



MEXICO

Mystical Migration of the Monarch

with Gustafson Photo Safari

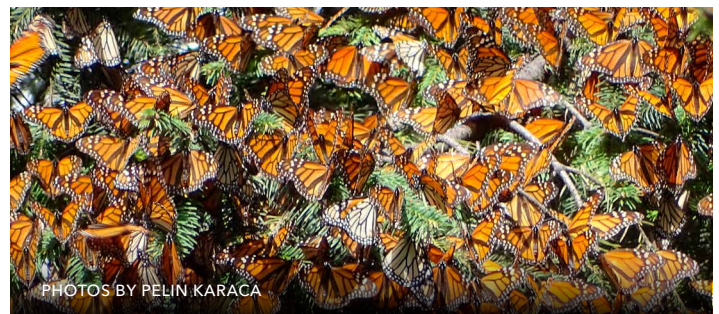
FEBRUARY 27 – MARCH 04, 2022

GPS

Monarch butterflies have a fascinating life story. They winter in the high mountains of central Mexico and migrate to Canada for the summer. It's a compelling story that takes five generations to complete. Each new generation flies further north, laying eggs that hatch the beautiful green, black, yellow, and white striped caterpillars which in turn form the iconic gold-ringed green chrysalis from which the new monarch butterflies hatch. The last generation will make the complete journey back to the mountains in Mexico to winter in the forests. It is this natural wonder that we will be filming and photographing high in the mountains of southern Mexico at the ends of the Earth. The sights and sounds of 100 million butterflies at first light is something I have dreamed of since I was a little boy! Join Gustafson Photo Safari for this slice of natural history: the Monarch Migration! With tips, techniques and personal instruction from a top digital photography expert, Todd Gustafson, you will return with an amazing portfolio of colorful images and a new sense of wonder about butterflies.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit three different monarch reserves on foot or horseback, where millions of individual monarch butterflies gather each winter.
- 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.
- Immerse yourself in the delicate sound of butterfly wings as tens of thousands of monarchs take flight when the sun emerges.
- Understand the story behind every photograph with site lectures on local wildlife, traditions, and history.
- Discuss results of applied techniques and present suggestions during evening feedback sessions.



PHOTOS BY PELIN KARACA



ITINERARY

DAY 1 | SUN | 27 FEB | MEXICO CITY

Depart from the U.S. and arrive in Mexico City. Upon arrival, we will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel. Check-in time is 3 pm. This evening, meet in the hotel lobby at 7 pm for a program orientation and welcome dinner.

RADISSON PERISUR

DAY 2 | MON | 28 FEB | JUNGPEO

After breakfast, we will check out from our hotel and start our journey with a visit to UNAM's Botanical Garden. Mexico is one of the most biodiverse countries in terms of its vegetation, home to more plant species than the U.S. and Canada combined. It also has the highest diversity of cactus plants in the world at an estimated 800 recorded species. The botanical garden at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) was founded in 1959 by a pair of botanists who wanted to create a space on campus dedicated entirely to the study and preservation of Mexico's extraordinarily diverse flora. In addition to photographing the diverse fauna of the country, the Botanical Garden is also a particularly good area to spot birds & reptiles such as woodpeckers, owls, orioles, and hummingbirds, rattlesnakes, milksnakes, and lizards; numerous species of butterflies; and even the rare Pedregal tarantula, an endemic species that is found only in this small area of Mexico City. Before we start our approximately 2.5 hours drive to Jungapeo to our hotel for the next 3 days, we will have lunch at La Mexicana Park located in the city's upscale Sante Fe district. Upon arrival

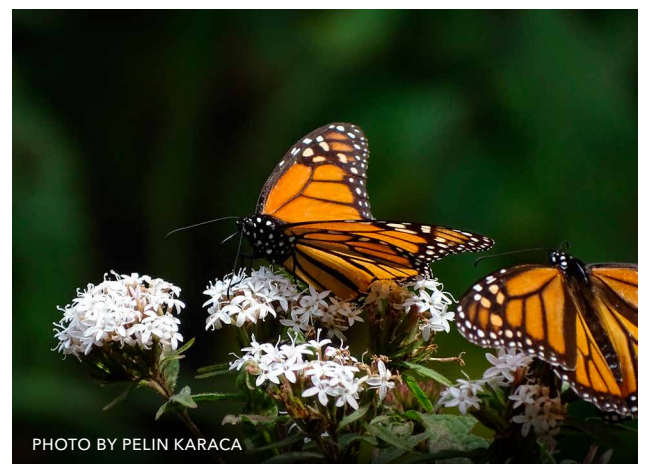
to Agua Blanca, we will settle in to our rooms and then join our group leader for a briefing on next day's events for our first Monarch outing and what to expect in the morning.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

AGUA BLANCA HOTEL

DAY 3 | TUE | 01 MAR | JUNGPEO

This morning, visit Sierra Chincua Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary. This is one of several nearby monarch sites and is more isolated than El Rosario, which we will visit tomorrow. The journey starts 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 100 Mexican pesos, payable in



cash only. Some walking will be required, but it can be done at your own pace and with stops and rest as needed. Once at the site, you have the day to enjoy and photograph the spectacular colony with a boxed lunch to be eaten at your leisure. Please note that restrooms are located at the bottom of the mountain and not in the reserve. You will have a short time to buy souvenirs at the craft market at the bottom of the mountain. If time permits, visit the Alternare Center, which has more than 20 years of experience working with rural communities with the goal of helping conserve butterfly habitat. They also teach sustainable farming techniques, the construction of adobe houses, wood-saving stoves, and water conservation practices. We will return to our hotel in the later afternoon.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

AGUA BLANCA HOTEL



DAY 4 | WED | 02 MAR | JUNGAPCO

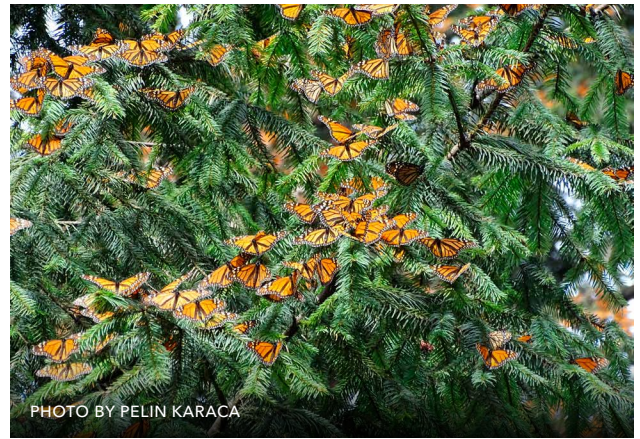
Today we will visit the monarch sanctuary of El Rosario, the largest overwintering site. The colony normally contains well over 100 million adult monarchs. An excellent trail system winds through the fir-covered slopes on which the colony is located. Additionally, there is a nearby stream where the butterflies may fly at midday to drink water. At this time of year, they may take flight for an hour or more for 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 is at your own pace, and birding can be done along the way. A portion of the hike can again be done by horseback rental at an additional cost. Once at the site, the day will be spent 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. Before dinner, gather for a briefing on Cerro Pelón and what to expect in the morning.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

AGUA BLANCA HOTEL

DAY 5 | THU | 03 MAR | MEXICO CITY

Early this morning, check out of the hotel and visit the Cerro Pelón reserve. Though local residents had known



about the monarchs' wintering sites for centuries, in 1975 a team of researchers under the direction of Canadian entomologist Fred Urquhart encountered Cerro Pelón, and it became the first confirmed site described to the broader scientific community. 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 is also the least visited, making it a more intimate experience. As on the previous days, you will take a boxed lunch and there will be no restrooms in the reserve. After our visit we will continue to Mexico City, to our hotel on the Zócalo, in the heart of the historic city center. Farewell Dinner will be at the hotel's restaurant with views overlooking at the main plaza and the Cathedral.

BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER

ZÓCALO CENTRAL HOTEL

DAY 6 | FRI | 04 MAR | MEXICO CITY

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

BREAKFAST



ABOUT YOUR LEADER



Todd Gustafson is a professional nature photographer and founder of Gustafson Photo Safari. Todd grew up in Tanzania and has won numerous photography awards. His work has been featured in many international publications and museum exhibits, including a display in a permanent exhibit in the Smithsonian Institution Museum of Natural History, publications by the

United Nations, and product guides for NIKON Corporation, where he works as a clinician/teacher. Todd is also a highly accomplished trumpet player and has degrees in music education and trumpet performance.



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

PRICING DETAILS

\$3,995

Price includes:

- Accommodations, meals, and activities as described, including entrance fees
- Non-alcoholic beverages with meals
- Full-time guide for duration of the program
- Private vehicle transportation and driver
- Most tips and gratuities
- Departure tax
- Carbon offset

Price does not include: international airfare, travel/trip cancellation insurance, gratuities for main guide or driver, drinks purchased on own, passport or visa fees, or items of a personal nature.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on a minimum of 4 participants in double occupancy; for a single room throughout the trip, add \$500 per person. A \$1,000 per person non-refundable deposit and enrollment form are due to hold your space on this trip. Cancellations within 95 days of departure date will result in loss of full deposit. Final payment is due Dec. 15, 2021.

Please note: Your participation as a traveler indicates acceptance of Holbrook Travel's COVID-19 protocols in place at time of travel.

Holbrook Travel strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance for medical emergencies while traveling and to protect your investment. Please note the purchase of Cancel for Any Reason Coverage or to exclude pre-existing conditions with Trip Cancellation coverage may require policy purchase within 10-14 days of your initial deposit, depending upon the provider.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This is an active adventure in high-altitude conditions (over 10,000 feet). Participants should be in good health and able to hike for a distance of 2-3 miles to the colony site and then back the same way (could be around 5 miles of hiking in one day). Typically, the hike takes between one and two hours, but the colony site varies throughout the season, so hiking times and distances may vary.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO ENROLL:

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