



Veracruz

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ El Brou (p222)
- ➔ Emilio Bistrot (p212)
- ➔ Villa Rica Mocambo (p213)
- ➔ Marrón Cocina Galería (p235)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Mesón del Alférez Xalapa (p221)
- ➔ Hotel Posada Doña Lala (p246)
- ➔ Casa Real del Café (p225)
- ➔ Hotel del Río (p234)

Why Go?

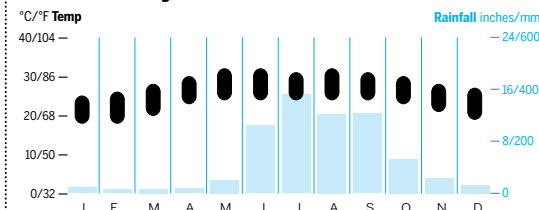
Taking up much of Mexico's Gulf coastline, the long and diverse state of Veracruz is where the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs began. It was also the cradle of the aptly named Veracruz Mesoamerican culture at El Tajín and is home to Mexico's highest peak – soaring, snowcapped Orizaba.

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 can be 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 inspiring Biosphere Reserve of Los Tuxtlas and some gorgeous *pueblos mágicos* (magical villages), including hilly Papantla, cobbled 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 Deciphering a triumvirate of Mesoamerican cultures in Xalapa's architecturally magnificent **Museo de Antropología** (p218).
- 2 Marveling at the many colors of colonial **Tlacotalpan** (p245), perhaps Mexico's least known World Heritage site.
- 3 Imagining past glories at the extensive ruins of **El Tajín** (p241).
- 4 Taking a boat across Laguna de Sontecomapan for fresh fish on the beach at **La Barra** (p253).
- 5 Sipping gourmet coffee in the cloud forest-encased towns of **Coatepec** (p224) or **Xico** (p226).
- 6 Standing breathless atop the summit of Mexico's highest mountain, magnificent **Pico de Orizaba** (p235).
- 7 Watching grown men fly at a one-of-a-kind *voladores* (fliers) ceremony in **Papantla** (p239).

