

## Mexican Volcanoes Expedition

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Thanks for your interest in our Mexico climbing programs. We have conducted these trips since 1976 and they have always been a favorite. It would be difficult to find a guide service with more experience climbing in Mexico. You only have to break away from work for one week. You can sharpen or acquire new skills while enjoying some Mexican sunshine and seeing another area of the world. All put together, this makes for a great climbing vacation.

We sincerely feel that this is one of the best run Mexico Volcanoes programs available. Experience, leadership and relationships make the difference.

This information should answer many of your initial questions and also guide you through the next stages of preparing for the climb. The material is quite self-explanatory but should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Our Mexico program was completely revamped when Popocatepetl became active several years ago. The result was that the trip is now better than ever. We are climbing Ixtaccihuatl (17,338') now that Popocatepetl has become active.

Orizaba (18,490') will be climbed via the Jamapa Glacier. In addition to the climbs, two nights are spent in Mexico City and one in the old Spanish colonial city of Puebla. We'll spend the night after climbing Orizaba with friends in the country town of Tlachichuca.

Each of the climbs involves several thousand vertical feet of snow and glacier climbing. This nine-day trip to Mexico is great as a first high-altitude experience or as an excellent way to prepare for Denali. Basic climbing experience such as a climb of Mt. Rainier would be excellent training for the trip. Each team member needs to be familiar with the ice ax arrest, basic cramponing and rope team travel. Each climber also needs to be in excellent physical condition. Climbing to altitudes approaching 19,000 feet is never easy.

A top IMG Senior Guide will be leading the program. That guide is joined by an additional IMG guide from the US and one of our resident guides from Mexico. Check out the [Guide's Page](#) on our web site. We are proud to say that while in Mexico, IMG works with the Reyes family for all travel arrangements. Their relationship with us and our program adds immeasurably to the success and enjoyment of the climb.

-- Phil Ershler, Program Director

### Mexico: Just The Facts

**Ixtaccihual:** 17,338'

**Set Your GPS:**

19° 11' N • 98° 38' W

**First Boot-Prints on Top:**

Although James de Salis's 1889 summit ascent was the first on record, archaeological evidence indicates that the mountain was previously climbed by Aztec and earlier cultures.

**The Neighborhood:**

Ixta is an extinct volcano, the third highest mountain in Mexico behind Pico de Orizaba and Popocatepetl, an active volcano about 10 miles away.

**The Legend:**

The name Ixtaccihual is Náhuatl (Aztec) for "White Woman," which comes from an ancient legend in which Ixta and Popo were once lovers that were turned into mountains after displeasing the gods. Ixta was turned into a mountain without life, and Popo was given eternal life, a curse of the highest magnitude in that forever he must gaze upon the extinct form of his beloved Ixta. His anguish is to blame for the rumblings of the earth.

**Freud Would Be Pleased:**

In keeping with the legend, many locals recognize that the mountain's prominent features resemble the features of a woman sleeping on her back, particularly when seen from the west. There are mountain features which correspond to the hair, head, ear, neck, breast, belly, knees and feet, and when discussing the mountain, these anatomical terms are commonly used in reference to key landmarks and climbing routes.

**Pico de Orizaba:** 18,880'

**Set Your GPS:**

19° 01' N • 97° 16' W

**First Boot-Prints on Top:**

1848 F. Maynard and G. Reynolds

**Size Matters:**

Pico de Orizaba, a dormant volcano, is the highest peak in Mexico, and the third highest in North America, behind Mount McKinley and Mount Logan.

**Good Neighborhood With a View:**

From high on the mountain, the Gulf of Mexico is visible to the east and Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, Mexico's second and third highest mountains, visible to the west.

## **DATES and PRICES:**

### **Orizaba and Ixtaccihuatl:**

Nov 10-18, 2012 (led by George Dunn)  
Jan 12-20, 2013  
Landcost: \$2,700 US

### **Orizaba only:**

~~Feb 4-11, 2012 (FULL; led by Phil Ershler)~~  
Feb 9-16, 2013  
Landcost: \$2,200 US



### **Cost Includes**

Included in your land costs are guide fees, double accommodations in hotels, shared accommodations in huts, group transportation, group equipment including stoves and fuel, ropes, cooking gear, group first aid kit, technical climbing equipment, radios, etc., and meals while climbing except for lunches/snacks.

### **Cost Does Not Include**

Not included are airport taxes, airport taxis, meals while not climbing, personal clothing and climbing equipment such as boots, packs, sleeping bag and pad, crampons and ice ax, lunch/snack foods or items of a personal nature.

## **APPLICATION/CANCELLATION**

Application and cancellation policies are discussed in the General Terms and Conditions sheet that was included in the sign up documents package. <http://mountainguides.com/signup.shtml>

## **ROUTE DESCRIPTION**

It has been said that these volcanoes are an ideal training ground for climbers who would like to get into high altitude mountaineering. The routes on these peaks are not particularly difficult technically but are very worthwhile ascents.

Both climbs involve extended cramponing on moderately steep slopes with hard snow conditions. Approximately 3,000 - 4,000 vertical feet of snow can be expected on each peak. Crevasse problems will be minor. Climbing Ixta or Orizaba can be compared to climbing Mt. Rainier from the 10,000 foot level up.

## **CONDITIONING**

You cannot over train for high altitude climbing. Concentrate on your heart, legs and lungs. Climb or hike at any opportunity. You will enjoy the trip more if you are properly prepared. An aerobic program of running, bicycling, or stair climbing, plus a conditioning program for the thigh muscles, is strongly recommended. You owe it to your team mates to be in excellent condition for the trip.

## **CLIMBING SKILLS**

Prior knowledge of ice ax arrest, cramponing and rope team travel are **REQUIRED**. Everyone needs to be familiar with these basic climbing skills.

## **WEATHER**

There is no way to predict what the exact weather will be like during our ascents. Temperatures should be comparable to those experienced on Mt. Rainier during the summer climbing season. Precipitation is usually minimal.

In Mexico City and the surrounding countryside, temperatures will range from a balmy 60 - 80° F in the day to cool evenings requiring a sweater or light jacket.

## **FOOD**

You will be responsible for your own restaurant meals and any bottled drinks. There is a variety of good restaurants within a short distance of the hotels we use. We'll try to sample a few of them.

We'll take care of breakfasts and dinners while climbing. That includes hot drinks. This means that you need only to worry about your climbing lunches and snack foods. Figure on food/snacks for four lunches. Candy, cheese, nuts, crackers and powdered drink mixes are items that people typically bring. You can always purchase some extras like fruit in Mexico. Bottled water is available everywhere. The bottom line is to bring snacks that you like to eat, not necessarily things that you think are good for you.

## **PASSPORT AND TOURIST CARD**

The procedure for entering Mexico is very simple. You **MUST** have a tourist card (obtainable from the airlines) and a passport. Upon arrival, you will be asked to show both your tourist card and passport so be sure to have both handy upon your arrival in Mexico. We also suggest you bring an extra copy of the front pages of your passport in case of loss, along with a couple of extra passport photos.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

While it's always nice to have a doctor as a participant on our trips, we cannot guarantee one's presence and you should be aware of this. We do ask that you to carefully fill out the Medical Information form that is part of the sign up packet which you completed as part of the registration procedure. We need to be informed of any allergies you may have, medicines you are currently taking and any medical conditions which could possibly affect your ability to safely participate on a climbing expedition.

In addition to the first aid items listed on the equipment list, there are a few additional medications that you should consider. These should be discussed with your personal physician and will require his prescription. We want everyone to bring a course of the prescription antibiotic Ciprofloxacin. You should also bring some Imodium for treatment of traveler's diarrhea. Please consider both of these medications as part of your **REQUIRED** equipment list. We do not recommend the automatic use of Diamox for altitude sickness but you can also discuss this with your physician and he can make this available to you if you and he deem it appropriate. Any medication should be used only if necessary and use should be discussed thoroughly with your physician and with your guide before you take the medication.

Water purification is also very important. An efficient and effective and inexpensive method is the use of iodine crystals. These are available commercially at mountaineering stores as a product called 'Polar Pure'. Iodine tablets, such as 'Potable Agua' are also available and work well. Filters, such as the ones made by MSR, are also good. Either can be used or both can be used in combination. Bottled water is also readily available.

There are some immunizations that you should consider. Your local health department is the best source of information. They are cheap insurance. Start preparations now so that these

vaccinations can be spaced out. We strongly suggest receive the Hepatitis A vaccination and a tetanus vaccination. Most people like to be current with these vaccinations regardless of whether they are traveling or not.

We also recommend that each participant brings a small bottle of a hand disinfectant such as Purell. Anything that we can do to stay healthy is worthwhile.

Health issues will be discussed during the expedition and we encourage you to contact us if you have any questions before or during the trip.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

No immunizations are currently required to enter Mexico. We do recommend that you consider the following:

- Tetanus/Diphtheria:** There is no natural immunity to the tetanus toxin and since it is found throughout the world, immunization is a universal recommendation regardless of age. A combined tetanus/ diphtheria booster is available, good for ten years.
- Hepatitis Vaccine:** New vaccines are available for both hepatitis A and B.

Please consult your physician or local health department for their recommendations. You should also ask your physician for a prescription for a course of the antibiotic Ciprofloxacin. Please consider this to be part of your required equipment.

## **PACKING AND TRAVELING SUGGESTIONS**

Most of us will pack our gear in two duffle bags. We put our climbing pack in one of these bags. Most airlines limit checked luggage to two pieces each weighing no more than 50 lbs. Use zip ties to close the bags or purchase TSA approved locks. TSA approved locks really are a good idea. These are nice for your peace of mind. They help to prevent pilfering. In addition to these two bags, we like to use a small rucksack as our carry on luggage. You then have this small rucksack available for day hikes, shopping, etc.

We also would suggest that you purchase one of the many light money belts that are available or get one of the pouches that you can hang around your neck and place inside your shirt. This is a little safer way to carry your money and travel documents. Experienced travelers will also carry a couple of extra passport photos with them as well as a copy of the first pages of your passport. These should be carried in a place separate from your passport. Having them available will greatly facilitate the replacement of your passport if you ever lost it.

Get to the airport early and make sure your luggage gets checked through to the correct destination. Also, make sure that your flight connections aren't too tight. Lost luggage is a pain. Try to keep the number of connections to a minimum when you are making travel plans and use the same airline as much as possible.

Leave expensive jewelry and watches at home. We would like everyone to have a wrist watch with an alarm along. They are quite handy. It's convenient to have a pen with you for filling in travel forms.

## **PERSONAL INSURANCE**

You are advised and encouraged to buy your own life, personal medical, travel baggage, trip interruption and all other types of insurance that may pertain to this trip as they **are not** provided for you. Please check here for more details and information: <http://mountainguides.com/travel-insurance.shtml> and call us if you have any questions.

## FLIGHT INFORMATION AND TRAVEL PLANS

Flights to Mexico City are easily booked from almost any area of the United States. Because of this, the group meets at the Maria Cristina Hotel in Mexico City. We encourage you to make your reservations early and strongly urge you to contact CTT Destinations. They are linked from our web site or you can contact them at: 800 909 6647 or by email at: [img@cttdestinations.com](mailto:img@cttdestinations.com) This is an agency that specializes in group travel. We've worked with them for years and we can highly recommend them to help make your travel arrangements. By knowing our programs, they can do a lot to facilitate your travel plans. It is also beneficial for us to have knowledge of everyone's travel arrangements

Try to arrive in Mexico City as early as possible on Saturday afternoon. Remember, you are responsible for making all of your own flight arrangements.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Your extra city clothes can be left at the hotel in a duffel bag. Keep your clothing tasteful but casual. Shorts for men are typically frowned upon in town.

We like to put our climbing pack inside one duffel bag and take a second duffel bag as our pieces of check-in luggage. Then, we carry a small rucksack as our carry-on on the airplane. One duffel bag is then left at the hotel in Mexico City.

Cash is usually easier to exchange. Since we aren't carrying very large amounts, most people prefer cash to traveler's checks. Carrying an assortment of smaller bills is usually helpful. Credit cards are accepted by better Mexican businesses in the cities but are useless in the small towns. Pesos can be purchased at the airport and in the hotel. Plan to take approx. \$500.

After clearing customs and immigration at the Mexico City airport, simply get one of the government run airport taxis to the hotel. The rate is set and there is no haggling over the price. Look for their window at the airport.

We meet at the Maria Cristina Hotel in Mexico City. The address is Rio Lerma #31 and the telephone number is: 5 566 9688. It is centrally located near the Zona Rosa in Mexico City. The people at the front desk of the hotel will have your names on a list. You will be paired with another member to share a double room. We will meet the group in the lobby on Saturday evening at 7:00 p.m. We'll then go out to dinner together and discuss the week's program. Your IMG leader will contact you later that evening if you arrive late and are unable to make the dinner meeting.

We will return to Mexico City on the following Saturday. Most people make their flight arrangements to depart Mexico City on Sunday morning. We will have rooms reserved for everyone at the Hotel Maria Christina for that final Saturday night. On the **Just Orizaba** program, we'll be flying out from the city of Puebla.

Again, the group will be meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday in the hotel lobby. If you will not be arriving until later in the evening, it's no problem. Just let me know and your leader will make arrangements to contact you later on the same evening. However, try to arrive as early as possible on Saturday. Again, the people at the front desk of the hotel will have your name and will be expecting you.

Suggested reading for the trip is [\*\*MEXICO'S VOLCANOES\*\*](#) by R. J. Secor.

## Mexican Volcanoes (ORIZABA and IXTACCIHUATL) Expedition Itinerary

- Day 01** Arrive in Mexico City and meet the group at the Hotel Maria Christina on Rio Lerma #31. Group meeting in the lobby of the hotel at 7:00 p.m. Dinner at a local restaurant.
- Day 02** Morning departure. Drive out in private vehicles to Ixta. We'll hike near Cortez Pass and spend the evening in the town of Amecameca.
- Day 03** Back up to Cortez Pass, do a carry of water/gear to our high camp and spend the night at the hut on the Pass.
- Day 04** Up to high camp, pack, prep for the summit climb and get to bed early.
- Day 05** Summit and back to camp and head straight for the city of Puebla. It's a long, but rewarding day.
- Day 06** Leave Puebla for Tlachichuca. From here we will be transported by local jeep drivers to the Piedre Grande hut at the base of Orizaba (18,490'). The night is spent in the hut.
- Day 07** Climb the mountain (12 hours) and return to the hut. The jeeps will meet us in the late afternoon and take us down to Tlachichuca. We will have dinner and stay with our friends, the Reyes family, in Tlachichuca that evening.
- Day 08** We will return to Mexico City, arriving about mid-day. The afternoon is free and we will spend a final night in town celebrating our success.
- Day** Depart Mexico City for flight home. You can arrange your flights to depart at any time on Sunday. Most of us leave early that morning.

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*“Phil runs a well thought out and organized program. It's a great way to see the Mexican Volcanoes. I highly recommend it...”*

—Trent

*“I would heartily recommend this trip for anyone who's interested in a great climbing vacation. The climbing was excellent. The logistics were very well planned... I believe that IMG does the best job with this trip...”*

—Wynne

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For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: [www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml](http://www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml)

## Mexican Volcanoes (JUST ORIZABA) Expedition Itinerary

- Day 01** Arrive in Mexico City and meet the group at the Hotel Maria Christina on Rio Lerma #31. Group meeting in the lobby of the hotel at 7:00 p.m. Dinner together as a group at a restaurant in the Zona Rosa of Mexico City.
- Day 02** Morning departure. Head in a private van to the village of Tlachichuca at the base of Pico de Orizaba. About 4 hours. Afternoon spent organizing gear, meeting the Reyes family and enjoying town. Dinner and night with the Reyes family in Tlachichua.
- Day 03** Drive to the village of Hidalgo and start walking. Group gear, including tents, will be dropped at our first camp. Walking time is approx. 3 hours. Evening spent by the fire at our camp.
- Day 04** Second day of hiking will take us to the Piedre Grande Refugio (hut). Another 3 hours. Evening spent at the hut.
- Day 05** We need a full day of acclimatization at the hut. We'll hike above the hut for approximately 2 hours and return to the hut for the evening. The afternoon affords us time to prepare our gear for the climb.
- Day 06** Climb Orizaba. An early departure allows us to summit and return to the Piedre Grande hut where our vehicle will be waiting for us. We need at least 12 hours for the return trip. We'll drive back to Tlachichuca for showers, dinner and a final evening at the Reyes compound.
- Day 07** Wake up at our leisure, have breakfast and say good-bye to the Reyes family. It's a 2 hour drive to the colonial city of Puebla. A sunny afternoon will be filled with lunch at a sidewalk café in front of the Zocalo, a bit of sightseeing and some shopping. Dinner at a super pizza restaurant on the Zocalo (town square) and the night at our hotel.
- Day 08** Early morning flight from Puebla to Houston on Continental Airlines. Connect for flights home.

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*“I was very impressed with how everything was so well organized. It seemed like every little detail was covered. IMG is way better than the others. Way better! You guys are the best in the business...”*

—Jim P.

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## Mexican Volcanoes Required Equipment List

This personal equipment list is for your guidance. Most items are REQUIRED, a few are optional. Please consider each item carefully and be sure you understand what each piece of equipment's function is before you substitute or delete items from the list. Keep in mind that this list has been carefully compiled by IMG. Check with your equipment outfitter if you are unsure about a particular item. If that doesn't answer your question, call us.

- LARGE size internal frame pack
- ice ax (60-70 cm length is the most useful)
- 12 pt. crampons (must be reasonably sharp)
- climbing harness
- climbing hard hat is also REQUIRED
- 2 locking and 2 regular carabiners
- sleeping bag (down or synthetic)
- Thermarest pad
- double climbing boots
- gaiters
- light hiking shoes
- two sets of wool socks
- light hiking shirt
- light hiking shorts and/or pants
- climbing pants
- Gore-tex wind/snow pants with full-length leg zippers
- Gore-tex wind/snow shell-type parka
- light to medium weight insulated parka (down or synthetic)
- polypropylene underwear -- 2 tops and 1 bottom
- soft-shell or Wind Stopper fleece jacket
- wool or fleece stocking hat
- ski gloves
- polypro gloves
- warm mittens
- bandana
- sunglasses AND ski goggles
- suntan lotion (at least #15 protection factor) and lipbalm
- 2 wide mouth plastic water bottles (1 insulated cover suggested)
- plastic bowl, mug with lid and spoon
- good headlamp with 2 sets of batteries (flashlight is not sufficient)
- camera and film
- personal first aid kit to include at least the following:
  - aspirin
  - antacids
  - moleskin
  - band-aids
  - Ciprofloxacin
  - Imodium
  - light weight toilet articles and personal medications
  - iodine crystals or tablets for water purification (these are available at mountaineering stores as a product called 'Polar Pure' or 'Potable Agua'.)
- toilet paper and small bottle of Purell
- 3 large plastic garbage bags
- pocket knife
- alarm wrist watch (Splurge and get an altimeter watch from Suunto.)




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*“Thank you for a professional, safe and successful climb. We had the experience of a lifetime...”*

—John H.

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