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# OAXACA, MEXICO

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## Basic Information



- Oaxaca pronounced (wuh-HAH-kuh) has been a state since 1824.
- The capitol is Oaxaca de Juarez.
- The size of Oaxaca is 36,275 square miles while the population is around 3 million.
- Some of the major cities in Oaxaca are San Juan, Salina Cruz, and Santa Cruz.
- The majority of people in Oaxaca speak Spanish.
- The state is best known for its **indigenous** people and **cultures**.



The state shaded in blue is Oaxaca

## Culture of Oaxaca

- Oaxaca is blessed with an amazing warm springtime climate, friendly people who take pride in their beautiful city and an overall atmosphere that sets the city apart from all the other cities in Mexico.



- Oaxaca is the city of constant celebrations and festivals. Oaxaca takes great pride in their most celebrated day, which is **Day of the Dead**. This is similar to Halloween, however people in Oaxaca celebrate it on November 22 (and the night of November 1<sup>st</sup>). The souls of the dead are believed to be able to return to earth on this happy and festive occasion. Families of the **deceased** prepare the favorite meals and drinks of the departed. They clean and decorate their **tombstones** and place pictures and candles of them on the top of their grave. Together families spend the day and night next to their graves and celebrate the arrival of the deceased.
- Oaxaca is known for its beautiful churches. All over the city, there are traditional and historical churches that were built in the 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The **exteriors** of these churches are incredible, and the **interiors** are truly masterpieces. People line up just to see inside of some of the most beautiful churches.



- The Oaxaca Valley is also one of Mexico's natural wonderlands. Mountain peaks reach 10,000 feet into the sky and overlook the beautiful valleys that appear to be a giant patchwork painting of earth-tones and greens because of the many farms and ranches. The surrounding mountains and valleys contain villages that have become famous for their beautiful art and unique crafts that they produce.



## Food

- Oaxaca is famous for its incredibly diverse food choices. Tamales in Oaxaca are wrapped in banana leaves and served alongside rice. Oaxaca is also known for its “Land of the Seven Moles”. Mole is a rich sauce made from as many as forty different ingredients. It is basically a chili sauce with hints of chocolate. People of Oaxaca also love many **peculiar** ingredients, such as grasshoppers. A visit to the local market is the best way to go if you want a taste of all kinds of different foods. The colorful market is packed with different meat choices, baskets of dried grasshoppers, bowls overflowing with different kinds of mole, fruits of all colors, and the brightest colored veggies you’ve ever seen!

These two photos resemble some of colorful foods and fun things to buy at markets in Oaxaca.



Mole  
Sauce!

## Ocean Views

- The beaches in Oaxaca have remained one of Mexico's undiscovered beach areas. At this point in time, the Oaxaca coast has managed to **preserve** its natural beauty. Not only will you get a feel for the beautiful beach views, but you will also be lucky in seeing some of Oaxaca's most treasured sea turtles. This is one of the few remaining places in Mexico where you can see these beautiful creatures on a regular basis.

Below are a few of the most popular and well-desired ocean views in Oaxaca!



Puerto Angel, Oaxaca



Mazunte, Oaxaca



Escobilla, Oaxaca



Zipolite, Oaxaca

## Glossary

Indigenous: Originating where it is found

Culture: All the knowledge and values shared by a society

Day of the Dead: A celebration of remembering loved ones who have died celebrated in Mexico and other parts of Latin America

Deceased: A person who has died

Tombstones: A large, flat inscribed stone standing or laid over a grave

Exterior: The outer structure of something

Interior: The inner or indoor part of something such as a building

Peculiar: Strange or odd

Preserve: Maintain something in its original or existing state

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## Common Core State Standards



### **5<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies**

- 5.SS.2.1.1 Develop and use different kinds of maps, globes, graphs, charts, databases, and models to display and obtain information.
- 5.SS.2.1.2 Identify the regions of the United States and their resources

### **5<sup>th</sup> grade English**

- RI.3.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.
- RI.3.5 Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

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