Overview

1. Instructor introductions
2. Introduction to Mérida
3. Food
4. Typical day in Mérida
5. Evening/Optional Activities
6. Excursions
7. Clothing
8. Departure day logistics
9. Managing money abroad
10. Questions
Who we are...

Sonia Calpanchay
Pablo Coats
Vanessa Elias
Sean McKinnon
Onsite staff

Moira Nuñez
Secretary

Diana Arízaga
Coordinator

Cintia Estrada
Secretary
Our vision
Mérida, México

Capital of Yucatan State of Mexico

One of the most important places to experience the Mayan heritage

Merida has a distinct cultural and political identity as a result of its unique geographic location, strong Spanish influence, and isolation from other parts of Mexico.

Unique culture and traditions: the local dress, language, cuisine, and the observance of holidays and celebrations

Close to famous archaeological sites, such as Chichén Itzá and Uxmal

Close to several ecological wonders, such as cenotes (underwater sinkholes) and exotic bird sanctuaries

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgzE2RQXjdI
Food

Mérida is a traditional city with a historic legacy of the Mayan civilization.

Yucatan cuisine is most representative of the city
  ◦ Influences from local Mayan culture, Caribbean, Mexican, European and Middle Eastern cultures.

Yucatecan food different from what people of the U.S. think of when they imagine Mexican food.

Plenty of rice and beans, yes.

But also lots of tropical fruit (Mango, Papaya, Banana, etc.)

Pork and Chicken very common as well

Vegetarians?
  ◦ Soups and Stews also very common, and many foods prepared w/spices, flavors, sauces, condiments
Some popular dishes

Poc-Chuc

Cochinita pibil

Marquesita

Papadzules
Mérida, México

Merida, Mexico, has a hot, high-humidity tropical climate with a pronounced dry season in the low-sun months, no cold season, and a wet season in the high-sun months, including June and July. The average high temperature in June and July is around 94F. The average low temperature in June and July is around 74F.

Torrential rains are very frequent in June and July, but mostly happen in the afternoons and are accompanied by a refreshing drop in temperature but a rise in humidity index.
Water

Keep yourself **very** hydrated drinking several bottles of water daily as it is very hot and humid in Mérida.

**Avoid drinking the tap water**, drink only bottled water.

Bottled water can be purchased very inexpensively at local grocery stores and convenience shops-- we found bottles for as little as 10 pesos (60 cents in the U.S.!)
A typical day in Mérida....
## Daily Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Verdes</th>
<th>Blancos</th>
<th>Rojos</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:50</td>
<td>Literature &amp; writing</td>
<td>Hispanic Linguistics</td>
<td>Grammar for communication</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:55-10:45</td>
<td>Culture &amp; conversation</td>
<td>Literature &amp; writing</td>
<td>Hispanic Linguistics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45-11:05</td>
<td>Break and announcements</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:10-12:00</td>
<td>Grammar for communication</td>
<td>Culture &amp; conversation</td>
<td>Literature &amp; writing</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:05-12:55</td>
<td>Hispanic Linguistics</td>
<td>Grammar for communication</td>
<td>Culture &amp; conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00</td>
<td>Mon, Wed, Thurs - Song, dance &amp; theatre</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tuesdays – Support &amp; Success Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 – 8:00</td>
<td>Sports – Wednesdays</td>
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Classes
Afternoon activities
Choir, Dance & Theater

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 1-2pm

During the program, students and instructors will work together to perform at the Farewell Show.
White outfit needed for the performance at the Farewell Party
Evening and optional activities
Evening Activities

In the evenings we will have:

Sports/Recreation (Wednesdays)
  - Soccer, football, capture the flag, ultimate frisbee, tag games, etc.

Support and Success Groups (Tuesdays 1-2)
Optional Activities

-Celestún (Wild Life and Flamingo Tour) - July 1st
Host Family Activities

Mérida en Domingo – June 12\textsuperscript{th}
Gran Museo del Mundo Maya – June 19\textsuperscript{th}
Luca de Gálvez Market – June 26\textsuperscript{th}
Progreso (beach) – July 3\textsuperscript{rd}
Three excursions

◦ Chichén Itzá and Izamal (1 day) – June 17th
◦ Uxmal and Loltún (1 day) – June 24th
◦ Punta Laguna, Tulum, and Valladolid (3 days, 2 nights) – July 8th - 10th
Volunteer Work

Where: Mayan Village of Yaxunah

When: Two Saturdays (June 18 & June 25)

What: Students will be involved in rotating activities at the village.

There will be a volunteer workshop, where all details will be explained, along with an explanation of student conduct and the village's expectations and needs.
Clothing

Due to humidity and heat, you may want to change clothes more often; during rainy season, your laundry may not dry as quickly.

Try to ensure most your clothing is **100% cotton** since synthetic fabrics don’t breathe as easily.

As a rule, **short shorts not acceptable** street attire in Merida or surrounding *pueblos*

**Mid-length shorts** are acceptable within your home, the beach and on some field trips. Pack a few pairs.

Yucatecans dress up more than most U.S. students
Clothing

Some ideas for packing clothes:

- **Young ladies**: casual skirts, bermudas, capris, pants (not too heavy), T-shirts, tank tops, blouses, dresses, jeans, a swimsuit, a light-weight long sleeve shirt, one or two dressy things for parties or special events, heels and a cardigan (evenings can be chilly). No revealing clothes, please.

- **Gentlemen**: casual wear, t-shirts, pants (not too heavy), a light-weight long sleeve shirt, dress pants or nice pair of jeans, swim trunks, a sweater, tennis shoes, one pair of dress shoes, a good pair of sandals and a sweater (evenings can be chilly).
Packing

Mérida is a large, well-supplied city, do not over pack. You can find common necessities there.

Items NOT allowed in carry-on bag:
- Hazardous, sharp, flammable objects, liquids, and foods

Buy travel-size toiletries- put in transparent zip lock bag
Check weight and size restrictions for carry-on on your airline's website
- Keep your most important items in your carry-on or purse.

For checked luggage, leave 10-20% of your suitcase space empty for any souvenirs
Packing

MAKE A PACKING CHECKLIST:

- US Passport
- IUHPFL-required documents
- School supplies (writing utensils, notebooks, dictionaries)
- Only travel-size shampoo and conditioner
- Lots of sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Sunburn and bug bite relief
- Any prescription drugs that you may use (make sure they are clearly labeled)

- Lightweight clothing
- Program shirt
- Comfortable walking shoes (sneakers or hiking shoes)
- Flip-flops as house shoes
- Sunglasses, sun hat
- Umbrella
- Camera with extra memory cards and batteries
- iPod
- Water Bottle
## Flight Information

Flight information (American Airlines):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flight Route</th>
<th>Departure Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis/Dallas (2281)</td>
<td>Thursday, June 9, 8:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas/Mérida (1616)</td>
<td>Thursday, June 9, 12:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrive in Mérida</td>
<td>Thursday, June 9, 2:50 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Be excited, be patient, be flexible 😊
Departure day logistics

Date of departure: June 9\textsuperscript{th}, 2015

Time to be at airport: \textbf{5 am}
- We will be at the airport for a while in the morning
- Be excited, be patient, be flexible 😊

Meet at/near the American Airlines Check-in Counters
Wear your program T-shirt!

\textbf{Luggage:} 1 suitcase + a small carry-on item like a back-pack.

\textbf{Recommendation:} Again, bring small travel sized toiletries. You can purchase whatever you need once you are in Merida.
Departure day logistics

Weigh your bag(s) before coming to airport
  ◦ You can check 50 lbs.
  ◦ Remember, you will likely buy things in Mérida that you want to bring home...
  ◦ You’ll have to pay for your baggage $25

Pablo and Sonia will be traveling to Mérida with the group!

Problems or delays on departure: please call any of us
  ◦ Pablo (812) 369-5457
  ◦ Sonia (615) 542-9435
Immigration

Upon arriving in Mexico you will have to fill out an immigration form
  ◦ You will not be allowed to leave Mexico without this form

Sean and Vanessa will be waiting for the group outside of Mexican customs, at which time students will hand us the following items in order to receive their program phone
  ◦ American (smart)phone and any smart devices
  ◦ Passport
  ◦ Immigration form

The instructor team will store these items for the duration of the program
Managing Your Money Abroad

1. Money in México
2. Payment options when making purchases abroad
3. Budgeting with your student
4. If your student runs out of money...
5. Some last important reminders
1. Money in México

The currency in México is the *peso*

The exchange rate is: 1 U.S. dollar $\approx$ 17 pesos.

There are coins and bank notes:

- Coins:
  - 5, 10, 20, 25, 50 Cents;
  - 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 pesos

- Bank notes:
  - 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 pesos
Mexican currency
2. Payment options when making purchases abroad

Cash
- Easiest and most preferred method for low ticket items
- Always accepted
- Student should arrive in country with some local currency

Debit card
- To make purchases or to make cash withdrawals from ATM
- Accepted, though cash is still preferred for low ticket items
- Local shops may not accept cards
2. Payment options when making purchases abroad

**Credit card**
- Accepted for substantial purchases
- Permits a cash advance
- Recommended in case of emergency

**What we do not recommend**
- Traveler’s checks
- Bringing U.S. dollars to the host country to exchange for local currency
3. Budgeting with your student

Come to an agreement with your student re: spending allowance and if he/she may ask for more money if his/her budget runs out

Student must understand exchange rate:
- 1 U.S. dollar ≈ 17 pesos.

Brief recap of what Program Fees include:
- Transportation within host country (in Mérida, you may have to pay for it out of pocket and we’ll reimburse you at the end of the program)
- Course manuals and instruction
- Host family stay, including lodging and meals
- Health insurance
- Program-directed field trips and activities (excluding optional activities)
3. Budgeting with your student

Brief recap of what the Program Fees do not include:

◦ Meals on limited overnight excursions (two to three meals, $10-$15 USD each)

◦ Personal expenses abroad such as souvenirs, gifts, postage, optional activities, etc., the estimated price range of which depends on student’s individual needs or allowance

◦ Optional excursion to Celestún, activities with host parents, and other activities that are not part of the Honors Program curriculum
4. If your student runs out of money...

Transfer more money into his/her account so that he/she can access it with his/her debit card.

Send money via Western Union. The name on the money order needs to match the student’s name exactly as it appears on his/her passport.

If the student is carrying a credit card, he/she has the option to use it to withdraw cash.

IUHPFL staff not permitted to lend students money

Consider giving your student a ‘trial run’ to see if he/she can budget money appropriately
5. Some last important reminders

IUHPFL staff is not permitted to lend students money

Contact your bank before going abroad to:
  ◦ Make them aware of the dates of your student’s trip abroad
  ◦ Ask them what international transaction fees your student can expect to incur upon making withdrawals or purchases abroad
  ◦ Assure that your ATM card is accepted in Mérida, México
  ◦ Order pesos (Exchange ~ $50 USD before leaving from Indianapolis)

Student should use debit cards and credit cards at least once before going abroad

Discuss budget limit with your student
Merida Program BLOG

Parents will be able to follow the group’s adventures on the blog.

- Updates
- Pictures
- Summaries of weekend excursions, etc.

Sonia will maintain the blog and keep parents informed! 😊

http://iuhpflmerida2016.blogspot.com/
Topics of Interest/Importance

The weather: HOT, Rainy, Humid.

Be prepared for mosquitoes!

Washing Laundry

House rules

Transportation

Down Time

Internet/Electronics – NO LAPTOPS or TABLETS!
¿Preguntas?
Questions?
Traveling with musical instruments (pt.1)

Musical instruments

Depending on their size, musical instruments can be carried on board, handled as checked baggage, or carried as cabin-seat baggage.

As carry-on

As part of the allowance of one carry-on bag plus one personal item, a passenger may carry a violin, guitar or other small musical instrument onboard the aircraft if:

The instrument can be stowed in the overhead bin or under the seat in front of the passenger; and

There is space for stowage at the time when the passenger boards the aircraft

Musical instruments transported onboard United and United Express aircraft must be in hard shell cases.

© AMERICAN AIRLINES RULES: https://www.aa.com/i18n/travelInformation/baggage/specialty-sports.jsp
Traveling with musical instruments (pt. 2)

As checked baggage

An instrument should be packed in a hard-shell case to keep it protected during normal handling. Excess checked baggage service charges may apply if the customer is checking more than two items. Oversize charges apply to musical instruments that measure 63 - 115 linear inches. Overweight charges apply to musical instruments that are over 50 pounds, but musical instruments weighing up to 165 pounds will be accepted. If the instrument is over 115 linear inches, please contact the United Customer Contact Center.

Additionally, customers should loosen the strings on stringed instruments to protect the neck against damage caused by expansion and contraction, which can result from temperature variations during flight.

See our Checked Baggage page for additional information about checking items.

As cabin-seat baggage

United will allow a customer to purchase a seat for a musical instrument that is too fragile or bulky to be handled as checked baggage.

Excess Valuation may not be purchased for musical instruments.

See our Cabin-seat Baggage page for more information on purchasing a seat for a fragile or bulky item.

© AMERICAN AIRLINES RULES: https://www.aa.com/i18n/travelInformation/baggage/specialty-sports.jsp
Renting musical instruments in Merida

There are several music stores that rent out musical instruments in Merida. Once there, the host family and the instructor team can help the student arrange to rent any instruments by week or by month.

Here are just some Yellow Pages search results for the category “Instrumentos musicales”:

**UNIVERSO MUSICAL**

C. 69 X 56 Y 58 S/N, CENTRO, MERIDA, C.P. 97000, YUC.; **Tel:** (999)923-5482

**CENTRO MUSICAL DEL SURESTE SA DE CV**

CLLE 69 479, PRIVADA GARCIA GINERES C - 29, MERIDA, C.P.97000, YUC., **Tel:** (999) 926 1760

**MUSIC CENTER**

CALLE 21 Nº 102 A, ITZIMNA 2, MERIDA, C.P. 97100, YUC.; **Tel:** (999) 926
Immunization

No special immunization or vaccination requirements exist for anyone traveling to Mexico.

For more information visit the CDC website:

Smoking

The no-smoking rule applies to all of our students, independent of their age.
Air Conditioning

- It is also likely that many of the host families will not have air conditioning in their homes. There are units, however rarely are they turned on to save on utility costs.