

Zacatlán de las Manzanas, Puebla

Zacatlán de las Manzanas is one of the nine magical towns in the state of Puebla. This name is special because it is an invitation to learn about the region's history, traditions, and heritage.

Zacatlán de las Manzanas, as its name suggests (manzana is Spanish for apple), is characterized by its prodigious production of apples, which are used to make cider and fruit liqueurs. Enjoying its flavors and colors is a wonderful experience, and walking through its orchards and plantations is also a favorite pastime of locals and visitors.

Another notable facet of Zacatlán is a tradition the city embraces, revolving around clocks. In 1896, a clock factory was built and today one can even visit the intriguing Clock Museum, which recounts the story of its founder, Alberto Olvera, who was fascinated by clocks and their various functions; after studying their mechanisms and mastering their complexity, he began to manufacture them. The clocks that were manufactured in Zacatlán de las manzanas are monumental.



Floral Clock, Zacatlán de las Manzanas

An exceptional example of the work produced by Olvera's factory is the multicolored floral clock that is located in the town's main square; it has been marking time punctually for more than one hundred years. Olvera's monumental centennial clocks adorn churches, schools, plazas, towers, cathedrals, and public buildings throughout Mexico and beyond, in far-flung corners of the world.

Zacatlán's extraordinarily tasty breads are renowned throughout Mexico and it is no surprise that there is a bakery on just about every corner of town. Their sugary aroma seduces the passersby to drop in and taste and savor them with a cup of delicious hot chocolate.

One of the main thoroughfares of Zacatlán that crosses the street where the Olvera Clock Factory is located, leads directly to the Municipal Cemetery. Since 2014, this space has become a haven for art and affords an opportunity to enjoy a unique space in Mexico. This is the Zacatlán Vitromural.

The Vitromural is located in a strategic position, as it provides a vista to the most important waterfall in the region, the Jilgueros Waterfall, with a drop of more than 300 meters, and at the same time, a visitor can learn a great deal about the town from this vantage point.

The idea of the Vitromural came from Mary Carmen Olvera Trejo, granddaughter of Alberto, who has given us the legacy of the monumental clocks in Zacatlán. Trejo wanted to do something to commemorate 300 years of the founding of Zacatlán, and called on local artists and the general public to help create a memorable work. The artist in charge of this work was Trish Metzener-Lynch, who captured the diverse images in collaboration with an extraordinary team.

The Vitromural is comprised of mosaics of different colors, tiles, talavera, recycled glass, and mirrors and was done in three stages.

More than 1,500 volunteers participated in the creation of this masterpiece, including professional goldsmiths, artists, and craftsmen. In the front of the cemetery, there are eleven biblical scenes, among which are the creation of Adam and Eve, the birth of Jesus, and the wings of the angel who announces a historical moment. As you take in the immensity of this mural, you see that its themes are related to Zacatlán de las Manzanas, its history, and its attractions. At the same time, you can enjoy the exquisite view of the ravine and its waterfall. On the same wall, five niches were built for showcasing saints, who serve as protectors of the faithful departed, who are buried in the pantheon.



Convent of Zacatlán

The glass wall occupies 400 meters in length and three walls of the cemetery. Trejo received help and funds from Dick Davis and his foundation, Por la Preservación de la Cultura Indígena de la Sierra Norte de Puebla and The Village of Arts and Humanities in Philadelphia. Thanks to both organizations, it was possible to obtain the materials and resources necessary to achieve this magnificent work.

The work was executed in three stages; the first began on May 9, 2014, the second on January 10, 2015, and the last on October 8, 2016.



The Valley of the Upper Stones, Zacatlán

The themes presented in the mosaic wall have a chronological meaning. And since the symbol that represents Zacatlán is an apple, all the images are framed with the silhouette of one. In 2011, the town was granted the appellation as a "Magical Town," a prestigious designation, one reserved for villages that exhibit particular characteristics of history, culture, or art, and so on, that are strictly monitored by the government. The following image commemorates that momentous achievement. On one side of the apple appears a bottle representing the cider that characterizes Zacatlán.



Next there is another image that shows us the year of the founding of the town of Zacatlán de las Manzanas and part of the Franciscan convent and its dome.



Zacatlán de las Manzanas and the nearby towns are deeply rooted in agriculture and one of their main products is corn. The Vitromurals pay homage to the people who make it possible for this cultural heritage to remain alive.



A very important aspect of these murals is the introduction of pre-Hispanic motifs. In the last part of the mural, you can see “The Nahuatl Universe,” which covers the last wall of the pantheon where the pre-Hispanic roots are represented and includes the 13 heavens, the nine underworlds and the gods Tonatiuh, Huitzilopochtli, Tlaloc, and Quetzalcóatl, which is the jewel of the mural.

Zacatlán has much to offer, and if you visit, allow yourself to be immersed in its magical charm, its aromatic breads, and its monumental clocks. And where once there was graffiti, today there is calm and contemplation as you drink in the town's history and come to understand its roots.

In 2018, the last group of Zacatlán's Vitromurals was inaugurated in the Alley of the Bone, with the aim of resuscitating another urban area that had been completely forgotten and even vandalized; now it is home to a new, fresh, and revitalized atmosphere. It is a space to enjoy the thousand wonders that Zacatlán offers.



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