

Day of the dead in Oaxaca Testimonials

"It was a great trip! No amount of reading about the Day of the Dead prepared me for the range of emotions of the people or the great attitude they have about death. You are very knowledgeable and you constantly tried to improve the experience when you got new information. I am pleased with my pictures. Really captured a lot of emotions in the cemeteries. Now I want to go see the gray whales!" Gwynn Ellis, Albuquerque, New Mexico

"I really love all the images and the great memories of all the fun times we had. I can truly say that your Oaxaca trip will go down in my book as one of the best trips I have taken. You made it really enjoyable. You know a lot of the locals and it allowed us to slide right in. The people, the town, you and my fellow shutter bugs made it a blast! I am so glad that I was able to share it with all of you" Tena Cohn, Del Mar, CA.

"I want to thank you for all the effort you put into planning for our Oaxaca trip. The trip was well-organized. You took us to places I never would have found on my own, and I had all the creative freedom I needed. And you got us there at just the right time, for the best light. I enjoyed the hotel on the Zocalo.....I just had a great time. I am so pleased with the variety of shots, and am sending copies to many people. Monica, a 17 year old girl from the art school you took us to, e-mails me almost everyday, to practice her English. I'm looking forward to getting together, and sharing our shots. I Just wanted to thank you for taking the time to make the CD of our trip. I love the photos that you took of me and the others. I never have pictures of myself, and this will be a nice memory. The trip was way better than I imagined, thanks again for all your efforts." Sharon Anthony, Carlsbad, CA

"The light, the color, the sense of tradition and connectedness. It was overwhelming – which is why I have to see it again. Sitting quietly on the pyramid steps with the group around was the perfect "power down" for trip's end. It was a time to watch the images of the days blur past – almost too cool for words. You have a very nice way about you and it enables people to become comfortable. You also encourage trip members to get out and do the work – to get out and try. Those skills are immeasurable. Oaxaca seems to have taken root in me in a way no place else has. Plainly, I can't wait to get back." Steve Pool, New York, NY

"Jim, I think you did an excellent job and paid much attention to us and gave us some very good photography advice. I think your helpful hints were very good as well as the slide shows you gave. The slide shows demonstrated what one would like to strive for. Oaxaca is a very interesting place and you have a very good and productive schedule of events. Very good planning and attention to the participants – I hope to go on more Jim Cline photo tours." David Ebert, Hyattsville, Maryland

"You guys do a great job for your tours. Really good planning, and give us a lot of good tips about each location. Thanks again." Dave Ebert, Hyattsville, Maryland

"I thought the pace and the variety of activities was just right, and the availability of free time for rest, shopping, or wandering was much appreciated by me and everyone else, I think. My favorite activities were the evening comparsas in the city and the villages – extraordinary and unforgettable experiences. But also great were the cemetery visits, the markets, the churches (all very different), and the archeological sites.....I'm certainly glad I stayed for the one day extension, and also that I followed your suggestion and came down a day early.

I thought that your presentations – especially the fact that they were keyed to the specific kinds of shoots that we were going to be encountering and were illustrated by examples of shots from the same events from previous trips – was very helpful. This was not advertised as a workshop and we were not engaged in specific assignments and critiquing our work on location. Such workshops exist for those who want them but this trip seemed to me a perfect combination of photo shoot and holiday – intense but not stressful. So the amount and nature of the instruction seemed to me just about right. In particular I found your tips about nighttime shooting in the cemeteries and the slow synchronized flash techniques to be really enlightening and feel that without being

subjected to a demanding class I had gained a lot of new experience during the week, especially in terms of using my tripod and flash.

I thought you were a very congenial and concerned trip leader, and you found a good balance between regimenting us and letting us stray. I also thought the trip a good value for the money. I have already recommended it (and the website) to others, and am definitely hoping to do the same trip again sometime in the future – this time with my wife. It was a wonderful, rich and exciting experience, and a truly fabulous venue for photography.” Lou Montrose, Solana Beach, CA

“I believe you'll be sending out some sort of questionnaire on the Oaxaca trip in a while, but for the moment, I just wanted to say again what a marvelous experience it was for me and thank you once again for orchestrating it all so beautifully.”

“I felt a part of everything in this culture, in this city, in this country, in this place. I told you once on the trip that I've never taken this much pleasure in a trip in my life. And that's true. Your involvement with the culture and the area was the reason for the extraordinary success of this trip for me. You very obviously care, for us as tour participants and photographers, but more important for the people of the area. It shows and it matters.” Mitch Spence, Climax Springs, MO

“Your slide shows where you commented on your pictures and techniques, were extremely helpful. Particularly your suggestions about approaching people in the cemeteries and your suggestions on techniques there. While I don't suppose I've produced absolutely deathless photography from those places, there are a few that I already treasure, and that's I think due to your help in both anticipating the situation and the photographic challenges involved. And while we're traveling, as on van trips, your comments are very much appreciated on technique and approach.” Mitch Spence, Climax Springs, MO

“Hi Jim, thanks again for a great trip and experience for the Day of the Dead. I've been working on my images and it brings back all of the fun times and great experiences. I still miss having lunch and watching the Pigeons fly through the Zocalo. Life in LA, just doesn't have that relaxing component or the fresh breezes. I learned a lot about my camera and photography in general during the tour that helped a great deal. Diane and I are also looking forward to the post-trip party. It'll be nice to see how everyone's images turned out. We both are pleased with the pictures that we took. In many ways I wish I took more. I'm working on a book "Angels of Oaxaca", a small picture book of the Angels that were at the cemetery.” Stephanie Hanchett, Los Angeles, CA

“ Hi Jim, excellent adventure with lots of fond memories and many good images. About 2/3rds of my 50+ rolls of film have been developed and so far I am delighted with the results. I have some good shots from the cemeteries. You were right about shooting and 800-ISO, but adding one stop more. That was the one area where I was concerned about exposure, but it worked.

The trip was well organized. Even when the info (you received) was incorrect, the alternatives were wonderful. It was a great gang of photographers, which I understand is usually the case when you lead a tour. I had a fabulous time, did some great shopping at the alebrijes shop, (my Christmas shopping is done), and had a memorable experience during my time in and around Oaxaca. There was never a dull or boring moment during the entire trip. Bye for now and thanks again.” Betty Toepfer, Los Gatos, CA

“When I arrived in Oaxaca, I had planned to take a bus or taxi into town, as I usually do when I arrive by myself a couple of days earlier than the group. Thanks for meeting me at the airport days before the trip was scheduled to begin. That gave you points BIG TIME!

The group seemed easy to control, and there were no conflicts that I perceived, which made the trip very enjoyable. You interface well with you clients, give the impression (at least) that you know what you are doing and offer a

relaxed atmosphere in which to travel and photograph. Yeah, I would say that you are very good at what you do and that you were attentive.

Pre-trip info was timely, well presented and gave everything needed to be prepared for the trip. The hotel was well situated and easy to find especially on the first day. (I could have stayed in a less noisy and less expensive hotel, but this one was central and probably worth whatever extra it cost to stay there). I loved the balcony outside my bedroom windows, which I frequently used to photograph the goings-on in the plaza below. Your choice of nice restaurants was appreciated. The food was usually outstanding and , of course, the mole was always excellent. Having included that into the cost of the trip may have added to the overall expense, but it was money well spent. Normally, I just roam around and photograph until I am starving then grab a sandwich and keep on going. The nice meals gave me time to slow down, visit with my travel companions and enjoy and appreciate the whole experience more.

Were you attentive? It was wonderful, like a parent taking care of their kids. I loved not having to organize, drive and find cash for whatever each and every day. All I had to do was just show up. What a delight!

I most enjoyed the fact the every day was just a little different from the day/s before. There was not much duplication even when we went to all the cemeteries. I liked how the trip started off slowly and built up the pace as the days went along. I really enjoyed visiting Monte Alban and Mitla. Those were such beautiful and historic sites. I also enjoyed the delicious food. I was told that the food would be delicious in Oaxaca and I was not disappointed. So...the pace, the subject matter, the small group size, the efficient organization of the tour made the trip very enjoyable.

The free time was perfect! I loved wandering at will, doing lots of street photography including the sand art on the promenade from the Zocalo to Santo Domingo Church and the art school near the Socrates Garden Plaza, being able to spontaneously photograph the children comparsas as they appeared, going back to the market for another try at capturing the flavor of the Day of the Dead in market terms, having time to speak with the locals and of course do some shopping. The side streets and markets of Oaxaca are very interesting and offer great photo opportunities. This kind of personal photography appeals to me, as I like to wander about looking for something that not everyone I am traveling with might have seen like the old aqueduct and the alleyways through some of the archways leading to another part of town.

I would definitely recommend your trips to my friends because you are knowledgeable about your subject, are able to come up with a back-up plan when needed, keep to schedule and have the transportation lined up and waiting for us each and every day with no waiting around. You always seemed to be available and project the idea that you care about your clients, their well being, their photographic experiences on the trip and if they are having fun along the way. Thanks for a great experience.

Thanks for sharing your previous experiences and offering suggestions. I think that it gave us some ideas of what to expect and how to go about it. For night photography, I intended to push my 400 film to 800, but your suggestion to add another stop was just about perfect and most of the images turned out just fine.” Betty Toepfer, Los Gatos, CA

“Oaxaca was the best - you do terrific trips and the chance to do/see local events/people are the best! Everything we did was wonderful and the special times of being with and photographing non-tourist events – school plays, art school preparations, small town celebrations made the trip that much richer – also your interactions with locals – their delight in seeing their photos and you again – a real treat! Jim – you are a really great leader – low key, thorough, flexible, trip subject is varied and rich in content. The richness, the variety of experiences and subject matter, size of the group was perfect, accessibility of you as leader. Oaxaca is an amazing place! It was a GREAT trip – you do a super job & I look forward to my next trip with you! ” Mary Ellen Kaschub, Los Gatos, CA

"Jim, I had a great time and would like to attend another of your tours in the future. You were able to handle a diverse set of personalities well and keep your sense of humor. If we had any questions or concerns, you dealt with them well, your help with the slow synch flash and existing light photography really helped. I felt the trip was a great value for what we experienced, I would recommend the trip to my serious photographic friends. We had a great group and the people photography in town and in the villages was great." Michael Edminster, Aptos, CA

"Jim, I want to thank you for a great trip in Oaxaca. So memorable." Karen Skullerud, San Diego, CA

"We had a great time with you and group in Oaxaca...great cultural experience..." Joe Messina, San Francisco, CA

"Jim, we had a great time with you in Oaxaca. Loved the format and the overall experience." Ed & Bernadette Sylvester, Nevada City, CA

"Thanks for putting together such a fantastic, well-organized trip. The variety of activities - and the super location of the hotel right in the middle of those activities was great - good choice. Some of the photo "assignments" were challenging - night shots and the movement within the parades - but, hey, that's what we came for. We appreciate all your efforts that made things go so smoothly - and we look forward to joining another of your tours. Thanks!" Bernadette Sylvester, Nevada City, CA

"Hi Jim I took your Oaxaca tour a couple of years ago and didn't realize how great you were because I didn't have anything to compare it to. Last year I wanted to go to Pushkar but your dates just didn't work for me. I looked around and found another tour (supposed to be the best and definitely was the most expensive) and left for India right after my conflict.

Jim, you are the greatest! They were not organized, didn't have anywhere the caring that you expressed and although the experience was great, I saw dozens of things happening that disappointed me. The guide was on his first India trip (so much for the ads about experience) and he relied totally on the hired local guides which were more attuned to tourists than photographers, and you will love this - WHEN HE REACHED A SPOT and told us this is where you should be to shoot, HE HOGGED THE SPACE for a really unreasonable length of time and the tour people had to wait and then fight for position and time. When I called him on it he said " this is my first trip and I have to bring back a portfolio for the boss"Very disappointing.

YOU ARE THE GREATEST, I can't say enough about how great you and your tour was. Please use me as a reference anytime, and I will see you soon. PS Thanks again!!!!!" Michael W. Licamele

"Jim, thank youi so much for the Day of the Dead trip. What a fabulous, fabulous trip that was! It was a new ballgame for me and I loved it! Your demeanor, networking, photo knowledge, etc. boded quiet well with me! It was a delight far more than I had hoped! I did a book of some of the pictures which I truly adore! I am now even more excited about Cuba! Safe travels!" Ann Thompson, Belleville, PA

"We want you to know how much we enjoyed the Oaxaca trip—I liked it just as much as the first time and Caroline had a great experience. We look forward to the possibility of going with you to Colonial Mexico and Guatemala at some future date. Best wishes for the New Year, and regards to Karl." Lou Montrose, Solana Beach, CA

"Jim, what a great experience! It was a wonderful trip you put together and I want to thank you again for all of the effort that you put into giving us the best cultural and photographic experience possible. The photo ops were amazing, but what really made the trip special was the cultural experience. I'm already looking forward to an opportunity to travel with you again. I felt well prepared based on the information you sent. I thought the pace was just right with maximum exposure to the culture without sacrificing photo-ops. The ease with which you interact with the locals made it easy for all of us.

You really did an outstanding job, Jim... And thank you again for all of your effort in putting together an incredibly enjoyable and productive trip to Oaxaca!" Ron Smith, Grand Junction, CO

"Jim was great. Really easy going, organized, attentive, generous. I had a great time and got some great shots! The Day of the Dead festival was truly amazing. It was action packed! There was always something going on. It was visually stimulating!

I think it was perfect. And I think the location of the hotel made it perfect. We were near everything and could just hear every time some parade or event was starting in the square. I think there was just the right amount of instructions. And I also appreciated that on the field, Jim would let us be if we wanted and if we wanted more instructions or to learn something in particular, he was there to help. I do think I learned a lot (technique and equipment wise) and I got shots that I was really happy with. I learned a lot and yet I did not feel like grueling a workshop. I am definitely traveling with you again!" Chantal Levesque, Montreal, Canada