

HISTORY OF THE ANCIENTS: COPPER CANYON AND CASAS GRANDES

Located in Sierra Tarahumara, the Copper Canyon is home to unique cultural and natural marvels. Visit picturesque towns with colonial missions and architecture. Travel off the beaten track to isolated places in search of breathtaking views. Meet the secluded Tarahumara native Indians, whose lives are practically untouched by modern civilization. Board the famous “train ride in the sky” to climb steep canyon walls and cross ravines at 7500 feet. Discover Mata Ortiz, home to well-known potters who revived a 500-year-old art. Learn about the Paquime, who left their footprints in a city of over 4000 rooms that today is a UNESCO site.

Dates: Thursday, November 5, 2009 to
Tuesday, November 17, 2009

Cost: Member \$2500; Nonmember \$2600; Single supplement \$800;
Deposit \$300

Day 1 El Paso

In the afternoon fly to El Paso. Settle in hotel.

Hotel: Camino Real, El Paso

Day 2 El Paso – Chihuahua city

Join a welcome brunch and orientation to meet your travel companions. Begin your journey crossing the border into Mexico and continue to Chihuahua city to spend a free afternoon to shop or relax. Dinner is in a well known restaurant.

Hotel: Quality Inn San Francisco, Chihuahua

Meals: B/L/D

Day 3 Chihuahua – Creel

In a city tour of Chihuahua, learn about the importance of the city and the state during the Mexican Revolution. See the government buildings with murals of the revolution, the Plaza Mayor and the Cathedral. Then drive to Pancho Villa’s home, now a museum, and tour an impressive art-deco villa. Make a last stop in Cerro Santa Eulalia, where the discovery of the mine promoted the establishment of the city. Have lunch in a small family owned restaurant with a view of the city. After lunch, drive south to Creel, a cozy lumber town nestled in the mountains, the most important center in the Sierra Tarahumara both for tourism and for trade among the local Indians. There are about 50,000 Tarahumaras living throughout the Sierra still clinging to their native traditions. Some of the women, in their colorful dresses, quietly gather in the tourist areas and offer their crafts at the same time as they are making them.

Hotel: The Lodge, Creel

Meals: B/L/D

Day 4 Creel

Spend the day exploring the many attractions around Creel, an area rich in natural and cultural attractions. The nearby San Ignacio and Cusarare Missions, where a different version of Catholicism is practiced, are located in the midst of Tarahumara cave dwellings; enter one of them. Drive through valleys filled with strange attractive rock formations. Surrounded by rich pine and oak forests, view tranquil Lake Arareko. Criss-cross a river to reach the 100 ft. Cusarare waterfall. Tarahumara Indians can be spotted living and working throughout the area.

Hotel: The Lodge, Creel

Meals: B/L

Day 5 Creel - El Fuerte

The morning is free to stroll, shop or relax. Around noon board the train for what has been described as “the most spectacular train ride in the world”. The Chihuahua-Pacifico railroad line is a major engineering feat, passing through 85 tunnels and 37 bridges. The most spectacular stretch lies between Creel and El Fuerte. The train twists and turns down the Septentrion Canyon descending from an altitude of almost 8,000 feet to sea level. Stop for two overnights at the charming colonial town of El Fuerte, set in subtropical vegetation. The historical hotel is covered with tropical vegetation.

Hotel: Posada Hidalgo, El Fuerte

Meals: B/L/D

Day 6 El Fuerte

Begin the day with a guided boat excursion on El Fuerte River to spot birds and enjoy the relaxing scenery. Learn the rich history of El Fuerte on a guided walk through the center of town. The historic colonial Posada Hidalgo, proud of having received distinguished guests, is part of the tour. After lunch, take an excursion to a Mayo Native Indian Village, little changed through time. Interact with the people in a tortilla making session and in learning the steps of their simple dances. Dinner is on your own to explore local flair.

Hotel: Posada Hidalgo, El Fuerte

Meals: B/L

Day 7 El Fuerte – Bahuichivo

Early in the morning board the train again to enjoy the spectacular views in the opposite direction. Stop in Bahuichivo for an overnight in Cerocahui, a Tarahumara Mission town. From there take an excursion to Cerro Gallego where, standing at an altitude of 7,500 feet above the Urique Canyon, you marvel at one of the most breathtaking views in the Sierra Tarahumara. The hotels for the next three nights are full pensions.

Hotel: Hotel Mision, Cerocahui

Meals: B/L/D

Day 8 Bahuichivo – Divisadero

After breakfast take a walk to visit the mission, a Tarahumara Indian boarding school and, if desired, hike to a small canyon with a waterfall. Return to Bahuichivo and board

the train again to reach Divisadero and be welcomed by a colorful array of dresses and crafts. The Divisadero hotel is on a cliff at an altitude of 7,200 ft. with a spectacular view. Three canyons meet at Divisadero: Copper, Urique and Tararequa. Impressive walks along the rim give different viewpoints and lead to caves inhabited by Tarahumara Indians. The afternoon is free. Before dinner, participate in a basket weaving demonstration by Tarahumara women while watching a documentary on the Tarahumara.

Hotel: El Mirador, Divisadero
Meals: B/L/D

Day 9 Divisadero

Spend the day enjoying the magnificent view, taking pleasant walks, relaxing and, with luck, seeing the Tarahumaras demonstrating traditional dances and ball game running skills.

Hotel: El Mirador, Divisadero
Meals: B/L/D

Day 10 Divisadero – Basaseachi

Drive to Basaseachic (Tarahumara word meaning “the place of the cascade”) National Park in Condameña Canyon. Described as “one of the most spectacular canyons in the hemisphere” and “one of the world’s greatest treasures”, the steep walls of the canyon give way to at least 5 major waterfalls, including the famous Basaseachic Fall with 806 ft. of free fall. Located off the beaten track of tourism, it is a place of extraordinary beauty and tranquility. The afternoon is spent to view the Canyon and the waterfall from different angles. In the remote, simple, family-run cabins spend a quiet evening marveling at the stars while tasting and comparing Mexican agave based drinks.

Hotel: El Rincon, Basaseachic
Meals: B/ L/D

Day 11 Basaseachi – Casas Grandes

After breakfast, drive North to Casas Grandes, home of the antique Paquime culture. Spend the night in a Paquime earth-style posada (small family hotel), where the owner opens her house to guests. Part of the home is a small gallery displaying a fine collection of the famous Mata Ortiz pots. Savor a typical Northern ranch style carne asada meal in the patio of the posada.

Hotel: Posada Guacamaya, Casas Grandes
Meals: B/L/D

Day 12 Casas Grandes – Mata Ortiz – Casas Grandes

Begin the day with an on site lecture on Mogollon Culture while exploring Paquime Archeological Site, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Paquime, an architecturally advanced adobe city of 3000 rooms, 4 stories high, was the center of the Mogollon culture, believed to be the link between the cultures of North America and Central Mexico. Enter the recently built Museum of the Northern Cultures, described as a “museographic jewel”. Continue with an excursion to the town of Mata Ortiz where local ranchers recently revived the ancient Paquime methods of pottery making. Visit potters

in their homes, including the home of famous Juan Quezada. See them at work creating their masterpieces, now reaching world fame. Join a hands-on pottery making demonstration. Lunch is in the home of a potter. On the way tour an old hacienda and a Mormon colony. Return to the hotel with time to relax before the farewell dinner which is accompanied by a folkloric dance performance.

Lecture: Mogollon Culture

Hotel: Posada Guacamaya, Casas Grandes

Meals: B/L/D

Day 13 Casas Grandes – El Paso

Free time in the morning to explore Casas Grandes or tour Paquime on your own. Drive to El Paso for your flight back into San Diego.

Meals: B/L

Cost includes:

All escorts and local guides, airfare to and from San Diego, all land transportation, most meals, snacks and bottled water, entrance and excursion fees, all hotel accommodations, tips for meals, hotels and bell boys, and medical-emergency travel insurance.

Cost does not include:

Fee for Mexican tourist card (\$20–\$25, valid for six months); we will provide the card to you. Tips for guides, drivers, and special-excursion staff.

Note:

Passport required.

To register, call 619.255.0203 or visit www.sdnhm.org.