

The Mixtec, Zapotec, and Triqui: Indigenous Peoples of Mexico Historical Timeline



1500 BC

The Mixtec ancestors migrate from northern Mexico into the area that is now the Mexican State of Oaxaca.



1000 BC – 200 AD

The Mixtec are the ruling indigenous group in the Oaxaca Valley. Tilantongo becomes their most important city for government, business, and culture.



700 AD

The Zapotec capital of Monte Albán shrank in population and influence. For unknown reasons, Monte Albán was largely abandoned at this time. This ancient city is now a tourist attraction.



1030 – 1063

For the only time in history, a Mixtec leader, named Eight Deer Jaguar Claw, united the Upper, Lower, and Coastal Mixtec. The Mixtec numbered about 1.5 million before “Spanish Conquistadors” (explorers and soldiers sent by Spain to develop new colonies) arrived in their homeland.



1858-1872

Former Mexican President Benito Pablo Juárez García was of Zapotec ancestry. He led the fight against the French invasion of Mexico and eventually overthrew the Second Mexican Empire. Benito Juárez is a Zapotec and national hero, remembered with a national holiday on March 21 and known for the quote, “Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace.”



1862

Porfirio Díaz, of Mixtec ancestry, was a general in the war against the French, and became a hero of the famous May 5 battle (now celebrated as “Cinco de Mayo”), due to the support of a Mixtec battalion.

1876

Porfirio Díaz became the President of Mexico when he seized power through a military takeover. He and his allies ruled Mexico with a heavy hand during the years known as “El Porfiriato.” Porfirio Díaz ruled until the Mexican Revolution began in 1910.



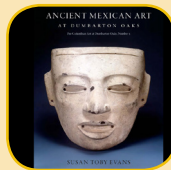
2015

Today, indigenous people from the Oaxaca Valley are very involved in markets around the world, as professionals, as producers of indigenous artwork, and as agricultural workers in northern Mexico and the United States providing food for people all over the world.



1950s and 1960s

Mixtec, Zapotec, and Triqui people began migrating in greater numbers to Baja California, Sinaloa and Mexico City in search of work in agriculture.



1000 BC

The Zapotec ancestors migrate from northern Mexico into the area that is now the Mexican State of Oaxaca. After they arrived, there were several centuries of conflict between the Mixtec and the Zapotec for political power.



500 BC – 200 AD

The Zapotec begin building Monte Albán, the heart of their political, economic and cultural life. Monte Albán was characterized by temples, plazas, government buildings, and a ball court. The Zapotec also built the city of Mitla. By 200 BC, the Zapotecs had defeated other indigenous groups to become the ruling group in the Oaxaca Valley. The Zapotecs reached a high level of sophistication in the arts, writing, architecture, and engineering.



1000 AD

Mixtec culture was growing in population and influence in southeastern Mexico. The Mixtec people became known for their metal work, fine pottery, and “codices”—a way of recording Mixtec history through pictures and symbols drawn on deerskin.



1521 – 1527

Most of the Mixtec and Zapotec regions were conquered by Spanish soldiers. The Zapotec leader, Cosijoeza, advised his people not to fight the Spaniards, hoping they could avoid a defeat like that of the Aztecs. However, these indigenous peoples continued to resist Spanish rule. The Zapotec, for instance, mounted resistance campaigns in 1550, 1560, and 1715.

During this time, many indigenous people moved to the mountains for safety and to keep their religion and traditions. Many small towns were created, separated by rugged mountains, resulting in a variety of indigenous languages and traditions. Today one-third of the towns in the state of Oaxaca are indigenous.



1932

Mexican archeologist Alfonso Caso discovers “Tomb 7” at the Monte Albán ruins, revealing many Zapotec and Mixtec treasures. Alfonso Caso also helped to interpret Mixtec “codices” which tell the history of the Mixtec people.

1980s

The Triqui people began asserting their uniqueness as an indigenous people. Indigenous people from southeastern Mexico began migrating seasonally to the United States, providing agricultural work.

