



Chiapas

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Don Mucho's (p239)
- ➔ Trattoria Italiana (p231)
- ➔ Tierradentro (p231)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Boutique Hotel Quinta Chanabnal (p238)
- ➔ Casa Felipe Flores (p230)
- ➔ B'o Hotel (p230)

Why Go?

Chilly pine-forest highlands, wildlife-rich rainforest jungles and well-preserved colonial cities exist side by side within Mexico's southernmost state, a region awash with the legacy of Spanish rule and some fabulous remnants of ancient Maya civilization.

The state has the second-largest indigenous population in the country, and the modern Maya of Chiapas form a direct link to the past, with a traditional culture that persists to this day. The fine city of San Cristóbal de las Casas is at the heart of this region and was once the central bastion for the rebel group Zapatistas, now much less influential than in the 1990s.

Chiapas contains swathes of wild green landscape that have nourished its inhabitants for centuries. And nature lovers willing to venture off the beaten path will be rewarded with frothy cascades, exotic biosphere reserves and adventurous geological destinations.

When to Go

- ➔ The rainy season is between May and October, with the heaviest rainfall mostly in June, September and early October. Some of the less visited, more out-of-the-way Maya ruins are located on dirt roads which are impassable during the rainy season.
- ➔ The dry season is between November and April, when warm sunny days are the norm.
- ➔ Temperatures don't vary much with the changing seasons – altitude is a much more influential factor. Lowland areas (such as Palenque and Villahermosa) are hot and sticky year-round, with punishing humidity and daily highs above 30°C. In more elevated places (like San Cristóbal), however, the climate is fresher and nights get fairly cold in winter (November to March).



Chiapas Highlights

- 1 Explore the extraordinary ruins of **Palenque** (p234), where jade masks and priceless jewels were found inside a ruler's sarcophagus, and the architecture boasts unique features
- 2 Wander around high-altitude **San Cristóbal de las Casas** (p223), home to

charming cobblestone streets, pretty colonial buildings and colorful indigenous peoples

- 3 Ponder the mysterious sculptural art of the ancient Olmecs while wandering around the junglelike grounds of Villahermosa's **Parque-Museo La Venta** – a paradise within the bustling city (p228)

- 4 Visit the ancient cities of **Yaxchilán** (p240), reachable via an adventurous river-boat trip, and **Bonampak** (p240), which offers amazingly preserved painted murals