



trip information

The following information is for **2014** trips. The dates and trips to specific countries change from year to year depending on interest, the political situation within the countries and the ability of Unbound projects to host an awareness trip. A detailed schedule and additional information will be sent one to two weeks prior to departure in the pre-departure packet.

MERIDA, MEXICO

Trip Dates: Nov. 8-15, 2014

Please register by Sept. 8 to reserve your spot. If you wish to register after this date, contact a trip coordinator at Unbound regarding availability.

Trips are open to anyone, however only Merida project sponsors will have the opportunity to meet their sponsored friends on this trip. Those with sponsored friends served by other projects in Mexico are welcome to contact Unbound to learn about an individual sponsor visit to meet their sponsored friend.

Trip Size: 12-30 participants

Trip Fee: \$500

Includes food, lodging and in-country transportation. Airfare is **not** included.

On your trip to Merida you may do some or all of the following activities:

- Be welcomed by our local staff who will be your hosts for the week, ensuring that your visit is enjoyable
- Spend time with your sponsored friend and possibly the family
- Visit the homes and communities of sponsored friends and their families, where you will learn about their joys and challenges
- Visit a nature preserve or historical Mayan ruins
- Visit communities near Merida as well as a community in the state of Campeche or Quintana Roo

Entry and Exit Requirements

A passport book valid for at least six months beyond the end of your intended stay is required to enter Mexico. U.S. citizens traveling as tourists beyond the border zone or entering Mexico by air must obtain a tourist card, also known as an FM-T, available from Mexican consulates, Mexican border crossing points, Mexican tourism offices, airports within the border zone and most airlines serving Mexico. The tourist card is generally included in the price of a plane ticket for travelers arriving by air and is provided to travelers upon arrival in Mexico. Please note that travelers not in possession of their tourist card at the point of exit from Mexico may face a fine from Mexican Immigration. *All fees are subject to change.* While in Mexico, travelers should carry their passport or a photocopy of it at all times. Participants who will be traveling with a minor should contact a trip coordinator at Unbound for additional information.

Airport and Travel Arrangements

Make your airline arrangements only after your registration is confirmed and you receive the trip coordinator's written instructions for scheduling your flight. In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to research airfares with a travel agent, the airlines or via the Internet. The Florida-based agency, Vista Travel, may be contacted regarding airfare at (800) 537-5066. This agency is familiar with our programs and schedules.

All trip participants arrive at the **Merida International Airport (MID)** on Nov. 8 and depart from the same airport on Nov. 15. **Unbound's local staff will meet all travelers at the airport who arrive on the scheduled arrival day. Do not accept offers of transportation from anyone other than the Unbound team.**



Accommodations and Food

All trip participants will stay in simple accommodations in Merida, usually in a hotel. The group will make day trips from Merida to nearby areas, as well as an overnight trip to another community on the Yucatan peninsula. Private rooms for married couples and families are available. Individuals will be assigned a roommate. Running water for showers is readily available, but it may not be heated. **Tap water is unsafe for drinking.** Instead, the project will provide bottled water. Alcoholic beverages are not included in the trip fee.

Participants will eat simple meals that reflect the local cuisine. All food is prepared with purified water. All meals will be eaten with the group. Do not purchase food from street vendors. Meals are often served at a later hour than most Americans are accustomed to eating. We recommend bringing snacks such as dried fruit and nut mixes, raisins, granola bars, etc., as you may want something to eat between scheduled meals.

No electrical converters or adapters are necessary. The electrical current in Mexico is 127V, within the same range as the voltage in the U.S., and the shape of the plugs is the same.

Climate

In Merida, the temperatures in November average between 70 and 90 degrees with average humidity levels near 75 percent. Participants should be aware that minor tremors may occur. The group will travel along winding roads, which can cause motion sickness.

Health/Medical Preparations

Contact your medical doctor or local health department for immunization recommendations based on your health history. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/travel has country specific recommendations regarding immunizations. You may also contact them by phone at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). Staff members of Unbound are not qualified to offer advice on immunizations.

You should also consult with your medical insurance company prior to traveling to confirm whether your policy applies in a foreign country. **If your policy does not cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation, we urge you to consider the purchase of temporary travel insurance.** Many plans, including Medicare, do not cover treatment outside of the U.S. You may find further information on travel insurance through a travel agent or through research on the Internet.

Currency Exchange and Handling

The local currency is the Mexican **peso** (MXN). Your lodging, food and in-country transportation are included in the trip fee. You should bring additional money for the purchase of snacks and souvenirs. You should not carry bills in denominations greater than \$20 because they may be difficult for local banks or vendors to exchange. Do not bring torn or severely worn currency. You can bring U.S. dollars into the country. You will be provided with an opportunity to exchange money upon arrival either at the airport, at the lodging, or another method. Traveler's checks are not recommended, and ATMs are not readily available.