Alternative Tourism in Mexico

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There are always other ways of doing things. This includes our recreational activities. For example, travelling and getting to know places (tourism) is not without new alternatives.

In recent years a worldwide stream of people has emerged who seek to promote and practice as well as offer services related to a different way of doing tourism. In this concept the most important thing is the contact with nature and the autochthonous cultures, that is to say to soak up the own of the region to visit.

Through a series of activities (see GUIDE below) we seek to impact or alter nature as little as possible. This includes respecting wild flora and fauna, as well as local cultures (their uses and customs) who, thanks to their way of life, have remained respectful of their natural environment without depleting it.

An alternative traveler now dispenses with the boring, monotonous comforts of mass tourism devoid of respect for biological diversity and ancestral cultures.

This globetrotter seeks more learning and excitement to experience the new and enjoy all that this vast natural and cultural world has to offer. It moves away, albeit for some time, from the routine way of life it usually leads in its place of residence or work.

In addition to helping, either with their economic contribution or in kind, to local people participate in conserving the wild spaces and benefit in some way thanks to the fact that we recognize how they live and why they are.

This alternative traveller is aware of the effects of his activity and demands that it be the most respectful of the environment. For example, it is established that in the place where it will be housed, the water used will be recycled or treated appropriately, and that the waste generated in the place where it is housed will be minimal or disposed of in a responsible manner.

If properly targeted, alternative tourism activities can become a beneficial option to conserve wild areas, such as Mexican Protected Natural Areas, which are areas that enjoy some protection status by the Mexican federal government through the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) or those Priority Terrestrial Regions, which are areas proposed by the National Commission for the Use and Knowledge of Biodiversity (CONABIO) unique for their important ecological and cultural value to Mexico and the world.

Of course there is a range of alternative travelers, from the "casual" (who are not very demanding and their visit is part of the itinerary of a trip of general or conventional interests) to the "heart or radical" who seek the most ecologically pristine places and / or "wild" culturally speaking, because they are involved in
trips designed with scientific, educational, environmental and / or conservation orientations.

Below is a guide to what many of them involve so you can get an idea of what the issue is all about.

**GUIDE OF ALTERNATIVE TOURIST ACTIVITIES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adventure tourism.</th>
<th>Trekking</th>
<th>which refers to hiking in the mountains.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Climbing</td>
<td>in their different modalities such</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Descent by parachute or paraglider as: rock, ice or combining both (mixed)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>throwing oneself from an elevated place in free fall</td>
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<td>Camp</td>
<td>hang-gliding, ultralight or balloon gliding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Horseback Riding</td>
<td>to spend the night using tents or tents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cannonism</td>
<td>is said to ride animals such as horses, camels, llamas, etc.</td>
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<td>Diving</td>
<td>activity consisting of following the course of ravines and their watercourses</td>
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<td>Rappelism</td>
<td>either self-contained (with artificial respiration equipment -SCUBA- ) or free (with snorkel -simple breathing tube)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>River descent</td>
<td>go down a cliff or walls using rope by means of inflatable rafts or in kayak</td>
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<th>Ecotourism</th>
<th>Environmental education workshops</th>
<th>teaching and learning of ecology and environmental sciences topics</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>includes: ecosystems, fauna, flora, fossils, geological phenomena</td>
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Photo Safari  
(volcanic eruptions…) and celestial or sidereal phenomena (star showers…).

Educational trekking 
with a view to exercising nature photography

Others: such as academics-conservationists 
there are signs that inform and guide about ecological aspects of the site (flora, fauna and other points of interest…)

Swimming in pools. 
participation in wildlife rescue programs and biological research projects

swimming in water pools, i.e. lentic waters (with no apparent movement)

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Rural tourism.

Ethnotourism  
in contact with the native, local or original culture of the site

Agritourism 
get involved in field-related activities, how sowing and harvesting takes place

Gastronomic workshops 
preparation or creation of food and dishes for tasting

Mystical experiences 
in contact with the magical world of subjectivity involving some special ritual (e.g. temazcal or steam bath)

Language learning 
the one commonly spoken in the region or the ancestral one

Eco-Archaeology 
the past of a culture and its natural environment

Preparation and use of traditional medicine 
know about the cure of diseases through herbal medicine and others

Handicraft workshops
participate actively in the manufacture of handicrafts

take photographs of everything that is involved in the activities of this branch of alternative tourism

Source Dirección de Fomento al Turismo Alternativo, Sectur México, modified by Jorge Neyra.

Bibliography:


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