



Tia Stephanie Tours Educational Travel Programs

MEXICO'S NATURAL WONDERS

The Journey of the Monarch Butterfly



Summary

Join us on a journey to learn about and witness one of nature's wonders--the monarch butterfly migration. Here, in the fir trees of Michoacan at between 8,000-12,000 feet, the monarch butterflies take rest for the winter months after flying over 3,000 miles. Here, they cluster in groups on the fir trees to stay warm. During the day, they enjoy the sunshine and can be seen flying in massive groups. In addition to seeing this display of nature, our trip includes a fascinating guided tour of Morelia, a colonial gem, and we travel to the shores of Lake Patzcuaro to learn about the ancient and present day Purepecha people. Arts and crafts abound in this region. Join us! This trip can be done independently or on our published group departure.



Trip Includes:

- Accommodations
- Expert Guides and/or Academics
- Comfortable / Secure Transportation
- Welcome and Farewell Dinners
- Breakfasts
- Meals according to itinerary
- Water on Van/Coach
- Airport Transfers
- Entry Fees

Program Highlights

- Exploring the Colonial Jewel and capital of Michoacan, Morelia, a city of pink quarried stone with deep roots in education, music and the arts.
- Traveling to Butterfly Country high in the fir tree mountains of Michoacan, where we witness a marvel of nature: The Monarchs in their Winter home, where they have been migrating to for thousands of years.
- Learning about the Migration Path and Life Cycle of the Monarch Butterflies.
- Having the opportunity to enjoy cultural and man made treasures of Michoacan by visiting Craft Villages on the shores of Lake Patzcuaro.
- Exploring the Ancient Purepercha empire of Tzitzuntzan, overlooking the shores of Lake Patzcuaro.
- Enjoying the regional cuisine of Michoacan, such as Ochepos and Corundas!



Itinerary

- Day 1: Arrive **Morelia**, transfer to hotel. We enjoy a light snack at the Portales, across from the Cathedral, which is illuminated at night! (D)
- Day 2: Breakfast at hotel, followed by guided walking tour of **Morelia**, the capital of Michoacan and a colonial gem! Morelia is a conservative city with deep traditions in higher education, music and the arts. Highlights include: The Government Palace and Alfredo Zalce Murals, Palace of Justice, Cathedral, Temple of the Roses, the former Aqueduct, and the outstanding House of "Artesanias". We enjoy a fabulous welcome dinner at one of Morelia's top rated restaurants. (B,D)
- Day 3: **Angangueo**, Leaving the world of art and history behind, we embark on a one of a kind nature trek to witness one of the Western Hemisphere's natural wonders: the Winter home of the monarch butterflies, which migrate each year to the Transvolcanic mountains of central Mexico. Millions and millions of butterflies fly south each year, to exactly the same location. It wasn't until 1975 that the scientific community finally tracked down the wintering sites of the Monarch in Mexico. Until then, the Monarch butterflies' winter hide-outs had been a secret known only to local villagers and landowners. The unique conditions for survival are found in oyamel fir forests, which are located in a very small area of mountain tops in central Mexico. We overnight at Don Bruno. (B,D)
- Day 4: In the morning we visit one more **sanctuary, El Rosario**, before we depart for **Patzcuaro**, on the shores of the lake that shares its name. We settle into our centrally located hotel before we enjoy a walking orientation tour of the charming plazas, churches and historical landmarks of this old town. We enjoy lunch in town. Evening at Leisure (B,L)
- Day 5: Today, we travel to the village of **Tzintzuntzan** to see churches and convents of the colonial era and to meet local artisans. We visit the ruins of the great, former Purepecha empire at Tzintzuntzan, which means place of the hummingbirds, where we learn about the fascinating people and culture who are believed to be descendants of nomadic tribes from northwestern Mexico, known as the Chichimecas. They are one of the few civilizations that held off the Aztecs in their attempt to spread their empire in western Mexico. From here, we visit the early community of Santa Fe de La Laguna, founded by Vasco de Quiroga, where we learn of the early evangelization efforts in this region. Returning home, we stop at Santa Clara del Cobre to see master artisans hammer copper as they shape the raw material into beautiful works of art. (B,L)
- Day 6: Today, we visit **craft villages, such as Cuanajo, near Patzcuaro**. Weaving, pottery and woodwork are the specialties we will see. We will also be able to spend more time strolling the cobblestone streets of Patzcuaro, visiting select craft shops and galleries and enjoying patio restaurants that serve regional foods, such as corundas. (B)
- Day 7: Today we transfer to **Morelia** to once again enjoy this colonial atmosphere of this UNESCO Heritage city. We will visit Museums and Artisan Coops on our final day. A farewell dinner will be held at one of Morelia's great restaurants. (B,D)
- Day 8: Transfer to airport for journey home (B)



Transportation: Licensed, insured, comfortable and safe vans or coaches



Hotels: Centrally Located and Charming properties in Morelia, Angangueo and Patzcuaro



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