
2009-10 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

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A Hop, Skip, and a Jump to Oaxaca

Alison Pate
Linfield College

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Journals from Oaxaca Spring 2010

2010-02-28 A hop, skip and a jump to Oaxaca



Me at Teotihuacan, photo courtesy of Amanda Holtby

It's the end of our third week in Mexico, and already so much has happened!

Mexico City was a whirlwind of museums and excursions, all of which were amazing.

We went to the ancient city of Teotihuacan, home of the gigantic Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon. I always find ancient sites to be particularly peaceful, and Teotihuacan was no exception. As we walked down the Avenue of the Dead, I couldn't help but imagine the everyday person strolling down to the temples to watch a seasonal ceremony. We also managed to go to the Tetitla complex, a living space for the wealthy, and see remnants of some gorgeous murals. This was especially exciting for me as I had previously studied some of them, and I couldn't believe I was walking where famous art historians had walked before.

After the endurance test that was climbing the pyramids, we were all completely exhausted.

The next day we visited the National Museum of Anthropology in Chapultepec park, which was also astounding. The museum itself is beautiful, and we got to see many key artifacts and art pieces from the most prominent sites in Mexico. We all said hello to the famous Calendar stone and the enormous statue of Coatlicue.

From Mexico City we then took a bus to Puebla, a really charming little town. We all had a lovely time sitting out by the Zocalo, eating churros and drinking coffee. We also went to the sites of Cholula, Cacaxla, and Xochitecatl. At Cholula everyone ate the famous chapulines (grasshoppers) and climbed up to a beautiful orange cathedral, built right on top of the archeological ruins of Cholula. This is a common theme at many conquered sites. At Cacaxla we saw more beautiful murals, and we had some time to sit and reflect at Xochitecatl, which was a blessing.

From Puebla we took another bus to Oaxaca, where we were whisked off to our new homes with our host families. It was a little nerve racking at first, but my host family is lovely, and they've done a lot to make me feel at home. I was worried about the food situation, since I'm a vegetarian, but they've been really accommodating. I live with an older couple, and their children and grandchildren are always over, so it's a fairly large family.

School started the very next day and we've been kept busy with our archeology class, visual culture class, Spanish classes, language exchange partners, our service project, and our various excursions. It's been a little overwhelming, but I'm making it through the best I can.

Our service project, teaching English classes in Teotitlan de Valle, has been a little stressful for me. I teach a class of adults who know some English already, and it has definitely been a trip out of my comfort zone. But the people are extremely nice, and I know it will be a good and rewarding experience for myself and for the rest of the group.

Yesterday I got to go to the site of Mitla for the first time, where I will be doing my research project. Mitla is absolutely beautiful, and I'm looking forward to the countless hours I will be spending there in the next months (no, really, I am!)

For more photos from my trip, please visit my tumblr: <http://apate.tumblr.com/>

Alison Pate, Art
Linfield College Semester Abroad Program in Oaxaca, Mexico