



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	ITAM, Mexico City
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2019
Otago degree(s)	LLB/BA
Major(s)	History

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
New Historical Perspective of Mexico	English		
Spanish 1	Spanish		
Law & Global Governance	English		
Mexico-US-Canada Relations	English		

Any comments about these papers?

I really enjoyed all of them - the best one was definitely the History of Mexico one. It was created especially for exchange students to gain knowledge of Mexican history and covers the history from the first people on the continent to today. The lecturer was amazing - a really good speaker, went at a perfect pace, focussed on historical trends and the socio-political climate instead of names and dates.

How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?

My workload was a bit less than it would've been if i was taking 4 papers at Otago, but for my friends doing business/economics etc. the workload was quite intense at times - they had assignments/presentations every week and exams throughout the semester. I definitely wouldn't recommend doing more than four papers if you don't want to stress over school work.

Accommodation

What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?

I stayed in the house of an older Mexican couple at Miguel Hidalgo 19. It was a really unique experience living in their house and the other exchange student living there became my best friend. They also had the most beautiful old house. My friends living in bigger dorms enjoyed it as well, the accommodation can really vary so I'd recommend asking previous exchange students where they stayed and whether they liked it. Maybe the most important thing is that the accommodation is close to ITAM and is with other students.

Although I enjoyed living at Miguel Hidalgo 19, I wouldn't recommend to other students unless you had a formal contract with the tenants which sets out your rights and the rules of the house, because we had problems with them trying to keep our deposit. Definitely always have a written contract with your landlords because ITAM can't really do anything if the landlords violate your rights.

Money matters

Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance

My rent was more than what I paid in Dunedin but that was because I was living in a very fancy area in a huge old house - it was \$470/month

Food was maybe \$10-20/day. You can budget well and just eat street tacos for \$2 a meal but we ate out at nicer cafes a lot.

Flights - from England to Mexico and then Mexico to NZ it was around \$3,000 but that was because I booked my flights quite late.

What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)

I used my kiwi visa card and got cash out of the ATM. But because most things in Mexico are paid in cash (including our rent) this built up a lot of ATM fees so I'd recommend using a travel card like Revolut or TransferWise.

Visas & Insurance

Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?

Yes, I just did it upon my arrival in Mexico.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, ITAM requires proof that you have medical insurance before they accept you!

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

There were lots of events at the start of the semester to welcome people and I'd recommend all those as they are a great way to meet people. I'd also recommend going on as many of the organised trips as possible, especially at the start of the semester. It's such a good way to make friends and they're pretty good value for money and it's nice to go on a trip that is already organised and security is taken care of etc.

I also did Salsa classes at ITAM which are on Mon-Thurs, they're free and super fun I'd definitely recommend them!

What was the university/ city like?

ITAM is quite a prestigious university so the students are very hardworking and sometimes kind of competitive. It's very business-orientated but I really enjoyed it because it's all at one enclosed campus which has really nice grounds and good places to study and it means everyone you know is all in one place every day. There is always events on as well! Some of the lecturers were very harsh on their students, especially what I heard from those taking business courses.

Mexico City is crazy, it's like a whole country. There's a lot to do but it's all quite far away from the Uni/the area you'll be living. That's not a bad thing though as San Angel is a really nice peaceful area with nice places to eat. Doing all the typical tourist stuff in Mexico City like the Zocalo, Chapultepec Park, Teotihuacan, Garibaldi plaza and the main museums is definitely worth it!

Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?

I've put screenshots of my Mexico City bucket list at the bottom of this document, the highlighter were places I went to! Overall I'd recommend trying lots of street food/comida corridas because the food is so good and cheap there.

In terms of outside of Mexico City, these were all the places I travelled to and I absolutely loved every single one of them and would definitely recommend: San Miguel de Allende, Guanajato, Queretaro, Taxco, Tepoztlan, las Estacas, Valle de Bravo, Nevado de Toluca, Valladolid (and all the surrounding cenotes and the pink lakes!), Chichen Itza, Isla Holbox, Tulum, Oaxaca City, Puerto Escondido, Tuxpan beach, Puebla city, Cholula, Tolantongo, Monterrey. We also saw the butterflies at Zitoac.

Any tips for future students?

Just try to travel to as many places around Mexico as possible, especially at the start of the semester before the workload increases/everyone runs out of money. Try condense exploring Mexico City into a few selected weekends and spend the rest of the time travelling. The best thing I did was spend the first long weekend ITAM gives you on a 10 day road trip (we missed like 2 days of classes) around Yucatan and Quintana Roo. Everything was beautiful and it was the best road trip I've ever been on.

As long as you do your research on safety, check the insurance and don't drive that much at night - just rent a car or fly somewhere then rent a car and travel around.

I'd also recommend learning a bit of Spanish (basic phrases and food so you can read menus) before you arrive, to make your life easier and also to increase the chances of your Spanish improving.

Also, Mexican locals are some of the friendliest and kindest people you'll ever meet and, unlike other exchange destinations, you actually have a chance to befriend local students! So take advantage of that for sure!

And definitely read up on Mexico's history - it's had a tumultuous political and general history and it makes exploring the country even more exciting when you've educated yourself a little bit.

Also, if you have a chance you should definitely stay as long as you can after the exam period to travel Mexico and the surrounding Latin American countries - that part of the world is so far from NZ so it's good to make the most of it whilst you are over there.

Overall Experience

Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!

My semester in Mexico City was the best 5 months of my life! The people that pick Mexico as a destination are from all across the world and are such open and interesting people. Mexican people in general are so helpful, friendly and fun. The food is as amazing as everyone says and there are endless things to do in Mexico City. The country of Mexico has everything to offer - from gorgeous beaches, to colonial towns to mountain hikes to natural wonders to ancient ruins to activist cities to jungle to cultural and art and history museums and so much live music and so much more! It's a unique and entirely different experience to home but it doesn't feel overwhelming or difficult to deal with at all because it is all so exciting and you are surrounded by the loveliest people. Getting to live in one of the world's biggest cities and explore one of the biggest most biodiverse and diversely populated countries on the planet is an experience I'd recommend to everyone!











MEXICO CITY BUCKET LIST

	Cafes/Restaurants	Bars/Nightlife	Tourist Attractions	Markets/Shopping	Museums/Galleries	Cultural/arts centres etc.	Streets/parks
Álvaro Obregón <i>San Ángel</i>	Café Borola El Pendulo			Flower Market (24 hours!) Bazaar Sabado (Handicrafts and art market on Saturdays) Mercado del Carmen (Hipster food hall) Mercado San Ángel	Museo Del Carmen (Real mummies inside)		
Azcapotzalco							
Benito Juárez	Fonda 99.99 (Cheap Yucateco restaurant) Los Chamos (Delicious Venezuelan food)					Cineteca Nacional de Mexico (Central film institute)	
Coyoacán	Corazón de Maguey (Good range of regional/authentic Mexican dishes and Mezcal selection) La Casa de los Tacos	Higuera 2 (Bar where Kahlo and Rivera used to visit – can't find name) El Centauro (Cantina)	Capilla de la Conchita (Church – example of Indigenous tequitqui influence and Spanish baroque)	Mercado De Antojitos Mexicanos (Try the deep fried quesadilla) Oasis Coyoacan (Posh mall) Librerías Gandhi (Biggest branch) Mercado Roma Coyoacán U-Tópicas: Librería y Galería de Mujeres	Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (Go to nearby sculpture garden to the Espacio Escultórico) Sala Nezahualcóyotl (Classical music concerts) La Casa Azul (Frida's old house turned into a Museum about her life) Museo Casa de Leon Trotsky	Casa de cultura Jesús Reyes Heróles (Garden cafe and arts centre) Centro Cultural y Social Veracruzano (Theatre/shop/restaurant) UNAM Campus Centro Nacional de las Artes (Cultural tours/workshops/events)	Av. Francisco Sosa (Pretty colonial housing) Plaza de la Conchita Viveros de Coyoacan

					(Where Trotsky lived, now a museum about him)		
Quajimaloa de Morelos							La Mexicana Park (Like walking through a utopian city planner simulation)
Cuauhtémoc <i>La Condesa & La Roma & Colonia Juarez</i>	Maximo Bistrot (Locally sourced Mexican food, reservation needed, looks \$\$\$) La Pitahaya Vegana (Amazing vegan tacos) Lalo! (Brunch/lunch) Borola Café Roma Boicot Café (Good for coffee and studying) Caffe Toscano Los Loosers (All Vegan!) Don Toribio (Cheap Argentinian/Mexican grill) Tierra Garat (Amazing coffee) Fonda Fina (Creative, modern Mexican – try the Peniques) Pizza Felix Los Tamales de la Roma (Cheap variety of Tamales, eat in or take-away) Taquería Orinoco 120 Nuevo Leon (For casual Mexican breakfast)	Supra (Rooftop bar) El plaza Condesa (live music) Gin Gin La Clandestina (Impressive Mezcal menu) Limantour (One of world's best bars, cocktails) Don Toribio (Cheap Argentinian/Mexican grill) SAVU (Music is good but lots of bougie older men) Salón Los Angeles (Oldest ballroom) Cantina Salón París (Local pub, nearby Alameda Park on Sundays) Cabrera 7	Arena Mexico (Lucha Libre wrestling – Friday is the biggest night)	La Incredible Librería Mercado Medellín (100-years-old, caters to Latin American foodstuffs) Mercado Roma (Gourmet foodball) Amsterdam Market (Small health food grocery) Casa Bosques (bookstore) Apartment 25 (boutique) Calle Colima & Calle Cordoba (Shopping streets) Milan 44 (urban market) Tianguis Sullivan (Weekend market)	Galería OMR (Leading art gallery in Mexico) MUJAM (Toy museum)/ Proyectos Monclova (Leading contemporary art gallery)	Foro Shakespeare (Theatre)	Parque España Parque Mexico (*both great for dog watching!) Pushkin Garden

	<p>Lardo (Mediterranean lunch & brunch, Rosetta sister restaurant)</p> <p>Rosetta Restaurant (Popular bakery and brunch/lunch place with beautiful interior)</p> <p>Cocina Marcelino (Brunch)</p> <p>Delirio (Mediterranean, brunch)</p> <p>Mapo Gal Bi (Korean food)</p> <p>Taquería El Guero (Hola) (Good veggie options!)</p> <p>Comedor Lucerna (Colourful food hall with courtyard and murals)</p> <p>Comedor Escondido (Instagram-worthy rooftop bar/restaurant)</p> <p>Pachuca (Old time diner)</p> <p>Pasillo de Humo (Oaxacan food)</p> <p>Chilpa (Build your own Chilaquiles!)</p>	<p>Condesa DF rooftop (Bougie)</p> <p>Pulquería Insurgentes (3 floors & rooftop, packed club in the weekend)</p> <p>Departamento Rico (gay club)</p> <p>Zona Rosa (gay-friendly district with a thriving Korean community)</p> <p>La Riviera del Sur (Old School Cantina with a modern makeover)</p> <p>Covadonga (Trendy Cantina, Spanish food)</p> <p>Bar Montejo (Cantina)</p> <p>Looloo Studio Xampaneria (Cocktail bar)</p>		<p>Parque Pushkin Tianguis (Includes antiques on Sundays)</p> <p>Condesa Tianguis (Typical street market with fresh food)</p>			
Cuauhtémoc	Azul Histórico (Mexican restaurant with rooftop bar)	Cantina El Tío Pepe (Local pub, art)	Lucha libre wrestling Secretaría de Educación	La Ciudadela (Traditional handicrafts)	Diego Rivera Mural Museum	Biblioteca de Mexico (Patio de escritores and the City of Books)	Alameda Central

Centro Histórico	<p>Cook Hanal (Authentic, local comida Yucateca)</p> <p>Café La Habana (Where Castro and Guevara planned the revolution)</p> <p>Tortas Been (Loaded, cheap tortas with a fresh juice stand)</p> <p>Café de Tacuba (Traditional Mexican restaurant est. 1912 – Diego Rivera’s first marriage was here)</p> <p>Limosneros (Famous creative Mexican cuisine, fucking delicious and good vegetarian food)</p> <p>Pastelería Ideal (Establishment bakery founded in 1927)</p> <p>El Huequito (Typical Mexican diner, occasional live music, lots of options and famous for their tacos)</p> <p>Café El 123 (Restaurant/café/store/gallery with Mexican/Thai/European fusion food)</p> <p>Aquí es Oaxaca (Family-run Oaxacan restaurant)</p> <p>Café Popular (24/7 Mexican cafeteria)</p> <p>Café Pagoda (Retro café w/ traditional food)</p> <p>El Cuadrilátero (Baguettes for gladiators, owned by an ex-Luchador)</p>	<p>Novoau interior, go for the beer & tequila)</p> <p>Pulquería Las Duelistas Salón Tenampa (Most famous Cantina, staple for Mariachis, open until 3am)</p> <p>La Opera (Cantina)</p> <p>La Azotea (Rooftop bar/restaurant, inside Barrio)</p> <p>Alameda art deco building housing a variety of shops and restaurants)</p> <p>Hilaria Gastro (Secret bar, enter through jewellery shops)</p> <p>La Bota (Spanish bar inside a flea market)</p> <p>La Mascota (Cantina – free food)</p>	<p>Pública (Rivera murals)</p> <p>Catedral Metropolitana</p> <p>Palacio de Bellas Artes (Temporary exhibitions and murals)</p> <p>Grand Hotel Ciudad de Mexico (Good views, featured in Spectre)</p> <p>Plaza de Santo Domingo</p> <p>Zócalo (Plaza de la Constitución, main square and biggest in Latine America)</p> <p>Palacio Nacional (Free entry, Diego Rivera Murals, roaming cats, historical exhibitions)</p> <p>National Supreme Court (Free to enter and get an audio guide around the 10+ murals)</p> <p>Folkloric Ballet (At the palacio de Bellas Artes)</p> <p>Street art tour (Roma, Saturdays 11am)</p> <p>Tlatelolco (“The little hill of land, Plaza</p>	<p>market, Plaza de Dandon nearby has outdoor dancing on Saturdays)</p> <p>Lagunilla flea market</p> <p>Mercado Jamiaca (Flower market)</p> <p>Mercado Abelardo L. Rodriguez (Typical neighbourhood markets with amazing murals)</p> <p>Calle de Mesones (Ramon Corona) y Calle Roldan (Uniquely Mexican products – Mexican ideas, Didacticos y Algo Mas, La Purisima)</p> <p>Victor Artes Populares Mexicanos (Mexican folk art, use knocker to be let in)</p> <p>Callejon de la Condesa (Used book vendors)</p> <p>Dulcería de Celaya (Authentic sweet shop founded in 1874)</p>	<p>Vértigo Galería (Contemporary young artists)</p> <p>Palacio de Bellas Artes (Diego’s <i>Controversial Man at the Crossroads</i> murals resides here)</p> <p>Museo Franz Mayer (design and decorative arts – courtyard is a peace oasis)</p> <p>Museo de la Constituciones (Museum of Women)</p> <p>Casa de la Memoria Indómita (Museum about Mexican state violence)</p> <p>Museo de la Ciudad de Mexico Museo Mexicano del Diseno (Contemporary art)</p> <p>Museo Nacional de Arte (Colonial art that shaped Mexican history)</p> <p>Museo Arte Popular (Folk art museum)</p>	<p>Biblioteca Vasconcelos (Art museum/cultural centre with murals)</p>	<p>(Next to Bellas Artes Garibaldi Plaza (Mariachis and nearby cantinas))</p>
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	<p>Finca Don Porfirio Juárez (Medicore café worth it for the view of the Bellas Artes)</p> <p>Los Callejeros (Taco restaurant, late-night)</p> <p>Hostería La Bota (Cantina?/Spanish restaurant)</p> <p>El Mayor (Mexican restaurant good for breakfast, looks fancy)</p> <p>Los Vegetarianos (Family-run vegetarian restaurant)</p>	<p>La Faena (Traditional cantina with quirky interior)</p> <p>La Puri (Kitsch Gay Club)</p> <p>UTA Bar</p> <p>Paranoid Visions (Underground Club)</p> <p>Bosforo (Mysterious Mezcalería)</p> <p>Pulquería</p> <p>Vacas Verdes</p> <p>Bósforo (Bar/restaurant)</p>	<p>de la tres culturas, Aztec archaeological site. Aztec pyramid, a 16th c church and the modern Mexico – student movement of 1968 gathered there after protesting was banned to decide on next steps)</p> <p>Casa de los Azulejos (House of tiles – you can go inside to courtyard in restaurant)</p> <p>Downtown Mexico (Hotel complex, main courtyard houses Azul Historico, restaurant, rooftop has views, there are small design shops and the wall of restaurant Puntarena is all grasses and native plants.)</p> <p>Palacio de Correos de Mexico/Palacio Postal (Complete in 1907 by Italian architect who</p>	<p>Mercado de San Juan (Food market with exotic meats and international cuisines – eatmexico.com provides tours)</p> <p>Sonora Mercado (Witchcraft Market!)</p> <p>Mercado de Artesanías (Handmade souvenirs)</p>	<p>Museo de la Memoria y Tolerancia (Exhibitions about human atrocities)</p> <p>MUMEDI (Design museum)</p>		
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			<p>also designed the Bellas Artes)</p> <p>Torre Latinoamericana</p> <p>Fuente de Vicente Rojo (Public art fountain)</p> <p>Historic Synagogue Justo Sierra 71</p>				
Gustavo A. Madero			Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe				
Iztacalco				Central de Abastos (Main wholesale market in CDMX)			
Iztapalapa							
Magdalena Contreras							
Miguel Hidalgo	<p>Raíz Cocina de Estaciones (Creative, changing Mexican menu)</p> <p>Nexo (Spanish, French, Mexican food)</p> <p>El Borrego Vuido (Late-night/24-hour tacos)</p>	Limantour (One of world's best bars, cocktails)	<p>Castillo de Chapultepec (History museum inside)</p> <p>Fuente de Itáloc (Diego Rivera fountain/infrastructure project)</p> <p>Panteón de Dolores (Cemetery and green space)</p>		<p>Museo de Arte Moderno (In the park)</p> <p>Luis Barragán House and Studio</p> <p>Museo de Antropología</p> <p>Museo Soumaya</p> <p>Museo Jumex</p> <p>Estela de Luz (Controversial Mexican independence monument, with a digital museum underneath)</p>	Autocinecma Coyote Polanco (drive-in cinema)	The Western Section of Chapultepec is dense and hides caves, cliffs, a decaying playground and marine park and a cemetery for concrete animal sculptures)
Milpa Alta							
Tláhuac							
Tlalpan							

Venustiano Carranza			Diablo Rojos Baseball game (at Estadio Alfredo Harp Helú)			
Xochimilco			Trañeras		Dolores Olmedo Museum (Pre-hispanic art, Kahlo and Rivera)	

CHAINS AROUND THE CITY

- Pain Quotidien
- La Casa de Tolo (Mexico City's street food put into a restaurant, very popular and everywhere)
- Qlo de Agua
- Neveria Roxy (local and retro ice cream)
- Tierra Garat (coffee chain)
- El Califa (casual taco chain)
- El Pendulo (bookshop cafes, great for studying)

OUTSIDE MEXICO CITY

- Robert Brady Museum (Private art collection and house – Frida Kahlo works), Cuernavaca
- Guadalajara, Jalisco (Tequila, mariachi music, colonial landmarks, zoo)
- San Cristobel de las Casas, Chiapas
- Cascadas de agua azul, Chiapas
- Sumidero Canyon, Chiapas
- Palenque, Chiapas
- Laguna Miramar, Chiapas
- Tepoztlan, Morelos (Birthplace of Quetzalcoatl, market, Teopozteco pyramid)
- Taxco, Guerrero (silver city)
- San Pancho/San Francisco, Nayarit (Beachside town)
- San Miguel de Allende, Guanajato
- Guanajato City, Guanajato
- Querétaro City, Querétaro
- Las Estacas, Morelos (Huge natural park where you can swim and picnic)
- Valle de Bravo, State of Mexico (On the side of a lake, natural landmarks including waterfalls and a mirador)

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- Nevado de Toluca, State of Mexico (Volcano in a national park, Mexico's fourth highest peak and you can hike to the top)
- Valladolid, Yucatán (Cute colonial city from which you can visit the numerous surrounding cenotes and the pink lakes/Las Coloradas)
- Chichen Itza, Yucatán (Mayan Pyramid ruins)
- Coba Ruins, Quintana Roo (Another ancient Mayan city)
- Bacalar, Quintana Roo
- Isla Holbox, Quintana Roo (You have to take a boat trip to swim with the Whale Sharks!)
- Tulum, Quintana Roo
- Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca
- Oaxaca City, Oaxaca (Best city in Mexico – as well as being a UNESCO World Heritage Site it is a hub of socio justice and political activism, filled with street art, community collectives and iconic food)
- Baja California beaches
- Copper Canyon, Chihuahua
- San Luis Potosi (Waterfalls, archaeological sites and protected natural sites)
- Las Pozas, Xilitla, San Luis Potosi (Surrealist exhibit in the rainforest)
- Puerto Vallarta (Gay beach capital of Mexico!!)
- Tuxpan Beach, Veracruz
- Puebla City, Puebla (Stunning colonial city)
- Cholula, Puebla (Church on hill, volcano and ruins – there's a tourist train from Puebla!)
- Tolantongo, Hidalgo (Hot springs and caves in a valley of cacti)
- Monterrey, Nuevo León
- State of Durango (Desert, mountains, thick forests)
- Rebel Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities, Chiapas