

Cuernavaca, Mexico with Speak Our Language 2010

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q: Where is Cuernavaca located?

A: To the south of Mexico City, approximately 1.5 hours by bus. It is a large city (similar to Columbus but more spread out) and is called the City of Eternal Spring for its wonderful climate.

Q: Why did you choose this city and the Cemanahuac school?

A: Tonya Tiggett, founder of Speak Our Language, worked at Cemanahuac in the mid 90's as Resident Director for The Ohio State University study program in Mexico for 10 weeks.

As a side note, Cemanahuac has been in business for more than 20 years and is owned by two Americans who have lived in Mexico for longer than that! www.cemanahuac.com

Q: What if I want to bring a family member or friend with me, but this person does not want to take Spanish classes?

A: You may bring someone with you. The person will not pay applicable school enrollment fees for the actual study abroad program, but all other costs will apply (airfare, housing, etc.).

Q: What are the expectations of this program?

A: Interested travelers should be serious about learning and practicing his/her Spanish. The expectations of Speak Our Language are that students will be open to new experiences, understand that we cannot plan for every contingency during our trip (although we do our best to ensure a wonderful experience), and we expect our students to represent the American culture by treating our Mexican host families and the school staff with the utmost respect. Finally, we expect you to have a GREAT time!

The expectations of the school staff at Cemanahuac are that you will complete the daily homework and assignments, in addition to studying vocabulary and miscellaneous lessons given by your teacher. While this is a fun experience and full of adventure so to speak, we do not want to discount the educational component and rigors of studying.

Q: What will my typical day look like?

A: Students who stay with a host family normally breakfast around 8AM and arrive to the school no later than 9AM. Classes are a maximum of 5 students and are taught 100% in Spanish. There is a break around 10 or 10:30 AM where students can grab a snack at the canteen on the school grounds, and even purchase local “artesanía” being sold at the school. Class dismisses at 1PM at which time students can do any of the following:

- Return home to each lunch with the host family
- Stay at the school for a lecture on Mexican culture or Spanish from 1-2PM
- Eat lunch around Cuernavaca
- Go on a planned school excursion to other cities nearby
- Anything else you desire!

Q: What do students do in the evening?

A: Some students will choose to have tutoring with a member of the Speak Our Language staff, only in the cases that this is requested. Otherwise, you are free to study, explore the city, have dinner in the center of town, or take advantage of any of the excursions taking place after school lets out at 1PM. ¡Olé!

Q: Do the teachers or host families speak English?

A: Although some teachers know English they will conduct class 100% in Spanish. You may ask a classmate for help in English but overall the expectation is that you will use Spanish as much as possible in the classroom and the teacher will not use any English.

The host families in general do not know much English and just like in the classroom, will speak only Spanish. They have been hosting students for years and will help you to adjust.

Q: Will there be help with my classes?

A: There will be a Speak Our Language on-site liaison who can tutor you and review any concepts from your class. You have classmates who can meet and form study groups too.

Q: What are the excursions we will take?

A: The descriptions are in the enrollment packet that is / will be mailed to you, along with prices. Please note that excursions are not included in the pricing list on this document and are extra.

Q: What is my class size and how do I get placed?

A: Class sizes are a maximum of 5 students and you will take a placement test the day before your class starts to know which level you will be assigned.

Q: Will I be in class with people who have traveled with Speak Our Language?

A: That depends on your placement levels and theirs. You may be in a class with someone from another group, another state, or even another country!

Q: Where do we fly into and how do we arrive to the school?

A: We arrive at Mexico City's international airport and we will either arrange for private bus transportation or a public luxury bus. You have the option of traveling with the group or independently prior to, or after, the trip dates. The bus will take us to the terminal in Cuernavaca and from there we will take a taxi to the school where the host families will pick up student(s). Students will return to the school the following day to take a placement test.

Q: What if I don't want to stay with a family?

A: You have the option of staying in an apartment that the school arranges for you, but your meals are not included.

Family home-stays include 3 meals per day and you have the option of living in the same house with another student, but having separate rooms (single), or you may room with another student or family member in the same house and share a room (double).

Q: Do we have to eat meals with the family if we choose a home stay?

A: That depends upon what you communicate to the family, but it is not mandatory. As a courtesy, you should inform the person cooking if you will be there for the meals that day. You do not receive any discount or reimbursement for meals not eaten at the home. Meals outside the home are covered by the student and not included in the board.

Q: How do we get to school each day?

A: Most families live near the school and most students will walk. You may take the public bus or you may take a taxi. Transportation cost to the school is not included in the package price.

Q: How much homework will I have?

A: This varies from teacher to teacher and student to student. As a general rule of thumb we estimate you will have about 2 hours of study each night. This will not be the same for all students as everyone's aptitude for the language varies.

Q: What if I have to return back to the U.S. early for unforeseen circumstances?

A: We will help you to make those arrangements. The only portion of the program that is refundable will be any unused housing days / hours.

Example: You stayed for three days and left, which was 4 days unused. You will receive a refund for housing only for those 4 days, but not tuition, our Admin fee, etc.

Q: How do I sign up for the trip?

A: See deadlines and pricing structure on the next page. Email your request for an enrollment packet to: tonya@speakourlanguage.com or call 614-245-8482 and leave your mailing address.

Cuernavaca, Mexico Trip for June 2010

One Week Program June 12 th thru June 19 th 2010			
COSTS	Apartment	Single Family	Double Family
Life-time fee to school	\$75	\$75	\$75
Tuition	\$203	\$203	\$203
Housing	\$270	\$252	\$182
Transportation to school	\$57	\$57	\$57
Textbook	\$35	\$35	\$35
SOL admin fee	\$320	\$320	\$320
Airfare estimate			
CMH - \$700			
JFK - \$500			
Total			
Leaving from Columbus	\$1,705	\$1,642	\$1,572
Leaving from New York	\$1,505	\$1,442	\$1,372
Two Week Program June 12 th thru June 26 th 2010			
COSTS	Apartment	Single Family	Double Family
Life-time fee to school	\$75	\$75	\$75
Tuition	\$406	\$406	\$406
Housing	\$540	\$504	\$364
Transportation to school	\$57	\$57	\$57
Textbook	\$35	\$35	\$35
SOL admin fee	\$640	\$640	\$640
Airfare estimate			
CMH - \$700			
JFK - \$500			
Total			
Leaving from Columbus	\$2,543	\$2,417	\$2,277
Leaving from New York	\$2,343	\$2,217	\$2,077

Other costs not included above, but could be added on:

- Excursions which range from \$15 - \$50 each and will be elected by our group
- Research material, library fee \$40 deposit and refundable
- Transcript fee \$5
- University of Pacific graduate credit at \$79 per credit, eligible for up to 6 credits
- Ashland University graduate credit at \$177 per credit, eligible for up to 3 credits

*** Please note that there may be some variation in the costs above which will be reviewed with each applicant.**

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Travel-Specific Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q: Do I have to get any shots or vaccinations for my upcoming trip?

A: Per Vivian Harvey of Cemanahuac, you are not required to get any vaccinations but she highly recommends that any international travelers would get Hepatitis A and B.

A: Another source suggests getting Typhoid and Tetanus in addition to Hepatitis A and B. Please check with your family physician 6-8 weeks in advance of traveling.

Q: What type of vitamins do you want us to bring for the Vitamin program?

A: Children's vitamins. Vivian buys her vitamins at Target.

Q: Is there wireless PC access at the school?

A: There is WIFI connectivity at the school and at a number of cafés throughout the city. There are three desktop computers at the school but during periods of high enrollment it may become difficult to get access to those PCs.

Q: What are some miscellaneous things I should know?

A:

- Bring battery operated alarm clocks in case the electric goes out.
- Bring rain gear (poncho or umbrella) since it will be the rainy season.
- Bring sandals or house shoes that can be worn around the home, outside your bedroom. FYI- bare feet in the main areas of the home is a "no-no."
- Do not wear expensive or flashy jewelry to draw attention to yourself.
- Check with your cell phone provider to know rates for calling from Mexico and if you have that capability while there.
- A gift for the host family is always welcome, but it is not necessary to bring one with you nor to spend an extravagant amount of money. You can always pick up a gift in Mexico once you get to know your family and their likes or dislikes. Taking the host parents to dinner may also be a welcome gesture.

Travel-Specific Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Continued

Q: Will we have access to workout facilities / golf courses / tennis courts for recreation?

A: Golf and tennis are considered elite sports in Mexico and are only available at private clubs. Some clubs do allow general admittance only during the weekday afternoons and it is expensive (\$100 or more). Since you will be in class from 9AM – 1PM, it leaves little time for such activities and in general can be difficult to arrange. However, there is a 9 hole private golf club near the school.

Q: Are there activities or excursions for us during the afternoons?

A: Yes! There is so much to do in and around Cuernavaca that we will have plenty to do! Our group can review these things once we arrive and decide as a group what we would do and then you may decide as an individual on other activities once you are there.

Q: Do they accept VISA and how much cash should I carry?

A: \$200 - \$400 US dollars is the recommended amount of cash to bring, and exchange \$50 of that at the airport in Mexico City. There is generally a 3% ATM foreign rate fee for transactions and although many banks or credit card companies say they don't charge this – it is accounted for in other "fees" or charges and is in the fine print somewhere!

Q: Do I need to bring an electric converter with me for my hair dryer, etc?

A: Most homes are updated with the same electrical currency that we have in the US. In the event that your host family has an older home whose wiring is not compatible, you may visit a hardware store and purchase a converter for little money.

Q: Will my cell phone work in Mexico?

A: This depends on your carrier and your cell phone type. Please check with your provider. For Verizon as of March 2010 cell phones will work and the cost per minute:

- To send or receive call: .99 (cents)
- Text messages are .50 each to send and only .05 to receive a message
- Blackberry's have been updated with SKYPE
- International email package upgrade for 30 days (approximately \$65.00) with unlimited access
- Email packages can be pro-rated per Verizon
- To activate roaming on your Verizon phone you press *228 send and then select option 2.
- For more information please contact your provider before your trip.

Q: When is my final payment due?

A: See below and David will send invoices with final amount due as this varies per participant.

Final balance and airfare booking	May 14, 2010	Amount will vary, we can invoice you for everything but airfare.
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