

# Wantok Adventures LLC

## World Rivers: Veracruz

Class IV

October 14-24, 2023

What makes every new year an exciting for us? A fantastic new World Rivers trip, of course, and we have the perfect one for 2023. As always, it's based on world-class rafting rivers, with seven days of rafting on six diverse and spectacular rivers in the tropical and mountainous state of Veracruz, stretching along the Gulf of Mexico. We use different crafts to suit the rivers, from small rafts on the Alto Filo, inflatable kayaks on the gentle Actopan and full-size paddle rafts on the other rivers, and include lots of different activities ranging from archeological wonders to zip-lining in the mango trees to a pre-Hispanic sauna. We camp for two non-consecutive nights while running long sections of two of the rivers and otherwise stay in cabins and small hotels, including five nights in the same hotel to minimize the packing and unpacking routine. Since the area is known for Mesoamerican ruins, we include visits to two sites, one of which is accessible only by river.

What's not to like. It's close and convenient, the weather is great, and we'll eat, drink and be merry between trips. Please join us in Veracruz.

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1, Oct 14 Arrival

Arrive in Mexico City. Due to previous bad experiences with lost luggage and delayed flights, we have chosen to base this trip out of Mexico City rather than taking domestic flights to Veracruz. Transfer to our hotel. If you arrive on this day, you will be met at the airport and taken to the hotel. In the evening, we'll have a welcome and orientation meeting in the hotel lobby before heading out to a local restaurant for our first dinner together.

*Hotel Plaza Revolucion, dinner only*

#### Day 2, Oct 15 To Veracruz & Cantona Ruins

After breakfast we'll head east towards the Gulf to Alto Tonga, a small town in central Veracruz. The drive, including a lunch stop and a tour of the ruins of Cantona, should take about 5 hours. The lunch will be at "Los Cochinitos" where we begin our delicious delve into the regional cuisine.

Cantona (La casa del sol) is a Mesoamerican archaeological site in Mexico. At its peak, Cantona was a walled, fortified city with a high level of urbanization. Its original inhabitants are unknown, but it is speculated that it was founded by Olmec-Xicalanca groups towards the late Classical Period. The site comprises a road network with over 500 cobblestone causeways, more than 3,000 individual patios, residences, 24 ball courts and an elaborate acropolis with

multiple ceremonial buildings and temples. These impressive buildings were constructed with carved stones (one atop the other) without any stucco or cement mortar.

After exploring the ruins, we carry on to the cabins at Rincon de Pancho and settle in, with a bit of free time to poke around the area.

*Rincon de Pancho, all meals*

### **Day 3, Oct 16      Alto Filo River**

Our first day of rafting! We drive to the access point for the river, load donkeys with our rafting gear, and walk about 45 minutes downhill on a jungle path into the put-in. The upper Filo offers very fun Class III-IV rafting in small rafts, but its spectacular landscapes make it really special. The rapids are surrounded by high and steep canyon walls with waterfalls spilling off the walls into the river. Fantastic. It's a rocky, technical test of our skills for the first part of our day then mellows out into a lovely Class II section.

We'll be rafting the section below this too, so we camp the night by the river and enjoy the quiet and the dramatic beauty. Tents and all group camping gear are provided and delicious camp food is served.

*Camp, all meals*

### **Day 4, Oct 17    Lower Filo & Bobos Rivers**

Back to the Filo River for easy rafting to the confluence with the Bobos, where we pause to visit the ruins of Cuajilote, which are only accessible by river. It's an archeological site from the Totonac culture more than 2000 years ago, large but little excavated. Just downstream is a second site, Vega de la Pena which we may also visit. There's more adventure along the way too: a cave exploration and the spectacular Cascada del Encanto. The Bobos is a Class II float. From take-out it's a two hour drive to Picocanoa, a rustic and eco-friendly hotel where we overnight (and spend four more nights!).

*Picocanoa Hotel, all meals*

### **Day 5, Oct 18    Actopan River**

We rafting small boats and inflatable kayaks on the pristine waters of the Actopan. We launch on this pristine Class II flow right where it emerges from underground, a special experience. river. We enjoy beautiful scenery of fruit plantations, jungle and mountains while navigating some fun rapids. This is a perfect place to try and inflatable kayak. We float right up to a local fish restaurant for lunch. After we leave the river we can visit the "City of Flowers", Xalapa, or return directly to Picocanoa to relax before enjoying the pre-Hispanic sauna at Temazcal.

*Picocanoa, all meals*

### **Day 6, Oct 19    Antigua River**

Today we take on the Antigua section of the Antigua river, a good class 3, big and bouncy. This is the original center of rafting in Mexico, and we put-in right from our hotel. After a day of good fun on the river, we can relax by the riverside in the thermal waters of El Carrizal. What a great

to relax those paddling muscles. Lunch is at Picacanoa. We include zip lining among the mango trees at Tirolesa de los Mangos, and you can decide on your own to include other optional activities like massages, mountain bikes, canyoning, and nature walks.

*Picocanoa, all meals*

#### **Day 7, Oct 20 Barranca Grande**

Today we take on a technical Class IV river, the Barranca Grande, the upper section of the Antigua River. At the river there'll be a thorough briefing before we launch for two days of challenging rafting. A day of whitewater excitement gets us to our camp in the narrow, winding river gorge.

*Camp, all meals*

#### **Day 8, Oct 21 Barranca Grande**

In the morning we raft the 4x4s, four big Class IV rapids, a high point of the trip. We continue on into the Pescados section of the Antigua for an afternoon of Class III-IV water. More fun on a great day of rafting with fantastic scenery. Take-out is at Picacanoa, and we will have completed all three sections of the Antigua.

*Picocanoa, all meals*

#### **Day 9, Oct 22 Upper Xico River**

Surprise! We've saved the best for last. We will undertake the first commercial rafting trip down the upper Xico river, another technical Class III-IV, if the water level is right. The river has been kayaked and rafted, including by our guides, and we will have a safety kayaker along. It's a barely explored part of the jungle, a special opportunity. If the river isn't at a raftable level, we can return to the Antigua for another day of rafting fun. We have some free time in the afternoon before dinner and a party accompanied by batucada, fast and rhythmic drumming by a local group.

*Picocanoa, all meals*

#### **Day 10, Oct 23 Mexico City**

It's a four-hour drive back to the hotel where we stayed the first night. We stop for lunch en route. The afternoon is free to get ready for the trip home, rest and relax or do a bit of exploring in Mexico City. Then, sadly, it's farewell dinner time. We reminisce about the trip, talk about our next adventures and say goodbye to newfound friends.

*Hotel, all meals.*

#### **Day 11, Oct 24 Depart**

Transfers to the airport are provided this day. If you are staying on in Mexico City you'll need to make plans to get to the airport on your own when you leave. *BF only*

## SCHEDULE AND COSTS

|                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| 10+ participants | \$3900 |
| 8-9 " "          | \$4300 |
| 6-7 " "          | \$4900 |

All prices are per person and based on double occupancy. If you request a single, the single supplement cost is \$500. If you are traveling alone but are willing to share a double, Wantok will try to find you a roommate. Prices are exclusive of international airfare.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Wantok guide on the trip and planning assistance before it
- accommodations in hotels or inns per itinerary
- all arrangements in the field, including group gear and rafting equipment
- camping gear except sleeping pad and bag
- meals as noted and a selection of beverages on-river
- sightseeing and activities as noted in the itinerary
- ground transportation

## WHAT IS NOT

- international and domestic airfare
- trip and flight insurance
- optional tipping off-river and to leader, guides and river staff
- excess baggage charges
- airport taxes
- off-river personal items like drinks, laundry, souvenirs, etc.

## ABOUT US

Wantok, a word from the *Tok Pisin* language of Papua New Guinea, literally means "someone who speaks my language", which by implication means someone from the same village or nearby, and by extension a friend or a mate. Wantok Adventures LLC is a group of veteran international river runners who chose our name to celebrate the spirit of camaraderie that brought us together. We are not a business in the traditional sense. We cooperate to create and market exciting river trips.

Our goal is to bring you great whitewater at great values, maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and safety on the water while minimizing the tendency towards luxury of the large adventure companies. We think trip participants are fully capable of being a bit more self-reliant, that 3-4 star hotels with lots of local flavor are

preferable to the big chains, that a great meal in a lively local restaurant is more enjoyable than the same meal in a fancy tourist place, and that a sense of adventure should be part of every trip.

Our price structure is simple, omitting the many hundreds of dollars others add on to every booking to pay for their printing, their mailings, their offices, and their staff. We devise the best and most cost-effective itineraries and negotiate the lowest fair price with the best local operators to offer you a terrific trip at a good price. A local outfitter, our guides, and you—that's all we need!

## **WORLD RIVERS PROGRAM**

For years travelers have been visiting the great ruins, monuments and cultural attractions of the world. Their more adventurous cousins have been going to the same countries to challenge the rapids of whitewater rivers. Why not combine the two, we thought? So now we have. In 2023 we are offering four trips that combine the tourist highlights of a country with rafting on its best rivers, spending most nights in hotels along the way: Bhutan, Nepal, The Alps (France, Italy & Switzerland), and Mexico (Veracruz).

This enticing collection of journeys will offer something for everyone who loves the thrills and beauty of a great river. Wantok's encyclopedic knowledge of rivers and river outfitters in a hundred countries, compiled during a lifetime of travel and river exploration, has been applied to devise the very best itineraries with the top operators around the globe.

Perhaps you'll be lured by the exhilarating whitewater, 2000-year old ruins, hot springs and rainforest of Veracruz. You won't want to miss the Alps, with all the comfort and glory of Europe paired with four great rivers and fine wining and dining in three countries. New this year are trips to Bhutan and Nepal, the pinnacles of the Himalayan rafting experience. In Nepal we challenge the best whitewater of the western area and end the trip in famous Chitwan National Park for elephant-back and other safaris. In Bhutan, the hidden kingdom, we'll be overwhelmed by the splendor of the monasteries, temples and palaces, enjoy stunning walks through the hills, and raft some of its lesser-known rivers. We're sure that one of these treats will compel you to experience this new way of seeing the rivers of the world

Or you can take advantage of our Roll Your Own option and get together a group of four or more people to create a departure on any of our existing World Rivers itineraries in Peru, Ecuador, Morocco, Japan, Southeast Asia, Nepal, East Africa, Bhutan, Mexico, Chile or Guatemala. If you have a country in mind for a World Rivers-style trip, let us know and we may be able to put the perfect itinerary together for you.

All of the trips take you out of the US for less than two weeks, and most nights are spent in picturesque hotels and inns as we seek to avoid the blandness of the international hotel chains in favor of small, family-run properties with local flavor and a personal feel.

Sound appealing? All the details you'll need to pick the right trip for yourself are available in on our website, [www.wantokadventures.com](http://www.wantokadventures.com). Take advantage of the opportunity to tour some of the most interesting countries in the world and get your whitewater fix too. But watch out: Once you try your first Wantok World Rivers trip, you may become addicted.

## **INSURANCE**

Neither the guides who are part of Wantok and its associates nor Wantok Adventures LLC, carries liability, evacuation or other insurance for the participants. We VERY STRONGLY recommend that you check what your current insurance will cover on a trip, and then purchase additional insurance for anything else you feel you need. We particularly advise buying trip cancellation, medical and evacuation insurance in case of last-minute changes in plans or a need for emergency medical treatment or evacuation while on the trip.

You can find good insurance policies through [WorldNomads](#), [Ripcord](#), [Squaremouth](#), [Travelguard](#), and [Travelsafe](#). Another excellent option is [MedJet](#). At a modest cost they will supply evacuation insurance from anywhere in the world to any hospital, promptly and without questions.

You will be required to sign a liability waiver acknowledging the insurance situation to participate in the trip

## **HOW TO SIGN UP**

A deposit of \$800 per person will hold your seat on this trip. If you're ready to join the trip, please mail your check for \$800 per person to Wantok at 1678 16<sup>th</sup> St, Ste B, Oakland CA 94607. If you prefer to pay by credit card, you can do so via Paypal, [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com), using [wantokadventures@gmail.com](mailto:wantokadventures@gmail.com) to identify us. To use Venmo or Zelle, please inquire.

You'll receive an email on receipt of your deposit with the detailed information on the trip, including a registration form, liability waiver, packing list, and travel details.

## **PAYMENT, CANCELLATION & REFUNDS**

Final payment is due 90 days before trip departure. Final payments using Paypal will be charged an additional 4% of the amount being paid to cover Paypal fees. Venmo, Zelle or bank transfers incur no fee from Wantok.

Checks should be mailed to Wantok, 1678 B 16<sup>th</sup> St, Oakland CA 94607.

If you cancel your trip up to 90 days before departure, the deposit minus \$250 penalty will be refunded. The penalty rises to \$500 for cancellations received 89-60 days before trip departure. Cancellations between 59 and 30 days before trip departure incur a fee of

50% of trip land cost. No refund will be made for cancellations within 29 days of departure date. We strongly recommend purchase of trip cancellation insurance (see above).

### **QUESTIONS?**

Contact us at [wantokadventures@gmail.com](mailto:wantokadventures@gmail.com) or contact the person who sent you this itinerary.

## ***Wantok Adventures LLC***

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