

## FRIENDSHIP FORCE EXCHANGE 12735

### Home Host -- Coatepec, Mexico.

Monday, November 7th to Monday, November 13th, 2016

Your six-night home stay will be with members of the Coatepec Friendship Force Club, most of whom live in nearby Xalapa which is situated in eastern-central Mexico, approximately 55 miles northwest of Veracruz city and about 200 miles from Mexico City. The area is an unforgettable place to visit. You will visit small cities and towns full of Mexican history and culture, see beautiful examples of Spanish Colonial architecture while admiring Baroque churches and leafy parks and learn about the region's coffee production. You'll travel nearly 7,000 feet in elevation during this exchange.



### Highlights

- Day trip from Xalapa to Coatepec and Xico
- Tour the Lencero Museum, a Spanish Colonial home once owned by President Antonio López de Santa Anna
- See Xalapa's main sights, including Xalapa Cathedral, Government Palace and the Paseo de los Lagos
- Explore the Museum of Anthropology in Xalapa, home to thousands of ancient artifacts, including giant (and rare) Olmec heads. Second finest Anthropology Museum in all of Mexico. A modern marvel.
- Discover why Coatepec is a Pueblo Mágico, and learn about its coffee production
- Visit Mary Magdalene's Parish Church in Xico
- Enjoy being in the lush, mountainous environment of the region and walk the cobbled streets of Colonial Naolinco.
- See historic Veracruz, early site of the Spanish conquest, and San Juan de Ulúa, one of the oldest fortresses in the Americas.
- Visit the ruins of Cempoala, the pre-Aztec capital of the Totanac Empire
- See the archaeological ruins of Quiahuiztlan.
- Enjoy a sunset picnic on the beach at Villa Rica.
- Welcome Dinner and Farewell Party.



### *What You Can Expect*

Xalapa is the capital — both politically and culturally — of the state of Veracruz, Xalapa is home to churches, museums, several green parks and many universities. Highlights include Xalapa Cathedral (Catedral Metropolitana), a Baroque- and Gothic-style church where the remains of St Rafael Guízar y Valencia lie; Government Palace (Palacio de Gobierno), the seat of the state government; the area surrounding the University of Veracruz (Universidad Veracruzana), the state's main university; and the Paseo de los Lagos, a circuit of walking paths between lakes and leafy trees.

One of Xalapa's biggest attractions is the Museum of Anthropology (Museo de Antropología de Xalapa). Explore its collection of artifacts from pre-Hispanic



cultures such as the Olmecs, Totonacs and Huastecs. The thousands of artifacts in the museum date as far back as 1300 BC and are wonderfully displayed in the airy, modern space. Don't miss the collection's most impressive pieces, the pair of giant Olmec heads.

A visit to the Lencero Museum (aka Museo de Lencero or Ex-Hacienda de Lencero), a Spanish Colonial home that first belonged to Juan Lencero, a soldier of Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés. Three hundred years later, in the mid-1800s, the home was bought by General Antonio López de Santa Anna, a former president of Mexico. Take a short tour of the home, admiring the period furniture and the tranquil gardens and lake.

From Xalapa, make the 20-minute drive to neighboring Coatepec, a city known for its coffee production—at 4,100 feet (1,250 meters) above sea level, Coatepec has an ideal climate for growing coffee beans. The city's other claim to fame is its designation as Pueblo Mágico, or Magic Town, a program led by Mexico's tourism department to highlight towns that provide a 'magical' experience, meaning they possess culturally and historically significant characteristics.

Check out the 18th-century San Jerónimo Church (Iglesia de San Jerónimo), one of Coatepec's main sights, and shop for crafts at the market. Enjoy your private tour of the Museo del Café (coffee museum) at El Café-tal Apan, a small coffee plantation just outside Coatepec where you'll learn about the region's coffee-making process and history. Admire antique tools and watch a demonstration.

Finally, make the 15-minute drive to your last city of the day, Xico, 9,200 feet (2,800 meters) above sea level and surrounded by green mountains. Admire the colonial houses; visit sites like Mary Magdalene's Parish Church (Parroquia de Maria Magdalena) and the Dress Museum; and try some of Xico's famous mole, a spicy Mexican sauce.

In Veracruz tour San Juan de Ulúa, a fortress that dates back to 1565. Situated along a peninsula jutting into the Gulf of Mexico, the complex once served as a prison and then a presidential residence. Today, it's a museum where you can learn about its role in several major events in Mexico's history. See top Veracruz sights like the zocalo (plaza), and the malecón (boardwalk). Enjoy the famous café lechero at the Gran Café de la Perroquia.

### ***Fees & How To Apply***

\$375 includes FFI ambassador fee and Coatepec club program fee. \$150 deposit required with application. Final payment is due by August 1st, 2016. Cancellations: No refunds after August 15, 2016.

To apply, complete the Exchange Application Form and mail it with your **deposit check payable to Friendship Force Florida Suncoast**. Mail application and check to the **Exchange Director, Rudy Michalek, 855 Bayway Blvd. # 707, Clearwater Beach, Florida 33767**.

You will receive an email confirmation once your application and check are received. Your check will NOT be deposited until you have been formally accepted into the Exchange. **Questions? Call 214-923-6549**. Selected ambassadors will be notified by March 20th, 2016. Ambassadors must have passport and obtain travel insurance.

**More Info.....** Maximum number of ambassadors is **18**. Re physical fitness: you must be able to get on/off buses without assistance, climb flights of stairs and be able to walk on cobblestones and hilly terrain. At times you will be in high altitude up to 7,000 ft. Re flights: You will book your own flights and transportation to Xalapa. Recommended flights, travel arrangements and optional excursions/hotels for pre- and post-exchange will be provided. Your U.S. passport must be valid at least six months from the date of departure from the U.S. Seven months would be safer to avoid any customs problems. You will be required to purchase travel insurance.