IUHPFL Mérida 2019
April 7th Student-Guardian Orientation
Overview

1. Instructor introductions
2. Introduction to Mérida
3. Typical day in Mérida
4. Evening Activities
5. Excursions
6. Clothing
7. Departure day logistics
8. Managing money abroad
9. Safety abroad
10. Questions
A quick look...
Un breve vistazo...

HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=KGUY5_2SN4
The *profes*

**Daniel Jung**: Linguistics and Literature instructor, Student and Public Relations coordinator.
- PhD Candidate in Hispanic Linguistics, focus on second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, pragmatics
- 4th summer in the program, 3rd time in Mérida.

**Odalys Miranda-Reyes**: Grammar and Culture instructor, Financial and Logistics coordinator
- PhD student in Hispanic linguistics, focus on second language acquisition, phonetics and phonology, pragmatics
- 3rd summer in the program, 1st time in Mérida.
Onsite staff

Moira Nuñez Secretary
Diana Arízaga Coordinator
Cintia Estrada Secretary
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 (Celestún).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgzE2RQXjdI
Mérida is a traditional city with a historic legacy of the Mayan civilization.

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

- Cochinita pibil
- Poc-Chuc
- Marquesita
- Papadzules
A typical day in Mérida....
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Verdes</th>
<th>Rojos</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:45</td>
<td>Culture B</td>
<td>Literature A</td>
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<td>9:50-10:35</td>
<td>Literature A</td>
<td>Cultura B</td>
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<td>10:40-11:25</td>
<td>Grammar B</td>
<td>Linguistics A</td>
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<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>12:00-12:45</td>
<td>Linguistics A</td>
<td>Grammar B</td>
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<td>12:50-2:00</td>
<td>Mon, Wed, Thurs</td>
<td>Choir/Dance,</td>
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<td>Tuesday Support</td>
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<td>and Success</td>
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<td>6:00-8:00</td>
<td>Sports Activities</td>
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<td>– Wednesdays</td>
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<td>8:00</td>
<td>CURFEW: Students with host families</td>
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Classes
Choir, Dance & Theater

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 12-1:30pm

During the program, students and instructors will work together to prepare for the Farewell Show.
White outfit needed for the performance at the Farewell Party
Support and Success Groups

• Small group discussion led by one instructor
  • Culture shock, making realistic goals, host family relationships, etc.
  • Helping you to maximize your experience abroad!! 😊
  • Please discuss concrete goals with your students before departure!
SMART goals

**Specific**  
Are the following SMART goals?

**Measurable**  
... Learn 40 words a week.

**Achievable**  
... Converse with all students on site every week

**Relevant**  
... Become fluent in Spanish.

**Time-bound**  
... Learn 5 vocabulary words every week.

... Journal every day for at least 15 minutes.

... Make life-long friends. 😊

... Converse without needing a dictionary

... Document every moment and feeling in video during the program.
Expectations

Our expectations of students

◦ Abide by the Honor Code
◦ Take advantage of this one-of-a-kind experience
◦ Keep a positive attitude and encourage one another
◦ Don’t compare your experience to someone else’s
◦ Respect: religion, gender, politics, sexual orientation, background—any difference you can think of,
Expectations

U.S. Guardian’s expectations of students
◦ ?

Students’ expectations of each other
◦ Work as a team- hold each other accountable
◦ A chain is only as strong as its weakest link
Evening and optional activities
Host Family Activities

Mérida en Domingo (Sunday Fair) – June 9th

Gran Museo del Mundo Maya (Maya World Museum) – June 15th

Mérida Zoo- June 23rd

Lucas de Gálvez Market (Traditional open air market) – June 30th

Progreso (beach) – July 7th
Community Engagement

This year we’re starting a new community engagement activity. We’ll be volunteering at the Centro Cultural del Niño Yucateco (Cultural Center for Yucatecan children, CECUNY).

More details will be posted to the blog when available.
Chichén-Itzá & Izamal

June 14th

Visit Chichén-Itzá (one of the most famous archeological sites in Mexico)

Free time to explore and buy souvenirs (be prepared to haggle!)

Izamal- Colonial city, monastery (and a pyramid to climb!)
June 21st

Visit Uxmal, another archeological site. (Less time to buy souvenirs because there are fewer vendors)

Loltún, series of cave with pre-historic drawings and fossils. (~2 hours), led by a guide.
June 28th

Excursion to a nature reserve. 1.5-2 hour boat ride plus beach time.
Campeche

July 5th

New excursion this year!

Likely itinerary is to visit an archeological site (Ednzá), a local town (Bécal), and free time to explore the city.
Honor Code

Language Commitment

- All Spanish, all the time
- **No** personal electronic devices
- The program cell phone must be carried at all times, with its charger, with the ringer on
- Must maintain a minimum number of minutes (MX$3.00)
- Keeping track of the cell phone and knowing the number of minutes is YOUR responsibility
- Bring a camera that isn’t also a cell phone
- Departure day/arrival
Honor Code

Language Commitment

◦ No English music or books (summer reading books must be in Spanish)
  ◦ All students must have a book (from US or bought there) for classes.
  ◦ Think of these as opportunities to expand your Spanish, not restrictions
  ◦ The best way to learn a language is to use the language!
Honor Code

No dating on site. 😊

No drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
◦ Even if offered to you by a host family member
◦ Tell Oda or Daniel immediately.

No risky activities
◦ No swimming in Cenotes/sinkholes.

Weeknight activities (1 – 2 hours)
◦ Keep your host family informed
◦ Abide by curfew (8pm)
◦ Rule of 3

Weekend activities
◦ Permission from onsite staff; chaperone
◦ Discos/clubs prohibited at all times
◦ Rule of 3
Honor Code

Travel
- No unaccompanied travel outside of Mérida
- Ask permission from onsite staff if planning to travel far with the host family
- No hosting of U.S. friends or family

Pledge to adhere to host family norms
- Remember that different ≠ weird
- Meet your host family halfway
- Two tools: respect and dialogue
Consequences

Infractions of the Honor Code have consequences

- Disciplinary action
- The entire group is affected
Cultural considerations

• Personal space

• Alone/down time
  • If you need this, be sure to *communicate* this to your family!

• Avoid political discussions (unless you and the family are comfortable)

• Food
  • Be sure to *communicate* your preferences!

• Air conditioning
Mérida online

Blog: https://iuhpflmerida.blogspot.com/
  • Blog will be updated regularly (1-2 times per week)

Facebook: http://tinyurl.com/FBMerida2019

• The blog is for parents/US family; Facebook is for students only
  • If you don’t have Facebook, please make one by April 23rd and request to join the group.
Flight Information

Preliminary Flight information (AeroMexico):

- Chicago (Flight 683)  
  Wednesday, June 5  
  12:20 AM

- Mexico City (Flight 535)  
  Thursday, June 5  
  6:05 AM

- Arrive in Mérida  
  Monday, June 5  
  8:10 AM

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

• Date of departure: June 5th, 2019

• Time to be at airport: 9pm on JUNE 4th
  ◦ We will be at the airport for a while! And it will be late!
  ◦ Be excited, be patient, be flexible 😊

• Meet at/near the AeroMexico Check-in Counters

• Wear your program T-shirt!

• Luggage: 1 suitcase + a small carry-on item like a back-pack.
  • Please avoid a carry on suitcase if possible.

• Recommendation: Again, bring small travel sized toiletries. You can purchase whatever you need once you are in Mérida.
Departure day logistics

• Weigh your bag(s) before coming to airport
  ◦ Please check the AeroMexico website to determine baggage weight restrictions (typically around 50 lbs)
  ◦ Remember, you will likely buy things in Mérida that you want to bring home...
  ◦ Please be prepared the AeroMexico baggage fee - $25 (again, DOUBLE CHECK!!)
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

Upon arrival at the airport in Mérida, 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

The Spanish only policy begins when we touch down in Mérida.
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/oversized tank tops are not acceptable street attire in Merida or surrounding pueblos. Think about what’s acceptable in your high schools.

- Exception: sports

Mid-length shorts are acceptable. Pack a few pairs.
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). No revealing clothes, please.
Packing

Mérida is a large, well-supplied city, **do not over pack (10 days worth of clothing)**. 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 (plus 2 copies)
- 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 (no internet connection)
- Water Bottle
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 \( \approx 19 \) pesos.

There are coins and bank notes:

- **Coins:**
  - 5, 10, 20, 25, 50 Cents;
  - 1, 2, 5, 10 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
  - Please make arrangements with your local US bank before departure

**Debit card**
- To make cash withdrawals from ATM
- *Rarely* accepted; cash is still preferred for low-ticket items
- Local shops may not accept cards (do not expect that every store/café will take cards)
2. Payment options when making purchases abroad

Credit card
- **Required** in case of emergency (e.g., medical emergency)
- Easy to set up joint account between parent and student at US bank

We don’t recommend:
- Traveler’s checks (not accepted anywhere)
- Bringing U.S. dollars to the host country to exchange for local currency
  - We will **NOT** have time to exchange money at the Mexico City airport, and there is no place to exchange money at the Mérida airport
  - There are places to exchange money in Merida (banks, casas de cambio), but it will be best to plan ahead/use an ATM
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 ≈ 19 pesos (20 pesos)

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

https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Merida

• A few examples...
  • Coke/Pepsi: 12 pesos
  • Water: 10 pesos
  • Meal, inexpensive restaurant: 75 pesos
  • Ice cream: 15-20 pesos
  • Coffee: 34 pesos
  • Movie ticket: 38 pesos
  • Souvenirs: more expensive, up to ~300 pesos (sometimes)
3. Budgeting with your student

Brief recap of what the Program Fees do not include:

◦ 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

◦ Public transportation costs for personal time (~8 pesos)
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 your student is under 18, they cannot receive these.

• If the student is carrying a credit card, he/she has the option to use it to withdraw cash (this costs extra)

• IUHPFL staff is **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

• Contact your bank before going abroad to:
  ◦ Make them aware of the dates of your student’s trip abroad (for each bank card)
  ◦ 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 Chicago)

• Student should use debit cards and credit cards at least once before going abroad (to make sure they work/students know how to use them)

• Discuss budget limit with your student
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 94°F. The average low temperature in June and July is around 74°F.

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.!)
Additional Safety Tips

• Be careful with your belongings, pay attention, use your head! (There is no lost and found)
  • Public transportation

• Medications – bring them if you have them (enough for the entire summer)

• Consulate visit/IFSA Butler orientation
  • Conducted in English
  • Additional safety guidelines about living in Mérida
    • Yucatán is one of the safest states in Mexico, and Mérida is one of the safest cities
Final topics of interest/importance

• The weather: **HOT, Rainy, Humid.**

• Be prepared for mosquitoes and the sun!
  • Buy insect repellant and sunscreen BEFORE departure (it’s expensive in Mérida)

• Washing Laundry (You should have weekly, free access)

• House rules
  • Be respectful, be communicative 😊

• Internet/Electronics – NO DEVICES WITH WIFI CONNECTION.
¿Preguntas? Questions?
Research Study

EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTION ABROAD
Student orientation
Communication with host families

Spend as much time as possible with them!!

You have to speak up.
  ◦ Be honest without being rude

Don’t ask “do you need help?”, just do it! (with helping)

Try not to make assumptions, always ask for clarification.

Discussion is not always an argument
  ◦ Spaniards love talking about politics, religion, etc. Be prepared.
  ◦ Discussions in Spanish can sound like arguments (tone, volume, etc.)

Personal space is different abroad.
  ◦ People get close.

Bring something for your host family
  - Something that represents where you’re from
Mindfulness

Limited resources
- Power/water cost significantly more in Spain than they do in the US. Be mindful of your water and electricity use.
  - Short showers
  - Lights/fans/electronics off when not in use

Not a hotel
- Expected to clean up after yourselves, do your own laundry, etc.
- Keep your bedroom clean and the door open.
  - Be respectful of families.
Honor Code

Language Commitment
No Alcohol / Tobacco / Drugs
No piercings or tattoos

Safety
- Avoid risky behavior (¡Actividad peligrosa!)
- Nighttime outings accompanied by host parents only
- Always stay in groups of 3 or more

Host family experience
NO cell phones/tablets/laptops allowed!! Bring your camera!!
- (And paper dictionaries)
The Honor Code and You

Engagement plans (plan de involucramiento)
- We’re a little worried you might not be having the best experience possible and we want to help. :)
  - Effect: A better experience.

Behavior plans (plan de conducta)
- We’re definitely worried about certain behaviors that may be affecting the experience of you and your friends
  - Effect: A better experience

Incident reports (Reporte / informe de incidente)
- There has been a serious violation of the Honor Code.
  - Effects: Loss of award of excellence, notification to US parents, potentially sent home.
Goals and expectations

You should have them.

You should be prepared to work for them. Ultimately, you are only accountable for your own development.

SMART goals
- Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound
- Track weekly, report back with us

Expectations
- Your experience is your own. Don't compare.
Class supplies

• Bring (or buy the first weekend)
  • All of your class books
  • A notebook or folder and loose-leaf paper for notes and writing assignments
  • A small notebook to keep with you and write down vocabulary you are learning
  • Pens/pencils
  • A Spanish-English dictionary (and a Spanish thesaurus?)
U.S. vs. Mexico

Personal space/ Touch
Americans are reserved and indirect while Mexicans are maybe more direct/open

Greetings: Shaking hands
◦ Man + man

Greetings: 1 kiss *noises* on cheek
◦ Woman + Woman, Woman + Man

A LOT of improvisation happens during excursions. **BE FLEXIBLE!**

Meals:
◦ Small breakfasts
◦ Large, late lunch ~2pm
◦ Small, late dinner ~8 -10 pm
◦ Tips for home: Eat more but in smaller portions

Carry kleenex, sunscreen, insect repellent, & water
Culture shock

Stages most people go through in adjusting to a new culture

**Fun:** The excitement and adventure of experiencing new people, things, and opportunities.

**Flight:** Disorientation brings the urge to avoid everything and everyone that is different.

**Fight:** The temptation to judge people and things that are different as bad or foolish.

**Fit:** Creative interaction with the new culture that includes a willingness to understand and embrace.

*Reverse culture shock*
The First 72 Hours

Exhaustion from travel (long flight, long bus ride)
Jet Lag
Different family
Different friends
Different instructors
Different city
Different language
New home

Imagine just ONE of these things by itself. The first 72 hours might be challenging. Plan to do something to help you relax: music, journaling, taking a walk, talking to host family. Be patient!
Culture Shock: How to Handle It

- **Remember, you are not alone!** All international students share what you are going through.

- **Focus on what you can control.** Don't invest major energy in minor problems.

- **Don't avoid things.** Tackle major stresses head on.

- **Be physically active and keep your sense of humor!** Try to get the best out of your experience no matter what.

- **Ask for help.** Create a wide support network as quickly as you can in your target culture.

- **Write it down.** Record your thoughts and frustrations in a journal. This will give you a healthy outlet for expressing your feelings.
Remember that we are a group

- **Communicate with each other**: Be patient and understanding; be sensitive to each others' feelings and difficulties.

- Support your groupmates’ efforts to speak Spanish and explore the foreign culture in a healthy and productive way. We are all learners!

- Participate actively in group work. **Be a team player!**

- We are an inclusive program.
Questions?
Conversation activities