



Oaxaca, Mexico, 2020



Day of the Dead Oaxaca, Mexico, 2020

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is the most time-honored and expressive holiday of Oaxaca. It is an example of the harmonious relationship between Christianity and the Pre-Hispanic traditions found in the state of Oaxaca.

Although *Día de los Muertos* is recognized all over Mexico, Oaxaca has become known for its ornately rich celebrations that honor the return of their deceased loved ones on November 1st and 2nd. In the state capital, Oaxaca City, the festivities of *Día de los Muertos* begin a week before the 1st and 2nd of November with the commencement of the “Plaza de los Muertos.”



The elaborate initiation of “Plaza de los Muertos” takes place in various markets around the city, with largest celebration occurring in the *Mercado de Abastos* (Market of Supplies). In each market one may find all of the necessary items to prepare for the arrival of the dead: sweet-smelling *cempasuchil* (marigolds), candles, chocolate, sugar skulls, and the ingredients for making the traditional dishes of Día de los Muertos, such as, *mole negro* (black mole), *pan de yema*, and tamales. Other items can include the delicious *nicuatole* (corn jelly), pumpkin with black sugar, sugarcane, *tejocotes* (small wild apples), *pan de muerto* (bread of the dead), cooked chayote, and an endless medley of regional fruit (oranges, limes, bananas, jicamas, wild apples, nuts, peanuts, medlar, pineapples). After spending the day in the market gathering and buying everything families head home, prepared to build the altar.

It is believed that the dead, after their long pilgrimage from the other life, arrive on earth tired and thirsty, thus the altars are constructed as a place for them to visit loved ones, feast on their favorite foods and listen to their favorite music. Oaxacan altars are most commonly built during the last days of October in the homes of the Oaxacan people. They are usually set-up on a table, which is wrapped with a tablecloth, white sheet or perforated tissue paper. Sugarcane is bound to the foot of the table and runs high overhead into the shape of a triumphal arch. On the morning of October 31st the offerings - such as, mole negro, chocolate and pan de muerto are placed on the altars.



The sweet-smelling *cempasuchil* (marigolds), oil lamps and bees wax candles adorned with black tissue paper are the final decorative accents of the altar. The dead are welcomed into the home and expected to bask in the essence of this splendid fervor.

The procession of souls begins, first with the children, then with the adults. The children visit the altars in the late afternoon and feast upon the food, mostly sweets, laid out for them. The souls of the adults return on November 2nd feasting, as well, upon the food offered to them by their loved ones.

You will find that there is much to see and do in the city of Oaxaca and in the outlying villages. For this reason, we offer you the opportunity to partake in a number of different tours to villages, but also encourage you to stay in the city to experience the altars and *comparsas* with us. This freedom enables you to design your own days, yet guarantees an all-encompassing series of events sure to deliver the diverse wonders of Oaxaca’s Día de los Muertos celebration.



Itinerary Day of the Dead 2020

Sunday, October 25th

We will pick you up at Oaxaca's International Airport; from there we will take you to a boutique hotel, located in the heart of the city center of Oaxaca, just a few blocks away from Oaxaca's main plaza, the Zocalo. After checking in we will hit the streets for an introductory walking tour of Oaxaca City.

Monday, October 26th

After breakfast at the hotel, Introduction at the Instituto Cultural Oaxaca. After the orientation we will walk through Oaxaca's Ethnobotanical garden. Lunch at Los Danzantes. Before having some free time in the afternoon, we will head over to admire the beautiful Santa Domingo church.

Tuesday, October 27th

After breakfast at the hotel, we will leave the city for an excursion into the surrounding villages. The trip includes visits to the archeological town of **Mitla**, also famous for mezcal, Teotitlan del Valle, which is known for their weavings, and Santa Maria el Tule, home of the infamous, grand **Tule tree** – the widest tree in the world. We will lunch in Santa Maria el Tule at the restaurant "El Milenario."

Enjoy a free evening, exploring the nightlife of the city or simply relax in preparation for the next day!





Wednesday, October 28th

We will start the day with a typical Oaxacan breakfast served in the hotel restaurant, and then head over to *Instituto Cultural de Oaxaca* (Oaxaca's Institute of Culture) for our hands-on mask making workshop. The masks are a distinct accessory to the *comparsas*, an important parade that takes place during *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). After this workshop we will visit two culturally significant places in Oaxaca, the first place is the archeological site of Monte Alban, once considered the capital of the Zapotec people between the years of 500 B.C. and 800 A.D. The second is Arrazola, a town famous for the production of *Alebrijes* (fantastical animal woodcarvings). Ending the day with dinner at La Biznaga, a contemporary restaurant situated in a lovely dimly lit courtyard, serving modern Oaxacan cuisine.

Thursday, October 29th

After breakfast at the hotel, the day's adventures will commence at the Instituto Cultural de Oaxaca (ICO), where we will finish-up with our mask-making workshop. After lunch we will have a guided tour through the market "Benito Juarez" where you can find the ingredients for our traditional cooking class on *Mole Negro* (Black Mole). We will also have the opportunity to buy artifacts to build our altar. Following the market, we will have the wonderful opportunity to build an altar for *Día de los Muertos*. In this construction, it is customary to include pictures of your own departed loved ones, and we encourage you to bring them along. Participating in such a ritual is an important aspect of embracing the culture's reverence of life and death. After, we will attend an educational lecture on the importance of the Day of the Dead, and the many traditions and customs that are associated with this special day. Dinner will be at El Asador Vasco.



Friday, October 30th

After breakfast at the hotel, we will dawn our handmade masks and participate in the ICO's traditional *Comparsa*, a parade celebrating *Día de los Muertos* through dance, costume, music and *mezcal*! We will have a few hours free in the afternoon, and recommend visiting some of the art galleries, shopping or relaxing in the *zocalo*. We will meet for dinner at Casa Oaxaca, described as the best restaurant in town, before heading over to the cemetery Xoxocotlan and or Atzompa to experience the customs of *Día de los Muertos*.



Ocotlán Market by Rodolfo Morales

Saturday, October 31st

After breakfast at the hotel, we will meet at the ICO for an introduction for our trip, after the introduction discover the secrets of Oaxaca's famous *Mole Negro* (Black Mole), as well as the most traditional dish of Día de los Muertos, in our much anticipated cooking class. After indulging in the wonderful Mole and a delicious Surprise Oaxacan dish, enjoy a free afternoon exploring the city. We will meet again in the late afternoon, and head over to Etna to watch their comparsas.

Sunday, November 1st

After breakfast at the hotel, we will have our Grand Masters excursion visiting with world class artisans that are producing some of the most beautiful Oaxacan handcrafts, such as The Aguilar Sisters in Ocotlan,. We will then go to San Martin Tilcajete to visit the gallery of Jacobo Angeles, a famous contemporary woodcarving artist and San Bartolo Coyotepec, the capital of the Barro Negro (Black Pottery).

Lunch will be at La Azuncena Zapoteca.

Monday, November 2nd

Transport to the Airport and Fly Home!

MOC Adventures 2020 Prices

USD

Price per person (Double occupancy)

\$2,750

Price per person (Single occupancy)

\$2,950

Items Included

8 nights lodging in Oaxaca at La Casa Catrina or a similar boutique hotel with all gratuities included.

Breakfast in our hotel (American or Oaxacan)

The following restaurants which represent the most distinctive tastes of real Oaxacan flavors (gratuities at these restaurants included):

- El Origen
- Casa Oaxaca
- El Catedral
- El Milenario
- La Azucena Zapoteca
- La Biznaga

Classes:

- Mask Making Workshop
- Lecture on Day of the Dead
- Oaxacan Cooking
- Mezcal appreciation

Airport transfers and land transportation within Oaxaca.

Entrance fees to museums and archeological ruins mentioned in the itinerary.

English speaking guides in Oaxaca.

All Taxes

Items Not Included

Air Fares and Airport Taxes.

Beverages and Alcoholic drinks.

Personal expenses, meals not included in the itinerary, tips and gratuities and other independent tour guides.

Any other incidentals not listed under "included".

*A non refundable deposit of \$200 USD to reserve your trip. Final payment is due 45 days before departure.

* Cancellation at least 45 days before departure will need to cover an administrative and operational of \$250.00 USD.

Contact Details

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