

Preparation for Monarch Teacher Network California trips



- *Be sure to read and save the information about arrival in San Francisco and Taxi/Hotel... you will want this information when you arrive*
- *You may want to print a copy of this document and take it with you on the trip.*

Identification – It is your responsibility to make sure you have the proper ID required!

Canadians and other Non-US Citizens: *Your best form of ID is a Passport. You must have proof of citizenship to enter and leave California. If you don't have a Passport, get one now! Make a copy of your Passport and important ID papers; leave one copy at home and carry one in your suitcase... in case you lose the passport and need to replace it at the Embassy.*

US Citizens: *You need some type of Photo ID to fly. You can use a valid Passport, driver's license, a State id, or student id! If you don't have a Passport or driver's license it is recommended, along with your photo id, you have a certified copy of your birth certificate as well. If you don't have any of these forms of id – GET THEM NOW! Make a copy of your important ID papers; leave one copy at home and carry one in your suitcase... just in case you lose them.*

Physical Conditioning

While we will not be heading into the most rugged mountains of California there will be steep paths or lots of steps between the beaches and the cliffs (road) of the west coast. San Francisco is very hilly and most of the locations we will visit have rolling hills and lots of walking opportunities. Listen carefully: *"It's pay now, or pay later"*: **any** aerobic-type exercise you do before the trip.... walk... run... bike... will make your trip more enjoyable. Start today. Forget the elevator; take the stairs. **Do SOMETHING every day. You'll be glad you did.**

Inclement Weather Departures: Important!

Because the California trips are in January, it is possible that inclement weather could cause problems/delays at your departure airport or possibly even in San Francisco. Monitor the weather situation carefully: if it seems impending bad weather could cause delays, consider changing your flight and arriving a day early. Be aware that our group will leave San Francisco by bus and head south to Pismo Beach on Sunday at 8:00 AM: we cannot and will not hold the bus for someone who unfortunately arrives late because of flight delays. **If you experience flight delays, please call Erik or Brian on their cell phones (leave a message if there is no answer) so they know when/where to expect you!** If you arrive in San Francisco after 8:00am Sunday morning, you will need to get transport by car or van at your own expense to our next destination. Brian or Erik will determine the next possible meeting point for you and the group and can help you with the details.

Suggestions on what to pack:

Clothes (Suggestions only; each person is different; suit your individual, personal needs)

- 3 pair of jeans (perhaps wear one pair on the plane)
- 1-2 pair of Khaki pants
- 7 t-shirts
- 2 long-sleeved shirts and/or bring a lightweight jacket

- 8 pairs socks in case one gets wet(maybe at least one thick warm pair)
- Sneakers and sandals (or hiking shoes are good for the rugged terrain)
- Sweatshirt and/or a fleece – it can get cold at times on the trip (and very nice at other times).
- 1 nice outfit. Some women take Capri pants and shirt; you do not need formal clothes for any occasions and only need casual nice clothes once or twice if you choose
- You might want to bring hat and gloves if you tend to be cold - you probably will only need this in Muir woods but you never know.
- **Rain gear -important**– raincoat and rain pants or poncho and umbrella
- Bathing suit (optional; some hotels have a pool or jacuzzi, ocean is too cold to swim)
- **You may want sunscreen and a brimmed hat for mid-day use in case of sun**

Think layers: *It can be damp and cool at any time but definitely at night. The cold northern California current brings cool seawater and damp air along the coast which can cause fog and low cloud. The air may feel much cooler than the thermometer would suggest – be prepared!*

Backpack I carry one every day! I use my backpack to carry camera, binoculars, water bottle, a snack (granola bar, dried fruit) extra layer or jacket, rain gear, journal with pen, tissues, Tylenol, umbrella etc). I also carry any essential medicines with me each day.

Medicines: Carry all personal medicines with you on the plane, in labeled containers. You may want to also carry them in your backpack (ones you can't live without). Any remedies for stomach ailments can be left in the suitcase (small bottle of Imodium AD, Pepto Bismol, and/or Tums) or picked up at a California pharmacy if needed; brands may be different so if you have a favorite make sure to bring enough for whole the trip.

Luggage and carry-on: Please limit your baggage to one medium or small suitcase and one carry on (we will have a large group; bus space will be limited). We suggest you place **all essential medications, critical items and a change of clothes in your carry-on luggage.** Personal items: Plan on carrying at least one water bottle for daily use. **You will need a day pack** for carrying personal items while visiting parks. Other suggested items you may want: alarm clock, small flashlight, sunglasses, chapstick, journal, guidebooks.

Camera: Bring a camera for sure; you'll get lots of great photos. Important: visitors in close proximity to monarch clusters are asked to speak in hushed voice, as loud voices disturb the butterflies and other visitors! This holds true in most of the parks and any of the bird or mammal colonies as well!

Binoculars: You may want to bring binoculars if you have them. We will have stunning views of the coast but will not always be able to get very close to wildlife so having binoculars along could be helpful. The trip leaders will have a large spotting scope for wildlife but it requires the subject (whale or bird) remain relatively stationary which rarely happens.

Time: **California is on Pacific Time which is 3 hours behind NYC/Philadelphia.** If it is 10am in Philadelphia it is 7am in San Francisco. Keep that in mind when you call home at 10pm from San Francisco (PT) and wonder why everyone is in bed in Philadelphia (1am ET)

Internet Access: All our hotels offer free wireless internet service but we can't guarantee there will be a constant steady connection. To stay in daily internet contact, your best bet is to bring a wireless-enabled device like an iPad or a laptop computer.

For teachers: trying to communicate with your students on a daily basis is a worthwhile goal. The trick is how to do that considering the time difference and a group schedule that is “on the

go”. Create reasonable expectations: let students know you will communicate when possible because you will be on the go, in natural areas, without easy access to internet or communication devices. Sometimes teachers have been able to make direct phone calls to their schools; it makes sense to set up all the details with the office before the trip so they are ready when you want to talk to the class on the phone or speaker. You decide what works best for you.

The easiest way for you to communicate with family or students on a daily basis is by email, from our hotel(s), using a wireless-enabled laptop computer.

Miss Hope (you will meet her on the trip) found a fun website: “I found a cool travel journal website that is really user friendly. It's easy to log on and it seems like a neat way to keep in touch with students while away from the classroom. Basically teachers post diary entries when possible and students can also post messages.” <http://www.etraveldiary.com/> Hope has also created a Facebook group site (MTN California Trip) where anyone can post something about the trip or to prepare for the trip.

Money matters: Many adults on MTN trips budget roughly **\$550 or more** for airport transfers, lunches, dinners... and other optional expenses/souvenirs. Of course this amount will vary from person to person and ATM machines are widely available.

Credit cards are widely accepted in California but you should not rely exclusively on credit cards as your only payment option. You should contact your credit card companies (and Bank if you have an ATM) to tell them about your trip to California so they don't think your card number has been stolen.

Packing, Weight and Bulk: *Be kind to yourself and those around you. Pack light. You have to get your luggage in and out of hotels (hotels often have porters but they are not always available). Leaving space in your suitcase means you will have space for souvenirs.*

Hotels and Transports:

Hotel in San Francisco: Our first and last two nights, we will be staying at the **Radisson Hotel in Fisherman's Wharf**, San Francisco. This is a block from the water, very close to Pier 39. See additional information below.

Once we have compiled flight information for the entire group, we will forward that flight information to everyone if you want to coordinate getting to and from the airports. You may want to wear an article of clothing featuring monarchs or butterflies so folks can recognize you as a group member. We do not recommend that people wait at the airport for other travelers: flights can be delayed and/or arrivals can be at different terminals - it may be difficult to link up.

Shuttle/Taxi in San Francisco: *You will need a taxi/shuttle to get from the airport to our hotel*

San Francisco:

Radisson Hotel Fisherman's Wharf - Saturday, Thursday, and Friday Nights

www.radisson.com/san-francisco-hotel-ca-94133/cafisher

250 Beach St. San Francisco, CA 94133

415.392.6700

San Francisco Airport Shuttle Services:

Airport Express – 415.775.5121

or Go Lorrie's – 415.334.9000

San Francisco Transportation:

Yellow Cab (415) 333-3333

or Green Cab (415) 626-4733

Pismo Beach:

Shore Cliff Lodge (Best Western) – Sunday night

www.ShoreCliff.com 2555 Price St. Pismo Beach, CA, 93449 805.773.4671

Pismo Beach taxis:

Yellow Cab in Pismo (805) 489-1155 or *234Taxi* in San Luis Obispo (805) 489-9985

Monterey:

Victorian Inn (Best Western): - Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights

www.VictorianInn.com 487 Foam St Monterey, CA 93940 831.373.8000

Monterey taxis:

Monterey Yellow Cab (831) 869-1957 or *Coach USA Central Cab* (831) 646-8294

IMPORTANT:

Our tour bus leaves for Pismo Beach and the largest monarch butterfly colony in California the Sunday at 8:00 am! If you are not there it is your responsibility to connect up with us on the phone and in person.

As always you should travel with a companion and/or the group whenever possible. Avoid travel at night unless necessary, and stay with the group. Do not wear expensive jewelry or expensive designer clothing. Keep valuables close at hand.

Don't forget....

- ID: Make 2 copies. Leave one home and carry one in suitcase.
- Plane tickets: Make 2 copies. Leave one home, carry one in suitcase.
- Cell Phones: You may receive roaming charges depending on your phone plan and provider. You should contact your cell phone service provider to determine your options and what would work best for you in California. If you bring your cell phone, **DON'T FORGET THE CHARGER.**
- Water: It is recommended that you **bring 1-2 reusable water bottles and refill at the hotel each morning. This cuts down on recycled trash and is better for the environment; it also means fewer stops to buy bottles of water during the trip.** Carry 2 water bottles in your backpack during the day.
- Make sure you have adequate supplies of prescription drugs and other medical necessities on your person. Carry details of your medical insurance and a list of contact numbers when traveling.

Health precautions: Some of our hikes may be strenuous. We will visit parks along the coast with rugged terrain. If you have any doubts about your health we strongly suggest you consult your physician. **You should be able to walk several miles a day, though you can often opt to walk less.**

We've probably forgotten something. Ask if you have any questions:

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