

Oaxaca Up Close

Day of the Dead Celebration



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

FRIENDS OF THE
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
ART MUSEUM

PRINCETON JOURNEYS
A World of Learning



OAXACA UP CLOSE

Inside the Day of the Dead Celebration for Alumni & Friends of Princeton University

October 28 - November 03, 2010

7 day Journey: Oaxaca

10 day Journey: Oaxaca + Mexico City

{ Trip Overview }

Although the Day of the Dead is celebrated in many parts of Latin America, nowhere is it more charged with cultural symbolism or more vibrant than in the UNESCO World heritage city of Oaxaca, Mexico. There is a palpable buzz in the air as families visit markets, prepare homemade mole, hot chocolate and pan de muertos for their friends and family, both living and departed.

Our tour operator, Culture Xplorers, has deep-rooted relationships in southern Mexico that allow our travelers to fully participate in this most festive of traditions, all from a distinctly local perspective. In addition to the stunning natural beauty, archaeological and architectural treasures of Oaxaca, meet many local friends: painters, chefs, sculptors, archaeologists and more.

Signature Experiences

- **Build an Altar.** Learn why Oaxaca families make altars dedicated to the memory of passed loved ones. With this understanding, we shop for, build & decorate our own!
- **Hot Chocolate Workshop.** Enter the home of a local friend for a delicious workshop on Oaxaca-style hot chocolate. Pati shares insights into her own family's traditions and the importance investing energy into the preparation of food offerings for this celebration.
- **At Home with Oaxaca's Artists.** Meet two of Oaxaca's internationally recognized artists at their home and workshop. Enjoy a private demonstration of their work, and a home-hosted meal.
- **Meal at Modesto's.** Enjoy a traditional Day of the Dead fiesta. Celebrate with neighbors and friends at the colorful home of a mixed media artist.
- **Oaxaca Cooking Class.** Roll-up your sleeves for a hands-on culinary workshop with Oaxaca's top contemporary chef. Prepare seasonal dishes and learn about the cultural roots and significance of particular foods during the Day of the Dead celebration.
- **Fabulous Farewell.** Oaxaca's finest contemporary chef prepares a tasting menu for Culture Xplorers travelers which combines fresh, regional flavors with a creative twist.

Day by Day Itinerary

October 28: Arrive Oaxaca

Be met upon arrival at Oaxaca's airport. Transfer to Oaxaca City and settle into our hotel only two blocks from the central Zocalo, Oaxaca's leafy central plaza. Gather for a welcome cocktail and dinner to meet our Princeton academic host, our trip leader and your fellow travelers. Receive an informal briefing on the days ahead. (Meals: D)

Lodging for six nights in Oaxaca will be at the charming and centrally located, 14 room boutique hotel La Provincia. For a preview visit:

www.hotellaprovincia.com.mx

October 29: Mitla, Home-Hosted Meal & Teotitlán's Master Weavers

Visit the archaeological site of Mitla to explore its fusion of Spanish Colonial and Zapotec architecture, followed by a visit to Teotitlán del Valle. Using ancient symbolism and natural dyes to create beautiful, museum quality textiles, Teotitlán's master weavers have become shining examples of one model of economic sustainability for endangered living traditions.

Demetrio and his wife welcome us to their home for a delicious lunch highlighting traditional Zapotec recipes and fresh, regional ingredients.

Afterwards, Demetrio teaches us about natural dyes and offers a weaving demonstration. (Meals: B, L)

October 30: Walking Oaxaca & Home-hosted Hot Chocolate

In this "city of painters" take time to visit a few of Oaxaca's most distinguished galleries and museums, including the high caliber, well appointed display of pre-Columbian art and artifacts that

world-acclaimed painter Rufino Tamayo donated to his hometown of Oaxaca.

This afternoon, visit the home of our friend Pati Reyes, a lifelong supporter of the arts who works with many of Oaxaca's painters, print-makers and other fine artists. Pati invites us to her cozy home to make traditional hot chocolate and taste "pan de muertos", the soft, slightly sweet bread made only at this time of year. (Meals: B, L)

October 31: Archaeologist for a Day & Building an Altar

Experience the archaeological riches and Zapotec roots of Oaxaca with a visit to Monte Albán. Back in town after lunch, it is time to create our Day of the Dead altar using the materials purchased at the market, as well as photographs and mementos brought with us from home for this special occasion. (Meals: B, L)

November 1: Day of the Dead Fiesta at Modesto's Home

Drive to the small town of Zimatlán, home of our friend Modesto, a much loved mixed media artist. Modesto invites us to share his family's traditional Day of the Dead mole and to celebrate with friends and neighbors. While in Zimatlán, visit the local pantheon to experience deep Day of the Dead traditions with no tourist presence. With luck, run into one of the town's early evening comparsas – roving, costumed street parties where dancing is a must! (Meals: B, L, D)

November 2: Culinary Workshop & Celebration Dinner

Don a cook's apron and roll-up your sleeves alongside Alejandro Ruiz, one of Oaxaca's top

chefs. Visit the city's produce market to buy ingredients, then enter the kitchen for a hands-on cooking workshop making regional, seasonal dishes associated with this festive time of year.

Enjoy free time this afternoon for shopping, museum visits or just people watching near the Zócalo. Gather this evening for our celebration dinner, a tasting menu prepared by Chef Ruiz and his team back at Casa Oaxaca.
(Meals: B, L, D)

November 3: Homeward Bound

Transfer to the airport for morning flights to Mexico City and connections home. (Meals: B)

Mexico City Xplorers Pre-Trip Extension

October 25: Arrive Mexico City

Our Mexico City leader greets you at the airport upon your arrival and takes you to our hotel on the edge of Alameda Park near the historic and revitalized downtown. (Meals: D)

Lodging in Mexico City is at La Casona, an historic colonial building lovingly transformed into a 29 room boutique hotel which has been named an artistic monument by Mexico's National Institute of Fine Arts For a preview, visit:

www.hotellacasona.com.mx

October 26: National Anthropology Museum & In the Footsteps of Frida

Start with an introduction to one of the world's great museums, the Museo Nacional de Antropología – the National Museum of Anthropology. It's vast, superb collection is well designed with a room dedicated to each of Mexico regions or ancient cultures.

This afternoon, follow the lives and artistic development of two of Mexican most compelling figures with a visit to the Dolores Olmedo Patiño Museum in Xochimilco which houses the largest private collection of Diego Rivera's work, as well as representative works by Frida Kahlo. Continue to Coyoacán, with a visit to the Kahlo family's Blue House, now the Museo Frida Kahlo, where Frida was born and spent much of her life.
(Meals: B, L)

October 27: Custom Mural Walk & The City of Gods - Teotihuacán

Explore Mexico's great metropolis with a mural-themed walk taking in its revitalized historic center. In addition to striking murals by Diego Rivera and his contemporaries, this walk exposes you to several of the city's superlative historic sites, including: the National Palace, the Zócalo, the Templo Mayor and the Catedral Metropolitana.

Drive north of the city to Teotihuacán (approx. one hour). Teotihuacán is a massive site, reflecting the importance of the city in its heyday from around 450 – 650 AD. At that time, it is estimated to have been the sixth largest city in the world. Enjoy lunch at the site and return to Mexico City in the late afternoon. (Meals: B, L)

Optional evening out: Mexico City's Ballet Folklórico is world renowned. Performances are often held on Wednesday evenings. Whenever there is a performance, as a service to Culture Xplorers' travelers, tickets may be purchased in advance upon request.

October 28: Basilica de Guadalupe & Fly to Oaxaca

After breakfast, transfer to the Mexico City airport, stopping en route to visit the Basilica de Guadalupe, honoring Mexico's most revered saint. Check in for your short flight to Oaxaca.
(Meals: B)

COSTS & DETAILS

Program Cost for 7 days = \$2,590/pp (single room add \$480)

Mexico City Extension = \$1,295/pp (single room add \$240)

Included Costs & Features:

- In addition to scheduled morning talks, our Princeton academic host will be present at all group events and excursions during our core program to offer additional insights and respond to travelers individual questions.
- Expert local guides, distinguished chefs, artists and other cultural ambassadors meet and accompany us throughout our journey
- Culture Xplorers' signature experiences listed at the start of this itinerary
- Lodging (double occupancy) at charming, boutique hotels brimming with local character
- Meals: Breakfast and lunch daily, plus (3) dinners and a welcome cocktail reception
- Private ground transportation in modern, air-conditioned vehicles throughout the trip
- All entry fees to included museums, archaeological sites, monuments, etc.
- Tips for baggage handling, hotel staff and Culture Xplorers' driver
- Bottled water provided aboard our vehicle
- Private airport pick-up and drop-off coordinated with group arrival & departure.

Not included & estimates:

- International airfare to & from Oaxaca. Budget \$700 for coach fare
- Approximately (3) meals during our core trip. Budget \$15/meal
- If you are traveling alone & choose a single room, add \$480 for 6 nights, or \$720 for 9 nights. To avoid this fee, ask us to assign you a roommate. If no roommate is available the single room upgrade must be charged
- Discretionary tip to Culture Xplorers' locally-based trip leader. Budget \$6 - \$8/person/day

Details:

- Max. travelers:16 (8 minimum)
- Length of trip: 7 days/6 nights, plus an optional 3 day/3 night extension to Mexico City
- Activity level: Moderately Active. Fast pace, substantial distances covered, considerable walking and stair climbing. Participants must be able to walk comfortably for 1 to 3 hours per day at altitudes of 5,000 feet. Some hilly terrain, walking on unpaved paths at archaeological sites and at local cemeteries.

Contact

Office of the Alumni Association of Princeton University
John Maclean House, P.O. Box 291
Princeton, NJ 08542-0291
tel: 609.258.8686
fax: 609.258.1281
journeys@princeton.edu

