



## **Culture, Spirit and the Women behind El Dia de Los Muertos in Oaxaca, Mexico**

**October 27- November 4th, 2024**

*We're going to the culinary and cultural capital of Mexico during one of the most amazing times of the year! If you love beauty, eating, bustling markets, bright colors, street art, friendly people, arts and crafts, rich history, and hands-on experiences—this is your trip! For ease and fun, we are staying at the same boutique hotel the whole time so you can unpack and enjoy the day activities!*

Sunday, October 27 Bienvenidos a Mexico

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(D)

Today you will make your way from the US to **Xoxocotlán International Airport (OAX)**. **We will arrange for a transfer** to our hotel. (If you come in a day or two early you can easily taxi to the hotel from the airport!)

You will meet your guide and Shasta Nelson for an orientation friendship session meeting at the hotel reception at 5 pm followed by a delicious Traditional **Welcome Dinner!**

Monday October 28 Orientation and World Heritage

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(B, L)

After a leisurely breakfast we will start our trip with some context! We've invited a local historian to share with us about "*the History and Cultural Diversity of Oaxaca.*"

Then it's time to get out and see it all! Let's move our bodies and take our 5 senses out into the city! We'll enjoy a historic **Walking City Tour** that will 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 famous 20 de Noviembre and Benito Juarez Markets. We will

also savor a few local delights along the way and have plenty of time to take photos of amazing colonial architecture, let's take in the colors and sounds of this amazing place!

Dinner and evening are free for you to rest, wander and explore the many options in town.

Tuesday, October 29 Culinary Arts (B. L)

This morning after breakfast we indulge in the incredible culinary arts of Oaxacan cooking first hand. We will enjoy a comprehensive five-hour course that starts at 10 a.m. and ends around 3 p.m. After introductions and an overview of the class, our hosts will walk to the nearby market s where we will pick up some last-minute items and, you will also receive a short tour of how to choose the ingredients that we will be using for that class. This is a fun interactive time that ends in our scrumptious creations!

For those that like we will then visit Galería de Arte "Redox" and meet with a local artists (Lilian Cruz Moctezuma requested). Then we enjoy a walking tour of local murals and folk art!

Dinner and evening are free to to enjoy some great local music venues or go to a Mezcal bar.

Wednesday, October 30 Excursion to Etna-Flores (B,L)

Today we leave Oaxaca City for **Etna town**, only about half an hour away.

*Etna is famous because it was the original Zapotec capital of the Oaxaca before Monte Alban supplanted it so there's some incredible ruins and history for us to step back into. Plus, it's the birthplace of quesillo cheese—a delicious white string cheese that melts in your mouth!*

We will visit its important church and convent [Century XVI] and then it's shopping! We will be guided through the *tianguis* market. Here our focus in on shopping flowers and offerings for the altars we are each going to be building for our Day of the Dead ceremony! We end our day at the fabulous altar and giant sand tapestry at the Palacio de Gobierno (now the Museo del Palacio).

This evening we have cultural interaction with a local curandera to learn about traditional healing and medicine in Oaxaca. We will participate in an herbal infused steam ritual to cleanse our selves, called a Temazcalera.

October 31 Indigenous Women, Markets and Coffee (B, L)

When we arrived we heard about the history of this area, but let's go deeper today and look at women! Our day starts with a thought-provoking conversation centred around "Indigenous women, Memory, Tradition and Rights." Here we will examine indigenous and gender rights historically and today as we seek to better understand what life is like for our sisters who live here.

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.

Then it's time to better understand the other famous drink from this area! today it's coffee! 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) to learn about coffee and fair trade in Mexico. And, yes will enjoy some fabulous Café.

After some free time and dinner, we will work on our altar in the hotel.

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

**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 (requested) and he will share his thoughts on “*The Death Days -- pre-Columbian civilization ceremony and cultural resistance*”.  
Then, it’s time for our late night visit to the municipal **cemetery of Xoxocotlan**.

November 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ A Day Trip to **Teotitlan for Crafts and Textiles**(B, L)

This late morning we will visit an artisan textile workshop (exposition about weaving of rugs of wool and natural colors). Teotitlán del Valle is a famous weaving village just outside of Oaxaca that is renowned for its traditional and high quality weaving wares. We will also have lunch in this charming town.

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 market before returning to Oaxaca City.

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 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ **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.

In the afternoon. We get hands on again once last time with cocoa and making chocolate at the Cooperative Autonomía de Convivencia y Aprendizaje de Oaxaca.

It’s our last afternoon here so let’s make sure you have the time to do whatever you most want! Maybe you have more shopping to do? Maybe you just want to wander the markets again? Maybe you want to people-watch from some cute café? Or maybe you want to invite a new friend from our group to go connect over a happy hour? Whatever you need, enjoy this city in all its expressive glory.

We will set time to visit local women's owned craft shops like Marias Arte y Diseño and Benshap. The crafts in Oaxaca are amazing!

We end our journey enjoying a Wrap up Circle and our Farewell Dinner together, yes with the famous local mole!

November 4<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Hasta Luego Mexico

\_\_\_\_\_ (B )

Breakfast and departures back to US. We will have a morning transfer to the airport at 10 am or stay on and enjoy the beaches for a few days!

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