

Cañon del Sumidero

On the highway east from Chiapa de Corzo towards San Cristóbal, you catch occasional glimpses of the lower reaches of the **Cañón del Sumidero**. Through this spectacular cleft the Río Grijalva runs beneath cliffs that reach 1000m in height in places, the rock walls sprinkled with patches of bright green vegetation. The typical tour is on a mesmerizing **boat ride** down the river from Chiapa de Corzo, or you can drive along the rim from Tuxtla.

From Tuxtla, *Autobús Panorámico* (Sat & Sun 9am & 1pm; 3hr 30min; M\$80) runs a bus from the plaza along the road that borders the rim of the canyon, passing all the main *miradores* – the best views are from **La Coyota**. The buses go only when five or six people turn up. There's no public transport to the area.

In Chiapa de Corzo, several companies offer regular boat trips down the canyon, all for the same price (8am–5pm; M\$150/person). The first office you reach is *Turística de Grijalva* (☎961/600-6402), on the west side of the plaza. Or you can head straight south down the street to the *embarcadero*, where other companies operate. During Mexican vacation times, boats fill with the requisite ten people almost immediately, and it doesn't matter where you buy your ticket; in slower times, it's best to show up early and go from company to company to see which boat is closest to full. Tours last a couple of hours, snaking through the whole gorge to the Chicoasén Dam, which forms a lake at the northern end. Along the way you pass several waterfalls, including the remarkable **El Árbol de Navidad**, where calcareous formations covered with algae resemble a Christmas tree from a distance. Crocodiles and spider monkeys can often be spotted, as well as vast numbers of pelicans, egrets and cormorants.

Bochil and Simojovel

Just beyond Chiapa de Corzo, Hwy-195 cuts off to the north. It's an inconvenient route, as there's no continuous bus service, but for those with time and inclination, it's a part of mountainous Chiapas that's well off the tourist track. Second-class buses run from Tuxtla only as far as Pichucalco, and from there you can catch another to Teapa in southern Tabasco (see p.736). The road climbs through mountains wreathed in cloud to **BOCHIL**, some 60km from Tuxtla and a centre for the **Tzotzil Maya**. There are a couple of simple **places to stay**, including the *Posada San Pedro* (no phone; 📍), whose basic rooms are set out around a courtyard on 1 Calle Poniente Norte, a block from the plaza; head for Banamex at the top of the plaza and turn right. *Combis* run regularly up to **SIMOJOVEL**, 40km away at the head of a spectacular valley. The pretty town is the source of most of the amber you'll find sold in local markets, and plenty of shops sell it, often for a bit less than elsewhere in the state.

El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve

Cradled within the slopes of the Sierra Madre de Chiapas, on the northern edge of the Soconusco (see p.677), the dense cloud forest of the **El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve** is a refuge for hundreds of species of birds (including the rare quetzal). The jumping-off point for the reserve is the town of **JALTENANGO**, also known as **Ángel Albino Corzo**, ringed with coffee plantations. But it's best to contact the reserve several weeks in advance if you intend to visit. Based in Tuxtla, the Fondo de Conservación El Triunfo (☎961/125-1122, 🌐www.fondoeltriunfo.org), at C San Cristóbal 8, is responsible for tourism. It runs four-day packages that include transport from Tuxtla, lodging at the simple *Campamento El Triunfo* in the mountains, a guide at the coffee *fincas* and in the wilderness and porters, for about M\$5100 per person. **Buses** to Jaltenango leave Tuxtla several times a day from the Cuxtepeques y Anexas station at Calle 10 Oriente Norte and Avenida 3 Norte Oriente.