



ITINERARY AND GENERAL TRIP INFORMATION

NATURAL DYES OF THE OAXACAN HIGHLANDS
WORKSHOP
JANUARY 24 - FEBRUARY 2, 2009

OFFERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ABUNDANT
YARNS OF PORTLAND, OREGON

TRADITIONS MEXICO HANDS-ON TOURS

303 AVERY STREET
ASHLAND, OREGON 97520
PHONE: 011 52 (951) 571-3695 (OAXACA)

EMAIL: TRADITIONSMEXICO@YAHOO.COM

WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.TRADITIONSMEXICO.COM](http://WWW.TRADITIONSMEXICO.COM)

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INTRODUCTION

In this specialty trip for Abundant Yarn of Portland, Oregon, (<http://abundantyarn.com>) Traditions Mexico and Stevanie Pico guide you into the world of Oaxacan natural dyes. Get your hands in the dye pot working with master dyers to learn their methods of dyeing wool with cochineal, indigo and other dyes in the Oaxaca highlands.

Our base camp will be the mega-weaving village of Teotitlán del Valle where there are 5,000 weavers hard at work as well as a small handful of top-notch natural dyers. This is the motherland of cochineal, and we'll delve into its secrets, seeing how it is cultivated and harvested. We'll be working with master dyer, Demetrio Bautista Lazo, to learn methods for direct cochineal dyeing with variable pH, as well as how to combine this little bug-dye with plant dyes to get even more tones. Oaxaca was once a large producer of indigo and we'll also dabble in the blues, learning how it is used by the weavers of Teotitlán.

We'll take a field trip into the Sierra and collect barks, mosses, oak galls, wild chamomile and other plants that we'll then bring back to the workshop and play with. Oaxaca was once a large producer of indigo and we'll also dabble in the blues, learning how it is used by the weavers of Teotitlan.

Our journey will also take us into the Sierra Madre to visit one of the last two silk cultivating villages in Mexico. We'll see how the villagers cultivate, hand spin, dye and weave their silk. There will also be opportunities to visit some of the ruined Zapotec palaces and temples in the Oaxaca valley, meet weavers in Teotitlan, visit a village of support spindle wool spinners and explore the fabulous new National Textile Museum in Oaxaca.

This tour is similar to the "Murex, Cochineal, and Indigo! Oaxaca Natural Dye Workshop" but does not head to the Coast of Oaxaca for the Murex dyeing portion of this workshop.

About Stevanie: She has a passion for color that has turned experimental skeins with friend and Abundant Yarn owner, Heather Saal, into an exclusive line of naturally dyed fibers. With an adventurous spirit she has worked to create communities of fiber artists who share her sense of fun and creativity. Stevanie has crafted many a perceived knitting disaster into a fruitful learning experience through her knowledge and wit.

Abundant Yarn & Dyeworks has offered fibers, natural dyes and mordant, yarns, notions, books, patterns and community in the Sellwood neighborhood of Portland for the last 3 years. Featuring an indoor natural dyeworks, more than 33,000 skeins of yarn and the Busy Bee Café, it is the perfect place to meet up with friends or relax and knit.

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TRIP FEATURES

Four days of hands-on dyeing and material collecting with master dyer, Demetrio Bautista
Learn techniques with Cochineal, Indigo and other dyes
Opportunity to purchase handspun wool from Zapotec spinners for dyeing
Meet a slew of tapestry weavers
See cochineal cultivation
Stay in mega-weaving village of Teotitlan del Valle

Sunday market in Tlacolula
Visit one of the last silk-cultivation villages of Mexico
Explore pre-Hispanic ruins
Stay in colonial Oaxaca City
Visit the national textile museum
Dine on delicious home-cooked Zapotec cuisine

TRIP DETAILS

Where: The valley and highlands of the state of Oaxaca in Southern Mexico

When: Jan 24 - Feb 2, 2009

Duration: 9 nights

Size: 6 to 10 participants

Cost: \$2,030, Single Supplement: \$300

Trip Guides: Demetrio Bautista Lazo and Carlos Ortega

ITINERARY

Please note that all of our itineraries are subject to alterations and delays due to weather and other logistical considerations.

B = BREAKFAST L = LUNCH D = DINNER

Day 1, Saturday (D). Our first group meeting will be at 6 pm today at our hotel, where we will introduce ourselves, talk about the upcoming trip and then head out to dinner. Oaxaca (OAX) international airport is your port of entry.

Day 2, Sunday (B,L,D). We dive in! First stop is the swirling Sunday market of Tlacolula where we begin our journey, a perfect place to get a quick infusion of the smells, tastes and sights of Zapotec Oaxaca. Then we head into the backcountry, traveling to a small village where most of the women spin wool on support spindles as a sideline occupation. We will visit with one of these women to see her amazing proficiency with the spindle. Here you will have the opportunity to buy handspun wool to dye if you choose. Then we travel to the mega weaving village of Teotitlan del Valle and to the home and hostel of our host and dye teacher, Demetrio Bautista Lazo (<http://www.teotitlan.com/>). We will settle into our simple and clean rooms with shared bath, built around the patio of this Zapotec weaver's home and begin to get to know our bilingual, charismatic and extremely skilled dye master.

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Day 3, Monday (BLD). This morning we travel into the Sierra Madre which rises directly behind Teotitlan and spend the morning learning about and collecting different kinds of dye plants such as wild chamomile, mosses, etc. We'll have lunch in a mountain village eatery before returning the valley and preparing our wool for dyeing. Evening in Teotitlan.

Days 4-5, Tuesday-Wed (B,L,D). These 2 days will be spent working with cochineal, indigo and additional dyes. Demetrio will lead us through and explain processes for different dyes and variants. We will dye small batches, working with a variety of ingredients and combinations with the goal of giving you a solid foundation in the basics of dyeing, or expanding on your existing knowledge with these ingredients that you can then take home and build upon. We recommend bringing a variety of yarns from home to see how different yarns take the dye. Time and energy allowing we may spend a couple of afternoons visiting a couple of the wonderful nearby archaeological sites. We will be eating good Zapotec home cooking prepared by Demetrio's wife and meet other members of his family as we enjoy the special opportunity of being part of a Zapotec household. Evenings in Teotitlan.

Day 6, Thursday (B, L, D). We'll let the dye pots rest this morning and travel up into the 9,000 foot high Sierra Madre and through the pine, oak and agave forests to the ridge top Zapotec village of San Miguel Cajonos where we'll meet a collective of silk cultivators, spinners and dyers. In 1530 silk was king in Southern Mexico, but the boom died out by 1600 and today there are only two remote regions where silk is still cultivated. This is one of them. We'll learn the story and see how these artisans work with this fine thread. There will be an opportunity to purchase gorgeous, hand spun silk shawls. But be prepared, a tremendous amount of work goes into creating these shawls and they are not cheap! In the afternoon we'll return to Oaxaca valley and our lodge. Evening in Teotitlan.

Day 7, Friday (B, L). This is our final day of dyeing and we'll make the best of it, finishing off our dyeing and putting together our sample books with notes of what we've done and the rainbow of colors of what we've achieved with our hard work. In the afternoon we'll bid farewell to Demetrio and head to Oaxaca city where we'll settle in for the rest of the trip. Evening in Oaxaca city.

Day 8, Saturday (L). Enjoy an open morning to explore this beautiful, ancient city. We will meet up for lunch and visit two textile museums. The first is the brand new National Textile Museum housed in a restored colonial house. And then, mouths watering at all the fine weaving we've seen, we'll go to a second textile "museum," Los Baules de Juana Cata, which is in fact a retail shop, but the place where museums and collectors from around the world come to buy the best of Oaxacan textiles for their collections. There is no better place, indeed there is no other place, to see the range of high quality indigenous textiles currently being woven in the state. Evening in Oaxaca.

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Day 9, Sunday (B,L,D). This morning we head back to Teotitlan to visit the weavers we didn't get to meet while we were so busy dyeing. We'll visit a couple of households to see some of the variety that is being woven here. We'll also visit a place where cochineal is being cultivated and learn about the process behind this fabulous red dye. A family in Teotitlan will prepare us a tasty, homemade meal and perhaps coerce you into making the tortillas. Time allowing we'll also visit a house where ceremonial beeswax candles are made and we'll take a peek at the whitewashed colonial church in the center of town (sitting on top of what were once the Zapotec temples of this village!). In the afternoon we return to Oaxaca, wash up and head out on the town for our final dinner together. Evening in Oaxaca.

Day 10, Monday (B). Breakfast and departures.

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GENERAL TRIP CONDITIONS

Traditions Mexico takes you beyond the standard sites visited by tourists and travelers and into the wonderful and authentic wilds of backcountry Mexico. As a result we will see things that other visitors seldom or never see, and in the process we will be subject to some jolting, dust and other strains that come with the wonder of adventure. We never go anywhere that doesn't have a decent hotel and good food, but this certainly isn't Kansas anymore, Toto. Our travelers should bring with them a willingness to get off the beaten track, a curiosity to see the real world in its true and wondrous colors, and the patience to bear the occasional discomfort that this can imply.

Language

Knowledge of Spanish is not necessary; a translator is always on hand. If you speak a little Spanish it will enhance your visit. If you speak a little Zapotec or Mixe it will enhance your visit even more. Mexicans are extremely hospitable and patient. This is a great place to work on your Spanish.

Dress

Some of the villages and homes we will be visiting are very traditional. As respectful guests it is very important to dress conservatively. Shorts, short dresses, sleeveless shirts, tank tops and tight fitting clothing shouldn't be worn in the villages. Dress in larger cities is less conservative. A sun hat is highly recommended. (A full list of packing suggestions will be sent to registrants prior to your departure.)

Accommodations/Single Supplement

Unless a specific accommodation is requested, we reserve or recommend the best available, reasonably priced, charming hotels/lodges with private bath, hot water and good service. Prices are based on two persons sharing a twin-bedded room. Traditions Mexico reserves the right to substitute equivalent or superior hotels.

A single supplement is the additional cost of a single traveler not sharing a room in double occupancy. If you request single accommodations you will be charged the single supplement. If you are willing to share a room, we will attempt to match you with another traveler of the same gender, in which case the single supplement will be waived. However, if we are unable to find another traveler with whom you can share a room, a single room option will be offered to all tour participants and if no one requests the single room, Traditions Mexico will supply a single room to be traded off among interested clients at no charge.

Documentation/Passport

U.S. Citizens traveling to Mexico are required to carry a current passport, valid for three months after your reentry to the U.S. It is your responsibility to obtain proper documentation. If you are not a U.S. Citizen, contact the embassy, consulate or national airline of the country you are traveling to for entry requirements

You will be given a tourist visa when entering Mexico (usually on the airplane) which will be stamped by Mexican Customs. DO NOT lose this or you will never be allowed to leave Mexico and will be required to work at the salt mines of Salina Cruz. Well, this is not quite true, but it is very bureaucratic to get it replaced.

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Medical Concerns

Some of the places we will be visiting are rural, indigenous, peasant communities. The court yards of the houses are filled with pooping chickens, turkeys, donkeys, oxen, dogs, cats, pigs, goats, etc. Tap water is not safe. Hygiene conditions are far from what you are accustomed to. We take all the precautions possible to keep our food clean and have purified water available at all times, but DIARRHEA is a real concern in Mexico. We'll talk about what to avoid on your first day here. It is a good idea to bring hand wipes or no-water soap. A drug now being used to treat diarrhea as well as being used as a preventative is the antibiotic, rifaximin (http://www.pharmacist.com/articles/h_ts_0549.cfm). Also recommended by travelers are colloidal silver, www.sovereignsilver.com, and Jarro-dophilus EPS "for intestinal and immune health" www.jarro.com. Dehydration is a common problem with diarrhea. Gatorade is a decent rehydration drink and is readily available in Mexico. For a better quality rehydrant consider traveling with powdered Hydralite, see- www.gookinaid.com.

If you are taking prescription medicine, bring your own supply. (Though there generally pharmacies and medical facilities available.) Bring an extra pair of glasses if you use them. No vaccinations are necessary for travel in Mexico, however it is advisable to get vaccinated against Hepatitis A.

Coastal travel runs a very small risk of malaria. Mosquito repellent is advised. You may want to consult your doctor about your travel plans.s2

In case of accident, injury or theft, you may want to consider taking out travelers insurance if your policy doesn't cover such things.

Medical Requirements

Good physical and mental health are essential for the enjoyment of these rural workshops and trips. You may travel in rugged areas removed from modern medical facilities. Good physical conditioning is recommended as preparation for all trips. By forwarding the deposit and signed Reservation Form, the passenger certifies that he/she does not have any physical or other condition of disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other passengers. It is essential that any participant with a medical condition requiring regular treatment or which may be affected by moderate physical activity, high altitude, heat, cold, humidity, dust, other natural phenomenon, unsanitary conditions or particular foods, notifies Traditions Mexico and the trip leaders, in writing in advance of travel. Traditions Mexico assumes no liability for medical care nor for special dietary requirements. Participants may be required to furnish a doctor's statement of good health. The judgment of Traditions Mexico or the local operator or guide, shall make the ultimate determination of an individual trip participant's fitness to embark upon, or to continue a trip. Any clients 60 years of age and over or with preexisting medical conditions are required to complete a Traditions Mexico medical form which must be signed and dated by a physician.

I look forward to seeing you and introducing you to the artisans of rural Mexico.



Eric Mindling
Traditions Mexico