

MEXICO

Mystical Migration of the Monarch

7 DAYS | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: FEB

One of the most amazing phenomena in nature is the annual migration of millions of Monarch butterflies (Danaus plexippus) southward from their breeding grounds in the United States and Canada to overwintering sites high in the mountains of southern Mexico. Hundreds of millions of Monarchs fly along the Gulf Coast, or across the Gulf of Mexico, to eventually reach the belt of high volcanic mountains which stretches across the southern end of the central Mexican plateau. At about a dozen isolated places within the high-altitude forests of this zone, Monarchs pass the winter in aggregations that can exceed 2 billion individual butterflies. Stand amid the fir-covered mountains and witness this awe-inspiring spectacle firsthand as the monarchs flutter, dip, and swoop overhead.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike or ride horseback to three different monarch reserves in Michoacán, where millions of individual monarch butterflies gather.
- Photograph the dramatic colors of the butterflies as they hang in clusters from the trees, drink from streams, feed on wildflowers, and soar in the air above.
- Visit the pyramids at Teotihuacán, one of the most architecturally significant Mesoamerican sites of pre-Columbian times.
- Spend time exploring colonial Angangueo, which was once a mining town but now derives most of its livelihood from butterfly ecotourism and agriculture.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - MEXICO CITY

Depart from the U.S. and arrive in Mexico City. Upon arrival you will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel located on the Zócalo, in the heart of the historic center of the city. This evening meet in the hotel lobby at 7 pm for a briefing orientation and welcome dinner. Check-in time is at 3 pm. *Overnight at Zócalo Central Hotel. (D)*

DAY 2 - ANGANGUEO

This morning depart for the colonial town of Angangueo, located high in the mountains in the state of Michoacán, about 100 miles west of Mexico City. Upon arrival in Angangueo, check in at Hotel Don Bruno and have lunch there. This afternoon, take a walking tour through town with your guide. Founded in 1792, the town served as a main mining center providing wealth for the area. Today the town derives its income from butterfly tourism and agriculture. As you explore the cobblestone streets, your guide will share sites of interest and the importance of butterfly conservation to the town. After dinner at the hotel, gather for a briefing to help prepare for the next day. *Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (BLD)*

DAY 3 - ANGANGUEO

This morning visit Sierra Chincua, one of several nearby Monarch sites. It is more isolated than El Rosario, which will be visited tomorrow. The journey begins with a hike up the mountain to about 10,000 feet. Horses are available to rent for a portion of the trail. The cost is about \$10 (cash only). Some walking is required, but you may walk at your own pace and stop to rest as needed. Once you reach the site, the entire day is free to enjoy and photograph the spectacular Monarch colony. A boxed lunch will be provided on-site. Please note: There are no restrooms in the reserve; restrooms are located at the bottom of the mountain. In the late afternoon, return to Hotel Don Bruno and have free time to explore the hotel gardens, walk and photograph the interesting scenes and people in Angangueo. *Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - ZITÁCUARO

Early this morning check out of the hotel and visit the Monarch site of El Rosario. This large overwintering colony normally contains well over 100 million adult Monarchs and has an excellent trail system winding through the fir-covered slopes on which the colony is located. At this time of year, they may take flight for an hour or more to water, nectar, etc., before returning to their roost on the tree limbs or trunks. The hike to reach the colony may again reach up to 10,000 feet and will require hiking up the mountain. The hike will be at your own pace and birding can be done along the way. A portion of the hike can again be done by horseback rental. Once at the site, spend the day enjoying the colony with a boxed lunch to be eaten at your leisure. Restrooms are located at the bottom of the mountain and not in the reserve. In the late afternoon return to Hotel Don Bruno, check out and continue on to Hotel Rancho San Cayetano located near Zitácuaro. The hotel sits on 13 acres of beautiful Mexican countryside, surrounded by gardens and views of the surrounding mountains. After dinner, gather for a briefing on Cerro Pelón and what to expect in the morning. *Overnight at Rancho San Cayetano. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - ZITÁCUARO

After breakfast visit the Cerro Pelón reserve. This visit will be a little more challenging than the previous days, with a steeper hike and altitudes starting at about 10,400 feet. Horses will be available for rent for the beginning portion of the hike and may be required due to trail conditions. Depending on the location of the colony, a 30-minute steep, uphill hike may be required after the horse ride. Cerro Pelón is the least-known Monarch reserve, and because of the rougher conditions, the least-visited, making for a more intimate experience. As with the other reserves, a boxed lunch is provided and there are no restrooms. Those who opt not to visit Cerro Pelón can spend the day at Rancho Cayetano and the surrounding areas. The property is great for birding and a short walk takes you to Coatepec de Morelo, home to the 16th century church Iglesia de

San Pancho and the market in Zitácuaro. If you wish to venture further you can visit the archaeological site at San Felipe Los Alzati (45 minutes from the hotel). *Overnight at Rancho San Cayetano. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - MEXICO CITY

After breakfast, depart for the Mexico City area and the pyramids at San Juan Teotihuacán. After a delicious lunch near the pyramids, you'll have the afternoon to explore this world-famous archaeological site, which covers 32 square miles and contains many structures, including two large pyramids. The Pyramid of the Sun, at a height of more than 200 feet, is one of the largest structures created in the pre-Columbian New World. After time to explore the ruins on your own, return to your hotel for a farewell dinner. *Overnight at Zócalo Central Hotel. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - DEPARTURE

Breakfast will be included depending on your departure time. Airport shuttle transfers out are included and will be coordinated based on flight times. Check-out time is at 12 pm. *(B)*



PROGRAM PRICING

\$2,235 (15 participants + 1 leader)

\$2,500 (10 participants + 1 leader)

International airfare, gratuities, horseback rental, and items of a personal nature are not included. Valid for travel in 2020.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants traveling in 2018 or beyond. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due upon booking and no later than four months prior to departure. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Cancellations received less than 95 days prior to departure are not refundable.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe