Discovering Our Planet Together



# Kingdom of the Monarchs

*Witness Mexico's Amazing Migration of Millions of Butterflies!*

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**Trip Details:**

Days
6 Days / Dec–Mar

Price
From $5495

# Kingdom of the Monarchs

*Witness Mexico's Amazing Migration of Millions of Butterflies!*

One of the world's most astounding wildlife events occurs each year in the forested Central Highlands of Mexico, featuring the most delicate of creatures. As we enter a grove of oyamel fir trees on a remote mountaintop, the trunks and branches appear to be blanketed with rusty autumn leaves. A closer look reveals they're quivering. Then, as the sun emerges from behind a cloud to warm them, hundreds of thousands of monarch butterflies take to the sky—so many that we actually hear the beating of their wings, which glow translucent orange against the blue sky. Sometimes, the monarchs float down to alight on our hats and shoulders. Experience this moving phenomenon with expert interpretation from Mexico's premier naturalist guides.

## Trip Highlights

### Visit Monarch Migration Groves on Multiple Outings

On foot and horseback, enter the remote fir forests of Mexico's Central Highlands, where millions of monarchs roost in protected sanctuaries each winter

### Listen to the Sound of Butterfly Wings

When the sun emerges, hear the hum of gossamer butterfly wings as tens of thousands of monarchs take flight, fluttering overhead in a cloud of orange

### Discover Nature & Authentic Local Culture

Explore traditional mountain villages, soak in healing mineral springs prized by Indigenous people, and witness the benefits of butterfly ecotourism for local communities



# Kingdom of the Monarchs Itinerary

*Witness Mexico's Amazing Migration of Millions of Butterflies!*

### Itinerary at a Glance

| | |
|---|---|
| **Day 1** | Mexico City |
| **Day 2** | Angangueo |
| **Day 3** | Angangueo |
| **Day 4** | Angangueo / Jungapeo |
| **Day 5** | Jungapeo / Toluca / Mexico City |
| **Day 6** | Mexico City |




Day 1

Mexico City

## Begin your journey into the kingdom of the monarchs

- Arrive in Mexico City before venturing to the monarchs' wintering grounds
- Join your Expedition Leaders and fellow travelers for a welcome dinner

Our monarch butterfly tour begins in Mexico City, with a transfer from the airport to our downtown hotel in the upscale Polanco district. Gather for a welcome dinner with our Expedition Leaders, followed by an orientation to the wonders that lie ahead. One of the world's most astounding natural events occurs each year in North America, featuring one of its most unlikely creatures: the delicate monarch butterfly. Every autumn, tens of millions of monarchs set flight on a remarkable 3,000-mile journey from the northeastern U.S. and Canada to their ancestral wintering grounds in the volcanic mountains of central Mexico. The location of their breeding grounds remained a mystery to the scientific community until 1977, and how an infant generation of butterflies finds it anew each year is still an enigma. Filled with anticipation, we look forward to tomorrow's journey into the mysterious kingdom of the monarchs.



Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917

Day 2

Angangueo

## A first, surreal encounter with the monarch colonies

- Ride small Mexican horses up forest trails to the butterfly colony
- Watch millions of monarchs blanket the oyamel firs at El Rosario Sanctuary
- Listen for the hum of their wings, audible nowhere else on Earth

Leaving Mexico City, we drive into the Central Highlands past vistas of the snowcapped Nevado de Toluca volcano, bound for the small mountain town of Angangueo. Once a copper and silver mining town, today it thrives on butterfly tourism and local agriculture. The village is very picturesque, a tumble of pastel buildings set along narrow cobblestone streets that hug the steep mountain slopes. Enjoy a hearty lunch of homemade Mexican fare before making our first foray into the monarch kingdom at El Rosario Butterfly Sanctuary, one of several sanctuaries within the 129,000-acre Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve.

As we drive high into the hills in an open-topped truck, a few butterflies flit about, offering a hint of what awaits ahead. Riding small Mexican horses provided by the local community (and led by your own wrangler, so no prior horseback experience is necessary), we ascend the trail through the forest as hummingbirds and red warblers accompany us to the heart of the monarchs' migration site. What we find is an almost surreal sight. At first glance, it looks as though the trees are covered with rusty autumn leaves. But soon we realize we are looking at millions of butterflies, covering the oyamel fir trees in a delicate, quivering blanket of black and orange. Boughs bend beneath their numbers, though each butterfly weighs less than half an ounce. Massed together in a colony, they cling to the trees in huge clusters to survive the cool winter temperatures. When the sun warms their parchment-thin wings, the monarchs take to the sky in a fluttering cloud of orange—so many that the air hums with their movement. Mexico's sanctuaries are the only place in the world where you can actually hear butterflies' wings beating. Their beauty is so ethereal that many Mexicans still hold the Aztec belief that the souls of the dead are reborn as monarchs.

Day 3

Angangueo

## Learn how ecotourism keeps the monarch forests standing

- Hike to Chincua Sanctuary to watch monarchs gather at a forest stream
- Learn how WWF–Mexico and local communities protect the butterflies' fragile forest
- Explore the village of Angangueo and its murals honoring the monarchs

At Chincua Butterfly Sanctuary, another magical encounter with the monarchs awaits. Riding horses along the established trail most of the way, we hike in the last bit to reach the mariposas. Sometimes the stream along the forest floor appears to flow orange, covered completely by butterflies as they descend to drink. As Mexican butterfly conservationist Carlos Gottfried said, "When you stand in a monarch sanctuary, your soul is shaken and your life is changed." During our visit, we hear about efforts to preserve this fragile forest ecosystem that is the key to the monarchs' survival, learning about what WWF–Mexico is doing in conjunction with local communities to protect the butterflies' habitat. Our visit is one way to assist, demonstrating to the local people that ecotourism can be a more viable and sustainable source of economic sustenance than logging. Later this afternoon, there's time to discover more of the village of Angangueo, known for its magnificent murals celebrating the importance of monarchs to the community. Wrap up the day with an informal lecture by our Expedition Leader on the biology, migration and conservation status of monarch butterflies, knitting together the wondrous experiences we have had so far.



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Day 4

Angangueo / Jungapeo

## One last dawn as the butterflies take flight

- Return to El Rosario at dawn as monarchs stir and may alight on you
- Soak in the mineral thermal springs of an eco-resort in the Michoacan mountains
- Look for myriad tropical birds across the resort's verdant riverside grounds

This morning we return to El Rosario to observe the butterflies in the early morning light. In contrast to our previous afternoon visit, we'll witness the monarchs as they awaken for the day, hoping the sun will shine and warm their wings, prompting lively activity. As the butterflies take flight, we may see them float down to drink nectar from flowers or even alight on an arm or shoulder. The largest of the monarch sanctuaries in the region, El Rosario offers the best opportunity to view large numbers of monarchs in one location. After lunch, we travel to Jungapeo to reach our ecolodge and spa, tucked into the mountains of Michoacan. Renowned for its mineral thermal springs and soaking pools, our hotel's lush grounds are home to myriad species of tropical birds. Spend the afternoon soaking it all in. Take a dip in the legendary springs, scout for birds across the verdant grounds, hike to a nearby waterfall, book a spa treatment, or simply relax.

Day 5

Jungapeo / Toluca / Mexico City

## Share Mazahua food and cultural traditions

- Wake to a chorus of tropical birdsong on a peaceful eco-resort morning
- Savor a traditional lunch showcasing regional flavors at La Casa de la Cultura Mazahua
- Learn about the art and cultural traditions of the Mazahua, one of central Mexico's largest Indigenous communities

Awaken to a symphony of tropical birdsong emanating from surrounding trees and bushes as we enjoy a peaceful morning at our eco-resort. After departing Jungapeo, we stop at La Casa de la Cultura Mazahua for a traditional lunch showcasing regional flavors. Explore the cultural center's gallery, courtyard and colorful murals while learning about the artistic traditions and cultural heritage of the Mazahua people, one of central Mexico's largest Indigenous communities. We then continue to Mexico City, where we gather for a farewell dinner before a late check-in at our hotel.

Day 6

Mexico City

## Homeward from the kingdom of the monarchs

- Transfer to Mexico City for homeward flights

Our monarch butterfly adventure comes to a close today. Transfer to the airport for flights home.



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# Kingdom of the Monarchs Accommodations

*Witness Mexico's Amazing Migration of Millions of Butterflies!*



## Plaza Don Gabino Hotel

This small and simple family-operated hotel offers clean, colorful rooms, homecooked local fare in the dining room, and warm hospitality -- all with easy access to the monarch sanctuaries.



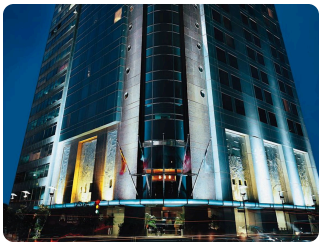
## Agua Blanca

Tucked within the mountains of Michoacan, Hotel Agua Blanca is a secluded ecolodge renowned for its mineral hot springs and natural surroundings.



## Hotel La Margarita

This small hotel near the center of the historic silver mining town of Anguangeo provides clean, colorful rooms with modest amenities, and is an ideal base for visiting the monarch colonies.



## Grand Fiesta Americana Hotel

The 4-star Grand Fiesta Americana Chapultepec is one of Mexico City's finest hotels, enjoying an ideal location facing the verdant expanse of Chapultepec Park, with proximity to all the buzz of cosmopolitan Mexico City.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/central-america/monarch-butterfly-tour/accommodations.

# See More Butterflies on Our All-Inclusive, In-Depth Journey

*Kingdom of the Monarchs*

Visiting Mexico's monarchs in their remote winter roosting sites is an unusual nature experience that few travelers have access to. Our unique itinerary gives you extensive time among the butterflies, as well as a chance to enjoy authentic cultural encounters in the remote mountain communities we visit. Only Nat Hab offers this full-package adventure round-trip from Mexico City!

1. **Make Three Different Monarch Sanctuary Visits**
   Very few companies offer tours to see the migration phenomenon of Mexico's monarch butterflies. Of those that do, typically just a day trip is provided to one sanctuary. Our full package features a comprehensive itinerary including three separate monarch sanctuary visits, with all accommodations, meals and round-trip transportation from Mexico City.

2. **Our Small Groups Tread Lightly**
   We limit our groups to approximately 16 guests, to lessen our impact on the habitat and foster a quiet, wondrous experience with the butterflies.

3. **Enjoy Authentic Cultural Encounters**
   Unlike most butterfly tours, which are simply day trips to a single sanctuary, we also include several cultural encounters to enhance your authentic Mexico experience. At Toluca, visit the Cosmovitral Botanic Gardens and stained glass panels. We also take a walking tour of Angangueo, learning about its history and continued vitality through sustainable butterfly tourism.

4. **Mexican Lodgings & Cuisine with Local Color**
   From a simple, cozy inn in the small mountain hamlet of Angangueo to a family-owned spa hotel and thermal springs near Jungapeo, our accommodations are chosen for their authenticity, natural environs and proximity to the butterflies. We also enjoy home-cooked dishes sourced from fresh local ingredients, reflecting the region's cultural heritage.

5. **Your Presence Makes a Difference for the Future of Monarchs**
   Your experience is enhanced by knowing that our presence is essential to the butterflies' continued survival: visitors demonstrate to locals that ecotourism can be a more viable and sustainable source of economic well-being than resource exploitation.

6. **Our Guide-to-Traveler Ratio Ensures Personalized Service and Attention**
   While the number of guides leading your trip depends on the number in the group (usually not more than 16); the maximum guest-to-guide ratio will never be more than 8:1, ensuring a quiet, low-impact experience with the butterflies.

7. **Outstanding Expedition Leaders with Unsurpassed Experience**
   Nat Hab has a well-deserved international reputation for employing the highest-quality Expedition Leaders in the industry. Our monarch guides have years of experience, with in-depth training as naturalists. And, they receive additional resources from WWF's top scientists. See our **Expedition Leader bios** with traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.



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**8** **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Promises a Superlative Butterfly Adventure**

With Natural Habitat Adventures, you receive our exclusive guarantee that clearly states that we will meet the high expectations we set forth in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. **Read our important promise.**

**9** **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.

**10** **Natural Habitat Adventures is WWF's Travel Partner**

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our small-group nature adventures, World Wildlife Fund, the planet's leading environmental conservation organization, has named Natural Habitat Adventures its worldwide travel partner—a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!



**Dates & Pricing Summary:**

Price
From $5495

Group Size
Limited to 16 Travelers

# Kingdom of the Monarchs Dates, Pricing & Info

*Witness Mexico's Amazing Migration of Millions of Butterflies!*

## 2026 Departures

| Departure – Return | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **Dec 6 - Dec 11, 2026** | **$5695** | |
| **Dec 13 - Dec 18, 2026** | **$5695** | |
| **Dec 14 - Dec 19, 2026** | **$5695** | |

## 2027 Departures

| Departure – Return | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **Jan 2 - Jan 7, 2027** | **$5695** | Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available |
| **Jan 3 - Jan 8, 2027** | **$5695** | Women's Journey |
| **Jan 4 - Jan 9, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Jan 5 - Jan 10, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Jan 9 - Jan 14, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Jan 10 - Jan 15, 2027** | **$5695** | |



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| Departure – Return | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **Jan 11 - Jan 16, 2027** | **$6595** | Photo Expedition |
| **Jan 16 - Jan 21, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Jan 18 - Jan 23, 2027** | **$6595** | Photo Expedition |
| **Jan 19 - Jan 24, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Jan 23 - Jan 28, 2027** | **$6595** | Photo Expedition |
| **Jan 24 - Jan 29, 2027** | **$5695** | Women's Journey |
| **Jan 25 - Jan 30, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Jan 26 - Jan 31, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 1 - Feb 6, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 2 - Feb 7, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 6 - Feb 11, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 8 - Feb 13, 2027** | **$6595** | Photo Expedition |
| **Feb 13 - Feb 18, 2027** | **$6595** | Photo Expedition |
| **Feb 14 - Feb 19, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 15 - Feb 20, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 16 - Feb 21, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 20 - Feb 25, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 21 - Feb 26, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 22 - Feb 27, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 23 - Feb 28, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Feb 27 - Mar 4, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Mar 1 - Mar 6, 2027** | **$5695** | |
| **Dec 5 - Dec 10, 2027** | **$5795** | Date Not Confirmed |
| **Dec 12 - Dec 17, 2027** | **$5795** | Date Not Confirmed |
| **Dec 13 - Dec 18, 2027** | **$5795** | Date Not Confirmed |



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## 2028 Departures

| Departure – Return<br>Dates not confirmed for 2028 | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Jan 1 - Jan 6, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Jan 2 - Jan 7, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Jan 3 - Jan 8, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Jan 8 - Jan 13, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Jan 9 - Jan 14, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Jan 10 - Jan 15, 2028 | $6495 | Photo Expedition |
| Jan 11 - Jan 16, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Jan 15 - Jan 20, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Jan 16 - Jan 21, 2028 | $5995 | |
| Jan 17 - Jan 22, 2028 | $6495 | Photo Expedition |
| Jan 22 - Jan 27, 2028 | $6495 | Photo Expedition |
| Jan 23 - Jan 28, 2028 | $5995 | |
| Jan 24 - Jan 29, 2028 | $5995 | |
| Jan 31 - Feb 5, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Feb 1 - Feb 6, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Feb 5 - Feb 10, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Feb 6 - Feb 11, 2028 | $5995 | |
| Feb 7 - Feb 12, 2028 | $6495 | Photo Expedition |
| Feb 8 - Feb 13, 2028 | $5995 | |
| Feb 12 - Feb 17, 2028 | $6495 | Photo Expedition |
| Feb 13 - Feb 18, 2028 | $5995 | |
| Feb 14 - Feb 19, 2028 | $5995 | |
| Feb 19 - Feb 24, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Feb 20 - Feb 25, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Feb 21 - Feb 26, 2028 | $5795 | |
| Feb 29 - Mar 5, 2028 | $5795 | |

See https://www.nathab.com/central-america/monarch-butterfly-tour/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.



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## Included

Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

## Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

## Important Information About This Trip

The monarch butterfly sanctuaries in Mexico's Central Highlands are a marvel no nature lover should miss! Observing millions of monarchs clustering and moving together is a wondrous experience. This trip can be more strenuous than most, however, so please read carefully the section on Physical Requirements.

## Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to on this trip are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require medical evacuation insurance for our guests' safety. If you decline the medical evacuation insurance coverage offered by Natural Habitat, we request that you send us documentation of the independent coverage you have selected. We will add the cost of a medical evacuation policy to your tour invoice until you provide our office with proof of coverage, including your insurance company's name, contact number and your individual policy number. Thank you for understanding that our policy exists exclusively in the interest of our guests' safety.

## Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Mexico City. **You must arrive no later than 5:30 pm on Day 1** in order to attend a group welcome dinner and orientation at 7 pm. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels will be included in your pre-departure materials.

**You may depart Mexico City at any time on the final day.**

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.



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# Kingdom of the Monarchs Extensions

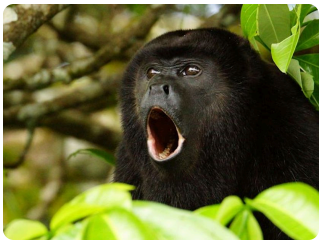
*Witness Mexico's Amazing Migration of Millions of Butterflies!*



## The Great Gray Whales of Baja

On skiff excursions from our shorefront whale camp, come within arm's length of amiable gray whales and their calves, as these gentle giants birth and nurture their young in the warm Pacific waters of San Ignacio Lagoon.

**$6995**



## Costa Rica Wilderness Explorer

See another side of Costa Rica on this adventure into rainforests, mist-shrouded mountains and coastlines well off the typical tourist track, and enjoy remote and authentic ecolodges en route.

**$8795** (+air)



## Natural Jewels of Costa Rica

An all-encompassing nature expedition through the jungle canals of Tortuguero to the misty cloud forests of Monteverde and Corcovado's wild beaches—discover Costa Rica's exceptional biodiversity.

**$11495** (+air)

**Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together**

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