MOUNTAIN LINK

MEXICO: IXTACCIHUATL AND EL PICO DE ORIZABA

Day 01 Once you clear customs at the Mexico City Airport you take a taxi to the hotel. Rooms are reserved under the name "Mountain Link." Please check in using your own name. The afternoon is free for exploring the Zona Rosa district; one of Mexico City's finest. Other points of interest are the Museo Archeologico and Old Town. In the evening there is an orientation meeting with your guides at the hotel. You are responsible for your dinner this evening.

Day 02 After breakfast in the hotel, we travel by private transport to the Pass of Cortez at 11,800 feet located between Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl. We stop along the way in the small town of Amecameca to tour the local market and church, and enjoy a roadside picnic lunch. Once at the pass, we will build camp and go for a short acclimatization hike. We spend the night near the pass. (B, L, D)

Day 03 We will pair our equipment down and hike along the west flank of Ixta to our high camp located around 14000ft. (B, L, D)

Day 04 Your guides wake you early for the big day. We climb through high-altitude grasslands to a moraine trail leading to the Ayoloco glacier. From this point, we ascend the glacier and gain the summit ridge. One more push along the summit ridge takes us to the top of Ixtaccihuatl 17,342 feet. We descend to high camp to spend the night. (B, L, D)

Day 05 We dismantle high camp and pack all our climbing gear for our descent back to base camp. Here ourvehicle awaits us for the drive to Puebla, the fourth largest city in Mexico. We spend the next two nights at one of Puebla's finest hotels. (B, L, D)

Day 06 Today is a day of rest and relaxation. You may choose to lounge by the pool or tour the city. This optional city tour includes Aztec and Toltec ruins, the smallest volcano in the world, a tile factory, and lunch in a beautiful hacienda-turned-restaurant. You are responsible for the cost of the city tour and all meals this day.

Day 07 After a three-hour drive, we arrive in the small town of Tlachichuca. Here we have lunch, repack our climbing gear, and load up the 4-wheel drive vehicles. We travel on a primitive road system to Piedra Grande Hut at 13,800 feet. We camp in tents near the hut for a peaceful night's rest. Please note that you are responsible for breakfast in Puebla on this day. (L, D)

Day 08 Today we prepare for tomorrow's summit attempt. Depending on weather, climbing conditions and group dynamics we either move to a high camp (near 16,000 ft.) or move technical gear higher up the mountain. This will help in acclimatization and minimize the demands of the long summit push the next day.

Day 09 We begin the climb in what some people deem to be early morning and others the middle of the night. Our route is the Jamapa Glacier located on the north side of the mountain. The first part of the climb is made on a scree trail to the base of the glacier. At this point, we gear up for glacier climbing and rope travel. Our route, "Ruta Norte," is straight-forward glacier climbing with few crevasse problems, yet its steep, sustained slopes make it challenging. Our ascent to the summit of the third highest peak in North America El Pico de Orizaba at 18,404 feet is both strenuous and rewarding. After a brief photo session and celebration, we descend to camp. At camp, we pack up then drive to Tlachichuca where we are rewarded with showers and a celebration dinner. The night is spent in Señor Reyes's bunkhouse. (B, L, D)

Day 10 We return to Mexico City by private bus and drive to the airport for outbound flights. Please book return flights after 4:00 p.m. You are responsible for your lunch & dinner. (B only)

(Unless otherwise noted, nights are spent in 2-3 person tents.)

**Itinerary subject to change.*
*** B: Breakfast; L: Lunch; D: Dinner: Initials are noted where meals are included.*