

# African Roots in Veracruz, México

Explore the African History & Their Influences in Today's Veracruz Culture

**On this unique 8 day journey** throughout the gulf coast state of Veracruz, you will **learn about the history of the African enslaved people and their vast contributions to the Mexican culture** as it relates to food, dance, music, politics, and more.

You will also **personally meet descendents of these Africans** who can still be found in small rural communities not far from the city of Veracruz.

To add to your *Journey into México History*, you will also **tour the city of Veracruz**, take a **scenic lake boat ride** to view many tropical birds and explore mangrove estuaries, **visit 3 ex-haciendas**, visit the "**coffee capital**" of Veracruz, learn about the **Olmec history** at the very modern **Xalapa Anthropology Museum**, and even see the **beautiful tropical waterfall** which was used in the old classic movie, *Romancing the Stone* with Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner.



**2018 Trip Dates:** April 14-21 | June 9-16 | October 6-13  
(contact us for availability)

**Trip Fee:** \$1997 USD / person (groups of 7-16)  
\$2257 USD / person (groups of 2-6)

**Single Supplement:** add \$290 USD

Trip prices and hotels listed are subject to change until time of booking

**Includes:** Airport pick-up & drop-off in Veracruz, all ground transportation, local bilingual historian tour guide, activities per itinerary, all entrance fees, 7 nights of hotel lodgings, 6 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 1 dinner, filtered water each day, all taxes

**Not included:** Airfare, additional activities & meals not listed in the trip itinerary, alcoholic drinks, trip interruption insurance, travel medical insurance, and guide tips

**Trip Difficulty:** Easy-Moderate

**Group Size:** 2-16

**Suggested Minimum Age:** 12

## Trip Itinerary

- includes arrival & departure days -

- Day 1: Arrive in the city of Veracruz
- Day 2: Yanga - First black free settlement
- Day 3: San Juan de Ulúa fortress  
Shopping in Veracruz city  
Lake Mandinga tropical boat ride
- Day 4: Free day  
Optional day tours available
- Day 5: Visit descendants of black slaves  
Community historical museum
- Day 6: Ex-hacienda El Lencero  
Xalapa Anthropology Museum  
Presentation:  
*The 3rd Root-African Presence in México*
- Day 7: Ex-hacienda Zimpizahua-Tour & Breakfast  
Coatepec - *Coffee Growing Capital*  
Texolo Waterfalls  
Farewell dinner
- Day 8: Travel day home

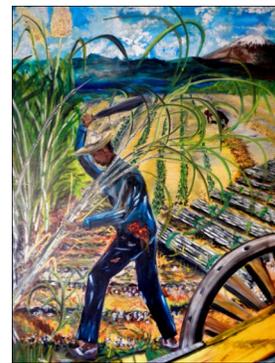
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**Make plans to reserve your space TODAY!**



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## Detailed Trip Itinerary

**Day 1** After arriving at the Veracruz International Airport (VER) you will be met and welcomed by a tour representative who will accompany you to the Gran Hotel Diligencias. This very nice 4 star hotel is located directly across the street from the main plaza in the center of the city of Veracruz. The rest of the day or evening is yours to explore and/or rest up from your flight.

**Day 2** After breakfast at one of the oldest iconic restaurants in the port city of Veracruz, your group will begin your exploration of African history by traveling to the **town of Yanga** which is known for being the **first free slave settlement in the Americas**. Located less than 1½ hours from Veracruz, this small village was named after a renegade slave by the name of Gaspar Yanga. He is known for being the leader of colonial México's first slave uprising. It is here that you will visit a small museum which has some excellent murals representing the plight of the African enslaved people and view the statue honoring this man for his heroism as a liberator. (B,L)

Lunch will be at a local restaurant which specializes in tasty barbeque pork and chicken. After the meal, you will **explore the nearby ruins site of an ex-hacienda**. At one time this was the home of the owners of a sugar cane growing operation. On these ground, you will actually have the opportunity to see where their captive workers were housed and learn of how they were treated by the owners. On the way to this ruins site, everyone will make a quick stop to **visit a small Catholic chapel** which dates back hundreds of years.

Before returning to your hotel in the city of Veracruz, you will have the opportunity to shop at a few stores found around the main square in Yanga. Back in the city, your evening is free to explore, relax, and have dinner on your own. (B,L)

**Day 3** This morning you can start your day with a buffet breakfast at the restaurant located in your hotel. Then everyone will jump in the van for a quick 15 minute ride to explore the **harbor fortress** called, **San Juan de Ulúa**. It took several hundred years to complete and is unique in that coral was used as a main material to construct the very thick walls of this massive structure. Your guide will tell you of the history of this fortress as a defender for the city of Veracruz and later how it was used as a prison.



Ok, who likes to shop? Next on your itinerary will be some time to **browse the many gift shops** found near the downtown area of Veracruz city. If you are thinking of purchasing some souvenirs for yourself or friends back home, this could be the time and place to do it.

Next, everyone will board the tour vehicle to take a ride down the avenue which parallels the Gulf of México as you head south to the town of Mandinga. Along the way, your tour guide will point out some of the **major sites in Veracruz and its sister city, Boca del Rio**. Lunch will be at a traditional restaurant in Mandinga which is adjacent to a huge lake that flows into the ocean. Most likely during lunch, your group will be serenaded by some of the local musicians. When everyone is finished, you are welcome to **board a small motor launch for a tour into the lagoon**. This is an opportunity to enjoy the warm tropical climate, view the interesting gnarled roots from mangrove trees, and spot many local birds.

Later, you will return to the Gran Hotel Diligencias. Dinner will be on your own. (B,L)



**Day 4** This morning you can have a leisurely buffet breakfast at your hotel because today is a **free day to explore on your own**. You will also have the option to sign up for one of the day tours listed below for an additional cost. (B)

#### Option #1

#### **Birding by Boat & Tour of La Antigua**

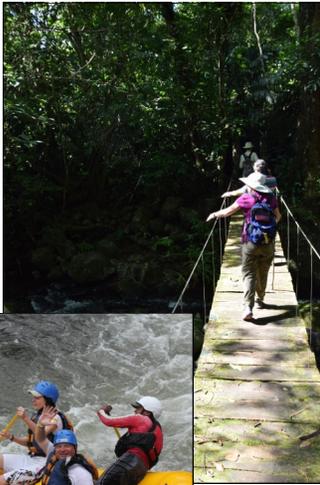
Difficulty: Easy

Whether you are a hobbyist birder or an very active birder, you will definitely want to bring your binoculars and sign up for this fun early morning adventure to **view the many local tropical and migrant birds** found along the shores of a nearby major river which flows into the gulf. Your vantage point will be from a small motor boat accompanied by an **expert bilingual birding guide**. As you slowly **cruise down the river**, your guide will be helping you to spot the different birds found along the way. He knows the names of all of them so if you are lucky, you may be able to add to your "Lifers" birding list. And if you are not a hobbyist birder, you might just want to come along for the ride anyway to enjoy an early morning of "peaceful tropical nature." Afterwards, you will have **breakfast at a local restaurant** in the riverside town of **La Antigua**. Then your guide will give you a **tour of this historical town**. This is the site of the first coastal village built by the Spaniards in the early 1520's. Remnants of the original customs house can still be seen there. Also you can visit one of the first churches ever built in the Americas.

Depart: 6:30am / Return: approx. 1:00pm

Min/Max: 2-5

Trip Fee: \$130 USD per person



#### Option #2

#### **Waterfalls, Monkeys & Jungle Hiking in the Rain Forests of Veracruz**

Difficulty: Moderate - You will be hiking on uneven pathways in the jungle One hundred miles south of the city of Veracruz you will **explore the tropical rain forests of the Los Tuxtlas region**. This trip includes a scenic 3 hour ride to the lakeside town of Catemaco. From there you will travel around the lake to a small jungle village where you will meet your local jungle guide. He does not speak English but your host guide/driver will do the translating for you. This local guide will tell you about the plants and trees found along the way and in many cases, what their medicinal uses are. The duration of the **jungle hike** will be determined by you and the others in your group. It can take anywhere from 1-3 hours. Along the way, there are **beautiful waterfalls**. The opportunity exists to take a cool refreshing **dip in the pools** found beneath the falls. Afterwards, you are invited to **have lunch at your local guide's rustic home in the jungle**. His wife will do the cooking and you are welcome to watch her prepare your meal over a wood burning stove in there dirt floor kitchen. Later, your group will take a **lake boat** ride to view this designated *World Biosphere Area* from the water. During the ride, you can **spot many birds and even monkeys** on some of the lake islands. Your host guide will take you on a short walking **tour of Catemaco** before driving back to your hotel in Veracruz city.

Depart: 7:30am / Return: approx. 9:30pm

Min/Max: 2-16

Trip Fee: \$179 USD (2 people) \$135 USD (3-16 people)

#### Option #3

#### **Whitewater Rafting & Zipline Adventure**

The riverside town of Jalcomulco in Veracruz is known as the "**Whitewater River Rafting Capital**" for all of México. In 2 hours drive time from your hotel, you will be able to experience a fun day of outdoor adventure with a guide from a professional rafting company. The **rapids are a doable class 2-3**. That means, there are times you may get drenched in roller coaster type rapids and other times, the water will be calm enough to jump in for a quick swim. Afterwards, you will **experience a 4 line zipline ride**. Two of the lines cross high over the river. Go ahead and yell like Tarzan if you feel the urge. A **buffet lunch** is included.

Depart: 7:00am / Return: approx. 4:00pm

Min/Max: 2-16

Trip Fee: \$157 USD (2 people) \$147 USD (3-16)

**Day 5** This day starts with breakfast at your hotel and then you will be on your way for a most unique cultural interaction. In México, there are cities, towns, and pueblos with the latter being a smaller town. This morning, you will be going to a place which is even smaller than a "pueblo." They are called, *Rancrias*. Think small rural settlement or native village.

With the African name, Matamba, this out-of-the-way *Rancria* is located just a little over an hour away from the city of Veracruz. Here your group will have the privilege to **meet descendents of African slaves**. Immediately, you will feel at home as they graciously welcome you to their rural village. Through your interpreter guide, you will be able to carry on conversations with them and hear the story of their family history. You are also invited to partake in a **simple lunch prepared by some of the local women**. After a round of good-byes and many hugs, your group will visit the nearby pueblo of Mozambique and then continue on to **explore a small history museum** with old photos and many "nostalgic items."

In the late afternoon, you will travel back to your hotel in the port city and have the evening free to relax and enjoy dinner on your own. (B,L)

**Day 6** After breakfast this morning, everyone will check out of the hotel and travel inland to the capital of the state of Veracruz, the city of Xalapa. This city is at a higher altitude (about 3000') and so it may be a little cooler as compared to the temperatures found on the gulf coast.

Your first stop will actually be before you reach the capital city. There is a **beautiful restored 16<sup>th</sup> century hacienda (Hacienda El Lencero)** with gardens, a reflection pool, and even a fair-sized chapel. Inside the house, you will be able to view the colonial furnishings which were mostly brought over from Europe. For a time, this house was occupied by Antonio López de Santa Anna. You might remember him as the general who led the Mexican army against the men who fought at the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas. He was also the president of México for many years.

Then everyone will travel into the city to the **Xalapa Anthropology Museum**. This very modern historical museum showcases almost 30 centuries of art and history. The most prominent are the **original stone heads** sculpted by the oldest known civilization in the Americas; **the Olmecs**. Their facial features have a striking resemblance to faces of those who live in Africa. You can decide for yourself . . . did people from Africa (Egyptians?) come to the new world and create these massive granite carvings?

Lunch is next on the agenda at a very nice restaurant in the city. You will then check into the *Villa Las Margaritas Caxa Hotel* which is located near the center of the city. Dinner will be on your own.

Later in the evening, everyone will congregate in one of the conference rooms in the hotel to see a **presentation** by your historian guide entitled, **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Root – African Presence in México**. Through a slide presentation of old colonial paintings and modern day photos, he will talk about the contributions Africans have made to the Mexican culture from the time they arrived on slave ships until present day. He will also tell of their joys and hardships from living in México. (B,L)



**Day 7** The first thing this morning will be to check out of your hotel and then travel a short 15 minutes to another beautiful ex-hacienda, **Hacienda Zimpizahua**. This place was built in the mid 1500's and has a mix of old buildings and lush tropical vegetation. Interestingly, there is a huge centuries old aqueduct with a big water wheel which is still operational to this day.

On this morning, you can pretend you are the owner of this huge estate as you will be served a **traditional Mexican breakfast** (family-style). Sitting outside at a table in the main courtyard, you will have the opportunity to experience how the original owners of this beautiful hacienda were served breakfast each morning.

After a short tour of the property, everyone will travel to the **pre-Hispanic Pueblo Mágico town of Coatepec**. This town is well-known for its coffee shops as this it is considered **"The Coffee Capital"** of Veracruz. This area is in a higher elevation in what is called a "cloud forest" and has all the natural attributes for growing coffee. You will have time to walk around the town square visiting the **many boutique shops**. And of course, if you would like another cup of coffee, there are plenty of cozy outdoor cafes for sipping and people watching.

You will then travel south to the La Finca Santa Rosa Restaurant which has an excellent birds-eye view of the **Texolo (Tey-show-low) waterfalls**. If you saw the classic movie, *Romancing the Stone* (Kathleen Turner & Michael Douglas), then you may remember a tropical scene with a waterfall in the background. This is that waterfall.

After lunch and after taking many scenic photos, your group will head back to the city of Veracruz and check in again at the Gran Hotel Diligencias. Later in the evening, you will all get together for a **farewell dinner** to enjoy your final night of Mexican hospitality and to share memories of your **Journey into México History**. (B,L,D)

**Day 8** Check out and return to the Veracruz Airport. Travel day home.

