

# Travel Newsletter

## Mexico Summer 2011



May 10, 2011

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### Don't Forget!

Before you get on a plane, make sure you have your **passport**. If you don't have it with you, Immigration will turn you away at the airport.

Make sure you have paid your **program fee** and/or taken care of your financial aid. You will not be able to participate in the program if you haven't paid your fee.

**You must e-mail your travel plans to [dpraul@ifsa-butler.org](mailto:dpraul@ifsa-butler.org) as soon as possible, if have not already done so.** Please include your first and last name, host university, airline, flight number, date and time of arrival and hotel information if you will be arriving in Mexico before the program start date. We cannot arrange for your host family to pick you up at the airport or your hotel if we do not know your travel plans.

### Security Check

Security will be tight, and you should allow ample time to clear security for your U.S. domestic and/or international flights. Carry-ons are subject to inspections; you may have to unload batteries or prove that your small appliances work. Be patient and cooperative with security personnel.

Keep the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines in mind when packing your carry-on bag. Do not bring on the plane any knives, sharp objects (such as nail files or scissors) or any item that could be used as a weapon.

### Checking In for Your Flight

You should plan to arrive at the airport three hours before your international flight, allowing yourself enough time to check in, get a boarding pass, clear security and make it to your gate.

You must check in for your flight. Otherwise, the airline can give your seat to someone else.

Ask if your U.S. domestic carrier has an agreement with your international carrier. If so, your domestic airline may be able to check your bags all the way through to your final destination, allowing you to get your international flight boarding pass at the gate.

If your bags can't be checked to your final destination, you'll have to leave the gate area, claim your luggage, check your luggage, get a boarding pass at the international airline desk in the check-in area and go through security to re-enter the gate area. Allow yourself plenty of time!

### Travel Problems?

If you are delayed and it looks like you may not make your flight, make arrangements with the airline (not your travel agent!) to get on the next available flight.

Be sure to **call us at 800-858-0229 and let us know** about your change in plans. We monitor messages on flight days, so if no one answers, leave a detailed voicemail. We will then inform our Mexico office of any delays on your behalf.

Provide us with your name, location, airline, old and new flight numbers, departure and arrival times and the name, telephone number and room number of your hotel (if necessary).

**Be sure to call IFSA-Butler on our general line at 800-858-0229 to ensure that the correct person gets the message. Please do not leave a message about travel problems on your program advisor's voicemail or e-mail.** Then call your parents to let them know about your flight change.

### Baggage Allowances

Most airlines allow two pieces of checked luggage and one carry-on bag. Contact both your domestic and international carriers for more information on baggage limits.

If you exceed baggage limits, the airline can require you to pay excess baggage fees and/or buy new luggage and repack onsite. Do not overpack!

Do not lock your luggage. The U.S. Transportation Security Administration has asked travelers to keep suitcases unlocked so they can easily be searched. Putting locks on your luggage can result in damaged, lost or delayed bags.

Please do not pack sporting equipment such as skis and bikes. If you feel you must bring your own, call your airline carriers for information about packing and excess baggage fees.

## Packing Your Carry-On Bag

Be sure to pack:

- Passport\*
- Plane tickets or e-ticket confirmations\*
- Cash, traveler's checks, credit cards\*
- *Preparing to Study Abroad*
- IFSA-Butler e-newsletter series
- Insurance coverage details
- List of contact names, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail for:
  - Academic advisor at your home college
  - Study abroad advisor at your home college
  - Parents and relatives
- Academic documents
  - Updated transcript
  - Course descriptions from home college
  - Rules of transfer credit
- Toiletries (liquids, gels and/or aerosols must be 3.3 ounces or less and fit comfortably in one, clear, resealable, quart-size plastic bag)\*\*
- Something to read/listen to
- Spare clothes in case your luggage is lost (It happens!)
- Any medications and prescriptions\*
- Water/snacks (purchased in airport, after security check)\*\*
- Camera

\* *Keep these items and other valuables with you at all times, preferably in a money belt or a bag worn across your chest.*

\*\* *FAA regulations require that liquids in excess of 3.3 ounces be placed in checked baggage. Please visit your airline's website for detailed security information. Also visit the Transportation Security Administration's website at [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov) for an up-to-date list of prohibited items (click on "Travelers and Consumers" and then on "Air Travel").*

## Host Family Gift

You should pack a small gift for your host family, although nothing extravagant. Past students have found that chocolates, professional sports goods, calendars and products from their home regions all make good gifts. Many host families also enjoy products printed in English, such as T-shirts or towels.

## In-Flight Comfort

For comfort during the flight, wear loose-fitting clothes and comfortable shoes. Your feet might swell during the flight; remember to walk around the cabin frequently to keep

your blood circulating! You'll probably find that the cabin feels cold, so don't give away your blanket.

## Customs Forms

As your plane descends into Mexico, your flight attendants will hand out a tourist card (*forma migratoria de turista*) and customs form (*declaración de aduanas*). They limit the amount of alcohol and cigarettes that you can bring into the country. Do not take any explosives, flammable fluids, fruits or vegetables with you on the plane. Remove the price tags and wrappings from any new purchases; you don't want to pay customs charges on new items.

If you have a question about declaring goods, declare them. It's not a problem to declare something unnecessarily. However, if you neglect to declare something customs considers dangerous to Mexican agriculture or against the law, they may fine, deport or imprison you.

## Clearing Customs

When you go through passport control, the officials will ask you the purpose of your visit. Tell them that you are a tourist and present your **passport and tourist card**. The tourist card is called the *forma migratoria de turista (FMT)*, and once stamped, serves as your **visa**. It is an important document, so keep it with your passport and **do not throw it away!**

If the official asks for your address, tell them you are a study abroad student at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY) and give the address of our Mexico office:

Student name  
Calle 25 No. 560 x 66  
Colonia Jardines de Mérida  
Mérida, YUC 97134

## Lost Luggage

Sometimes students land in Mexico only to find their luggage has taken a side trip. If your luggage does not come out of the carousel, see an airport official to file an airline lost luggage claim **before leaving the customs area**. You can give airline officials the Mexico office address listed in "Clearing Customs."

If you lose your luggage, you will receive a lost luggage file number. Keep this information handy, as it will have all the relevant information you will need to help airline staff track down your luggage.

## Phone Home

**Call home as soon as you get to Mexico.** Our staff in Mérida will help you call home or you can contact your family via the Internet at your host family's home.

Let your parents know that you'll be very busy during orientation, so you might not be able to call very often during that time. We will contact them if any emergencies arise, but it's likely you won't have time to call.

## Where Is Orientation?

### If you arrive in Mexico on your program start date:

Provided you send your travel plans to [dpraul@ifsa-butler.org](mailto:dpraul@ifsa-butler.org), your host family will pick you up at the airport. You will stay with your host family that night and they will take you to meet the group for orientation the following day.

### If you arrive in Mexico before your program start date:

You will need to make your own accommodation and luggage storage arrangements for all nights prior to your program start date. Please send your hotel information along with your travel plans to [dpraul@ifsa-butler.org](mailto:dpraul@ifsa-butler.org). If we have your hotel information, we can arrange for your host family to pick you up from your hotel at 11 a.m. on your program start date.

### All students:

If you need assistance after you land in Mexico, contact our resident director, Diana Arízaga, at (999) 970-0958.

## If You Arrive Early

If you arrive before the program start date, you'll need to make your own accommodation arrangements. Our resident director recommends these hotels:

### Hotel Medio Mundo

Calle 55 #533 x 64 y 66  
Tel. 999-924-5472  
[www.hotelmediomundo.com](http://www.hotelmediomundo.com)  
(walking distance from the UADY administration building)  
U.S.\$40 range

### Hotel Maison Lafitte

Calle 60 # 472 x 53 y 55  
Tel: 999-928-1243  
[www.maisonlafitte.com.mx](http://www.maisonlafitte.com.mx)  
(One-and-a-half blocks from UADY)  
U.S.\$60 range

### Hotel Santa Ana

Calle 45 #503 x 60 y 62  
Tel: 999-923-3331  
[www.hotelsantaana.com.mx](http://www.hotelsantaana.com.mx)  
(Five blocks from UADY)  
U.S.\$50 range

### B&B Luz en Yucatán

Calle 55 #499 x 58 y 60  
Tel: 999-924-0035  
[www.luzenyucatan.com](http://www.luzenyucatan.com)  
(One-and-a-half blocks from UADY)  
From U.S.\$30

## Currency

You can exchange currency at the airport. Do not change money until you have cleared customs and have met with the program staff, unless you arrive before the program start date.

If you arrive late at night or on a weekend, exchange your currency at the airport. Banks give a better rate of exchange, but they are not open on weekends or holidays. *Casas de cambio* (official money exchange offices) are open on the weekends, but their exchange rate is usually lower than that available through banks. See *Preparing to Study Abroad* for more information about exchanging money.

## Updated Calendar

We've included an updated summer program calendar. Please check to see if any of the dates associated with your program have changed.

## Last-Minute Tips

- Sign up for frequent flyer miles.
- Reread the housing and health insurance sections of *Preparing to Study Abroad*.
- Photocopy your passport and plane tickets and give a copy to your parents or a family contact.
- Give your parents the numbers of your credit cards and traveler's checks in case they are lost or stolen.
- Plan to try new things, taste new foods and go where you never expected to go.
- Buy a travel guide or rent a video of Mexico.
- Read something about Mexico before you leave.
- Be prepared for adventure!

**Questions? Call us at 800-858-0229 or visit us online at [www.ifsa-butler.org](http://www.ifsa-butler.org).**

# Program Calendar

## Mexico Summer 2011



	<b>Language and Cultural Studies in the Yucatán</b>		<b>Beginning Language, Culture and Medical Spanish in the Yucatán</b>
Arrive in Mérida	May 26	Arrive in Mérida	June 15
Program Starts	May 26	Program Starts	June 15
IFSA-Butler Orientation	May 27-29	IFSA-Butler Orientation	June 16-19
Welcome Reception	May 29	Welcome Reception	June 19
Classes Begin	May 30	Classes Begin	June 20
Classes End	July 8	Classes End	July 15
Program Ends	July 8	Program Ends	July 15
Departure Date	July 9	Departure Date	July 16

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**These dates are correct as of January 28, 2011, but must be regarded as provisional, given the mutability of Mexican university calendars.**

Upon arrival at your host institution, check the end dates for changes before confirming return travel plans. Ending dates vary from department to department, and you must complete all course obligations prior to departure. In addition, you should not make plans to travel on the final day of exams since there may be exams on that day.

Program housing is available only until the date listed as "Program Ends" on the calendar.

**Exams must be taken where and when scheduled.** Under no circumstances may students request that an exam time be changed. Exams are taken under formal examination conditions, and changes cannot be made for individuals.