



Culture, Spirit and Crafts behind El Dia de Los Muertos in Oaxaca, Mexico

October 27 – November 4th, 2020

October 27 Bienvenidos a Mexico (D)

Today you will make your way from the US to Xoxocotlán International Airport (OAX). We will arrange for a transfer to our hotel at 3 pm . You will meet your guide in Oaxaca, for an orientation friendship session meeting at the hotel reception at 5 pm and enjoy a Traditional **Welcome Dinner**.

October 28 Orientation and World Heritage (B, D)

After a leisurely breakfast we are we will have a lecture on “*the History and Cultural Diversity of Oaxaca*” . by a local historian on the history of Mexico from the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociológicas de la Universidad Autónoma “Benito Juárez” de Oaxaca (IISUABJO). Then we are off to enjoy a historic **Walking City Tour** or Oaxaca. Highlights include el Zocalo, the Temple of Santo Domingo de Guzman, an excellent example of Baroque architecture, the archaeological exhibits at the Oaxaca Regional Museum and the 20 de Noviembre and Benito Juarez Markets. Dinner and evening are free for you to rest, wander and explore the many options in town.

October 29 Excursion to ETLA- Flores (B,L)

Today we leave Oaxaca City for **ETLA town**, where we will visit its important church and convent [Century XVI]. Afterwards we will be guided through the *tianguis* market. Here our focus is on shopping flowers and offerings for the the altars. We end our day at the fabulous altar and giant sand tapestry at the Palacio de Gobierno (now the Museo del Palacio). Tonight the evening is yours to enjoy.

October 30 Excursion to ETLA- Mexcal (B,L)

This morning we are off to Sola de Vega to visit the organization Productores Soltecos de Agave y Mezcal SPR de RI. We will visit their fish pond of maguey tobalá, and to a mezcal’s paleque to learn about the traditional production of this important alcohol. We will exchange at the home of a member of the mezcal producers’ workshop and be briefed on the “*Situation at the mezcal workshop before news of the commercial Treaty*” by Ing. Luis Méndez. Unión de Productores Soltecos de mezcal followed by a

tasting of tobalá's mescal. In the afternoon we will return to Oaxaca City, and you will have the evening free to explore its vibrant streets.

October 31 Indigenous women, Tianguis and Cafe (B, L)

Our day starts with a briefing on "Indigenous women, Memory, Tradition and Rights." By Noemí Gómez Bravo, Ayuuk-mixe, requested. Here we will examine indigenous and gender rights historically and today. After we will walk for the tianguis, the open air markets, in the Central de Abastos of the town. Here you have time to shop, take photos, and see the diverse array of crafts and offerings. After lunch we will meet "The Just Market", Organic Café's producers and members of the Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Café de Oaxaca (CEPCO) Miguel Tejero, Consejero (requested) to learn about coffee and fair trade in Mexico. After some free time and dinner, we will work on the death altar in the hotel.

November 1st Dia de los Muertos (B, L)

Today is *Dia de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead, which officially spans Nov. 1 and 2. The tradition that's been celebrated for thousands of years, tracing back to indigenous tribes in Mexico, is alive. This morning we will experience the Day of the Dead altars as works of art and spirituality. Schools and social organizations hold contests for the best altars and some of them are astonishingly intricate and beautiful. After lunch we will visit with a local bakery and learn about *pan de muerto*. The one that you see most often is what is known the rest of the year as *pan de yema*, "yolk bread," with decorative heads stuck into it. This bread is delicious, especially when you dunk it in the local Oaxacan hot chocolate! In the afternoon you will have free time to rest or explore on your own. We have dinner tonight in Sta. Cruz Xoxocotlan at the home of a local friend José Morales García (requested) and he will share his thoughts on "*The Death Days -- preColombian civilization ceremony and cultural resistance*". Before our late night visit to the municipal **cemetery of Xoxocotlan**.

November 2nd Teotitlan-Crafts and Textiles (B, L)

This morning we will exchange at an artisan textile workshop (exposition about weaving of rugs of wool and natural colors). We will have a briefing by Mtro. José Buenaventura, maestro artisan of Teotitlán del Valle (requested). We will also have lunch in the town of Teotitlan del Valle at the house of Mtro. José Buenaventura. Afterwards we will walk through the temple [Century XVI], the archeological site in Teotitlan del Valle, and enjoy a visit to the Community Museum and workmanship market before returning to Oaxaca City. We will enjoy an exchange with a member of the Organization of Indigenous Zapotec People (OPIZ) to learn about their mission, struggles and successes. You are free for dinner tonight. Yet we hope you join us if you stay up late for one of the Comparzas de los Viejos to keep vigil.

November 3rd Monte Alban Archeological Site (B, D)

After our breakfast we are off to the wonderful **Monte Albán archeológico** site, a large pre-Colombian site just a few kilometres outside of Cruz Xoxocotlán a small city and municipality located 5 km from the state capital of Oaxaca. It is one of the earliest cities of Meso America. Here we will learn about this ancient place, have time to walk and explore. After lunch we will exchange with a local archeologist, Ninfa Pacheco, "*Monte Alban before privatization* " (requested). Our afternoon will be free to explore the markets and the city in all its expressive glory. We end our journey enjoying a Farewell Dinner together.

November 4th Hasta Luego Mexico (B)

Breakfast and departures back to US. We will have a morning transfer to the airport at 10 am.

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