



CELEBRATE THE DAYS OF THE DEAD in Mexico

with *Monarch Teacher Network*



October 31-Nov 7, 2009

Ancient people had traditions and rituals dedicated to honoring their ancestors. In Mesoamerica, indigenous people believe that souls do not die, but rest placidly in a special place until the day they return to their earthly homes and visit relatives: November 1 and 2, the *Days of the Dead*. The return of monarch butterflies to Mexico every November, each carrying the spirit of an ancestor, is part of that tradition, a fusion of pre-Columbian and Christian beliefs.

No darkness or sorrow accompanies the soul's journey home. These transcendent days are marked by feasts and celebrations: scents, colors, tastes, love and enjoyment await both the living and deceased. For Mexican people, the area around Lake Patzcuaro in the state of Michoacán ("Place of the Fishermen") is a special place to witness the happy and colorful *Days of the Dead* tradition.



Our tour guide, Marcos Garcia, will lead us west of Mexico City to Lake Patzcuaro, the cradle of the indigenous Purhepecha culture and a unique place to visit and explore. We will be welcomed by the Purhepecha people as honored guests. They will guide and share with us the *Days of the Dead* holiday, the beauty and hospitality of Purhepecha traditions, language, folklore, food and craftsmanship.



We welcome adults of all professions and interests to participate in this unique experience and learn about the indigenous Purhepecha people. Teachers who participate will receive 36 hours of NJ Professional Development credits.

The trip is sponsored by *Monarch Teacher Network*, a project of the *Educational Information and Resource Center (EIRC)*... a New Jersey public agency located near Philadelphia, PA. EIRC has provided educational programs to schools and communities since 1968. More about EIRC at www.eirc.org More about *Monarch Teacher Network* and applications for this trip at www.MonarchTeacherNetwork.org

If you have questions, contact one of the following:

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Visit www.MonarchTeacherNetwork.org for trip updates and other information.



Itinerary:

Saturday, Day 1 (Oct 31): Arrive in Mexico City. Transfer to Royal Plaza hotel; tour *Days of the Dead* exhibits at the Zocalo (Mexico City's main square). Dinner: 7 pm

Sunday, Day 2 (Nov 1): Travel by first-class coach to the state of Michoacán (picnic lunch), arriving at Lake Patzcuaro by 3 pm; boat ride to Pacanda Island, an indigenous community. Welcome and orientation. Dinner on the island at our hotel; followed by traditional activities at Pacanda cemetery lasting until midnight or beyond.

Monday, Day 3 (Nov 2): Late (9am) traditional breakfast and lunch on the island with the local people. Then travel by boat to San Jeronimo/Santa Fe, indigenous communities along the lakeshore. We will share a traditional dinner in Santa Fe and will observe *Day of the Dead* celebration activities at the local cemetery, lasting late into the night. Accommodations are at Pacanda Island or San Jeronimo hotel.



Tuesday, Day 4 (Nov 3): Breakfast (9 am). Full-day exploration of traditional crafts (embroidery, basket-making, cornhusk figures, pottery) under the guidance of local artisans. Learn techniques to make these works of art and attempt some of your own. Local traditional lunch. Accommodations and dinner that night are at Hotel Posada Don Vasco in Patzcuaro.

Wednesday, Day 5 (Nov 4): Breakfast at hotel. Travel to Paricutin volcano. The most recent volcano in the western hemisphere, Paricutin grew from a cornfield in 1943, creating a cone 1,391 feet tall and burying two towns in lava. Hike to the now-quiet volcano and visit a church that was nearly buried in lava. Then we are off to down-town Morelia for accommodations and dinner at Hotel Soledad.

Thursday, Day 6 (Nov 5): Breakfast at hotel, followed by a tour of Morelia's sites, shops and artisans. Morelia is known as the "Queen of the Colonial Cities" and is the capital of Michoacán. Lunch in down-town Morelia. Leave for Mexico City in the afternoon. Dinner and accommodations are at the Royal Plaza Hotel.

Friday, Day 7 (Nov 6): Breakfast at hotel. Explore a World Heritage Site: *Xochimilco*... the "floating gardens". Take the Boat ride, lunch and tour, followed in the afternoon by a tour of the *Dolores Olmedo Museum*, a colonial hacienda that houses one of the finest collections of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo artwork in the world. Return to Royal Plaza Hotel; farewell dinner in Mexico City.



Saturday, Day 8 (Nov 7): Hotel breakfast, then transfer to airport for flight home.

Land cost/deposits: Land portion of the trip is booked through EIRC and costs \$1,195; see below for what this includes. Deposit is due by July 30; applications will be accepted after that date space permitting. Limited space: apply early. Payments for the land cost are made out to "EIRC-Global Connections" and submitted with application to: EIRC-Global Connections, 606 Delsea Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080 attn: Brian Hayes. The application and deposit of \$625 per person (checks only) will be accepted as long as space allows. The balance is due by September 18, 2009 unless otherwise noted. Payments are non-refundable, non-changeable.

Air: Each person is responsible to book their own airfare to Mexico City. **Flight details will be available in late summer** so people can coordinate with the group leader and/or other members of the group. **Until that announcement, people must not book their airfare.**



Included in the tour: seven nights hotel accommodation (*rates based on double occupancy... single supplements available at additional cost*); seven breakfasts; two dinners; three lunches; Entrance fees to museums and boat rides; Transport via air-conditioned motor coach, and an English-speaking guide (Marcos Garcia).

Not included in the tour: Cost for airfare; passport; five dinners and three lunches (budget \$150 +/-); airport transfers (approx \$20/transfer); tips to bus driver (\$1 per person per day) and tour guide (\$3 per person/day) to be paid in cash; tips to bellboys, maids and waiters; other expenses of a personal nature.