



CHAUTAQUA

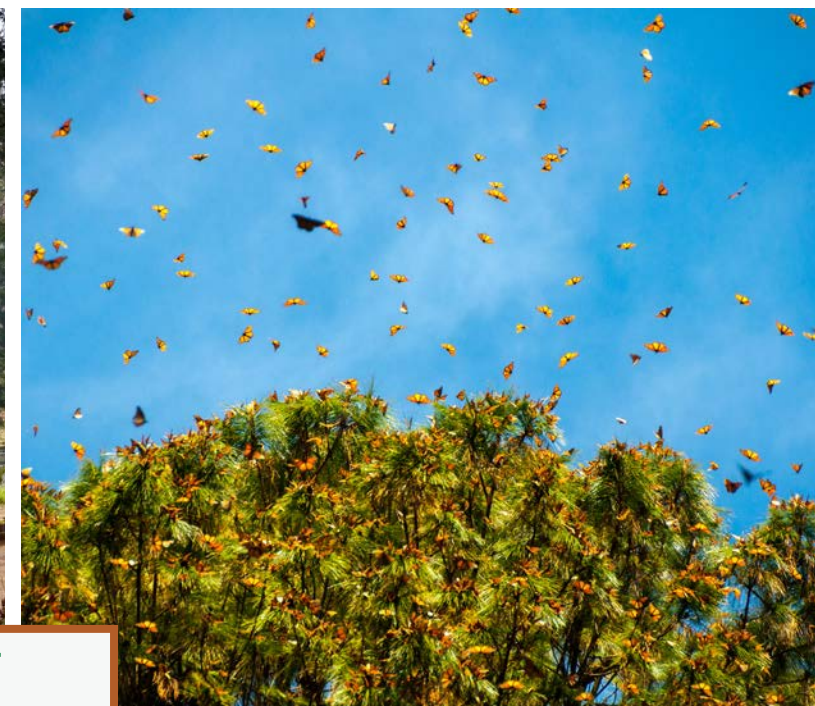
TRAVELS®



Mexican Monarch Migration

February 21-28, 2025

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Mexican Monarch Migration Overview

February 21-28, 2025

Chautauqua Travels invites you to witness the monarch butterfly migration, a remarkable display of nature's resilience and wonder. Join Betsy Burgeson, Supervisor of Chautauqua's Gardens and Landscapes on a spectacular journey from Mexico City to the mountains of Mexico's Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Each year, up to one billion monarch butterflies migrate from North America to central Mexico, traveling 3,000 miles to reach their winter home. The butterflies gather together to keep warm, blanketing the Oyamel fir and pine trees in dense clusters that come to life as the sun breaks through the forest canopy. Learn about their extraordinary journey and witness this natural phenomenon firsthand with visits to two of Mexico's butterfly sanctuaries. You will also enjoy Mexico's rich heritage, with a hands-on cooking class, evening at the ballet, and visit to the Museo de Arte Moderno.

Note that this is a moderately strenuous tour and includes several one-hour hikes on uneven surfaces at elevation (approx. 5,500 feet above sea level). Those who choose can reduce the hiking distance by traveling on horseback. The trail to view the butterfly migration is not accessible to wheelchairs, scooters, or rollators.



Trip Highlights

- Learn about the fascinating science underlying monarch migration along with ways that you can nurture and support butterflies in your own gardens from Chautauqua's Supervisor of Gardens and Landscapes, Betsy Burgeson.
- Journey deep into the forest of La Piedra and El Rosario butterfly reserves to observe thousands of monarch butterflies overwintering in dense clusters on Oyamel and pine trees. Witness them awaken and take flight as their wings are warmed by dappled sunlight.
- Embark on a boat through the protected waterways of Xochimilco and learn about how agriculture can repair and enrich the soil during a tour and lunch at an organic farm located amid the canals.
- Immerse yourself in Mexico City's vibrant visual and performing arts scene, with visits to the Museo de Arte Moderno and an evening at the Palacio de Bellas Artes.
- Enjoy the rich flavors of Mexican cuisine with farm-to-table dining and a hands-on cooking class at one of the world's best restaurants.



Mexican Monarch Migration

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Itinerary

Day 1: ¡Bienvenidos a Mexico!

Arrive in Mexico City today and transfer directly to your hotel, located near the Paseo de la Reforma. Enjoy time on your own to explore the neighborhood before joining your fellow travelers for a welcome reception and dinner. Tonight, your Chautauqua Travels expert, Elizabeth (“Betsy”) Burgeson, Supervisor of Chautauqua’s Gardens and Landscapes, will provide an overview of the fascinating science underlying monarch migration.

Meals: Dinner, Reception

Accommodations: Hotel Marquis Reforma

Day 2: Ancient Canals and Agriculture

Depart for the famous canals of Xochimilco, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Spend the morning exploring the last remnants of the vast water transport system built by the Aztecs on a colorful boat, or “trajinera.” Disembark at Arca Tierra, a farm on one of the *chinampas*, or artificial islands created to support ancient agriculture. You’ll meet with some of the farmers that continue this legacy on a tour around the chinampa. Learn about the regenerative farming practices they use to improve soil health and water quality. Then enjoy a farm-to-table lunch made with fresh, local, and organic ingredients like huitlacoche, spinach or squash blossom. Return this afternoon and enjoy time on your own to explore the city.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: Hotel Marquis Reforma

Day 3: Toluca Gardens

Depart for Valle de Bravo this morning, stopping en route in the city of Toluca. Here, you will have time to explore the magnificent Cosmovitral Botanical Garden, which showcases over 500 species of native plants surrounded by vibrant panels of stained glass, reflecting their brilliant colors on the garden within. Continue to the picturesque town of Valle de Bravo, on the shores of Lake Avandaro, your home for the next three nights. En route, your Chautauqua expert will share additional information about monarch migration and protection. Enjoy lunch as a group, then settle into your hotel and enjoy time to explore the town on your own.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: Hotel Misión Grand Valle de Bravo

Day 4: Magnificent Monarchs

Today you will witness the miraculous monarch migration. Depart your hotel this morning for a short drive to the nearby Piedra Herrada Sanctuary, one of four sanctuaries located within Mexico's Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve – a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Each fall, millions of monarchs travel thousands of miles from their summer breeding grounds in the United States and Canada to central Mexico where they spend the winter in the Oyamel forests to prepare for the long journey north. Once they arrive in Mexico, butterflies gather in large clusters on tree trunks through the winter, forming dense groups that glow in the sun-dappled forest. By February, as temperatures rise, the butterflies begin their mating rituals – laying hundreds of eggs in the trees before returning to North America. Today, you will begin the steep trail deep into the Piedra Herrada Sanctuary. The trail is challenging, and you will have the option of traveling on foot or horseback. Find yourself surrounded by large stands of Oyamel fir and pine trees. The butterflies remain clustered together in the cool morning temperatures; however, as the sky warms, the butterflies take flight – and the show begins. After a boxed lunch in the sanctuary, you will return to Valle de Bravo to enjoy an afternoon at leisure to explore its charming, cobbled streets and well-preserved colonial buildings on your own.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: Hotel Misión Grand Valle de Bravo

Day 5: El Rosario's Resplendent Butterflies

Today, we travel several hours north to El Rosario in Michoacan State, home to the largest population of monarchs and thought by many to offer the best viewing opportunities in Mexico. For these reasons, El Rosario tends to be more crowded than Piedra Herrada. Once again, those who choose can begin the journey on horseback. The final ascent is on foot, culminating with trees that are blanketed by hibernating monarchs. After a boxed lunch in the park, descend to the coach and return to Valle de Bravo. Enjoy a group dinner on the waterfront this evening.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Hotel Misión Grand Valle de Bravo

Day 6: La Marquesa and Mexico City

Migrate back to Mexico City today, stopping en route in La Marquesa, a national park about one hour outside the city. Enjoy lunch in a pine forest before returning to the city. Settle into your Mexico City hotel this afternoon before joining the group tonight in the Palacio de Bellas Artes for a performance by the Ballet Folklórico, a folk ensemble showcasing traditional culture and costume of Mexico for more than seventy years. (*subject to scheduling and availability*)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: Hotel Marquis Reforma

Day 7: Culinary Explorations

Visit Chapultepec Park this morning, an expansive oasis in the heart of the city. Here, you will explore the Museo de Arte Moderno (MAM), one of the largest collections of modern art and sculpture in Latin America. Later, immerse yourself in a hands-on culinary adventure at Expendio de Maiz Sin Nombre, repeatedly recognized as one of the best places to eat in Mexico City—and around the world. Toast your journey this evening with a final celebratory dinner featuring live mariachi music.

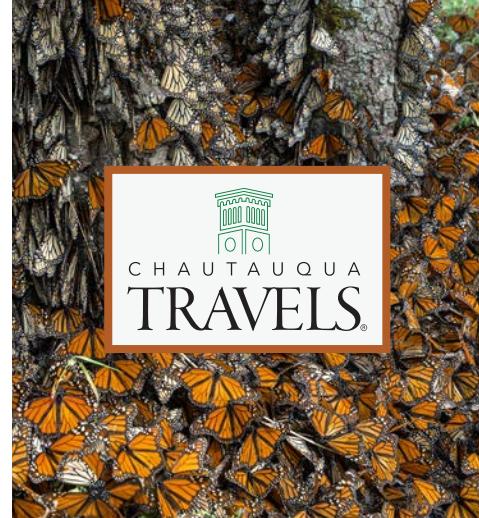
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Hotel Marquis Reforma

Day 8: Departure

Depart hotel for individual flights home.

Meals: Breakfast



Your Expert

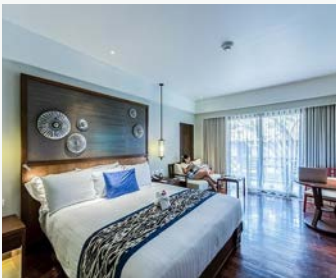


Betsy Burgeson

With a degree in science teaching, a sense of humor and love of gardening, Betsy Burgeson has been empowering thousands of attendees over the past 20 years through her presentations, workshops and tours. She holds a B.S. in Earth Science and Biology Education from S.U.N.Y. Fredonia and taught Biology at Panama Central School from 2000-2007. From 2008 -2014 she was the Watershed Steward & Master Gardener Coordinator for Chautauqua County CCE. In January 2015, Betsy was hired as the Supervisor of Gardens and Landscapes at Chautauqua where she gets to help Chautauqua Institution grow, both figuratively and literally. She not only “paints” Chautauqua with blooms each season, she empowers others to make sustainable gardening choices, by combining her loves of gardening and educating.

Connecting people to the natural world has always been one of her passions. The ephemeral beauty and amazing fortitude of Monarch butterflies have helped her inspire people to re-connect with nature. They are a great reminder of how small the world really is and the global impacts our actions can have. Betsy loves raising monarchs with her three children and hopes that someday one of the hundreds of monarchs she tags each year will be found in the sanctuaries in Mexico.

Accommodations



Hotel Marquis Reforma Hotel & Spa

The Marquis Reforma, is an iconic art deco style property on the fashionable Paseo de la Reforma, a short walk from Chapultepec Forest. Recognized as a “Leading Hotel of the World,” the property features three on-site restaurants, a full-service spa, fitness center, and indoor pool. Meticulously designed rooms combine luxury and comfort. **4 nights**



Hotel Misión Grand Valle de Bravo

The Misión Grand Valle de Bravo is a boutique property located outside the city in the Avandaro Forest adjacent to a natural waterfall. The hotel provides a tranquil getaway with access to nearby trails, along with on-site dining, garden, a fitness center, spa, and indoor pool. All rooms are comfortable and spacious with two double beds, regardless of occupancy. **3 nights**





Price:

Double Occupancy: \$5995 pp

Single Occupancy: \$6820 pp

Deposit: \$1,000

Program limited to 25 travelers.

**Book
Today**

What's Included

- All accommodations for the duration of the tour
- Meals, as noted in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and visits as noted in the itinerary
- Expertise of a Chautauqua expert, ATA-hired travel director, and local guides throughout the tour
- All gratuities for on-tour guides, drivers, hotel, and restaurant staff as part of the group program
- All on-tour transportation, unless otherwise noted
- A group transfer from the airport for those arriving according to the designated itinerary
- Quietvox listening devices to facilitate audibility and social distancing on tour
- The assistance of an ATA professional travel team to assist with pre-trip questions, travel arrangements, including flights, extra hotel nights and other services
- Comprehensive pre-departure mailings and materials with information about the destination and what to expect on tour, including a suggested reading list
- Emergency evacuation insurance

[Click here to read the full terms and conditions online.](#)



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