

ITAM, Mexico City

BA History and Politics

Firstly, I would encourage anyone reading this to DEFINITELY do an exchange, and can honestly tell you that Mexico City will be one of the better choices out there for you to go on. I could not imagine getting my degree without having had this amazing opportunity.

Mexico is an incredible city and, being one of the largest in the world, it never sleeps. With around 30 million people in the greater area, Mexico City offers practically anything an exchange student could want. It is culturally diverse and offers you the chance to do something completely new every weekend. I personally went to Mexico with practically no Spanish, but was able to have an incredible time... so do not let language barriers prevent you from going!

However despite the great semester I had, I did struggle with the pollution in Mexico City at times. But this was not a major issue at all, and was just another incentive to go and explore other places in Mexico!

Mexico City is also at a very high altitude, so don't worry if you find yourself out of breathe for the first few weeks!

The University, ITAM:

ITAM is pretty small university with a nice campus, and is located in a safe part of Mexico City. The University is different from Otago in that it is much more interactive, you are expected to go to almost all of your lectures and get involved in discussions... they are more like tutorials. But, the exams are a lot more casual! And the teachers are pretty understanding of exchange students and how we will be travelling around a wee bit... so I think if you are up front, most teachers will be fine with you missing a lesson here or there! For ITAM I would also advise you to take more papers than you need, as it is really easy to drop papers but almost impossible to change. I would also suggest you take any class with Alexandra that you can! She is THE BEST lecturer in ITAM, super chill and really interesting.

Accommodation:

Most exchange students live close to ITAM in Hidalgo 26, Hidalgo 92 or Alpina 11. These are all great options, as they are super close to ITAM and you can walk to lectures every day without having to worry about traffic. Hidalgo 26 and 92 are the more relaxed flats, I was in 92 and loved the balance between exchange students and Mexicans in the flat! 26 is generally made up of all exchange students and both of these flats party together all the time. Alpina 11 is much stricter with hours you can get in at and guests, but still seemed like a good option to me.

All of these are also close to a local market with super cheap produce!

I paid about \$105 NZ per week for my accommodation, which included internet, electricity as well as having a live in maid at the flat to help with the cleaning. Really good value, and I would definitely recommend Hidalgo 92 to anyone!

Weather:

I was in Mexico for their winter... but winter in Mexico is a far cry from what we have here in Dunedin. I would honestly just pack a hoodie or two, because it gets a bit chilly at night with Mexico being so high up! But the days are still really warm, and when it turns to summer you will be glad you did not waste space packing heaps of big clothes!

Cost/Living:

The general cost of living in Mexico City is much cheaper in Mexico City than in Dunedin, trips to the local market will have you sorted. Street food is also a great way to experience local cuisine without breaking the wallet, but I would definitely recommend you eat at places with running water so you know they clean their equipment! In saying that, once you build up a wee bit of a stomach for the local germs... Do not hesitate to get whatever looks great! Because Mexican food is amazing, and a wee bit of food poisoning every now and again is all part of the South American Fun!

Safety:

The reputation for safety in Mexico is not too good, but I found that Mexico City is generally pretty safe! You do have to be more cautious than in NZ, but I think if you are smart and tend not to flash your money, and mostly travel with other Mexicans then you will be fine. Most of the issues in Mexico are more along the borders in the US, and in some tourist hotspots like Accapulco where the cartels compete for the Drug market. But I went to these places and had a great time, just be a bit more cautious and you will be fine!



Things to do in Mexico!

- Tulum and Holbox, beach areas near to Cancun! I would recommend making time to see these places if you hit Cancun for Spring Break.
- Puerto Escondido, great for a surf trip and chilling on the beach with a chilled coconut!
- Valle de Bravo, awesome place just outside of Mexico City!



- Accapulco, great surfing and club seen! Nearest beach outside of Mexico City. Make sure you go to the Sun Club!
- Xochimilco, spend the day in the sun drinking on boats with your buddies... what could be better?
- Playa Del Carmen, another great beach city close to Cancun!
- Centro Historico, great times to be had... right in the heart of Mexico City!

