

MEXICO

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden | The Monarch Migration

February 13 – 19, 2022



*Each year, millions of monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) make the journey from North America to Mexico's Sierra Madre Mountains, flying thousands of miles to their winter home. The migration is one of nature's most amazing phenomena. Stand amid the fir-covered mountains and witness this awe-inspiring spectacle firsthand as the monarchs flutter, dip, and swoop overhead. You'll see countless millions on the roosts in the early morning, as well as in flight at midday, feeding on wildflowers, and watering at streams.*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike or ride horseback to three monarch sanctuaries, where millions of individual monarch butterflies hang in clusters from the trees, drink from streams, and swirl in the air above.
- Learn about the monarch life cycle, their migration journey, the conservation of these colony sites, and the biology of the species.
- Visit the pyramids at Teotihuacán, one of the most architecturally significant Mesoamerican sites of pre-Columbian times.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Expert naturalist guide
- Accommodations
- Activities & entrance fees
- In-country transportation
- Meals & beverages
- Carbon offsetting
- Most tips/gratuities



ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER



FEBRUARY 13 - MEXICO CITY

Depart from the U.S. and arrive in Mexico City. Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel, located on the Zócalo in the heart of the historic city center. Check-in time is 3 pm. This evening, meet in the hotel lobby at 6:30 pm and head to a local restaurant for a welcome dinner. *Overnight at Zócalo Central Hotel. (D)*

FEBRUARY 14 - ANGANGUEO

Begin today with a short exploration of Mexico City, with a brief walking tour of the Zócalo, Cathedral, Templo Mayor, and National Palace. A boxed lunch will be provided. Depart for the colonial town of Angangueo, located high in the mountains in the state of Michoacán, at approximately 8,400 feet elevation and about 100 miles west of Mexico City. Check in at Hotel Don Bruno. After settling in, enjoy a delicious Mexican dinner at the hotel, followed by a briefing to help prepare for the next day. (Please note that it can get cold at night and in the early morning. It is recommended that you bring warm sleeping clothes.) *Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 15 - ANGANGUEO

This morning, visit Sierra Chincua. This is one of several nearby monarch sites and is more isolated than El Rosario, which will be visited tomorrow. The journey starts with a hike up the mountain to about 10,000 feet. Horses will be 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. Later this afternoon, take a walking tour through Angangueo 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. Dinner is at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 16 - 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. 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. 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. In the late afternoon, continue on to Hotel Rancho San Cayetano near Zitácuaro. The hotel is set on 13 acres of beautiful Mexican countryside, amid 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 or similar. (BLD)*



FEBRUARY 17 - 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 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. Those who choose not to visit Cerro Pelón will be able to enjoy Rancho San Cayetano and the surrounding areas. The hotel property is great for birding, and a short walk takes you to the market in Zitácuaro and to Coatepec de Morelos, which is home

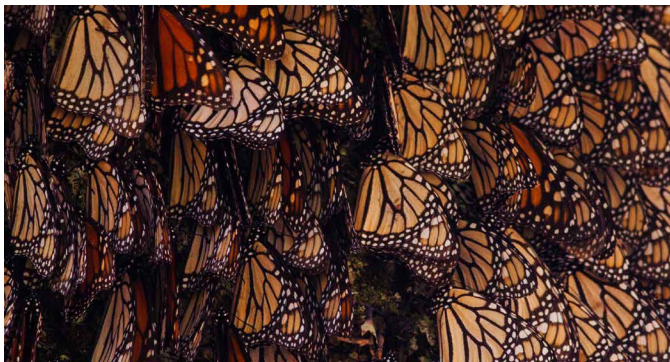
to the 16th century church Iglesia de San Pancho. If you wish to venture further, you can visit the archaeological site at San Felipe Los Alzati (45 minutes from the hotel). Return to the lodge for dinner. *Overnight at Rancho San Cayetano or similar. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 18 - 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 on the Zócalo for a farewell dinner. *Overnight at Zócalo Central Hotel. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 19 - FAREWELL!

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 is 12 pm. (B)



MEET YOUR LEADER



David Orban currently serves as the Animal Excellence Manager at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. He and his team help to bring forth an evidence-based and strategic approach to understanding and

enhancing animal welfare for the Zoo's diverse residents. While originally from Michigan, over the last few years David has enjoyed exploring Cincinnati and traveling to many national parks across the US. Outside of work, David enjoys being in nature (hiking, camping, kayaking, birding) and spending time with family and friends. David is elated to lead a program that visits the wintering grounds for the annual monarch migration – an incredible natural phenomena!



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



LAND PRICING

\$3,175

Cost includes meals and non-alcoholic beverages, accommodations, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time guide, bottled water on bus, most tips/gratuities, donation to Cincinnati Zoo, carbon offset, and departure tax.

Does not include international airfare, gratuities for main guide and driver, or items of a personal nature.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. 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.

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

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room, add \$450 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until November 10, 2021, at which time non-refundable final payment is due.

Please note: Itineraries may be subject to change due to protocols and adjustments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the latest information regarding our COVID-19 policies, please visit holbrooktravel.com/covid19

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Christina Anderson at c.anderson@cincinnati-zoo.org



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