

ANDEAN PATHS

OAXACA-MEXICO JOURNEY ITINERARY

August 1st – 13th, 2026

July 22 – August 3rd, 2027

Day 1: Arrive to Mexico City: We will transfer to our hotel. Our representative will be waiting for you with a sign with your name or the name Andean Paths.

Day 2: National Museum of Anthropology and Mexico City tour:

It is the largest and most visited museum in Mexico. Located in the area between Paseo de la Reforma and Mahatma Gandhi Street within Chapultepec Park in Mexico City, the museum contains significant archaeological and anthropological artifacts from Mexico's pre-Columbian heritage, such as the Stone of the Sun (or the Aztec calendar stone) and the Aztec.

The museum's collections include the Stone of the Sun, giant stone heads of the Olmec civilization that were found in the jungles of Tabasco and Veracruz, treasures recovered from the Maya civilization, at the *Sacred Cenote* at Chichen Itza, a replica of the Sarcophaga lid from Pacal's tomb at Palenque and ethnological displays of contemporary rural Mexican life. It also has a model of the location and layout of the former Aztec capital Tenochtitlan, the site of which is now occupied by the central area of modern-day Mexico City.

The permanent exhibitions on the ground floor cover all pre-Columbian civilizations located in the current territory of Mexico as well as in former Mexican territory in what is today the southwestern United States. They are classified as North, West, Maya, Gulf of Mexico, Oaxaca, Mexico, Toltec, and Teotihuacan. The permanent expositions on the first floor show the

culture of the Native American population of Mexico since the Spanish colonization.

Mexico City is the capital and largest city of Mexico, as well as the most populous city in North America. It is one of the most important cultural and financial centers in the world, and is classified as an Alpha world city according to the Globalization and World Cities Research Network (GaWC) 2024 ranking.^{[16][17]} Mexico City is located in the Valley of Mexico within the high Mexican central plateau, at an altitude of 2,240 meters (7,350 ft).

The city has 16 boroughs, which in turn are divided into neighborhoods or *colonias*. We will visit the old colonial city, and the *colonias* of Polanco and Reforma.

The 2020 population for the city proper was 9,209,944, with a land area of 1,495 square kilometers (577 sq mi). According to the most recent definition agreed upon by the federal and state governments, the population of Greater Mexico City is 21,804,515, which makes it the sixth-largest metropolitan area in the world, the second-largest urban agglomeration in the Western Hemisphere (behind São Paulo, Brazil), and the largest Spanish-speaking city (city proper) in the world. Greater Mexico City has a GDP of \$411 billion in 2011, which makes it one of the most productive urban areas in the world. The city was responsible for generating 15.8% of Mexico's GDP, and the metropolitan area accounted for about 22% of the country's GDP. If it were an independent country in 2013, Mexico City would have been the fifth-largest economy in Latin America.

Mexico City is the oldest capital city in the Americas and one of two founded by Indigenous people. The city was originally built on a group of islands in Lake Texcoco by the Mexica around 1325, under the name Tenochtitlan. It was almost completely destroyed in the 1521 siege of Tenochtitlan and subsequently redesigned and rebuilt in accordance with the Spanish urban standards. In 1524, the municipality of Mexico City was established, known as *México Tenochtitlán*, and as of 1585, it was officially known as *Ciudad de México* (Mexico City). Mexico City played a major role in the Spanish colonial empire as a political, administrative, and financial center. Following independence from Spain, the region around and containing the city was established as the new and only Mexican federal district (Spanish: *Distrito Federal* or *DF*) in 1824.

Day 3: Basilica of Santa María de Guadalupe and Teotihuacan pyramids

Officially called **Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe** is a basilica of the Catholic Church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary in her invocation of Our Lady of Guadalupe, located at the foot of the Hill of Tepeyac.

Every year some twenty million pilgrims visit the sanctuary, of which about nine million do so in the days around December 12, the day on which Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated. Annually, the Basilica of Santa María de Guadalupe has at least twice as many visitors as the best-known Marian shrines.

The church known as the Old Basilica of Guadalupe was built by the architect Pedro de Arrieta, its construction beginning in March 1695. On May 1, 1709, it opened its doors.

Teotihuacan: The city and the archeological site are located approximately 40 kilometers (25 mi) northeast of Mexico City and is known today as the site of many of the most architecturally significant Mesoamerican pyramids built in the pre-Columbian Americas, namely the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon. Although close to Mexico City, Teotihuacan was not a Mexica (i.e. Aztec) city, and it predates the Aztec Empire by many centuries. At its zenith, perhaps in the first half of the first millennium (1 CE to 500 CE), Teotihuacan was the largest city in the Americas, with a population of at least 25,000, but has been estimated at 125,000 or more, making it at least the sixth-largest city in the world during its epoch.

Apart from the pyramids, Teotihuacan is also anthropologically significant for its complex, multi-family residential compounds, the Avenue of the Dead, and its vibrant, well-preserved murals. Additionally, Teotihuacan exported fine obsidian tools found throughout Mesoamerica. The city is thought to have been established around 100 BCE, with major monuments continuously under construction until about 250 CE. The city may have lasted until sometime between the 7th and 8th centuries CE, but its major monuments were sacked and systematically burned around 550 CE. Its collapse might be related to the extreme weather events of 535–536.

Teotihuacan began as a religious center in the Mexican Plateau around the first century CE. It became the largest and most populated center in the pre-Columbian Americas. Teotihuacan was home to multi-floor apartment compounds built to accommodate the large population. The term Teotihuacan (or Teotihuacano) is also used to refer to the whole civilization and cultural complex associated with the site.

Day 4: Coyoacan and Frida Kahlo blue house

Coyoacan it is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Mexico City, located 10 km south of the Zocalo (main square) of Mexico City. This area is filled with narrow cobblestone streets and small plazas, which were laid out during the colonial period, and today give the area a distinct and bohemian identity. The area is filled with mostly single-family homes, which were former mansions and country homes built between the colonial period to the mid-20th century. The Project for Public Spaces ranked the neighborhood as one of the best urban spaces to live in North America in 2005 and is the only one in Mexico on the list. This area was designated as a "Barrio Mágico" (Magic neighborhood) by the city in 2011.

People come to enjoy the still somewhat rural atmosphere of the area as well as the large number of restaurants, cafes, cantinas, museums, bookstores and other cultural attractions. Some of these businesses have been around for almost a century. Mimes, clowns, musicians, folk and indigenous dancers, storytellers and other street performers can be found entertaining visitors. Vendors sell street food such as ice cream, homemade fruit drinks, esquites (flavored corn kernels), corn-on-the-cob served with mayonnaise, lime, chili pepper and grated cheese, amaranth bars, and various candies.

Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderón: (July 6, 1907 – July 19, 1954) was a Mexican painter known for her many portraits, self-portraits, and works inspired by the nature and artifacts of Mexico. Inspired by the country's popular culture, she employed a naïve folk art style to explore questions of identity, postcolonialism, gender, class, and race in Mexican society. Her paintings often had strong autobiographical elements and mixed realism with fantasy. In addition to belonging to the post-revolutionary *Mexicayotl* movement, which sought to define a Mexican identity, Kahlo has been described as a surrealist or magical realist. She is also known for painting about her experience of chronic pain.

Kahlo spent most of her childhood and adult life at La Casa Azul, her family home in Coyoacán – now publicly accessible as the Frida Kahlo Museum. Although she was disabled by polio as a child, Kahlo had been a promising student headed for medical school until being injured in a bus accident at the age of 18, which caused her lifelong pain and medical problems.

Kahlo's interests in politics and art led her to join the Mexican Communist Party in 1927, where she met fellow Mexican artist Diego Rivera. The couple married in 1929 and spent the late 1920s and early 1930s travelling together in Mexico and the United States.

Her paintings raised the interest of surrealist artist André Breton, who arranged for Kahlo's first solo exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York in 1938; the exhibition was a success and was followed by another in Paris in 1939. While the French exhibition was less successful, the Louvre purchased a painting from Kahlo, *The Frame*, making her the first Mexican artist to be featured in their collection.

Kahlo's work as an artist remained relatively unknown until the late 1970s, when her work was rediscovered by art historians and political activists. By the early 1990s, not only had she become a recognized figure in art history, but she was also regarded as an icon for Chicanos, the feminism movement, and the LGBTQ+ community. Kahlo's work has been celebrated internationally as emblematic of Mexican national indigenous traditions and by feminists for what is seen as its uncompromising depiction of the female experience and form

Day 5: Arrive at Oaxaca Airport, transfer to our hotel - City Tour

Oaxaca is home to a vibrant culture and beautiful weather. It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. There are over 1,200 historic buildings, most of which are hundreds of years old. The mixing of Indigenous, Spanish, and contemporary Mexican influences are unique, with impressive architecture, museums, markets, restaurants, shopping, and nightlife. Lovers of culture come here to indulge in the Mexico of Zapotec and colonial legend. Flowing through picturesque, yet tranquil streets, life pulsates with an unadulterated regional flavor. It has a year-round spring-like climate due to its location nestled in a fertile valley of the Sierra Madre Sur Mountains.

We will do a walking tour, visiting the historical downtown, wandering to take in the vibrant colors and historic architecture, and along the way sharing time with the locals in the Zocalo courtyard, the Santo Domingo temple, and the impressive and colorful markets. We will have lunch at one of the local markets where the Oaxaca gastronomy flourishes.

Day 6: Monte Alban and Cacao Ceremony

In the morning, we will visit the Monte Alban archeological site. It is 35 minutes outside of Oaxaca. Besides being one of the earliest cities of Mesoamerica, Monte Albán was important for nearly one thousand years as the pre-eminent Zapotec socio-political and economic center. Founded toward the end of the Middle Formative period at around 500 BC, Monte Alban, by the Terminal Formative (100 BC – AD 200) had become the capital of a large-scale expansionist polity that dominated much of the Oaxacan highlands and interacted with other Mesoamerican regional states, such as Teotihuacan to the north (Paddock 1983; Marcus 1983). The city lost its political preeminence by the end of the Late Classic (AD 500–750), and soon thereafter was largely abandoned. Small-scale reoccupation, opportunistic reuse of earlier structures and tombs, and ritual visitations marked the archaeological history of the site into the colonial period. The area contains great plazas, truncated pyramids, a court for playing the ball game *tlachtli*, underground passageways, and about 170 tombs, the most elaborate yet uncovered in the Americas. The site is located on high ground, probably chosen for its defensibility.



During the first two phases of Monte Albán culture, temples and other structures were built with dressed stone. Zapotec occupation of the site may be dated with certainty by about the 1st century BCE. The beginning of the third and most flourishing phase of Monte Albán corresponds to the Classic Period (300–900 CE). The influence of the Teotihuacán

architectural style is quite evident. The zenith of the period was reached circa 500. During the ensuing fourth period, about which little is known, Monte Albán lost its political preeminence, and its structures began to decay. In the final phase, which lasted up to the Spanish conquest in the 16th century, the Mixtec inhabited the site; they reused some of the old Zapotec tombs, and the two cultures became fused.

We will go back to Oaxaca to have lunch in a local restaurant. Short rest until 4:00 pm when we will go to a private home in Etla town, 25 minutes away, to visit a local healer. We will receive a traditional cleansing and participate in a Cacao ceremony. Seeds from the *Theobroma cacao* L. (name of species of cacao) are the base to produce the most important and widespread functional food in human history. The origin of cacao dates back more than 3000 years, when it was used for nutritional and medicinal purposes by the Mayan and Aztec civilizations

One of the general health attributes of cacao is reduced risk of chronic diseases. Various health benefits of the cacao compounds have been attributed to their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory potency, phenolic and flavonoid contents. The total antioxidant capacities of cacao are higher than that of other phytochemical-rich foods. For instance, flavanol-rich cacao consumption improves dermal blood flow, increases photo protection and contributes to the maintenance of skin health. It also can produce mental relaxation and a light sensation of peace of mind.

We will go back to our hotel to rest and to enjoy the benefits of this ceremony.

Day 7: Oaxaca – San Martin of Tilcajete

San Martín Tilcajete is a town and municipality located about 23 kilometers (14 mi) from the city of Oaxaca. It is part of the Ocotlán District in the south of the Valles Centrales Region.

San Martín Tilcajete is known for its wood carvings of real and fantastic animals painted with bright colors and designs. This is part of Oaxaca's tradition of being one of the leading producers of folk and modern art, which is displayed in shops and galleries all over the world. The making of these animals has become the major source of income for many of the families of the municipality, using carving techniques that have been

passed down from generation to generation. It has become the economic base for the community, with the streets lined with workshops that have been built into family homes in various parts of town. For many families, the making of these figures not only provides an economic base, but helps to keep generations together, with aspects of the productions divided among the different generations and sexes.



Large alebrije in front of a shop in Tilcajete

The brightly painted wooden figures now carry the name “**alebrije**” but they are a mixture of two craft traditions, one ancient and one more recent. The Zapotecs of Oaxaca have carved representations of animals from wood and other materials for centuries. Certain animals were important as totems, and some were carved to use as hunting decoys (jacabo). The carving of animals was from the wood of the copal tree, native to the area. But as of at least 50 or so years ago, the carvings were mainly toys for children. At the beginning of the 20th century, the focus of woodcarving was more focused on utilitarian items and masks for celebrations such as Carnival, all of which are still made.

The creation of fantastic and fantastically colored creatures as well as the name alebrije come from the work of a man from Mexico City named Pedro Linares. According to the Linares family, Pedro fell seriously ill in the 1930s and during his fever-induced hallucinations, envisioned fantastic creatures as well as the name “alebrije.” He was a Mixe from the Central Valleys area of Oaxaca, but he created and established the creation of alebrijes using cardboard and wood in Mexico City. This original tradition continues in Mexico City with several later generations of the Linares family.

Day 8: The King of Matatlán Mescal Distillery / Transfer to Santa Catarina Lachatao community

The King of Matatlán Distillery began producing mescal in 1950. The Elders, originally from Santiago Matatlán transmitted for generations the traditions, culture, as well as the secrets, knowledge and ideas of how to produce mescal. The King of Matatlán Distillery makes mescals from its own plantations, however, there are some agaves which are obtained from the mountains and cobbled areas that are difficult to access.

The Santiago Mateo family continues with the age-old tradition of producing mescal by hand, being the third generation and very proud of its mescal roots.

After this visit we will travel for 2 hours through the mountains of the Sierra Norte to the small local community of Santa Catarina Lachatao. This community is inhabited by Zapoteca descendants. We will spend 3 nights here in very simple and nice cabins.

Later in the evening a ceremony with the “holy children” (psilocybin mushrooms) will be available for those who would like to participate (optional). This evening will be a “night ceremony” experience. We will offer a “daytime” experience two days later.

Day 9: Fire Ceremony and Nahuals Reading

The people of the Lachatao community will offer a fire ceremony under the Zapotec tradition. We will do an easy hike to Cerro Dragon Hill within the community land. At the top of the hill there is an altar for their fire ceremonies. The healers of the community will lead the ceremony. After the ceremony we will have a picnic offered by the community.

In the afternoon Ruben and Sindy, the shamans who will be leading the psilocybin ceremony next day, will read the Nahual of each of us.

In Mesoamerican and Toltec spiritual traditions, a **Nagual** (from the Nahuatl word **nāhualli**) refers to a human being who can access spiritual power through transformation or deep connection with their tonal counterpart. This ability is not merely about shapeshifting but also about guiding spiritual development and fostering personal transformation by bridging the physical and metaphysical realms. **Nagualism** involves the belief that each person

possesses a dual aspect: the **tonal**, representing their everyday awareness and ego, and the **nagual**, representing their deeper, limitless self. Nagual serves as a guide, helping individuals access hidden potential and spiritual insight by harmonizing these two aspects.

We have a free afternoon to rest and meditate. Dinner in the community.

Day 10: Sweat Lodge and Psilocibin Ceremony

After breakfast, in mid-morning, the community will offer a temascal (sweat lodge) experience. Then in the afternoon we will have an opportunity for a second ceremony with the “holy children” (optional). Dinner in the community.

Day 11: Lachatao to Puerto Escondido

From Lachatao to Oaxaca we will do a 2 hours ride, then we will take a new road for 3 hours to Puerto Escondido, which is located on Mexico’s Pacific Coast in the state of Oaxaca. The climate is tropical and humid, with an average annual temperature of 28°C (82°F) and a rainy season in the summer. As the legend goes, pirates once kidnapped a young woman here. While they were docked in the bay, the woman managed to escape. They referred to her as “La Escondida” (The Hidden One), and looked for her every time they returned, to no avail. The name stuck, and it eventually became known as Bahía de la Escondida (Bay of the Hidden One). The port here was established around 1900 to ship coffee. There was no settlement here at that time due to a lack of potable water, which didn’t appear until the 1930s, and with the water came the foundation of a new town.

There are plenty of beaches in Puerto Escondido that are great for chilling out. Playa Carrizalillo is a wonderful beach to visit. You’ll have to walk down 167 steps to access the beach (and then back up again), but this stunning cove is worth it. Also, you’ll find two bays sitting right next to each other – Puerto Angelito and Playa Manzanillo. Both Puerto Escondido attractions are nice for relaxing and swimming.

Most cuisine is based on seafood and local plants, which include eleven species of banana, chocolate and coffee. We will have the afternoon to walk around the village. Dinner will be in a local restaurant.

Day 12: Puerto Escondido

We will have a free day in Puerto Escondido to integrate all of our experiences, to rest and enjoy the beaches, and the charm of this picturesque fisherman village. We will offer different **optional** activities like boat rides for dolphin watching, horseback riding, bird watching and more. Our last night we will have a “light” ceremony, a *Phosphorescence Ceremony* with bioluminescence, a unique alchemy of ocean currents and water temperature which draws *dinoflagellate* plankton into the Manialtepec Lagoon. “Ancients believed bathing in phosphorescence gave them special energy and made them more youthful.”

Back in town for our farewell dinner.

Day 13: Transfer to the airport to get our flight to Mexico City for international connections. Book your international flight connection, for after 20:00 (8 pm)

General Information:

Zapotec - Middle American Indian population living in eastern and southern Oaxaca in southern Mexico

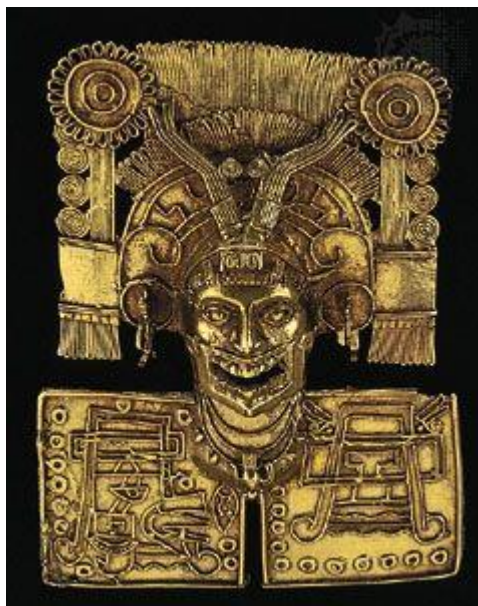
The Zapotec culture varies according to habitat—mountain, valley, or coastal—and according to economy—subsistence, cash crop, or urban; and the language varies from pueblo to pueblo, existing in several mutually unintelligible dialects, better called distinct languages. In general, however, Zapotec society is oriented around central villages or towns and has an agricultural base. Staple crops are corn, beans, and squash; market crops such as coffee, wheat, and sugar cane are grown where the climate allows. Some hunting, fishing, and gathering of wild foods is also practiced. Agriculture is based on slash-and-burn clearing of land, and plow and oxen are used in cultivation.

Crafts are still practiced in some areas; these are chiefly pottery, weaving, and palm-fiber weaving. Clothing ranges from traditional (particularly for women) to modern. Traditional dress for women consists of a long skirt, long overtunic (*huipil*), and a shawl or wrap around headpiece. Male dress, when not modern, consists of wide, loose trousers, loose shirt, sometimes with pleats, sandals, and straw or wool hat.

The religion of the Zapotec is Roman Catholic, but belief in pagan spirits, rituals, and myths persists, to some extent intermingled with Christianity. The *compadrazgo*, a system of ritual kinship established with Godparents, is important.

Mixtec - Middle American Indian population living in the northern and western sections of the state of Oaxaca and in neighboring parts of the states of Guerrero and Puebla in southern Mexico. Historically the Mixtec possessed a high degree of civilization in Aztec and pre-Aztec times.

The modern Mixtec are primarily farmers who practice slash-and-burn cultivation and use the hoe and digging stick or oxen and the plow. Corn (maize), beans, and squash are the staple crops. Other subsistence activities are hunting, fishing, herding, gathering wild foods, and producing and selling items of woven palm fiber. Settlement patterns vary; there are central villages (which may be vacant except during fiestas or market days, with the families living on their farms most of the time), and there are dispersed villages with family groups living scattered over the countryside.



Mixtec gold pectoral 1000 CE

Weaving (of cloth and palm fiber), ceramics and [alebrijes](#) (woodcarving figures) are common crafts. Dress is largely traditional or semi traditional. Men wear a white cotton shirt and trousers, straw hat, and sandals. Women wear a wraparound skirt, a long tunic (*huipil*), and a shawl (*rebozo*).

Women generally are barefoot and may go without the *huipil*, nude above the waist, in the coastal areas.

Although nominally Christian, most Mixtec believe in an assortment of pre-Christian spirits and deities, and in some areas they worship stone idols representing the rain god. Hills, caves, streams, springs, and swamps may also be sacred. Agricultural rituals and the harvest feast are important, and *curanderos* (shaman-healers) are common. Christian fiestas and masses for patron saints are also celebrated with church brotherhoods (*cofradías*) organizing the festivities.

Price per person:

\$4,700 per person (double occupancy)

Single Occupancy an extra of \$1,400

A deposit of \$1000 will reserve your space.

Second payment of \$2,700 is due May 01, 2026, or April 22, 2027.

The balance of \$1,000 is due July 1, 2026, or June 22, 2027.

Reservations: All reservations are subject to availability. For information about how to reserve your space and make your deposit for the journey, please contact Linda Leyerle at lleyerle@aol.com. In Mexico it is not possible to reserve rooms, flights, etc. without a copy of the traveler's passport. Linda will give you details about how to send a copy to us. Time is of the essence so please respond as soon as possible if you are interested in this journey.

Cost includes: Air ticket from Mexico City to Oaxaca and from Puerto Escondido to Mexico city, private tour bus or van for travel during the journey, entrance fees, all meals, hotels, tips for restaurants and hotels, water during meals, 2 temascal (sweat lodge) ceremonies, nahual reading, one of the two holy children's ceremony, Daniel Koupermann assistance during the journey.

Cost does NOT include: International roundtrip airfare to Mexico City, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, one of the two holy children's ceremony \$120, tips for the local guides, and tip for private bus driver, personal items, souvenirs.

Please be aware that internet and other communications will not be available in Lachatao community.

This journey is for individuals ready to have an educational/experiential

experience. People with physical or psychiatric challenges may find this journey too difficult or uncomfortable. **We recommend a visit with your doctor at least 6 weeks in advance of departure. No immunizations are required unless you will be entering Mexico from a country with Yellow Fever – in which case you will need a Yellow Fever immunization certificate and be prepared to show proof.**

No visas are required for most people entering Mexico (US, Canadian, UK, EU, Australia and New Zealand citizens). If you have questions about this, please let Linda know. **Your passport must be valid at least 6 months after the date of your departure from Mexico (February 13, 2027, or February 03, 2028).**

Once you have reserved your space, we will send you more information – packing lists, info about the country, etc. You will be fully prepared for the journey. Also, Linda is always available by email for any questions or concerns – whatever they may be.

Cancellations & Refunds: Due to availability of space on our journey and the time required to process trip reservations **payments will not be refundable after May 01, 2026, or April 22, 2027.**

We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance to protect yourself in case extenuating circumstances force you to cancel your trip. There are many different options available online.

Responsibilities: ANDEAN PATHS reserves the right to accept or reject any person as a participant at any time, and to make changes in the itinerary whenever deemed necessary for the comfort, convenience, and safety of our participants, and to cancel a journey at any time. In the event a journey is cancelled, ANDEAN PATHS shall have no responsibility beyond the refund of monies paid to it by program participants as listed. Upon registration, participants acknowledge that ANDEAN PATHS and its affiliates are not responsible for any damages, losses, or expenses resulting from actions or omissions by service providers supplying services to program participants. Reasons that Andean Paths might cancel a program include, but are not limited to, issues around safety due to impassable roads, protests in Mexico, or similar unforeseen events.

We are available to address any questions, concerns or comments.

By Andean Paths ©