

Welcome to the UIMQRoo Summer Field Course
An intercultural experience

ORIENTATION PACKET



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The UIMQRoo/CAN Summer Field Course Overview

The UIMQRoo/CAN Summer Field Course is about interculturality. It is about foreign and local students actively engaging and interacting in a rural Maya community, and laying the foundation for collaborative action. By joining Intercultural University students in field projects in the community, we offer visiting students the chance to experience day-to-day reality of life in a rural Maya village. At the same time CAN interns have the opportunity to reflect about who they are as they come to terms with living in a community which often has very different cultural assumptions and worldviews from their own. The experience is rounded out by intensive language study or travel to alternative community projects.

We offer several structured activities in our summer field program:

For six weeks UCSC students join UIMQRoo student research teams in rural Maya communities. Student interns have two options:

- 1.) Join UIMQRoo student research teams as they investigate and document different aspects of daily life in Maya communities through a participatory diagnostic or,
- 2.) Student interns can choose to participate in ongoing student research projects in the communities. Project topics include: Agroecology, alternative tourism, Mayan Language and Culture, environment, and economic development.

Students can also participate in an intensive language course in either Maya or Spanish in the community of Felipe Carrillo Puerto and/or two weeks of travel to three alternative rural community tourism projects with host students. The program in Quinta Roo allows undergraduate and graduate students to earn credit through their universities while experiencing the issues and challenges, joys and unexpected discoveries in this journey of intercultural connections.

CAN (Community Agroecology Network)

CAN has teamed up with the Maya Intercultural University of Quintana Roo in the management of the internship program. The summer of 2009 will be the first year these two institutions collaborate in this intercultural endeavor to promote ecological, social and economic sustainability.

Based at the University of California, Santa Cruz, CAN is a U.S. based non-profit committed to sustaining rural livelihoods and environments by integrating research, education, and trade innovations. CAN is linked to educational institutions and consumer groups that are working together to support agro ecological sustainability at the community level.

UIMQRoo (Maya Intercultural University of Quintana Roo)



UIMQRoo and Host Students

In 2001 the country of Mexico, through a constitutional amendment, officially embraced the diverse ethnic identity of its population, thus taking an important step in reversing decades of policies that sought the homogeneity of its society. In that same year, Mexico began to lay the foundations for the development of a new higher education model that would attend not only to the needs of its indigenous population, but that would seek a new model of higher education with emphasis on exploring the creation of knowledge across cultures in search of innovative solutions to the pressing issues on a local, regional and world level.

That initiative has led to the development of the Intercultural University Model. The model seeks sustainable solutions in a world where issues such as hunger, environmental destruction, disease, poverty and conflict have only increased in the last decades. Currently there are 9 intercultural universities throughout Mexico with the Maya Intercultural University, located in the town of José María Morelos accepting its first generation of students in 2007.

The intercultural model stresses that the student not only embrace, celebrate, study and understand his or her own identity or local community, but also to successfully navigate different cultures and world visions, as a compliment to the search for synergies between different ways of knowing and acting in the world. A fundamental piece of a student's education in the intercultural model is direct contact with other cultures outside of his or her own culture. Our exchange program provides for such an experience.

The Exchange Program at UIMQRoo defines Interculturality as:

Interculturality is the active interaction between two or more cultures that lays the foundation for exchange, dialogue and mutual enrichment between cultures, and seeks the exploration of new ways of thinking and alternative solutions to common and global challenges

Interculturalidad es la relación, convivencia e interacción entre dos o más culturas que permiten el intercambio y el dialogo entre diferentes grupos culturales y su enriquecimiento mutuo, buscando alternativas de solución a retos comunes y explorando nuevas formas de pensar”.

The University currently has 500 enrolled students with the number of new admissions increasing every year. The new buildings include classrooms, office facilities, a language lab, a computer lab with internet access, wet and dry labs and a library.

The university offers the following degrees:

- Language and culture
- Alternative tourism
- Engineering in Agroecological Production Systems
- Community Health (August 2009)
- Municipal Administration (August 2009)

Projects and Timeline



Student researchers conducting interviews



University of California students in the Field

The summer course offers:

- **Welcome and orientation** in José María Morelos on June 10th.¹
- **Six weeks community field project** in a rural community near the town of José María Morelos. CAN interns choose to either join UIMQRoo student research teams as they investigate and document different aspects of daily life in Maya communities (*diagnosis*) or to participate in ongoing student research projects in the communities. Please ask the CAN coordinator for more information and example projects: coordinator@canunite.org

¹ For students that have conflicts in their academic calendar, an orientation on an alternative date will be given.

- **Dates of the field work:** June 14-July 23rd

In addition the six week field work, the cost of \$2,000 includes one of the following options below *(if the student desires to participate in both options price will change)*

- **Two weeks of intensive language program** in the town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto: Dates Flexible
- Two weeks travel to 3 **community projects** in the Yucatan Peninsula: Dates Flexible

Fees and Expenses

Cost of the internship: \$2,000

Breakdown of costs in USD

Transportation	\$62.
Overhead/Supervision	\$432.
Food / Rent / Home-stays	\$589.
Language Instruction or Travel with Host Students	\$517.
CAN Administrative Costs	\$400.
	\$ 2,000.

Other Costs (not included in the 2,000 cost breakdown):

- Airfare
- International Health Insurance
- Hammock and Mosquito Netting (between \$60-\$70)

Additional out of pocket costs could include, phone calls, excursions on the weekends (roundtrip transportation from José María Morelos to the communities will average around \$8), and while in the community about \$5 a day for extras like water, or food, shampoo, soap, etc. The program also requires that you add on international health insurance coverage to your pre-existing coverage. Please see below for more details.

Country Profile: Mexico

www.datos generales mexico.com

Mexico shares a northern boundary with the United States of America and a southern boundary with Guatemala and Belize. It is surrounded by four bodies of water: the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Sea of Cortez and the Pacific Ocean.

The country's official name is The United States of Mexico and its system of government is a federal republic. The country is divided into 31 federal states plus the Federal District (the capital). The official language is Spanish, although there are more than 50 officially recognized indigenous languages and dialects spoken throughout the country.

Mexico is rich in natural resources, diverse cultures and languages. Much of the population identifies themselves as Roman Catholic, although in indigenous areas the religion is mixed with indigenous religious practices.

The Yucatan Peninsula is made up of three states, Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo. The Maya culture and language is a large part of the identity of the Yucatan Peninsula.

Security Issues

Below are some facts and statistics about the security situation in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico. The rural area of Quintana Roo, in which the internship takes place, is an area in which violence related to drug trafficking is rare. In addition, as a university we feel very secure about the safety of internship students. Internship students who participate in our summer program will find that they are part of a network that helps to insure their safety. We help to ensure the safety of not only internship students, but our own students in several important ways:

- Our summer program takes place in the small rural communities that surround the town of José María Morelos, the town in which the university is located.
- Internship students participate with UIMQRoo students, organized in teams, in developing a research or community development project. This means that internship students are not alone in the communities, but are working and living with a team of UIMQRoo students in the field.
- UIMQRoo students are working on summer projects in their own communities or communities in which they have relatives.
- All students are closely supervised by UIMQRoo professors who visit students in the field throughout the development of their summer project.
- In addition to internship students receiving supervision from the UIMQRoo professors who are supervising projects, the internship students have weekly meetings with the UIMQRoo internship coordinator.
- Internship students are placed in communities which are close to José María Morelos, communities which have internet and phone access, and communities which immediate evacuation is possible if need be.
- In addition to working with a team of students in the field, the internship students is assigned a host students that helps orient and guide the intern.

Perceptions of Security in the State of Quintana Roo, México

Based on information published by the Research Center for Development A.C. about the rate of incidence of violence and delinquency in the United Mexican States, out of five levels (Very high, high, middle high, middle and middle low), the State of Quintana Roo is placed in the middle level. This is because in recent years, the fight against organized crime that the Mexican government faces has increased the rate crime in the country. However, it is important to note that in Quintana Roo, the few clashes between criminal groups and police have occurred in the northern part of the state, in the tourist area, especially in the city of Cancun, where criminal groups control the black market and drugs that are consumed. But precisely because of the importance of tourism to the country, this region is heavily guarded by police force and military agents. So much is the security in the region that by the end of February the Rio Group Summit 2010 was held in Cancun, which brought together tens of important Latin-American representatives.

The region where the Intercultural Mayan University of Quintana Roo is located is at the center of the state, especially the municipalities of Jose Maria Morelos, Felipe Carrillo Puerto and communities in the municipalities bordering Yucatan and Campeche. In this region, the incidence of violence is almost nonexistent. There are no records or knowledge of events that alert us to insecurity in the region.

The central and northern regions of the peninsula of Yucatan are found in the lowest crime rate levels, which places the region as one of the safest for Mexican citizens and foreigners that visit. The authorities of Yucatan have received high recognition as the safest state in the country, which strengthens the idea that the central region of the peninsula is the safest for exchange student activities.

The municipality and town of José María Morelos

<http://www.JoséMaríamorelos.gob.m>



Municipality of José María Morelos, indicated in black, in the state of Quintana Roo, Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico

The municipality of José María Morelos is located in the interior of the state of Quintana Roo, making it the only municipality in the state that has no coast line. To the north and east are the states of Yucatan and Campeche, and to the south of Quintana Roo is the country of Guatemala and Belize.

The town of José María Morelos, where UIMQRoo is located, is in the heart of the municipality of José María Morelos and what is known as the “Zona Maya” of the state of Quintana Roo. Like most towns in this area it was first settled by the Maya, and continues to be dominated by the Maya community. It is primarily an agricultural town and includes some ranching and forestry activities. Life in the town of José María Morelos is quiet. Entertainment options are limited but may included entertainment activities in the downtown park, or a weekend baseball game. It is common to hear the Mayan language spoken throughout the municipality.

The town has a sports field known as the Domo, which includes an athletics track, basketball courts, a soccer field, a green area for various activities, and a baseball field. The Domo is located in the Rojo Gomez neighborhood (colonia) on Avenida Morelos. The town also has community parks that have basketball courts and football fields. There is also a local swimming pool.



Rural Communities

Local communities are usually friendly and open to visitors. The population of the rural communities range from a few hundred families with larger towns boasting populations of more than 4,000 inhabitants. Families tend to be large compared to families in the US, and are made up of extended families. Farming continues to be the main economic activity of the area.

Sports facilities in the communities vary. Social events can include dances and trips to other communities on weekend, TV, soccer games or other sports events. You may need to come up with your own entertainment. Most rural communities do not have banks, bank machines, supermarkets or commercial centers.

Most families of the Yucatan Peninsula are close-knit, and it is generally customary that all family members eat their meals at the same time. It is recommended if you are staying with a family that you share meal times with them.

Felipe Carrillo Puerto

<http://www.felipecarrillopuerto.gob.mx>

The town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto is located just one hour south east of the town of José María Morelos, in the municipality of Felipe Carrillo Puerto and is the site of the Spanish language school. This town is slightly bigger than José María Morelos, and played a central part in the historic castor war fought between the Maya and the Mexicans. The town offers much the same services as that of the town of José María Morelos, but does include a bank, a lively and well stocked market, and several institutions of higher education. It is also a hub for travelers making their way along the coastal route of Quintana Roo.

Weather

The prevailing climate in the region is hot and humid, with rains in different periods throughout the year. Average highs in the summer are 95 degrees and it can dip down to 75 degrees at night. In addition the area has high humidity, so in general summer is a very hot time of the year. The summer months also include periods of rain, and it is part of the hurricane season so tropical storms can bring high winds and rains. Higher temperatures and humidity are found in the interior of the state, with cooler temperature and less humidity along the coast line.

Living Conditions

The community of José María Morelos is officially categorized as an urban area and single family housing predominate. Rural housing is often made up of a collection of one or two



Typical housing style

room buildings, built with materials from the region (bajareques) and roof of the plant known as huano. The families of José María Morelos and surrounding communities for the most part sleep in hammocks (although beds are much more common in the town of José María

Morelos), and hot water for bathing is not common. Family members tend to share rooms for sleeping.

Logistics for field stay

For the summer six-week field stay, each student research team secures their own housing options. These may include renting a space or staying with family members. For the research team, including a CAN intern, the intern coordinator will work closely with the team to ensure organization for meals and adequate housing whether they decide to rent a house or live with a local family.



Photos which show rural housing and sleeping conditions

Adequate housing includes: A space for sleeping and living for the number of research team members. Please note, in most cases there are not “private” rooms for individuals for sleeping. Usually a common area for sleeping is shared by more than one individual and there is not as much private space for individuals as the visiting student may be used to. This is the case for either option of renting with other students or staying with families. In the case that an intern thinks that such an arrangement will be difficult, a special effort can be made to provide a private space for sleeping. This may mean that a student will have to rent a separate place that is not part of a family or a space shared with other students.

Bathroom Facilities

In many cases bathroom facilities are more rustic than what an intern might be used to and may be located in an outdoor area instead of in the house. In the communities it is often the case that the bathroom facility does not have solid concrete walls, but walls made of palos (small tree trunks). Bathrooms often do not have plumbing so water for toilets and showers are provided with large buckets.

NOTE: It is important that the students understand that families tend to bathe more than once during the day and change clothes several times a day, and that not to do so may be considered offensive.

Organization for meals

In the case of research teams that rent a space, the intern coordinator will work closely with the team to ensure adequate organization to provide for three meals a day. Lunch is the heavy meal of the day, always includes meat, and is eaten around 2 pm. Options that student research teams use when not staying with families in the communities are to buy groceries and cook meals, arrange with someone to provide one cooked meal a day, or eat in small restaurants in the communities.

In the case of home-stays while in José María Morelos or in the case that the research team decides to stay with families, the family will provide three meals a day.

Note: Vegetables are not a large part of meals, or they come in the form of “garnishes” and “salsas” for whatever the main meal is. Green salads are not at all common in the area. Although all families will receive an orientation, the student might need to supplement his or her diet with vegetables or fruit that they buy.

Note: Please alert your Internship Coordinator to any special dietary requirements as soon as possible (e.g., diabetic, lactose intolerant). Accommodating special diets is not guaranteed and can be very difficult due to availability and local conditions.

Special note to vegans and strict vegetarians: Please be aware that it is often difficult to accommodate strict vegetarians and vegans. It may be possible to get meatless meals but vegans and strict vegetarians may have a problem avoiding animal products altogether. There will always be beans available as a protein source, but tofu is not available. If this poses a problem, then participation in the Internship Program should be seriously reconsidered.

Laundry

Access to laundry options while in the communities will most likely consist of paying someone to wash clothes by hand. In larger towns such as José María Morelos laundry facilities can be found.

Safety of Personal Items

In home-stays in town like José María Morelos every effort will be made to provide a locked space where the student can keep personal items such as cameras and computers. In the communities it can be difficult to find a space where personal items can be locked and this should be taken into consideration when the student is in the field.

Culture, Attire, and Social Considerations

Latin culture tends to have less 'personal space' between people. Mexicans greet family (men and women) and friends with an embrace and a kiss (*besito*) and have more physical contact and proximity than people from the United States.

In general, Mexicans tend to dress more neatly outside the house than Americans do. Shorts are mostly worn by younger people outside the home in rural communities. Due to the heat it is acceptable to wear light, practical clothing, including tops with straps vs. with sleeves, and short skirts for women. Sandals, running shoes and hiking boots are good footwear. Women usually tie their hair back. Clothes are clean (even if well worn), and often ironed. Locals take showers frequently, often more than once a day due to the heat and humidity.

Drugs and alcohol

Although Mexicans love to have fun, excessive drinking and promiscuous behavior are serious concerns when staying with families or with the research team, and will result in your dismissal from the program. Drug use is illegal in all Mexico and use will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Gender

Gender roles can be different in Mexico than they are in the United States. Norms for some behaviors, like dress, are different, while those for other behaviors, like closeness while speaking, may seem much looser. The best way to learn such cultural idiosyncrasies is through observation.

In the communities the role of women is usually based in household tasks and men are more inclined to work in the field. In some traditional community and religious activities, female participation is limited due to a belief that women have powers that can be very dominant and can entice the gods (examples are community rituals such as Ch'a 'chaak and huajia Kool).

Recommendations for females: You will inevitably be whistled, hissed and shouted at in the streets. Some people consider it a compliment and it is important to remember a whistle is also used to catch people's attention, men or women. It is best to ignore comments and whistling in the streets. Being defensive only makes it worse. Remember that sometimes they may be trying to warn you of a danger like a truck coming up behind you!

Accommodations (beyond the 10-week program)



In the town of José María Morelos you can find hotels and rooms for rent. Most hotels are located in the city center or on the main street of José María Morelos. The average hotel room costs \$250 pesos a night, and rooms for rent can range between 500 to 1,500 pesos a month.

Hotels in and near José María Morelos

Name	Address	Telephone (are code 997)
Sra. Gabriela Flota Alcocer	Av. José Ma. Morelos. Colonia Centro s/n	978-0148
Sr. Domitilo Márquez	Av. José Ma. Morelos. Colonia Centro s/n	978-0235
Sra. Delta Diaz de Pérez	Av. José Ma. Morelos. Colonia Centro s/n	978-0110
Sra. Juana Escoffiè Cobos	Av. José Ma. Morelos entre Chilam Balam Col. Centro s/n	97-801-89
Lic. Eduardo Pérez	C. Vicente Guerrero. Colonia V. Grro. s/n	1022800
Sr. José Ma. Angulo Vazquez	C. Chilam Balam. Colonia Centro s/n	97-803-10
Prof. Guadalupe Huicab Zetina	Av. José Ma. Morelos, Colonia Centro	1022320
Sra. Arlyne Ix Castillo	Domicilio Conocido Dziuchè X carret. Laguna Chichankanab	978-2127
Prof. Andrés Flota Castillo	Domicilio Conocido Dziuchè x carret. Laguna Chichankanab	
Sr. Baltazar Borges Cob	Carret. 3.5. Dziuche Tihosuco Web Page (www.kantemo.com.mx)	



Food

Beans and corn tortillas can be found as part of almost every meal, and meat make up a large part of the diet. There is a large variety of tropical fruits and their availability varies depending on the season.

Restaurante el Mostrenco, José María Morelos

Dishes are also still prepared with wild game, such as wild boar, deer, pheasant. A favorite way to prepare food is to bake it underground known as “Pibil”. Chaya, which is somewhat like spinach, is also a common leaf used in various dishes and is highly nutritious. Different types of chili are usually available at every meal, with chili habanera being one of the favorites. Pumpkin seeds are eaten in a variety of forms, often found in sauces and there is “Pozle”, common throughout Mexico and Latin America, which is a beverage prepared with sweet corn. The heaviest meal is in the afternoon, usually around 2:00, and it is not uncommon to take a siesta after the meal. In the evenings it is common to eat something “lighter”, like tacos, or deep fried tortillas with bean or meat made into “panuchos” or “salbutes”.

It is common to eat in what is known as “cocinas economicas” or smaller establishments that are an extension of the family home. José María Morelos has several restaurants, or eating establishments, among them are:

Address	Owner	Telephone (are acode 997)
C. Jacinto Canek	Sra. Martha Medina	979-92-14
Av. José Ma. Morelos Col. Centro	Sr. Emilio Hernández Gasca	973-45-83
C. Chilam Balam	Sr. Alfredo Fuentes	973-45-83
Av. José Ma. Morelos	Lic. Eduardo Pérez Hernández	1022800
Calle Morelos- Presumida	Sr. Eulalio Trejo	978-02-28
Av. José Ma. Morelos por Canché y Manuel Antonio Col. San Juan	Sra. Jessica V. Velo López	97-803-12
Calle Coba entre Miguel Hidalgo y Primavera	Sr. Miguel Flota Castillo	1051397
Av. Morelos Esq. Xcabil	Sra. Nidia Soledad Cervera Sosa	1076636

Language

The dominant language is Spanish in the town of José María Morelos and Felipe Carrillo Puerto, and in the rural communities the dominant languages are Maya and Spanish. It is crucial to evaluate your Spanish skills before beginning your internship as it could limit your experience during your stay in the community. In general, communication will depend on you and your desire to learn and get involved in the culture. A minimum of intermediate Spanish skills are required.

Hospitals and Health Clinics

The town of José María Morelos has two 24 hour medical “centers”:

- The public hospital, **El Hospital Integral de José María Morelos**, is located on Avenida José María Morelos on the corner of Noh-Bec street. This public hospital has 24 hour

emergency services all year long, plus outpatient clinics in the morning (8:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm) and evenings (after 3:00 pm). The consultation fee is \$ 20.00 pesos.

- The private clinic **Clínica de Especialidades “San Luis”** is located on Avenida José María Morelos, just across from the public hospital, on the road to Felipe Carrillo Puerto. Phone: 997-9-78-03-35. The clinic offers emergency services 24 hours a day, laboratories, gynecologist and dentist.

In some rural communities there are small health care facilities that generally belonging to the public health system known as the Seguro Popular. It offers service to the public for a minimal fee. Hours are usually on the weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm, however personal will attend emergencies at any hour.

Laboratories are found throughout the town of José María Morelos and Felipe Carrillo Puerto, and it is not necessary to have a doctor’s order to run tests, such as to check for amoebas or parasites. Pharmacies are also found on almost every corner.

Since many of the communities do not offer medical services on the weekends it is important to plan ahead. If you have a medical problem that needs attention on the weekends, you might have to travel back into José María Morelos (or other larger towns like Felipe Carrillo Puerto) for attention and services. Please take into account that transportation options to and from the rural communities on the weekends are also more limited than on weekdays.

Local residents often use traditional and home remedies to cure or offer relief of symptoms for common illness such as cold or flu.

Drinking Water and Hydration

Throughout the Yucatan Peninsula it is only safe to consume bottled water. In order to reduce the use of plastic, we recommend that you bring water bottles. Water is sold in large water containers known as “garrafones” which hold 20 liters of water. You can fill your water bottles from these. The family you are staying with should have such a container, or if renting with students, you will be able to secure reliable drinking water with them. It is best to try and consume 3 liters of water per day as minimum to avoid dehydration, in addition to covering the head with a hat, and seeking shade when possible.

Diseases and Vaccinations

The official CDC (Center for Disease Control) web page for Mexico is <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationMexico.aspx>. It has excellent overall information about the kinds of diseases and illness one can get while traveling in Mexico, and how to handle the situation. They also recommend (but do not require) several shots and medications. Below is a summary, but we highly recommend that you consult the web page and make your own decisions about what type of vaccinations or medications to consider for your travel.

Diarrhea: Given changes in the diet, it is hard to avoid a bout with diarrhea. Also, due to the heat, it is much more common to experience stomach ailments. If you have diarrhea, you should consume fluids and avoid products with laxative effects such as milk or milk products. Always wash hands before eating and it is best to avoid little food carts that are found everywhere. It is usually safe to drink the fruit juices that are offered on the side of the road, or on little stands, since they tend to be 100% juice. Cooking with coconut oil is a great way to help reduce bacteria and fungus infections. We recommend you do some searching on the internet about traveling and diarrhea.

Dengue: The Peninsula is considered a risk area for dengue. There is no vaccination. The CDC information, including tips for prevention is found at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/yellowBookCh4-DengueFever.aspx>. Dengue is fairly common, so it is important the students know about, its symptoms and medications for it. However, most cases are mild. Once in awhile Quintana Roo will have hemorrhagic dengue alerts, which is very serious and life threatening disease. It is rare, but important to be aware of.

Hepatitis A: Mexico is considered high risk for Hep A. CDC recommends vaccination

Hepatitis B: Mexico is low risk

Typhoid: Mexico is considered high risk, CDC recommends vaccination.

Rabies: The CDC recommendation is to have the shots in general for anyone spending much time in the outdoors, especially in rural areas anywhere in the world. It does exist in Quintana Roo, but it is rare. We recommend that you inform yourself as to how the disease is transmitted in order to avoid potential infection.

Malaria: Some pockets of the Quintana Roo border area with Belize and Guatemala are considered a risk area. The municipality of José María Morelos is not in the border area. There is information on the CDC web page about the type of medication one should take if you are in a risk area. If you decide to take malaria medication, we recommend that you thoroughly investigate the side effects of all malaria medications, including the one that the CDC recommends.

Traveler's Medical Insurance.

IMPORTANT: This field internship requires you to obtain international traveler's medical insurance. This must be added on to your current insurance coverage. No providers offer coverage for basic sicknesses in foreign countries. The cost depends on the length of stay and desired coverage options, but students can expect to pay around \$100-190 for a 10-12 week stay. CAN works with a reliable and very helpful insurance broker, Sue Barstow, who can answer any questions.

Please visit Sue's website for an instant quote:

- 1.) <http://www.rossvalleyinsuranceagency.com/page.php?travelInsurance>
- 2.) under "Multinational Underwriters" click "Atlas Travel Insurance"
- 3.) click "StudentSecure". This is the most comprehensive and economical for students. As part of the application process you will need to show proof of international travel insurance before departing.

Money

In Mexico the currency used is the peso, and coins are referred to as "monedas". The official exchange rate between the US dollar and the peso has been fluctuating between 13-15 pesos to the dollar. When arriving at the airport, convert some cash into pesos to get you through the first few days and any kind of emergency (somewhere around \$100).

Banks can be found in larger urban centers like Merida, Felipe Carrillo Puerto, or Tulum but only operate Monday through Friday, and some have limited hours in the mornings on Saturday. One of the easiest ways to change dollars into pesos is through your debit or credit card at a bank machine. The town of José María Morelos has no bank but has two bank machines which accept US debit cards. The rural communities do not have ATM's so please plan ahead. Also be aware that sometimes the ATM's in José María Morelos runs out of cash, and you have to wait a few days for them to be replenished.

Transportation



Transportation between Cities:

There are four bus lines that connect the town of José María Morelos to urban centers throughout the Yucatan Peninsula. The lines are: ADO, Mayab, Línea Europea and Oriente. The most traveled destinations from José María Morelos are: Merida, Chetumal, Cancun, and the entire Riviera Maya.

FIRST CLASS BUSES: ADO AND LINEA EUROPEA: Provide air conditioning, movies, bathroom, and seats in general overall good condition. Only make stops in larger urban areas.

SECOND CLASS BUSES: For the most part these buses also provide air conditioning. These busses are popular because they make frequent stops at the smaller communities along the highway, or will pull over to let someone off if asked.

Local residents who can afford the slightly higher prices of tickets and are traveling between larger cities usually opt for the first class buses, due to the fact that travel time can be a lot less than if traveling in second class buses. Second class buses will make stops in communities that are on route. Often in first and second class buses the air-conditioning is turned on full, so it is important to always travel with a sweater, pants or warm blanket. If traveling in first class buses such as ADO, be prepared for movies which often have their volume on high.

Bus Terminals in José María Morelos .

Bus Terminals	Address
ADO/ORIENTE/MAYAB	Av. José María Morelos entre Kanche y Manuel Antonio Col. San Juan
Clase Europea (Omnitur del caribe)	Calle primavera s/n entre Jacinto Canek y Santiago Pacheco

Transportation in and around José María Morelos: Transportation in the town of José María Morelos is by taxi and tricitaxi (bicycle taxi), at 5 pesos per person. Many destinations are in walking distance.

Transportation to and from communities: Mini-vans are the main form of transportation to and from the surrounding communities. Prices vary depending on the distance of the community.

Things to Pack

Clothing/Footwear for Fieldwork

- Light Rain gear – rain jacket/poncho (note local folks do not wear rain gear for the most part due to the heat. If caught in rain they wait it out or just get wet)
- Well-worn and comfortable hiking boots with good ankle support and traction
- Hat (for sun protection)
- Full length pants with pockets
- Shirts (long sleeved, lightweight shirts are best for field work as they protect you from sun and insects)
- Light weight socks
- Bandana (good for protecting neck and head from insects)

Clothing/Footwear for Leisure

- A few sets of clothing for evenings in town.
- Sandals.
- Lightweight pants or shorts.

- A sweater or jacket for cold evenings (it can cool down in a big storm).

Field Supplies

- Small daypack/rucksack
- Drybag or plastic sealable bags (good for protecting equipment such as camera from dust, humidity, and water)
- Insect repellent
- Water bottles
- Passport and a copy of passport

Bedding and Towels

- Bathing suit (in the rural communities and even in José María Morelos locals tend not to wear bathing suit(s, but to swim in shorts and a light top (with bra underneath).
- Towel and wash cloth (you may want to bring 2 towels or a lightweight camping towel that dries quickly given the humidity)

Personal Supplies

- Personal toiletries
- Personal first aid kit (for example: anti-diarrhea pills, antibiotics, antiseptic, itch-relief, pain reliever, bandages, blister covers, etc.) and personal medications
- Sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher
- Baby powder to help freshen up damp shoes and clothing
- Sunglasses

Miscellaneous/Other Suggested Items

- Camera, film, extra camera battery
- Flashlight/torch or headlamp with extra batteries and extra bulb
- A few photos of friends and family and where you live to share with your host family or other students
- Earplugs
- Books or other pleasure reading and games for free time
- Pocket knife (pack in your checked luggage, not your carry-on)
- Binoculars
- Field notebook

- A small travel alarm clock

(It should be noted that you can buy most of these things in Cancun or Merida city if needed)

Mosquitoes and other small biting insects can be an annoyance, but can be minimized by protecting skin with clothing (long-sleeved shirts, bandanas, hats). Insect repellent is also an option, but can be uncomfortable in the heat. Wasps and bees and possibly poisonous snakes may be present in the field.

When not in the field, you will want to wear what you wear at home. Basically, pack clothes knowing that things get wet easily and dry slowly, it can get really warm and humid, you will be walking a lot, and if you're in the field at all you'll get dirty. If you are doing office work or farm visits you will want to wear your normal clothes

Internet and Phone

Phone: To call into Mexico from the states you must dial 011-52, followed by the area code of where you are calling. To call into José María Morelos you must dial (997), and Felipe Carrillo Puerto is (983). Calling into the United States out of Mexico you dial (001) and then the area code and number.

The town of José María Morelos offers land lines and cell phone coverage. There is also a public phone service whose hours are 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 pm located at Avenida José María Morelos s/ n between Chilam Balam and Jacinto Pat Cologne Center. From here you can make calls to anywhere in Mexico or to the United States. Also there are public phones on the streets, but these only work with phone cards, not with money. Often they are out of order. A phone card must be purchased at any of the various local pharmacies.

Some rural communities have a telephone service from which you can make local or long distance calls with telephone cards. Some, but not all rural communities, can receive signal for cell phone.

Internet: The town of José María Morelos has centers that offer free wireless internet network, and can be found in Poder Joven and Plaza Comunitaria. There are also computer centers that provide internet service at a cost of approximately \$ 10.00 pesos per hour. Also the University offer free wireless internet service.

In many rural communities wireless internet service is provided by the “casas comunitarias”. Although it should be noted that the network tends to fail during the rainy season and the service is slow.

Contact Information

For more information please contact:

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or

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Resources / Links

<http://www.seyc.gob.mx/uimqroo/index.php>

<http://www.JoséMaríamorelos.gob.mx>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/dengue/spanish/dengue-qa-spa.htm>