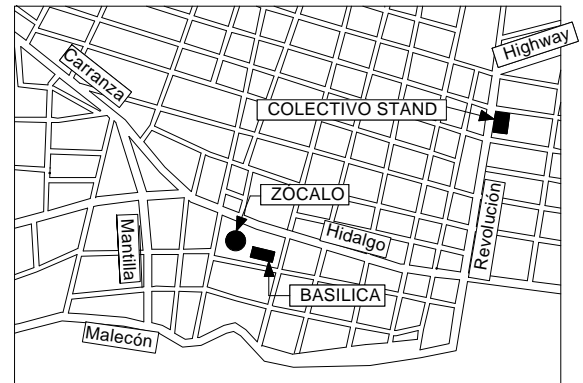
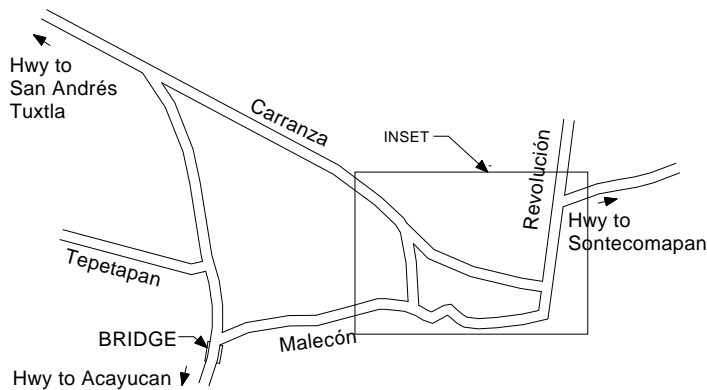


Catemaco

The Volcanic Lake hike starts in town; for the Poza Reina hike, the writeup includes directions for getting there by car or by colectivo.



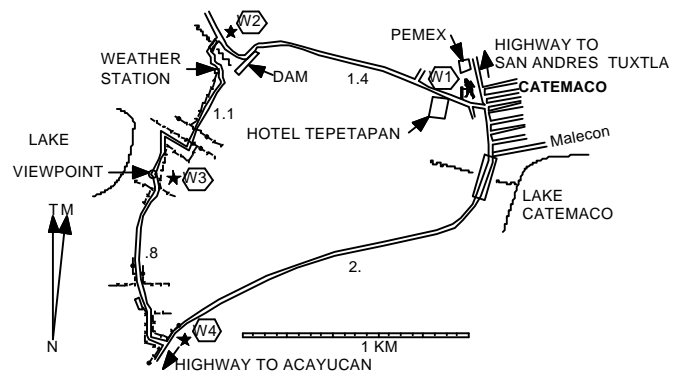
Volcanic Lake



Trail Data Length of loop = 5.3 km.
Exertion index = 120. Maximum elevation = 390 m.

There's a small lake in a volcanic crater near Catemaco. The hike that goes there takes you through some pretty farm country on little-used roads.

The trailhead is at the end of the street the Hotel Tepetapan is on. That street connects with the Highway 180 bypass around Catemaco 200 meters south (toward Acayucan) from the Pemex at Km 146. It almost lines up with Moctezuma Street coming from the center of town. When you reach a dam at the other end, go around to the other side of the dam. At this point you may elect to follow the canal downstream for whatever distance suits you to see birds in natural jungle foliage who feed on fish in the canal.



From the dam, go past the small unmanned weather station and follow the foot trail past the little lake to the highway and back into town.

Thanks to Dave Kloosterman for this delightful excursion.

SALTO DE EYIPANTLA

The waterfall at Eyipantla is a commercialized tourist attraction. It is included here only because many guidebooks mention it and you could get the impression that a hike is involved.

If you drive you'll find the parking insecure. Youths will offer to "cuidar" your car but in fact they're as likely as anyone to break into it. There is the further risk that some little man with a dirty rag and a bucket of dirty water will scrape the paint off your car and demand a tip. Telling them not to serves no purpose. They'll ruin your car's paint finish and grin at you when you get back.

Taking the bus avoids that problem, but in reality the waterfall is only worth the bus trip if you're a fanatic for waterfalls. It's a nice enough waterfall but the commercialism and artificiality of the setting makes it altogether forgettable.

Poza Reina



Trail Data Length = 7.7 km. Exertion index = 160 going, 35 returning. Maximum elevation = 481 m.

A picture-perfect waterfall and crashing cascades in a gorgeous setting makes as good a destination as you'll find in Mexico. The hiking part is a bit monotonous, being almost all ranchland, but the surrounding hills are pretty and there's not much traffic. Thanks go to Gene Gaudi for this great suggestion.

It's a fairly long walk and there's no place to buy water so go prepared. This area gets a lot of rain, so go prepared for that as well. The setting for the falls and cascades is wonderfully natural. So natural, in fact, that no trails have been built and so some agility is required to scramble over some of the boulders.

The trailhead is the colectivo stop in Tebanca, at Aborrotos 'El Triunfo', at the far end of town. If you're driving, the fact is that if you can drive as far as Tebanca you can drive all the way to Poza Reina. So it's a long walk for those who don't have cars and for those who do but choose to walk. For everyone else it's a short drive.

You can catch a colectivo for Tebanca in Catemaco at the corner of Independencia and Revolución Streets. Starting at the Basilica, go five blocks north (six if you're counting short blocks) and five blocks east and you'll see the colectivos lined up. Ride the colectivo to the far end of Tebanca and walk in the same direction.

To drive to Tebanca, follow the signs through Catemaco toward Sontecomapan and Montepío. That takes you past a five-corner intersection a block north of the colectivo station. From the five-corner intersection head out east on the highway. In 2.6 mi (4.2 km), at a fork, bear right toward Nanciyaga. You'll go through Coyame, where the pavement ends, and Tebanca is the next town after that, in 3 mi (5 km).

There seem to be no signs for Poza Reina. The only turn is in 2.5 km from the trailhead (Aborrotos 'El Triunfo'), onto a road like the one you're on, signposted for Hidalgo and Lago Apompal. The entrance is on the right in 5.2 km, at the first substantial collection of ranch buildings. The ranch owner will collect a toll of about US\$3 per person, in pesos.

