

RANCHO GORDO AND XOXOC INVITE YOU TO EXPERIENCE  
**NOCHE MEXICANA**  
WEEKEND AT THE EX-HACIENDA SAN JOSÉ EL MARQUEZ  
in beautiful HIDALGO, Mexico



ENJOY AN EXTENDED WEEKEND WITH *Steve Sando* OF RANCHO GORDO AND HIS MEXICAN PARTNERS, *Gabriel Cortés Garcia* and *Yunuén Carrillo Quiroz* OF XOXOC. SPEND EASY DAYS TOURING THE HACIENDA, MEETING YOUR BEAN FARMERS, CRAFTSPEOPLE AND MORE. YOU'LL HELP MAKE A TRADITIONAL BARBACOA IN A 300 YEAR OLD PIT, LIGHT A BONFIRE TO CELEBRATE MEXICO'S INDEPENDENCE, AND SO MUCH MORE INCLUDING A TRADITIONAL CHARREADA.

**SEPTEMBER 14 THROUGH 18, 2011**  
SPACE IS LIMITED TO 12 GUESTS. ALL MEALS AND TRANSFERS FROM MEXICO CITY ARE INCLUDED. JUST COME HUNGRY!

FOR BOOKING OR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL **707/259-1935**

# Voz de la guitarra mía, al despertar la mañana...



## DAY ONE

In the afternoon, we'll be picking you up from your hotel in Mexico City and drive out to Hidalgo. Depending on the traffic, the drive might just not be the highlight of the trip so there will be drinks and snacks waiting for you at the ex-Hacienda San José el Marquez. After drinks, you'll check into your hotel for hopefully an early night.

## DAY TWO

Breakfast will be a la Jarocha, followed by a leisurely tour of the hacienda and adjacent fields of xoconostle cactus. The hacienda is a compound with some rooms seemingly stuck in time. Others, like the church, are literally falling apart, with its high walls leading the eye up to a roofless sky. The land around the hacienda has been overgrazed by cattle for years, leaving almost nothing except the sour prickly pears known as xoconostle. The families living in the hacienda make the delicious treats under the name Xoxoc.



Our taller (workshop) on tortillas might just be the highlight of the trip. Local home cooks will be coming to the hacienda to demonstrate everything from the making of the nixtamal masa to the grinding on a traditional metate to forming tortillas. By the end of class, you'll be an expert, or something close to it. Finally you can make all the mistakes you'll need to and ask all the necessary questions until you feel you have this foundation of Mexican cuisine down pat. Comida, served a little later than our traditional lunch, is the big meal of the day and ours will be served in the hacienda using local, seasonal foods found in the mercado (market).

After the meal, we'll tour the Xoxoc facilities and see how they make the prickly pear snacks and the state of the art organic drying techniques that we'll be using with our upcoming Oaxacan chile project with Diana Kennedy. You'll also see my pride and joy, the new bean storage building, built with traditional adobe bricks, made under the supervision of craftsmen from Puebla.

After a break at your hotel, you'll come back to the hacienda for the big event. Gabriel and his brother Antonio will light a bonfire in honor of Mexican independence and we'll all toast and keep warm with local and regional mezcales, or non-traditional hot chocolate, if you prefer. The producer s of our Oregano Indio in the Huastecan region of Hidalgo are making the long trek down to the hacienda to meet you and even better,



sing. They're experts in the traditional Huastecan style that you'll swear sounds a bit like yodeling, and you'd be right. I think it's going to be a great party. How often do you get serenaded by a bonfire at an ex-hacienda?

## DAY THREE

After a typical Aztec breakfast, we'll visit the town of Nopala for a classic charreada. Similar to a rodeo, it used to be a competition between haciendas. Now it's a lively exposition keeping the cowboy traditions alive with events for both men and women.

For comida, we have a special, traditional treat: chiles en nogada. Nothing says Mexican Independence like this classic dish. There are dozens of variations (Chef Marta Chapa wrote an entire book on the subject!)



but this version has been in Gabriel's family for generations. The afternoon's events haven't been planned. We did want to hear from you and see if there aren't events or workshops you'd like us to arrange.

## DAY FOUR

After a breakfast at the hacienda, we'll drive through Maguey Verde to visit the home of one of our bean growers. We will visit the bean fields and learn about traditional agriculture methods in Mexico. The big meal of the day (comida) will be courtesy of another of our partners in the Rancho Gordo-Xoxoc Project. Jacinto will be preparing a traditional Hidlago barbacoa which is made by burying lamb in a large hole, smothered in herbs and spices and then covered with leaves of the maguey plant. The mound is covered with earth and it cooks all day. Jacinto is also an expert on breaking horses and will share his expertise on that as well.



Later, we'll visit the colonial town of Huichapan. It's one of my favorite places in Mexico and I have fantasies about a retiring there one day, just not too soon! We'll tour the town square (zocalo), the market, churches and colonial architecture.

Dinner will be salad and wine from Querétaro.

## DAY FIVE

After a Zapotecan breakfast, we'll make our way to Tula, one of my favorite archeological sites in all of Mexico. The weird, wonderful Toltec warrior statues are not to be missed and there are pyramids for climbing that are thrilling but not quite as exhausting as the group in Teotihuacan, just outside of Mexico City. We'll have a light lunch and then head

back in the afternoon towards Mexico City.

*...quiere cantar su alegría  
a mi tierra Mexicana*



Note: Our trip starts with you being picked up in Mexico City. You can come early and take in the sites and we have lots of recommendations. Mexico City culinary maven Ruth Alegria is waiting to show you around either before or after Noche Mexicana. Ruth can help with hotel reservations if you like.

The complete price is \$1,620 (US) per person based on double occupancy. For singles, add 10%, for a total of \$1,800. This covers all food, transportation and lodging while in our care. You'll only need to purchase incidentals and personal items, if at all.

**NOCHE MEXICANA** is a unique travel experience hosted by me, Steve Sando of Rancho Gordo and Gabriel Cortes Garcia and Yunuen Carillo Quiroz of Xoxoc. Twelve guests will experience a very different Mexico as they meet the bean growers and artisans who make the Rancho Gordo-Xoxoc Project a success. You'll also relax and take workshops at the ex-hacienda San Jose el Marquez in the state of Hidalgo. All in all, it's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to visit Mexico with a completely different perspective, with a focus on food and agriculture.



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While all travelers will be comfortable and enjoy themselves, this isn't a trip for everyone. The hotel we're using is clean, safe and modern but it's simple. Its main advantage is its proximity to the hacienda. You will eat like you've never eaten before but you may be asked to use a tortilla as a spoon or eat with your hands. The food will be incredible but you'll probably never see a cloth napkin. The growers and artisans you'll meet are country people. They tend to be warm and friendly but perhaps a little more formal than you'd expect. They're very proud of their traditional methods and techniques, which many Mexicans take for granted as well, and you'll want some interest in agriculture or food production if you take this trip. There will be plenty of fun (and tequila and mezcal) but it's not a weekend in a Cancun resort. Without being preachy or pedantic, our visit is helping make their dreams of farming their crops on their lands in their way a reality. Along with purchasing Rancho Gordo-Xoxoc Project products, it's the best way to help. As you will see, it's going to be a gas and a trip to remember.

**I've been asked to lead a trip like this for years but the timing hasn't been right until now. I don't see another one anytime soon. Our space is going to be limited to twelve guests, so if you think this is going to be your trip, please don't hesitate!**

**-Steve Sando, President, Rancho Gordo**

**TO BOOK, PLEASE CALL US AT 707/5259-1935 RIGHT AWAY TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT.**