

Cuernavaca Summer 2009

The usefulness of this handbook depends on student input.
If you find erroneous information, please contact *overseas@indiana.edu*.



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THE IU PROGRAM

Indiana University's summer program in Cuernavaca gives about 20 IU students a year the opportunity to reside for six weeks in Mexican homes and study Spanish language five days a week with other U.S. students at the Cuernavaca campus of ITESM (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey), a prestigious, private Mexican university. The Indiana faculty member who accompanies the group teaches a course on Mexican culture and civilization and serves as liaison between the students, ITESM, and Indiana University.

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a supplement to the *Getting Started* handbook. While it contains specific program information, *Getting Started* contains information relevant to all students on Indiana University Overseas Study programs. Both booklets should be used now as you prepare to leave and later while you are abroad. Since most student questions are addressed in these handbooks, please consult them before contacting the Office of Overseas Study.

This handbook is also available on the web: www.indiana.edu/~overseas/programs/handbooks/cuernavaca.pdf

Student Advice

“Read as much as you can about the Mexican culture. Study up on your language skills, keep an open mind, and BE WILLING TO ACCEPT CHANGE!”

The Program in Cuernavaca

CALENDAR 2009

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| May 26 | Arrive in Cuernavaca |
| May 27-29 | Orientation, placement |
| June 2..... | Classes begin |
| June 6-7 | Trip to Mexico City |
| June 12-14..... | Puebla trip |
| July 6-8 | Final examinations |
| July 9..... | Departure day |

GROUP FLIGHT AND ARRIVAL DAY

Overseas Study has arranged an optional group flight from Indianapolis to Mexico City. When you arrive at the Mexico City airport, show the immigration officer your Tourist Card and **be certain that he or she stamps a 90-day (not a 30-day) authorization in it.** Keep the Tourist Card in a safe place while you are in Mexico, because you will have to present it to immigration officials when you leave the country. If the immigration officer only grants you a 30-day authorization, you will have to renew the visa in Mexico and pay a fee of approximately \$40, with the assistance of TEC.

When you have cleared customs, the Resident Director and the TEC staff will take you by chartered bus to the Tec campus Cuernavaca, where your landlady or housemother will be expecting you. Bus transfers with the group between Mexico City and Cuernavaca are included in your IU program fee.

If you do not travel with the group, you are responsible for getting to Cuernavaca on your own. On arrival day, TEC charter buses depart periodically depending on arrivals.

Alternately, take one of the comfortable, reliable Pullman de Morelos buses nonstop from the airport to the bus station on the outskirts of

Cuernavaca. The current fare is 125 pesos (\$10), and the trip takes about 90 minutes, depending on traffic.

To find Pullman de Morelos buses: When you emerge from customs, you will be in the International Departures area of the airport. Go to Sala D, the transport area for bus companies. Ask for the Pullman de Morelos bus headed for the Casino de la Selva station in Cuernavaca. Buy your ticket at the counter and show it to the bus driver who will then stow your luggage underneath the bus. When you arrive in Cuernavaca, take a pre-paid taxi to your host family.

ORIENTATION

During the first several days in Cuernavaca, you will take part in an orientation program that includes meetings with the Resident Director, language placement, class registration, setting up e-mail and discussions about health, safety and cultural differences. Mexican student mentors (*cuates*) will show you how to navigate local bus routes, and where to shop, change money, and find Cuernavaca's cafes, museums, markets and discos.

CUERNAVACA

Cuernavaca, the capital of the state of Morelos, is set in the mountainous region of central Mexico, about one hour south of Mexico City. It is known as the City of Eternal Spring, thanks to its near-perfect climate and year-round profusion of brilliant flowering plants and lush greenery. Cuernavaca has long been a popular resort and vacation spot. In the 16th Century both the Aztec emperor Moctezuma and the Spanish conquistador Cortés built retreats there, and today many residents of Mexico City have weekend homes in the city. Nearby are important pre-Columbian archaeological sites and colonial churches.

Cuernavaca, a city of 900,000, has cultural and social opportunities of its own, but its proximity to Mexico City provides access to the country's most exciting cultural attractions.

CAMPUS CUERNAVACA

The Cuernavaca campus just moved to a brand new facility in the of spring 2008! The new campus has two main buildings and is a highly modern, fully equipped facility. The campus has classrooms and laboratories, a computer center, a library, wireless internet access in all campus conference rooms, private security, free medical assistance, a private bus shuttle to several locations around Cuernavaca, a cafeteria and several stores. Students can enjoy Cuernavaca's wonderful weather while studying in the many green areas on campus.

The campus offers a wide variety of associations, workshops, classes and sports facilities to supplement regular classes. These include associations organizing events, courses, social activities including on-campus music and parties, conferences, symposiums, travels, etc. There is also a fully equipped gymnasium with professional instructors, baseball, football, soccer, basketball, volleyball, beach volleyball and tennis courts and a large running track. An official size swimming pool is under construction. Moreover, the campus offers sports classes such as aerobics, yoga, body pump, abdomen class, and workshops in different dance styles, art and Mexican cooking.

Student Advice

“Meet Mexican friends at school and go out with them, explore the city, zocalo and the mercados. Speak only in Spanish with the host family.”

There will be about 150 U.S students in Tec's summer classes, including groups with their own resident directors from University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Ball State and IU. Of course, no Mexican students will be in your classes, although there will be a few on campus. Your family and Tec mentors will be your best sources for meeting Mexican friends.

Transportation to the new campus will be facilitated by a shuttle; your IU fee covers the shuttle fee.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Courses

You will be assigned to language classes based on: 1) the results of a written placement exam taken on the first day at the Tec and 2)

your previous language study at IU. In some cases an oral interview is conducted. Although the Tec's language levels do not match IU's courses perfectly, every attempt will be made to place you in a level that challenges you, does not repeat work already taken at IU, and permits you to make progress in your degree.

You will take one grammar class (4 hours daily) and one conversation class (2 hours daily). Schedules will vary based upon language level. Enrollment is limited to 15 students. Grammar classes require a text and workbook, but primary emphasis is placed on speaking, communicating, and vocabulary building, not grammatical structures.

Classes are likely to include role playing, brief oral reports to the class, discussion of Mexican holidays, explanation of proverbs and common idiomatic expressions, and vocabulary building exercises. All Tec classes provide a comprehensive syllabus that states the schedule, basis for grading and attendance policy. Expect to receive homework assignments on a daily basis.

IU students also take *Mexican Life and Culture*, a course taught by the Resident Director, with 1-2 regular meetings per week. In addition to its academic content, the course provides an opportunity for IU students to meet together, share new experiences, discuss cross-cultural issues, and learn more about the historical, sociological and cultural context of issues you have encountered during the week.

Credits

IU grants six credits for the program: three for the Tec grammar course, and three for a combination of the Tec conversation course and the Resident Director's course.

IU credit for Tec coursework depends upon **both** your language placement and your previous language study at IU. For administrative reasons, all IU participants will receive course equivalencies from the IU Bloomington course inventory. Students from other IU campuses should work with their home campus foreign language department to have the IUB courses count toward home campus requirements. Credit will be awarded as described below.

Students who have completed S105 or S150 (or S119 and S132) at IU and place at the Intermedio I level:

S200 Intermediate Spanish I & S250 Intermediate Spanish II

Students who have completed S200 (or S203) at IU and place at the Intermedio II level:

S250 Intermediate Spanish II & S275 Hispanic Culture

Students who have completed S250 (or S204) at IU and place at the Avanzado I level:

S275 Hispanic Culture & S310 Spanish Grammar

Students who have completed S275 (or S204) at IU and place at the Avanzado I level:

S310 Spanish Grammar & S317 Spanish Conversation

Students who have completed S275 (or S204) at IU and place at the Avanzado II level:

S310 Spanish Grammar & S317 Spanish Conversation

Students who have completed S310 (or S311) at IU and place at the Avanzado II level:

S312 Spanish Composition & S317 Spanish Conversation

OR

S315 Business Spanish & S317 Spanish Conversation

Taking coursework at the appropriate Tec level is important. **If you do not place at the Tec level that is commensurate with your previous IU study, then at least three credits will be recorded as undistributed 200-level credit.** (Students who take coursework at Tec's basic level are awarded 6 hours of undistributed 100-level credit.) If you have questions regarding the credit you will earn, inquire at the Office of Overseas Study before departure. Should you insist on changing your assigned level, the Tec will require that you sign a waiver to that effect.

IU students may enroll in language courses. You do not have the option of enrolling in the Tec's literature or culture classes.

You must take all course work for credit. **No pass/fail option, withdrawals or incompletes** are permitted. An uncompleted course will be listed as an "F" on your transcript.

TEXTBOOKS

You will purchase your textbooks at the Tec after language placement is determined. Budget \$60-100 for this purpose.

E-MAIL

You will receive a free e-mail account in your first few days at Campus Cuernavaca and have easy access to computer clusters on campus. This is the best way to contact your family and friends.

EXCURSIONS

The Tec organizes a number of weekend excursions to destinations throughout Mexico. The weekend trips to Mexico City and Puebla are included in your IU fee, and you are expected to participate, but the trips to Taxco, Acapulco, etc. are optional. Once you arrive in Mexico, you may pay the Tec for as many additional trips as you wish. They typically cost \$150-\$250 each, and payment may be made by cash, credit card or traveler's checks.

On excursions you will be responsible for the costs of your own meals and refreshments.

Many students participate in all the Tec-organized trips; however, you may prefer to travel independently in smaller groups, as opposed to with 100 Americans, or spend some weekends with your host family enjoying the area near Cuernavaca.

Take advantage of free time to visit Cuernavaca's churches, murals, parks, colonial buildings, historic neighborhoods and museums.

DEPARTURE DAY

Indiana University has arranged group transport to Mexico City airport on Thursday, July 9. The cost has been included in your program fee. The TEC staff will provide details of departure time and location. If you do not travel with the group, you are responsible for getting to Mexico City on your own. Remember that airlines have strict limitations on luggage and carry-on items.

Life in Cuernavaca

HOUSING

You will share a room with another American student in a Mexican home selected by the International Affairs housing coordinator. This opportunity to live in a Mexican home and to speak Spanish in daily interactions, and particularly at meals, is a strength of the program.

Your room will probably have twin beds, a desk, lamp and bookcase. Towels, sheets and bedding will be provided. If you have severe allergies or special housing needs, or if you wish to room with a friend, note that fact on the Tec housing questionnaire.

You will be informed of your host family's name, address and telephone number just before your departure from the U.S. No other information about the family will be provided, and there will not be enough time for you to correspond with them before you arrive.

Be realistic in your expectations of your housing arrangements. Families who rent rooms to American boarders typically need the extra income. A few adopt students almost as sons and daughters of the family, but not all students and their "families" achieve a close relationship; instead, their union remains basically a business arrangement.

Most housemothers and families treat students like guests in their homes, so bringing the host family a small gift, especially from your home town or state, is a thoughtful gesture and a positive way to begin your stay together. Host families generally take the initiative in beginning conversations and extending social contact; be sensitive to these initiatives.

Student Advice

"I really wish I would have reached out and met more elderly Mexican people. My peers at the TEC were very preoccupied with going to clubs. I feel like I missed out on a lot of really interesting historical and amazing experiences. I traded them for a lot of smoke-filled, techno-beating nightclubs, where the rich upper classes flaunt their money."

Courtesy is highly valued in Mexico. Certain informal American

practices, such as putting feet on furniture, walking barefoot, or appearing scantily clad in the home, are considered rude in Mexico. Walking barefoot also exposes you to the risk of scorpion sting. Make an effort to keep your room tidy.

Student Advice

“Talk to the family as much as you can. As difficult as it is to cut out the English, try to only speak Spanish.”

The Tec screens families carefully and accepts only households who agree to its regulations. You will be provided with a copy of the housing contract at Registration. Although these regulations are spelled out in detail, sometimes,

through forgetfulness, shortage of time, or a financial pinch, the housemothers may not always live up to them. Deal promptly but diplomatically with any problems. If a polite and friendly discussion with the family does not improve the situation, discuss the problem immediately with your Resident Director.

Read more about the housing policy at www.cva.itesm.mx/cicom.

MEALS

Housing includes three meals daily, Monday through Saturday, but no meals on Sunday. Let the housemother know if you won't be home for a meal or if you will be out of town for a day. Ask the

Student Advice

“Take advantage of meal times with the family. Many students opted to eat out at American restaurants instead of with the family; I had the best learning experiences/Spanish practice at meals.”

family to prepare a sack meal for you. Most households have water purification systems or provide bottled water, but you should avoid ice, unpeeled raw vegetables, and lettuce salads even at home. You can use kitchen facilities on Sunday.

LAUNDRY

Your housemother will provide clean sheets and towels. You may use the laundry facilities at your host family home once a week for personal laundry.

TELEPHONES

Thanks to a tight telephone monopoly, Mexicans pay *very high rates* for telephones. Even local calls are metered. For this reason, you are limited to a maximum of two three-minute local calls from your home each day.

Student Advice

“Buy a Spanish-English dictionary, get a calling card and a credit card, and plan on getting turista.”

To place a long distance call, even with a calling card, use a pay telephone, not your host family’s telephone. For both local and international calls, you may purchase the Mexican “Ladatel” telephone debit cards to use on specially marked telephones.

Only in the case of an emergency may you place long distance calls from private houses, and only with the consent of the housemother. In these cases you should call collect and the housemother should place the call to prevent problems arising from a language barrier. There is a charge for placing a collect call.

HEALTH & MEDICAL CARE

Medical care is provided at the campus medical center Monday through Friday, from 7:00 to 16:00 hrs. The service is free. In addition, International Affairs will provide you with a list of physicians and dentists who can provide more specialized care as well as attention outside medical center hours. Host families can also put you in touch with physicians that they know.

To maintain good health throughout your stay in Mexico:

- Avoid drinking unboiled water at all times. Bottled water is cheap and widely available. Since ice is often as impure as the general water supply, ask for drinks *sin hielo*. Don’t eat raw vegetables and fruits unless you are able to peel them first. Lettuce and strawberries should be avoided altogether. (Ask for sandwiches without lettuce or tomato.)
- Never eat or drink from street stands. Water may be contaminated.
- Eat and drink in moderation, especially during your first few days in Mexico.

- Don't be alarmed if you get *turista*. Few visitors to Mexico get through a stay without at least one case of diarrhea. Readily available remedies such as Imodium help; so does rest and eating lightly. If the problem persists more than 24 hours or includes vomiting, inform the Resident Director immediately and consult the campus medical center. Respiratory problems (colds, etc.) should also be treated promptly.
- Let the Resident Director know if you are ill.

SAFETY & RESPONSIBILITY

Indiana University will work to protect your health and safety overseas, but you must take responsibility for the results of your decisions, choices and behavior. Before the program, read carefully and consider the information given to you by the Office of Overseas Study regarding your health and any special needs. Together with your family, review the Overseas Study safety and responsibility guidelines in the *Getting Started* handbook.

Take these basic precautions to help ensure a safe stay in Mexico:

- Never carry large amounts of cash or wear valuable jewelry. Keep a tight grip on your purse, wallet and camera, especially on crowded buses or in big cities. Keep backpacks and purses in front of you. If you are carrying more than \$20, keep it in a money belt under your clothing, and be discrete when removing bills from it.
- Make a photocopy of your Tourist Card and passport. Put the originals in a safe place and carry the copies with you.
- Do not go out alone with strangers. This is particularly true for women but applies to men as well.
- Avoid looking lost. If you need to open a map in a non-touristy part of town, go into a restaurant, order a soft drink, then study your map. If you need to ask directions, go inside a store.
- Never go out alone after dark. If you are returning home late, telephone for a *taxi de sitio* and have the driver deliver each passenger right to the door.
- Particularly after dark, use only taxis you telephone for service (radiotaxis), not cabs you hail on the street. The company will then have a record of the driver and the cab's license number in case of

an incident. This is important throughout Mexico, but especially in Mexico City where tourists have been assaulted and robbed after hailing Volkswagen bug taxis and other cabs cruising the streets or parked in front of restaurants, theaters or clubs.

- One of the best ways to protect yourself abroad is to avoid excessive drinking. Although alcohol may be more accessible at your program site than in the U.S., if you drink alcohol at all, do so in moderation. Not only may inebriation be culturally offensive, more importantly, it can impair your judgment in critical moments when you most need to be alert (e.g., finding your way home late at night, socializing with strangers).

- Do not use illegal drugs. The penalties in Mexico are extremely severe, and convicted offenders can expect lengthy jail sentences and fines. There is nothing that the program can do to help you if you get in trouble. Just as in the U.S., purchase of controlled medication requires a doctor's prescription. Possession of excessive amounts of a psychotropic drug such as Valium can result in arrest if the authorities suspect abuse.

- Coping with the unwelcome advances of Mexican men can be a special problem for American women. To avoid the attention of the local “Don Juans,” women are counseled to travel in pairs or in groups, to avoid suggestive clothing, to avoid making eye contact or smiling at strangers on the street (this is interpreted as an invitation), and to speak initially only in the *usted* form to men. Often the best strategy is to ignore advances or catcalls altogether, and quickly go on your way. Ask the Resident Director for several firm, direct idiomatic ways to say, “Leave me alone,” or “Get lost.” Inform your Resident Director about any unpleasant experiences.

- The Mexican Constitution prohibits political activities by foreigners, and such actions may result in detention and/or deportation. Travelers should avoid political demonstrations and other activities that might be deemed political by the Mexican authorities. Even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence. You are urged to avoid the areas of demonstrations, and to exercise caution if within the vicinity of any protests.

TIPPING

Tipping is more common in Mexico than in the United States. It is appropriate to add the usual 10-15% on bills in restaurants and bars. People also give coins (5-10 pesos), often conspicuously, for a whole range of small services, like packing purchases in a supermarket, guiding a driver who is parking a car, or distributing toilet paper in a restroom. However, you do not tip taxi drivers. Ask your host family for advice on tipping.

BARGAINING

Americans who are used to fixed prices find bargaining and haggling over prices in a market, or with a street vendor, a new and different experience. However, you might find bargaining enjoyable and good language practice as well. Following are some tips for bargaining.

Student Advice

“Practice your Spanish. Think of everyday things you say in English and translate into Spanish.”

Don't haggle if you have absolutely no intention of buying. This is unfair to the vendor who is trying to make a living. The vendor will usually set an asking price for more than he or she would accept. The vendor is not your adversary. Be polite; smile and establish friendly

relations. Let the vendor lower the initial price at least once before you make a counter offer (of about half the original asking price).

Cajole, say you'd love to take the item in question to a beloved relative, and lay it on thick about how close you are to having spent all your money. Pretend to lose interest in the item and shift your attention to something else (even cast a glance at a competitor's stall).

Be subtle in the way you play the game. The vendor has played it more than you and has watched many prospective buyers use the same tactics. Raise your original offer slightly at some point. If you don't, it will be taken as a sign that you won't play the game cooperatively, and your sale will not be sought as hopefully.

The classic ploy is to hesitantly turn to walk away, saying that you'll look around and think about it. It is important to do it when you think the vendor will only lower the price one more notch. Also, do it in such a way that you give the impression that you just might be coaxed into raising your offer one more notch. The rest is up to you and the vendor, as to whether a deal is made or not.

PACKING

Pack light by planning a flexible, mix-and-match, easy care wardrobe. Cuernavaca's summer temperatures are in the '80s, but it is a dry heat, without the humidity of an Indiana summer. The rainy season begins in June, so you should be prepared for rain most afternoons or evenings.

American students may dress casually on campus, but it is best to strive for a degree of neatness and formality a bit above our customary expectations at an American campus. Avoid sloppy, torn clothing or sweats in order not to offend or send the wrong message. Mexicans rarely wear shorts, and if they can afford to they will dress neatly and formally for nearly every occasion. You will want to bring skirts and nice slacks for discos and restaurants.

Bedding and towels (but not washcloths) are provided in your Mexican homes. U.S. toiletries are available in Mexico. Be sure to pack:

- Light rain coat or jacket with hood
- Light wool sweater for weekend trips, especially to Mexico City (where evening temperatures can drop to 40 degrees in July)
- At least two nice outfits for clubs and dancing
- Compact umbrella
- Comfortable, durable walking shoes that don't mind the rain
- Slippers or flip-flops to use at home (It is considered disrespectful to walk barefoot in your home, and there are scorpions.)
- Pepto-Bismol, Imodium, or other diarrhea remedy
- Personal hygiene items, vitamins, contact lens solution (All are available in Cuernavaca, but expensive.)
- Insect repellent, sunscreen (at least level 15)
- Travel alarm clock, small flashlight (for occasional power outages), pocket knife (packed in your checked luggage)
- Money belt
- Small knapsack for weekend travel
- 6-week supply of prescription drugs (in original containers)

- Copies of your prescriptions clearly printed in generic (not name brand) terms
- Washcloth
- Extra pair of glasses. Typewritten copy of your glasses prescription
- Journal, address book with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses
- Photos of your family, home, hometown
- Gift for your Mexican hosts
- AT&T calling card, Cirrus or Plus bank debit card

Mexico operates on the same electrical current and uses the same flat, two-prong wall plug as the U.S.

SUGGESTED READING

Neither this handbook nor the orientation meeting will be able to provide you with all you want to know about Mexico. To learn about currency exchange, prices, markets, restaurants, weather, social customs and travel destinations, purchase a good guide book. Read it before you go, and take it with you. Mexico is filled with fascinating places to visit and you will enjoy them more if you have a source of information on how to get around.

Travel Guides

The Lonely Planet Guide to Mexico. Lonely Planet Publications.

Let's Go: Mexico. New York: St. Martin's Press.

The People's Guide to Mexico. Santa Fe: John Muir Publications.

Student Advice

"Read *The Lonely Planet Guide to Mexico*. Keep an open mind. Do a simple review of Spanish."

Books about Mexico

Castañeda, Jorge. *The Mexican Shock. Its Meaning for the U.S.* New Press, 1995.

Clendinnen, Inga. *Aztecs.* Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Hellman, Judith Adler. *Mexican Lives*

Paz, Octavio. *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. Mexico, 1959

Riding, Alan. *Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans*. New York: Vintage.

Thomas, Hugh. *The Conquest of Mexico*. London: Hutchinson, 1993.

Wolf, Eric. *Sons of the Shaking Earth*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1959.

Student Advice

“Study about the history and culture of Mexico BEFORE you go. The information will help you get the most out of the trips, especially when you visit the ruins.”