



Veracruz

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ El Brou (p222)
- ➔ Las Delicias Marinas (p217)
- ➔ Restaurante Mesón Xiqueño (p227)
- ➔ Los Canarios (p212)
- ➔ Ulúa Fish (p212)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Posada del Emperador (p232)
- ➔ Mesón del Alférez Xalapa (p220)
- ➔ Hotel Azúcar (p243)
- ➔ Hotel Posada Doña Lala (p246)

Why Go?

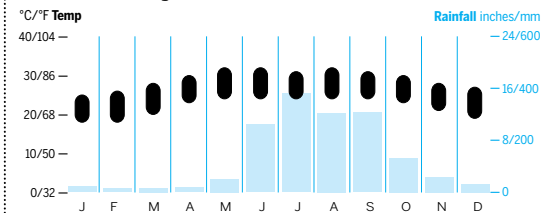
Taking up much of Mexico's Caribbean coastline, the long and diverse state of Veracruz is where the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs began. It was also the cradle of the aptly named Veracruz Mesoamerican culture at El Tajín and is home to Mexico's highest peak, soaring, snow-capped Orizaba.

As a destination it's routinely overlooked by travelers, and while it's true that the beaches are better in the Yucatán and the colonial towns more impressive in Mexico's central and western highlands, Veracruz has a steady supply of charms in both categories. It also lays claim to the World Heritage site of colonial Tlacotalpan, the impressive Biosphere Reserve of Los Tuxtlas and some gorgeous *pueblos mágicos* (magical villages) including hilly Papantla, cobble Coscomatepec and the coffee-growing center of Xico.

Its biggest attraction, however, is its quietness. Wherever you go here, you'll find yourself well off the beaten path, with discoveries just waiting to be made.

When to Go

Veracruz City



Oct Cheap prices, bearable temperatures and barely another tourist in sight.

Feb–Mar The Veracruz Carnival kicks off the biggest party on Mexico's eastern coast.

Nov–Feb Peak tourist season for non-Mexicans with less rain and balmy temperatures.

Veracruz Highlights

- 1 Decipher a triumvirate of Mesoamerican cultures in Xalapa's architecturally magnificent **Museo de Antropología** (p218)
- 2 Marvel at the many colors of colonial **Tlacotalpan** (p245), perhaps Mexico's least known World Heritage site
- 3 Imagine past glories at the extensive ruins of **El Tajin** (p241)
- 4 Take a boat across Laguna de Sontecomapan for fresh fish on the beach at **La Barra** (p254)
- 5 Sip gourmet coffee in the cloud forest-encased towns of **Coatepec** (p224) or **Xico** (p226)
- 6 Climb (or at least take the cable car) up Mexico's highest mountain, magnificent **Pico de Orizaba** (p235)
- 7 Watch grown men fly at a one-of-a-kind **voladores** ceremony in **Papantla** (p237)

