documents and money. Crime is generally not a problem in the areas we are in, however, it only takes one mishap to turn your experience sour. Therefore, please practice good “travel sense” and be wary of your belongings. As in any urban center, pick-pocketing can occur. We advise you to carry your valuables in a money belt or travel safe which are difficult for pick-pockets to reach.

Esprit Mexico Trips - General Information (3of3)

Medical Considerations

There are a series of vaccinations recommended for travel to rural Mexico. You will have to advise your doctor about your trip and they can recommend an international travel inoculation center. The State of Veracruz is currently a low risk Malaria area, however you should consult your travel clinic for the most up to date information. Malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes (as are other diseases) and are best to be protected from. A good repellent, as well as, long pants and shirts at dusk drastically reduce your contact with mosquitoes. "No-See-um" Mosquitoes can become a problem for visitors to Jalcomulco and are at their worst 15 m of the river banks. We recommend that wearing pair of tights or quick dry pants over your legs while paddling on the rivers. Locals swear by "green shampoo" as the best repellent for these pesky little critters - readily available in town.

It is also very typical for 'gringo' stomachs to become unsettled in Mexico. Some clients in the past have successfully used probiotics to ward off stomach problems throughout the trip. The probiotics used were grapefruit seed extract and a brand of probiotics called Florastor. Please consult your doctor or nutritionist if you are interested in taking these or other probiotics during your stay in Mexico.

It is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medication you require. Advise us of the possible side effects of any medication you are taking and of any dietary requirements related to them. We suggest that each guest bring for their own use a supply of the following:

- A general antibiotic treatment
- Anti-acid tablets (for spicy food)
- Antidiarrheal tablets (Immodium) for gastrointestinal problems
- Aspirin/headache remedy
- Antiseptic swabs.
- Sunblock SPF 15+
- Lip balm (with sunscreen)
- Feminine hygiene pads etc.
- Mosquito repellent
- Electrolyte crystals (to combat dehydration)



Packing Tips & List

To make the most of your trip to Mexico, it is important to pack the appropriate clothing, gear and accessories. Below, we've outlined a suggested packing list for your week of adventure. For kayakers and open-boaters, there is some additional paddling gear for you to include. Add or delete as you see fit, just remember that the less you bring with you, the better! That way, you will have more space in your bags to bring mementos home!

Dryland

- 1 pair of shoes/sandals
- 1-2 lightweight long pants or skirt
- 1 quickdry pants (for evenings at camp)
- 2-3 t-shirts
- 1-2 long sleeve shirts
- 2 shorts
- 1 swimsuit
- 1 towel
- 1 warm sweater/fleece
- 1 waterproof shell/jacket
- 1 sun hat
- ? underwear
- ? socks (1 pair wool/fleece for camping)
- 1L refillable water bottle

For the River

- 1 pair river shoes/sandals
- 1 quick dry shorts
- 1 polypro/fleece tights
- 1 long-sleeve base layer
- 1 fuzzy rubber/rash guard
- 1 splash jacket *we have wetsuit/splash jackets available in Mexico

Camping Equipment

- 1 sleeping bag
 - 1 sleeping pad/mattress
 - 1 headlamp/flashlight
- *only required for trips which include overnight camping, we have sleeping bags/pads available for rent in Mexico

For Kayakers/Open-Boaters

The following gear is available in Mexico - but we find most paddlers prefer their own gear. Please let us know in advance if you would like to borrow any of this gear. There will be a damage deposit and rental fee required to borrow any kayak paddles.

- whitewater helmet
- lifejacket/PFD (min type III)
- large keyhole skirt
- kayak/canoe paddle

Other Accessories

- personal toiletries
- book/journal
- camera
- small day pack
- personal first aid kit (see above)