



AN MAHC INSIDER GUIDE

The Guelaguetza 2026

*Everything you actually need to know to enjoy
Oaxaca's most beloved festival — written from 27
years on the ground.*

By

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MONTE ALBÁN HERITAGE CENTER

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What's Inside

Nine real-world chapters built from the most-asked questions I get every July. Skim what you need, save the rest for later.

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CHAPTER 1

A Quick Welcome From Me

Hi friend — Arion here, writing to you from Oaxaca. If you've found this guide, you're probably planning to come for the Guelaguetza, or you're already here and a little overwhelmed. Either way, I'm so glad you found us.

I've lived in Oaxaca for a long time now, and every July I watch thousands of visitors arrive with one wish: to experience the Guelaguetza without making rookie mistakes. The questions I get asked the most are almost always the same — "*Where do I buy tickets?*", "*Why won't my card work?*", "*Will it rain?*", "*How do I not look like a clueless tourist?*"

So I made you this guide. It pulls together nine of my most popular Guelaguetza articles into one easy-to-read PDF you can keep on your phone, print at your hotel, or scribble notes on. Everything inside is based on what I see actually happen on the ground — not what brochures say.

The word Guelaguetza comes from Zapotec and means "offering" or "reciprocity." Come in that spirit and Oaxaca will fold you in like family.

— ARION

How to use this guide

Read it cover-to-cover if you have the time, or jump straight to the chapter that solves the problem in front of you. Each chapter is short, practical, and written exactly the way I'd explain it to a friend over coffee at the Zócalo.

And remember — when something goes sideways (and a little something always does in July), take a breath, smile, and ask someone for help. Oaxacans are some of the warmest people on earth, and the moments where things don't go to plan are often where the best stories come from.

Vamos. Let's get you ready.

CHAPTER 2

Resale & Fake Tickets — How Not To Get Scammed

Let's start with the chapter I most wish I didn't have to write. Every year, dozens of visitors arrive at the Auditorio holding what they thought were valid tickets, only to be turned away at the gate. Their money's gone. Their seats don't exist. And the show is about to start.

Tickets to the main Lunes del Cerro performances are in huge demand, and where there's demand, there are scammers. So please, before you click "buy" anywhere — read this chapter.

The five warning signs of a fake ticket

Scammers tend to repeat the same patterns. If you see any of these, walk away:

- **Prices that seem too good to be true.** Official tickets for Lunes del Cerro range roughly from 300 to 800 MXN depending on section. Anything dramatically below that is almost certainly fake.
- **Pressure to buy right now.** "Last ticket!" or "Official tickets are sold out, but I have one!" — that's the scammer's playbook.
- **No SuperBoletos confirmation.** Real tickets come with a clean QR code from SuperBoletos. Fakes are blurry, generic PDFs, or phone screenshots.
- **Sold on Facebook, WhatsApp, or by strangers in the street.** If it's not the official channel, it's a risk.
- **"Guaranteed entry" promises with no proof.** Nobody outside the official system can guarantee you anything.

⚠ A real story I hear every July

Someone "saves" 50% by buying through a social media seller. They show up to the gate excited. Security scans the QR. It's invalid — already used, or never real to begin with. Show is starting in 20 minutes. Now they're scrambling for a real ticket... at full price. Don't be that person.

The only safe places to buy

There are very few legitimate channels, and they're easy to remember:

Channel	How it works
SuperBoletos.com	The only authorized online vendor for Guelaguetza tickets.
Secretaría de Turismo offices	In-person purchases on Av. Juárez 703 in Oaxaca's Centro.
Auditorio ticket windows	Same-day, limited availability, on the day of the show.

If you've already been scammed — act fast

1. **Contact your bank or payment provider immediately.** Request a chargeback. Most credit cards and PayPal will help if you report fraud quickly with screenshots and receipts.
2. **File a report with the Policía Turística in Oaxaca City.** Bring all your evidence — screenshots, payment confirmation, messages with the seller.
3. **Do not try to use the fake ticket.** It will not work. Buy a real one if any are still available.

Recovery isn't always possible, but acting fast gives you the best shot. Honestly though — prevention is the only reliable strategy. Buy from official sources only, every single time.

CHAPTER 3

Why Your Credit Card Keeps Getting Rejected on SuperBoletos

If you've tried to buy Guelaguetza tickets online and your card got rejected — welcome to the club. In my experience helping visitors, roughly 7 out of 10 foreign cards run into trouble on SuperBoletos. It's not personal. It's a payment-system mismatch.

Why it happens

SuperBoletos runs through Mexican banking gateways with strict anti-fraud filters that often flag international cards as high-risk. Major issuers like Chase, Capital One, or many European banks block these transactions automatically — even if you called and notified them you're traveling.

On top of that, the site doesn't always play nicely with the 3D Secure protocols used by foreign banks. Add currency conversion quirks, daily limits, and required local billing addresses, and you've got a recipe for "transaction declined."

Why this isn't a SuperBoletos problem (mostly)

The Mexican payment system is doing what it was built to do: protect against fraud. The unfortunate side effect is that legitimate travelers get blocked too. Knowing this helps you stay calm and try the next workaround instead of giving up.

What actually works (in order of reliability)

1. Buy in person at the Secretaría de Turismo

This is hands-down the most reliable method. Go to **Av. Juárez 703** in the Centro Histórico. They accept cash, Mexican cards, and sometimes foreign cards without any of the online hurdles. Staff often speak some English, and you walk out with printed tickets in hand. Lines form during sales periods but they move steadily.

2. Try a Wise or Revolut virtual card loaded in MXN

These often appear "local" to the gateway and bypass the foreign-card flags. Not foolproof, but worth a shot.

3. Use a VPN set to Mexico, switch to a desktop, and try in incognito

Sometimes desktop browsers have better gateway compatibility than mobile, and clearing cache plus using incognito reduces session conflicts. Try off-peak hours when servers are less loaded.

4. Call your bank and ask them to whitelist SuperBoletos specifically

Generic "I'm traveling" notes often aren't enough. Ask them to mark this specific merchant as approved.

5. Have a local friend, hotel concierge, or guide buy on your behalf

If you have a Mexican contact, this is the cleanest path. Reimburse them in cash. Done.

The free option that always works

Don't forget: **Sections C and D are free**, first-come, first-served. No tickets, no website, no card issues. We cover the timing strategy in the next chapter.



What I tell friends

If you're already in Oaxaca and the website is fighting you, just walk to the Sectur office. You'll save yourself an hour of frustration and get printed tickets immediately. The personal interaction is honestly part of the experience.

CHAPTER 4

Best Time to Arrive for Free Seats at the Auditorio

Sections A and B are paid reserved seating. **Sections C and D are free** — no tickets needed, but they fill up fast and once they're full, that's it. No more entry. So timing matters more than anything.

The 2026 dates and times

Show	Date	Performance time
Lunes del Cerro #1 — Morning	Monday, July 20, 2026	10:00 AM
Lunes del Cerro #1 — Evening	Monday, July 20, 2026	5:00 PM
Lunes del Cerro #2 — Morning	Monday, July 27, 2026	10:00 AM
Lunes del Cerro #2 — Evening	Monday, July 27, 2026	5:00 PM

Morning vs. evening — which has easier free seating?

The **morning show is the most popular** with locals and tour groups, so the line for free Sections C and D forms early. We're talking 4:00–5:00 AM early. By 7:00 AM the line is long, and by 8:00 AM the good spots are gone.

The **evening show has slightly shorter lines** for free seating because many people have day jobs. Arriving 2:00–3:00 PM gives you a solid chance at a good free seat. To play it safe, be in line by 3:30 PM at the latest.

If you're flexible, the evening show is the easier free option for 2026 — and the lights and energy at dusk are honestly magical.

Exact arrival times that work in practice

You want...	Arrive by...
A solid free seat for the morning show	5:00–6:00 AM (some die-hards arrive at 4:00)
A solid free seat for the evening show	2:30–3:30 PM

Gates usually open 2 to 3 hours before the show. Free sections are unassigned concrete bleachers, so the earlier you arrive, the closer to the front you sit.

Make the wait comfortable

- Bring a small cushion or yoga mat — the concrete benches are *brutal* after an hour.
- Pack water, snacks, sunscreen, hat, and a light rain jacket. July weather flips fast.
- Vendors near the line sell coffee, tamales, and fruit, but having your own backup is smart.
- A small daypack with your valuables and a phone battery pack will save you.

Getting up there

Taxis or rideshares are easiest in the early hours. Expect 150–300 MXN from the Centro. Tell the driver "Auditorio Guelaguetza" and ask to be dropped as close to the main gate as possible. Buses run, but they're unreliable at 5:00 AM. The final stretch is a short uphill walk on a well-lit path — wear comfortable shoes.



Insider truth

The free sections are where the festival's heart actually beats. Local families, kids in regional dress, retirees with thermoses of coffee — that's where you'll meet Oaxaca. The paid sections are nice. The free ones are unforgettable.

CHAPTER 5

Free Guelaguetza Popular — Dates & Places

If buying tickets feels like too much, or if you want a more authentic, community-rooted experience, the **Guelaguetza Popular** is for you. These free public celebrations grew out of the 2006 social conflict in Oaxaca, when teachers and community movements created their own festival to keep the celebration close to public life rather than packaged for tourism. The result is a mix of dance, music, civic pride, and street energy that many locals love more than the auditorium shows.

The four key free dates in Oaxaca City for 2026

Date	Event	Time	Where
Sun, July 19	Convite Magisterial	3:00 PM	Templo del Carmen Alto → Zócalo
Mon, July 20	Calenda Magisterial	3:00 PM	Templo del Carmen Alto → Zócalo
Tue, July 21	Main Magisterial y Popular show	9:00 AM	Estadio del ITO
Mon, July 27	Zaachila community Guelaguetza	1:00 PM	El Cerrito Archaeological Zone

What to expect at the Magisterial events

The Convite and Calenda are not your average parades. They blend traditional Oaxacan elements — regional dress, brass bands, dancing, towering *marmotas* and *monigotes* — with political banners, union chants, and social messages. It's celebration and civic voice woven together. More raw, less polished, and very much alive.

Getting to the ITO stadium (Tuesday, July 21)

Option	Cost	Notes
Private taxi	\$75–\$150 MXN	Fares rise during peak dates; traffic can be heavy
Colectivo (shared)	\$15–\$20 MXN	From Central de Abastos. Cheap, frequent, very crowded
City bus	\$8 MXN	Stops along Blvd. Eduardo Mata. Look for "ITO" or "Tecnológico" signs. Slowest option

My advice: Leave early on July 21. The roads around the stadium get crowded fast in the morning.

Why Zaachila is special

If you can only do one community Guelaguetza, make it Zaachila. The town's celebration is called *Láii Gula'saa* and happens at **El Cerrito Archaeological Zone** — an ancient mound in what was the last Zapotec capital. Watch for the **Danza de la Pluma**. Take a colectivo from Calle Bustamante (about 19 minutes, \$35–\$40 MXN). It's free, deeply local, and feels nothing like the auditorium.

Other community Guelaguetzas worth chasing

- **San Antonino Castillo Velasco** — Floral traditions, parades from the main square to the community park.
- **Cuilápam de Guerrero** — Held near the iconic unfinished Ex-Monastery of Santiago Apóstol. Food fairs and craft markets often run alongside.
- **San Andrés Huayápam** — 15 km north of Centro, taxi or local bus.
- **Mitla** — 50 km east, second-class bus station. Pair it with the ruins for a great day.
- **Ocotlán & San Bartolo Coyotepec** — Colectivo from Central de Abastos.

The colectivo system, demystified

If you want to chase community Guelaguetzas, learning the colectivo system is one of the best things you can do in July.

- **Southbound colectivos** (San Antonino, Ocotlán, San Bartolo): south of the Central de Abastos market, usually red-and-white sedans with town names painted on the door.
- **Eastbound colectivos** (Mitla and the eastern valley): southern end of Central de Abastos or along the Pan-American Highway.
- **Cash only.** Always ask "¿Cuánto?" before getting in. Fares are usually standardized but can shift slightly during festival days.

For context: official ticket prices in 2026

Section A presale (May): \$1,423.30 MXN — Regular from June 1: \$1,573.78 MXN

Section B presale (May): \$1,124.61 MXN — Regular from June 1: \$1,273.96 MXN

Sections C & D: **Free, first-come, first-served.**

My favorite "all-free" Guelaguetza plan

- ✓ **Sun, July 19, 3:00 PM** — Convite Magisterial from Carmen Alto to the Zócalo
- ✓ **Mon, July 20, 3:00 PM** — Calenda Magisterial along the same route
- ✓ **Tue, July 21, 9:00 AM** — Magisterial y Popular at the ITO Stadium
- ✓ **Mon, July 27, 1:00 PM** — Zaachila community celebration at El Cerrito

CHAPTER 6

What You Can & Cannot Bring Into the Auditorio

The Auditorio Guelaguetza is huge and open-air, holding thousands of people, so there's a clear list of what's allowed and what isn't. Knowing it ahead of time saves you a long detour to the cloakroom and gets you to your seat faster.

Officially prohibited — leave at your hotel

- ✗ **Outside food and drinks.** No glass bottles, cans, or beverages from outside. They sell water and snacks in plastic cups inside.
- ✗ **Large backpacks, suitcases, or strollers.** Anything bigger than a small daypack will go to the cloakroom.
- ✗ **Professional cameras or video equipment.** Big lenses, tripods, external mics — not allowed. Phones and small point-and-shoot cameras are fine.
- ✗ **Selfie sticks, laser pointers, and audio recorders.** Strictly banned — they distract performers and other spectators.
- ✗ **Weapons, sharp objects, or anything that could be thrown.** Knives, scissors, metal-tipped umbrellas, fireworks.
- ✗ **Large banners, flag-poles, balloons, or anything that blocks others' view.** Pets are also not allowed.

Technically allowed but bring smart

Heavy bags slow security and are miserable in crowded stands — a cross-body bag or fanny pack is far better. Leave jewelry, expensive cameras, and unnecessary electronics at the hotel. Bulky raincoats are awkward; a packable rain poncho is gold. And anything that *could* be thrown — even a hat or scarf — can become a problem during gift-throwing if used carelessly.

What you can bring without any issue

Small personal bags or purses (cross-body or clutch), your phone and a small camera (no flash during dances), a compact rain poncho or foldable rain jacket, sunscreen, hat and sunglasses, and a small amount of cash for water and snacks inside.

Time-saver

Show up with your bag already open and your phone in your hand. Security is efficient when you make it easy. Aim to arrive 45–60 minutes before showtime to avoid the worst of the line.

CHAPTER 7

Gift-Throwing Etiquette — Doing It The Right Way

This is one of the most beautiful moments of the whole festival — and one of the most misunderstood. The audience throws small gifts to the dancers as a living expression of *guelaguetza*: reciprocity, mutual giving, the heart of why this celebration exists. Done right, it creates magic. Done wrong, it can feel chaotic and even disrespectful. So let's get it right.

The best gifts to bring

The rule of thumb: small, lightweight, easy to catch, and useful for the dancers and their families afterward.

- ✓ **Fresh fruit** — apples, oranges, bananas, small bags of grapes. The classic. Symbolizes abundance.
- ✓ **Bread or sweet rolls** — small packaged sweet breads or conchas travel well.
- ✓ **Small toys or balloons** — especially for children's delegations. Inflated balloons on strings are safe and fun.
- ✓ **Individually wrapped sweets** — hard candies, chocolates, local treats in small bags.
- ✓ **Tiny handmade crafts** — woven bracelets, embroidered handkerchiefs, small pottery. Extra-respectful.

Bring a small backpack with about **15 to 25 items**. Generous but not over the top. Avoid anything heavy, sharp, or in hard plastic that could hurt someone.

How to throw gifts the right way

1. **Wait until the dancers finish performing** and are waving to the crowd. That's the official moment. Throwing during the dance disrupts everything.
2. **Throw one item at a time** and aim gently toward the open space in front of the dancers — not directly at them.
3. **Smile and make eye contact** if you can. The connection matters more than the gift.
4. **Give people around you a turn.** Don't throw constantly or try to "win" the most catches.
5. **If you're in the front rows, be especially careful.** Performers are right there.

The most common mistakes

- ✗ Grabbing or hoarding gifts that land near you. Reciprocity, not collection.
- ✗ Throwing heavy or hard objects. A full plastic bottle can really hurt.
- ✗ Throwing during the dance instead of between delegations.
- ✗ Throwing money or anything that looks like a tip. The gift is symbolic, not payment.

X Getting frustrated if you don't catch anything. The joy is in giving.

Practical tips

- Buy your gifts the day before at **Mercado 20 de Noviembre** or **Mercado Benito Juárez**. They have everything at fair prices.
- Pre-bag small bundles for easy throwing.
- Bring kids? Let them help pick and throw a few items — sweetest memory of the whole trip.
- If gift-throwing isn't your thing, that's totally fine. Clapping and cheering counts. The dancers feel it.

The smiles, waves, and quick eye contact during gift-throwing are what people remember most about Guelaguetza. With the right spirit, you don't watch the festival — you become part of it.

The real secret

The word *Guelaguetza* means "offering." The whole festival runs on generosity and sharing. A respectful attitude — and a small basket of fruit thrown with care — will open every door you need.

CHAPTER 8

10 Things NOT To Do at the Guelaguetza

The basics — be polite, don't litter, don't be rude — apply everywhere. But the Guelaguetza has cultural nuances that can catch even seasoned travelers off guard. Here are 10 specific things to avoid, gathered from years of watching well-meaning visitors stumble.

1. Don't wear traditional indigenous attire as a costume

The embroidered huipiles and woven garments you'll see are specific to each region and carry deep identity meaning. Wearing them without ties to those communities reads as appropriation. Wear modest, comfortable clothing instead — that's plenty respectful.

2. Don't photograph participants without permission

Dancers and artisans represent their communities. Snapping close-ups during preparations or rituals can feel invasive. Always ask first. Some will decline for personal or spiritual reasons, and that's their right.

3. Don't haggle aggressively at artisan markets

Prices reflect hours of skilled handwork rooted in generations of tradition. Aggressive bargaining undervalues that. Gentle negotiation is fine; grinding someone down isn't.

4. Don't join dances or parades uninvited

The calendas invite observation, not crashing. These dances carry historical and spiritual weight. Watch from the sidelines. If a local invites you in, accept humbly.

5. Don't ignore the political context

The Guelaguetza has roots in indigenous resistance and sometimes carries subtle protest against commercialization. Treating it as pure entertainment can lead to insensitive comments. Listen, observe, and learn.

6. Don't overconsume mezcal or treats in sacred spaces

Mezcal and traditional foods are shared generously, but indulging excessively near performances or altars feels irreverent. These elements honor the earth and ancestors. Savor mindfully.

7. Don't climb or touch festival structures

Auditorium and surrounding areas include symbolic woven arches and altars. Climbing them for photos disrespects their cultural purpose and can damage handcrafted features. Stay on designated paths.

8. Don't grab or hoard thrown gifts

We covered this in Chapter 7, but it's worth repeating. Catch what comes your way gracefully. Hoarding misses the entire point.

9. Don't sweat the schedule

Events sometimes start later than announced. Oaxacan culture values presence over punctuality. Complaining or rushing reads as impatient and a little disrespectful. Embrace the flow.

10. Don't fly drones

The festival's airspace is restricted. Drones can be confiscated, you can be fined, and they disrupt the live, shared experience. Personal cameras only. Respect no-filming zones.



The bigger picture

These aren't rules to make your trip stressful — they're how you become a guest the community actually wants to welcome. Approach with curiosity and care, and you'll get back tenfold what you give.

CHAPTER 9

Spanish Survival Phrases for the Festival

Here's the truth: you don't need to be fluent. You need a smile, patience, your phone translator as backup, and about 20 phrases. Locals are warm and patient with anyone who tries — even just a greeting opens doors that fluent English won't.

Your 20 essential phrases

Spanish	Pronunciation	Meaning & when to use it
Hola, ¿cómo estás?	<i>OH-la, KOH-mo es-TAS</i>	Hello, how are you? — Greet vendors at markets and food stalls.
Gracias / Muchas gracias	<i>GRAH-see-as / MOO-chas GRAH-see-as</i>	Thank you — say it after every interaction.
Por favor	<i>por fah-VOR</i>	Please — for ordering, asking, buying.
¿Habla inglés?	<i>AH-bla een-GLES</i>	Do you speak English? — Hotels, upscale restaurants, ticket office.
No hablo mucho español	<i>no AH-blo MOO-cho es- pah-NYOL</i>	I don't speak much Spanish — say first so people slow down.
¿Puede repetir más despacio, por favor?	<i>PWE-de re-pe-TEER mas des-PA-see-o por fah-VOR</i>	Can you repeat that slower? — bus drivers, guides, directions.
¿Dónde está el baño?	<i>DON-de es-TA el BA-nyo</i>	Where's the bathroom? — universal need.
¿Cuánto cuesta?	<i>KWAN-to KWES-ta</i>	How much? — markets and street food.
La cuenta, por favor	<i>la KWEN-ta por fah-VOR</i>	The bill, please — restaurants and mezcaterías.
Quiero ir a Monte Albán	<i>kee-EH-ro eer a MON-te al-BAN</i>	I want to go to Monte Albán — show to taxi or at bus stops.
¿A qué hora sale el autobús a Monte Albán?	<i>a ke O-ra SA-le el ow-to- BOOS</i>	What time does the bus to Monte Albán leave?

Spanish	Pronunciation	Meaning & when to use it
Un boleto para la Guelaguetza, por favor	<i>oon bo-LE-to PA-ra la gwe-la-GET-sa</i>	One ticket for Guelaguetza, please — at official windows.
¿Hay guías en inglés?	<i>eye GEE-as en een-GLES</i>	Are there English guides? — Monte Albán entrance.
Soy vegetariano/a	<i>soy ve-he-ta-ree-A-no/a</i>	I'm vegetarian — handy at food stalls.
Me gustaría probar mole	<i>me goos-ta-REE-a pro-BAR MO-le</i>	I'd like to try mole — point and smile.
¿Está lejos?	<i>es-TA LE-hos</i>	Is it far? — walking distance questions.
Ayuda, por favor	<i>ah-YOO-da por fah-VOR</i>	Help, please — emergency phrase.
¿Qué hora es?	<i>ke O-ra es</i>	What time is it? — performances start on time.
¿Dónde puedo tomar un taxi?	<i>DON-de PWE-do to-MAR oon TAK-see</i>	Where can I get a taxi? — late-night returns.
Hasta luego	<i>AS-ta LWE-go</i>	See you later — friendly goodbye.

Where English actually works

While basic Spanish plus a smile goes a long way at markets and small stalls, English shows up consistently in:

- Hotels and guesthouses in the Centro.
- The Monte Albán ticket office and visitor center (and our MAHC audio tours and maps in English).
- Tour operators and authorized guides — especially during Guelaguetza season.
- Upscale restaurants and coffee shops around the Zócalo.
- Taxi apps like Didi (drivers follow GPS even with limited conversation).
- Official Guelaguetza information booths.

CHAPTER 10

July Weather & What To Pack

July is the heart of the rainy season in Oaxaca, and the weather has its own personality. Here's what to actually expect — and how to pack so the rain enhances your trip instead of derailing it.

The basic weather profile

Element	What to expect
Daytime highs	82–90°F (28–32°C)
Evening lows	~60°F (15°C)
Humidity	60–70%
Monthly rainfall	~60–80 mm
Pattern	Sunny mornings, afternoon/evening showers
Elevation	~5,100 ft (1,555 m) — UV is intense even on cloudy days

Mornings start sunny and comfortable — perfect for early exploring. Clouds build by midday, and short, tropical downpours roll in during the afternoon or evening. Streets get slick fast, but the rain is also what makes the surrounding valleys electric green this time of year.

General packing strategy

- ✓ Breathable, quick-drying fabrics — cotton or linen work well.
- ✓ Layering: light scarves or jackets for cool mornings and evenings.
- ✓ High-SPF sunscreen, hat, sunglasses — UV is no joke at this altitude.
- ✓ Comfortable, waterproof footwear for cobblestones after rain.
- ✓ Insect repellent — wet season means more mosquitoes.
- ✓ Compact umbrella or poncho that fits in a daypack.

Tactical tip: plan outdoor stuff for mornings, indoor backups (museums, mezcalerías, the Textile Museum) for afternoons.

Special tips for the Guelaguetza specifically

- The Auditorio is open-air on Cerro del Fortín, so the weather is in your face. Arrive early — afternoon rain can muddy paths and delay starts.

- Pack a **lightweight rain poncho**, not an umbrella. Umbrellas block the view of people behind you.
- A small cushion is gold for the long shows on hard concrete benches.
- Wear moisture-wicking clothes; carry a reusable water bottle. Hydration stations exist but personal supplies prevent stress.
- For evening calendas, add a light layer for the temperature drop. Bug spray for dusk.
- Dress modestly — no revealing outfits — to align with the festival's cultural depth.
- If rain hits during a parade, embrace it like locals do. Just keep electronics in a waterproof bag.

Final packing checklist

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| ✓ Breathable t-shirts, shorts, dresses | ✓ Personal medications |
| ✓ Light jacket or sweater for evenings | ✓ Reusable water bottle |
| ✓ Sturdy waterproof walking shoes | ✓ Small folding cushion (game-changer) |
| ✓ Sandals (waterproof if possible) | ✓ Binoculars (for distant free seats) |
| ✓ Hat, sunglasses, high-SPF sunscreen | ✓ Portable fan or cooling towel |
| ✓ Compact rain poncho or small umbrella | ✓ Phone battery pack |
| ✓ Daypack for water and snacks | ✓ Waterproof bag for electronics |
| ✓ Insect repellent | |

Embrace any showers as part of the experience, just like locals do. The rain is part of why Oaxaca feels so alive in July.

My Final Checklist & A Hug From Oaxaca

If you remember nothing else from this guide, remember these eight things:

1. **Buy tickets only from SuperBoletos or in person at Sectur.** Never from social media or street sellers.
2. **If your card gets rejected, walk to the Sectur office on Av. Juárez 703.** Done in 20 minutes.
3. **Free seats fill fast.** Morning show: in line by 5:30 AM. Evening: by 3:00 PM.
4. **For a free, deeply local experience, do the Magisterial events and Zaachila.**
5. **Bring a poncho, a cushion, sunscreen, and a small cross-body bag.** Leave the big backpack at the hotel.
6. **Gift-throwing: small, soft, between delegations only.** 15–25 items max.
7. **Don't wear traditional dress as a costume.** Don't fly drones. Don't haggle hard.
8. **Smile, say *gracias*, and embrace the rain.** You'll be just fine.

Thank you for letting me be a small part of your trip. The Guelaguetza is one of the most beautiful things on earth, and the fact that you cared enough to read all the way to the end means you're going to do it justice.

¡Nos vemos en Oaxaca!

— Arion

About MAHC

The **Monte Albán Heritage Center** is an independent, bilingual platform built to help visitors experience Oaxaca's most sacred archaeological site — and the wider region — with depth, accuracy, and respect.

Visit montealbanoaxaca.com for free maps, audio tours, and dozens more articles like the ones in this guide.

Found something to fix? Email contact@montealbanoaxaca.com and I'll correct it personally.