

## Mexico City

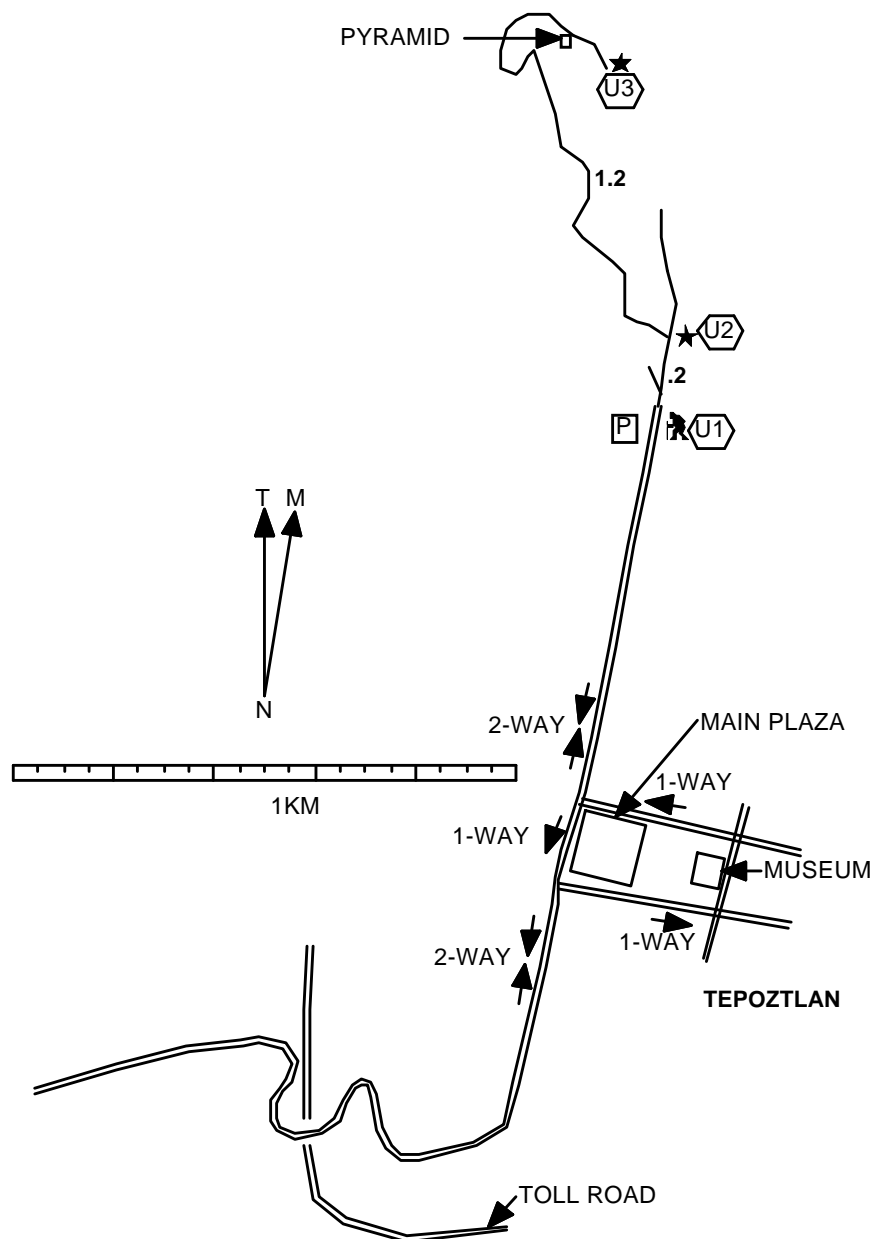
### Tepoztlán

**Trail Data** Length each way = 1.4 km. Exertion index = 360 going, 10 returning. Maximum elevation = 2101 m.

It's a little bit of a stretch to call this a hike. The trail is almost entirely on stones that have been laid step-like up a very steep hill. But the vegetation is natural and the stones were laid hundreds of years ago by the Tlahuica people who settled here. About 50 meters from the top there's a steel ladder which probably was installed later. The pyramid is a small temple platform with remnants of Mexica (Aztec) decorations.

The trail up to the pyramid begins at the north end of Cinco de Mayo Street, which is the main street through town. At the main square, if you're driving, you have to go right and go around the block because of one-way streets. On the way you'll pass the museum, which is worth a stop.

At the north end of town, Cinco de Mayo Street ends directly at the trail. There is a paid-parking lot there. Also, there is a fee to see the ruins, which is paid at the top of the trail. A sign at the bottom indicates how much the fee is. You can hike up for free.



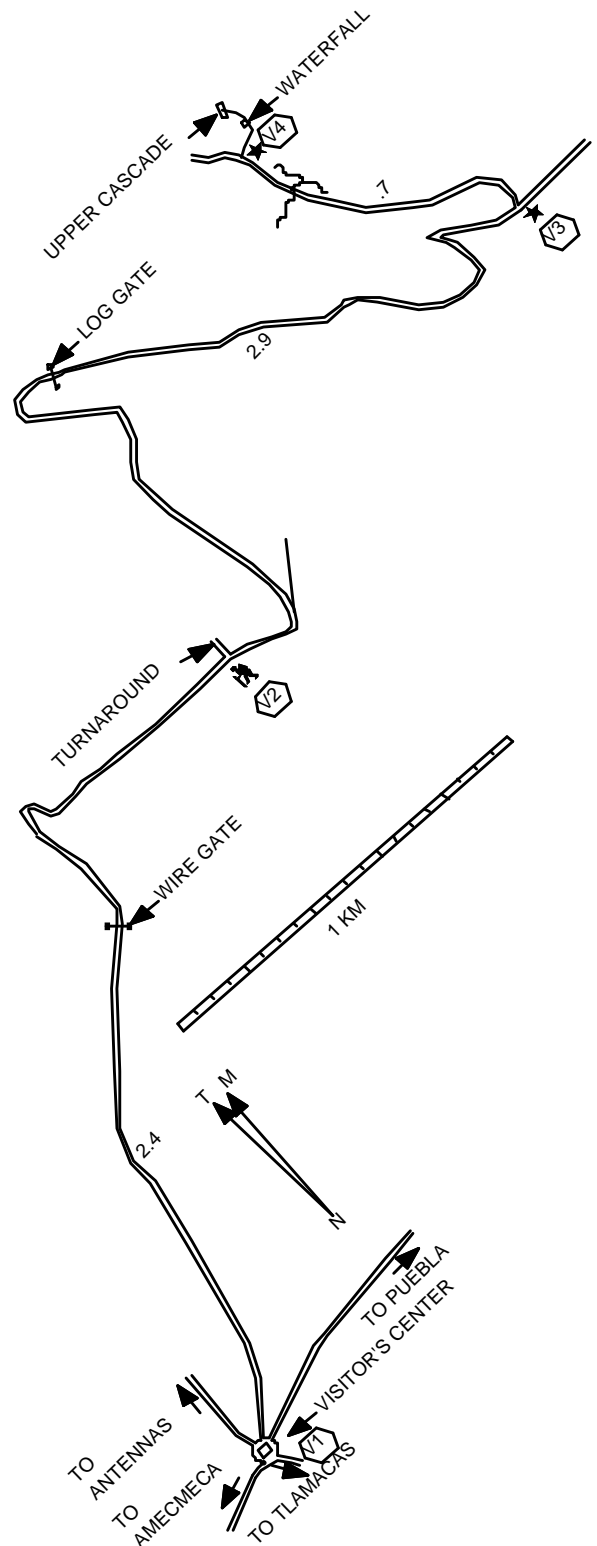
## Paso de Cortés

**Trail Data** Length each way= 6 km. Exertion index = 165 going, 360 returning.  
Maximum elevation = 3702 m.



To be this close to the capital and breathe clean, fresh air amidst beautiful long-needle pines and catch glimpses of stalwart peaks looming above you is an unexpected treat. This hike takes you through all that and, as a bonus, shows you a cascade and a waterfall.

The road to Paso de Cortés starts from the highway at the south end of Amecameca, 100 m south of Pemex #0222. There might be a sign for Tlamacás. Follow the road up to the high point of a saddle between Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl Mountains. There you'll find a circle with a square block column, which marks where Cortés crossed on his way to Tenochtitlan-México. Next to it is a ranger station where you can stay if you bring a sleeping bag and a back-pad and you're prepared to cook meals; you'd need a stove and there aren't any showers. There are four other roads leaving this circle: one toward Tlamacás, one toward Puebla, one toward the microwave antennas uphill, and another between the last two that leads to the trailhead. You have to open (and close) a gate near the circle to proceed, and there's a wire gate at 1.5 km. The trailhead is at 2.4 km, where the road widens enough that you can park and there's a turnaround for anything as big as a van. After that the road gets worse.



## La Malintzi

**Trail Data** Length of loop = 6.7 km. Exertion index = 1558 going, 213 returning. Maximum elevation = 4452 m.

This hike is well into the strenuous range, not just because of the exertion index but also because of the high altitude. Some of it involves volcanic sand, but the footing is better than at Paricutín. The lower part is a well-worn trail in pine forest.

It gets a lot of traffic from capital residents, who are more used to high altitudes than most foreign visitors. But most of them go only as far as the tree line.

A paved road zigzags across the trail at the lower part. Consider following it as far as the trash bin to reduce the amount of dust you'll breathe and to save your feet and ankles for the volcano.

La Malintzi National Park is shown on some maps as La Malinche NP. There are cabañas to rent and a tent camping area. RV's can park overnight.

These driving directions are taken from *Traveler's Guide to Mexican Camping* by Church and Church, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Rolling Homes Press, 2005).

"There is plenty of room for big rigs once you reach the campground but the climb through the park probably limits really big rigs from visiting, we wouldn't bring anything over about 30 feet up here.

"To reach La Malintzi head south on the road up to the volcano which cuts off Mex 136 at about the 130 Km marker [surveyor: slightly east of the 130 Km marker] between Apizaco and Huamantla, it is signed for Teacalco. After 2.6 miles (4.2 km) you will reach the small village of Totolquexco. Turn left at the intersection and drive another 3.4 miles (5.5 km) to the gated park entrance. A ranger will let you in and then it is another 1.8 miles (2.9 km) to the gated campground entrance on the right."

