

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MEXICO 2020

Student Handbook



for

ANAR 155: Study Abroad Ancient Mexico
A UCSD Department of Anthropology Study Abroad Course

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Introduction

Welcome to ANAR 155, Study Abroad: Ancient Mexico! This rather ungainly title describes a UCSD Anthropology course offered over Spring Break 2020. The course consists of an eight-day long trip to Mexico during which we will visit 14 sites and three museums highlighting the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica.

The goals of the course are:

1. To teach students about the history, art, and architecture of ancient Mexico within their actual context;
2. To provide an experiential approach to learning that is not possible in the classroom;
3. To act as a field complement to ANAR 154 (*The Aztecs & their Ancestors*)
4. To introduce students to indigenous and Latin American cultures by interacting with living people;
5. To provide a short, highly intensive course that does not interfere with the school schedule or summer employment needs of students; and
6. To provide an Education Abroad experience that is less expensive and open to students who have program needs that require their presence on campus.

What you are now reading is a Student Handbook designed to answer some of your questions about the course, what we will be doing, where we will be going, how you should get to Mexico, what you should bring, and what my expectations will be as a professor.

Course Outline

ANAR 155 is a Study Abroad program that will be held in Mexico during Spring Break, 2020. During this time, you will learn about the history, art, and architecture of ancient Mexico by visiting cities, pyramids, tombs, and palaces built by the Aztecs, Toltecs, Olmecs, and other indigenous peoples. We also will tour museums that house important collections of art and other artifacts produced by these cultures. If you have taken ANAR 154: *Aztecs & their Ancestors*, this travel course will greatly help you in understanding and contextualizing the lectures you have already heard. Ancient Mexico will come alive for you in a way that is impossible within the classroom. If you have not taken ANAR 154: Don't panic! By the end of this course, you should learn the fundamentals of the history of Precolumbian Mesoamerica and develop a strong appreciation for the accomplishments of these cultures.

A complete Trip Itinerary is available through the Department of Anthropology website. The itinerary mentions the sites and museums that we will visit each day. In this section of the Student Handbook, I discuss such things as our typical daily schedule, the book(s) you should bring and read, and my expectations from you as students.

Daily Schedule: Room, Board, and Activities

Accommodations. While in Mexico we will be sleeping in hotels. We will not be camping. The hotels are included in your course fees. They will not be fancy places, but they certainly will not be dirty flea-bags. According to the Mexican Board of Tourism, they are all three-star hotels. You can expect private bathrooms with running hot/cold water, fresh sheets, and generally well-kept and clean rooms. Most will have air conditioning and others will have fans. Some hotels will have televisions (remember: Mexican tv is in Spanish!), and a few may have swimming pools. In all places, you will share a room with another student, unless you have already paid extra for a single. The names and contact telephone numbers of the hotels are provided in an appendix to this handbook. You should bring a copy of this with you (and have it on your person at all times) and should also leave a copy with your parents, in case there is an emergency at home and they need to contact you.

Typically we will wake up rather early. Most days will begin for us at 6 AM, and a few may begin an hour or so earlier. You will get used to me saying “Time to get in the van!” at an hour when many of us would rather be sleeping. An important note: since this is a course rather than a packaged tour offered by a company, you will be responsible for getting your bags to and from the van. Please do not expect me or our chauffeur to do it for you.

Our day of visiting sites will end when they close, typically at 5 or 6 PM. Some evenings, we may visit museums that are open until 7 or 8 PM. Many days we will leave an archaeological site, drive for an hour or two to a hotel, check in, and then eat dinner. Some days (in Oaxaca and Mexico City) we will stay in the same hotel for multiple nights. On these occasions, you may leave your “night pack” (clothes, most toiletries, etc.) in the hotel. If you are concerned about safety issues, please talk to me or the chauffeur.

Transportation. During the day, we will drive from archaeological site to archaeological site in a hired van. Most of your course fees will be applied to renting the private van, paying our chauffeur, and paying insurance. Our driver will be David Salas, who has worked for me in this capacity since 1998 and is a scrupulously honest and dependable person. He also is a licensed guide and a member of the guide union in Mexico, and is licensed and insured to drive a public transportation vehicle. This is important: it would be illegal to run the course in Mexico without a licensed guide, licensed chauffeur, and licensed public conveyance vehicle. David speaks English and is always happy to learn more. He also is a devoted bird watcher; if you have an interest in ornithology, you should talk to him about it and I am sure he will point out various birds to you. Like most Mexicans, he knows an awful lot about the history of his country (much more than a typical American would know about the U.S.A.). He will be able to answer any question you may have about the colonial, independence, revolutionary, and modern periods of Mexican history. He is very capable, and you may consider him to be a “teaching assistant” for the course.

The private van we will be driving will be clean, new, and well kept. It will have an air conditioner and will seat up to 12 students.

Archaeological Sites and Museums. Entrance to all archaeological sites and museums is provided as part of your course fee. Some museums may have additional charges for the use of a camera, and flash is prohibited in all museums. Tripods are generally forbidden in Mexico. Recently, Mexican law has been changed to allow the filming of video at archaeological sites, but an additional charge is always required at the gate. This charge is

typically about \$ 3 U.S. for each and every site, so it can get expensive. If you wish to shoot video, please keep in mind that you will have to pay this additional fee yourself.

On the way to each site, I will present a general background lecture consisting of information that you should know. Some of the sites are only poorly understood (i.e., archaeological work has been limited to consolidation or reconstruction rather than scientific research, or very little has been published to date), and these formal lectures will be short. My style is very different from that of a “professional” guide. If I do not know something, I will tell you. We will not clap and listen to the echo!

We will tour each site as a loose group. Sometimes you may wish to go off with other students. This is all right, but I will ask you to stay within earshot. One reason is that I will talk about various features, buildings, and works of art that we will see; I do not want you to miss anything important. The size of our group is such that we often will be having conversations about what we see, rather than a more formal guided tour. I promise that I will not rush you by something interesting so that we finish quickly.

Perhaps the most important aspect about the course is this informal setting. You are encouraged—even required!—to ask questions and to participate in discussions about what we see. I very much doubt that you will have another chance as an undergraduate student to engage in so much one-to-one interaction with a professor. One of the goals of the course is to give you this sort of attention as a student.

Food and Beverages. Included in your course fees are breakfasts and lunches. Most often we will have sit down meals in restaurants, but from time to time we will have picnics. David is an excellent cook, and on these days he will prepare something while we visit a site.

We will always bring water with us in the van. You should have some sort of container for carrying it with you, like a Nalgene bottle or small canteen. Most sites will sell soda pop and other beverages, as well as purified water. Most sites will also have bathrooms, although their quality will vary dramatically. Be prepared and bring your own paper!

You should bring enough pocket money with you at all times to buy snacks and drinks (other than “van water”) as you wish. You will be asked to purchase your beverages at meal times; some people seem to drink a lot more expensive beverages than others, and it is unfair to split the cost evenly. A word about alcohol—the drinking age is 18 in Mexico. You will be expected to maintain civil behavior at all times, and drunkenness during the course hours of the day will not be tolerated. Please remember this is a university course and not a party. But I have never had this problem with a class, and I do not expect to this year.

We will share two dinners—on the first and last nights of the course—that are included as part of your course fees. The last night we will have a Farewell Dinner. During the other nights of the course, you will be free to eat wherever you choose. In part, this is to give each of you a chance to experience Mexico as you wish. It also is a chance to give each of us a little “down time” when we are not forced to be together in a big group. It will also allow some of us to save a little money by eating in inexpensive restaurants. Finally, some of us may have dietary needs or requirements that are not easily met during the day. If you have to have your daily Big Mac, pizza, or tofu burger, this is the time to do so. You will need to bring enough money with you, therefore, to pay for five dinners. Please see the section on Money for more details.

A final word about food: *If you have special dietary needs or requirements, it may be difficult to meet them.* In particular, if you keep strictly Kosher or are a Vegan or have certain life-threatening food allergies, you will have to bring your own food for the entire trip. It is

simply impossible to meet these requirements any other way. Please keep this mind when packing.

Grades and Expectations

This is a study abroad course, not a formal lecture-hall course. Moreover, simply by enrolling, each of you has expressed an interest that is far beyond that which is typical for an on-campus course. My expectations of you as a Study Abroad student are therefore quite different from my expectations of classroom students, and the final grades I assign reflect this difference in expectations.

I ask that you participate in discussions, ask questions, and talk. You will be assigned a short and simple textbook (see below), which I will ask you to read. During the course, in addition to taking notes, you are required to keep a daily diary that discusses all your impressions about the sites we see and describes all that you have learned about them. You may choose to illustrate this with drawings or photos. It will be due one week into Spring Quarter. A group assignment will be given on our last full day in Mexico City, and you will make presentations that evening at our Farewell Dinner. There will also will be Final Examine given at 4 PM on the first Monday of Spring Quarter. Your final grade will be based on our conversations, your questions, the diary, the group presentation, and the final exam.

Textbook and Other Books to Bring

There is one required textbook for this course. You should order it through whatever vendor you like. I have chosen it because it is easy to read, inexpensive, and extremely compact. Please buy it and read it before we go, and then re-read it during the course. The textbook is:

Coe, Michael D., and Rex Koontz

2013 Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs. 7th Edition. Thames and Hudson, New York.

Please make sure you have the current edition. Earlier versions are now woefully out of date, incomplete, and inaccurate.

You also may wish to purchase a general guidebook to Mexico. I like the **Lonely Planet** and **Moon Publications** best, but the **Rough Guide** also is good. Guidebooks will help you decide where you want to eat and will help keep you oriented in the cities where we spend the night. Some people may want to bring a compact **Spanish Dictionary** or phrase book.

It is really useful and enjoyable to know where you are and where you are going. To this end, you may wish to buy a fold-up map of Mexico. If you are planning on doing some exploring in Mexico City, a map of the Federal District (as it is called) is essential. If you do not find one at your local independent bookstore, you might want to wait until we get there. Lots of colorful options are available.

Finally, do not forget to bring a notebook and pen. I expect to see everyone taking notes during the lectures.

Planning for the Trip: Documents, Money, Climate, and What to Bring

Passports, Visas, and Tourist Cards

All students are required to have passports. If you are a U.S. citizen and do not have a passport, go to a major U.S. Post Office, bring your birth certificate (the original, not a photocopy), and fill out and mail the required forms. Be prepared to enclose payment, and make sure that you apply far enough ahead of time to get the passport back from the U.S. Passport Office. You should start this process now.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you should check with the Mexican consulate to find out if you require a visa. Please get your visas before the trip begins!

Although many students have undoubtedly been to Tijuana or elsewhere in Baja California, you may not be aware that this region has a special temporary immigration status that is different from that of the Mexican “mainland.” All tourists traveling to the rest of Mexico are required to have a Tourist Card (called FMT). You get this by filling out a short one-page form when you enter the country. When you pass through Mexican immigration, they will ask for how many days you require. Say something like “one month,” “30 days,” or even “180 days.” Place the Tourist Card and place it in your passport. Do not lose it; you will need the Tourist Card when you leave Mexico.

If you fly to Mexico from the U.S.A., you probably will be given a Tourist Card to fill out on the airplane. Otherwise, you will receive one at Mexican Immigration.

Some students may opt to fly out of Tijuana rather than San Diego or LAX. This is fine, but *make sure you fill out your Tourist Card before you get on the plane.* If you forget, you may be in considerable trouble when we leave Mexico. Mexico—like the U.S.A.—is not fond of illegal immigrants in their territories, and can be especially angry at the hypocrisy of Americans who violate their own immigration laws.

Money

The Mexican currency is the Peso. Currently, there are about 18 Pesos to the U.S. dollar. Except in very touristy zones, you may find it difficult to spend U.S. dollars in Mexico.

You should bring enough money for dinners, snacks, and souvenirs for your trip. The best way to bring money is to divide it between a relatively small amount of U.S. cash (no more than about \$200 U.S.) and a bank ATM card. Please do *not* bring travellers’ checks!

ATMs: Your Friend in Mexico. Perhaps the greatest change that has made travel easier for tourists is the installation of ATMs (called *Cajeros Automaticos*) throughout the country. ATMs are open all night and are as safe as in the U.S.A. If you lose your bankcard, it is no big deal. Your card cannot be used without your PIN, and we can call your family and ask them to cancel the card. The maximum you can withdraw in a day is about \$3000 Pesos.

Credit Cards. Visa and Mastercard are also accepted in most city shops and fancier restaurants. If you plan on using a credit card, you should call your company ahead of time and notify them of your dates of travel. If not, the card may be automatically rejected when you try to use it.

Travellers' Checks: Don't Leave Home with Them! Travellers' checks are *not* recommended, and are largely a vestigial thing of the past like your appendix or tailbone. They can be cashed at *Casas de Cambio* (see below), some hotels, and banks. But you may get a bad rate of exchange and—particularly at a bank—you may have to stand in line for an hour. We will not be able to make special trips to banks in the middle of the day to change checks for you. If you still want to bring travellers' checks, just realize that you may not be able to cash them. Think of them as emergency backup.

Casas de Cambio (*Wechsel*, Foreign Cash Exchange). Most major Mexican cities have special licensed money exchange booths. Some are open late at night. You can exchange U.S. cash or travellers' checks at them. They are safe.

Do *not* exchange money or travelers' checks with people in the street. Be aware that this is illegal, and almost always there is some sort of scam going on (e.g., you agree on a rate, sign the travellers' check, and then the person changes the rate on you).

The Big Question: How Much Should I Bring? The amount of money (cash, ATM cards, credit cards) you bring is up to you. One student I had brought only \$50 U.S. for two weeks and did not use it up. Another student brought \$500 and spent it all on souvenirs and tchatchkies during the first two days! Here are some tips that might help you plan.

Food. First, remember that you will be paying for five dinners. If you want to “do the trip on the cheap,” I would set aside about \$10 for each night or a total of \$50. This should be sufficient to buy you a fairly large supper and beverage. If you are a big eater, bring twice as much. Keep in mind that food is cheap, but alcohol is not. A full meal might cost the same as two beers or a glass of wine. Also bring a sufficient amount of money for daily snacks and soda pop. I would guess that \$3/day is sufficient for snacks.

Souvenirs. Mexico has a full range of touristic goodies from cheap, cheesy knickknacks to solid gold copies of the Aztec Calendar Stone. The important thing to do is to shop wisely. Do not spend your wad on the first ceremonial dagger you see. Do not be afraid to haggle, particularly if you are buying from a street vendor. In that context, haggling is expected. Finally, do not buy so much junk that it fills up the van!

Souvenir buying is really a personal matter. You may be the sort who prefers to take pictures and buy a couple of postcards. You may need to buy something for everyone you know at home. As a very general estimate, I would say that unless you are buying silver or gold jewelry in Mexico, \$100 should be enough.

Telephone Calls. Calling home is easy but can be expensive. *Be careful with your cell phone.* Yes, they do work in Mexico, but you may be charged horrific international roving fees. Even text messages can be expensive, although less so. If you absolutely cannot live without your phone, call your company ahead of time to find out how much it will cost you. Consider getting a texting plan. Otherwise, each text could cost you a dollar.

Tip for the Driver. A final cost that I ask you to consider is a tip for the driver. In Mexico, the general rate is about \$3 U.S. per person per day, or about \$27 U.S. for each of you. This is not mandatory, but I do ask you to consider it and please set it aside.

Geography and Climate of Mexico

Mexico is a country of great extremes, from mountains with year-round snow to hot tropical rainforests, to deserts. On this trip, we will spend almost all of our time in temperate

mountainous regions. Expect lows in the 50s and highs in the 70s. We probably will not encounter heavy rains, but a light drizzle is possible.

Planning for the Trip, Part I—What to Wear

Because we will be outside in rural areas much of the time, your clothes should protect you from the sun, rain, and brambles. We also will be traveling in indigenous regions, where people have some traditional ideas about what constitutes appropriate dress for men and women. If you want to be treated with respect and not be stared at, you should dress respectfully.

The following clothing suggestions are based on what *I think* will meet your needs:

- (1) Light weight and durable long pants (two or three pairs, including something warm like jeans);
- (2) Both short- and long-sleeve shirts (three or four total for the trip);
- (3) Light weight hiking boots;
- (4) Alternate closed-toe footwear for the evenings and days when your boots are wet;
- (5) A hat or cap you can wear in sun or rain;
- (6) Sun glasses;
- (7) Something fairly nice or dressy for evenings in the city;
- (8) A bathing suit for hotel pools, if you wish.
- (9) A warm sweater, sweatshirt, or light jacket. It will be cold at night and some days!

Some of you may wish to go out in the evenings, and you should be aware that many places have dress codes, particularly for men. Shorts are never appropriate for “clubbing,” and jeans might not be acceptable.

A Tip on Packing. Please *limit your bags to two*: a regular sized backpack, duffle bag, or suitcase for access in the evenings/nights/mornings, and a daypack or handbag for the day. Just two bags, please! If you bring more, there will be less room for everyone else.

Laundry. We will not have time to do a laundry run. Please try to pack for the entire trip. If you want to be a real pro traveller, bring fewer clothes and some Woolite. You can wash your ginchers and socks in your hotel room.

Planning for the Trip, Part II—What Else to Bring

You should bring the course textbook, one or two other suggested books (see above) a camera, and all personal items and medications you need. Also, do not forget a notebook and a pen! Here is a list of things that are suggested:

- (1) All medications you require on a daily basis;
- (2) Personal toiletries and hygienic items;
- (3) Camera and digital cards, as well as charger or spare batteries;
- (4) Notebook and pen;
- (5) YOUR PASSPORT, which should be with you at all times;
- (6) Sunscreen;
- (7) Bugspray;

- (8) A small canteen or water bottle;
- (9) Textbook and one or two other books (see above);
- (10) A map;
- (11) Sufficient money for small purchases (see above);
- (12) A personal music device for chilling in the van;
- (13) A roll of toilet paper to share;
- (14) A big bottle of Pepto Bismol or the equivalent and Imodium;
- (15) THIS HANDBOOK.
- (16) A book to write your your diary in

Most of these items should go in your “Day Pack,” which will be available throughout the day. Some of your medications, toiletries, and hygienic items—as well as money or credit cards well stashed—can go in your “Night Bag,” which will be locked up in the back of the van during the day.

What Not to Bring: Drugs and Alcohol

Please understand that when the van is searched (and there could be check points) and someone has illegal substances, we *all* will go to jail. The van will be confiscated by the government, and expenses will be enormous. You have been asked to sign a liability waiver that includes, in part, a statement that you agree to keep to the standards of a Drug Free Workplace. The only thing worse than a Mexican jail is a U.S. Federal Penitentiary, where you could land if caught by U.S. Customs.

Please respect the laws of Mexico and the U.S.A., and understand that by engaging in illegal activities, you would be putting all of us in jeopardy.

Getting to Mexico

The course officially begins when you are met at the airport in Oaxaca City. We will meet you at the airport and take you to the hotel. The course officially ends with a drop off at the Mexico City airport. If you choose to leave Mexico later than this, you will be on your own from when we check out of our hotel on that morning. Everyone will need to purchase *two* airplane tickets:

- (1) A round trip ticket from the U.S.A. to Mexico City;
- (2) A one-way ticket from Mexico City to Oaxaca City.

The point here is that we are starting in Oaxaca and ending in Mexico City. To do this, you almost certainly will have to fly through Mexico City. Some things to pay special attention to:

Give yourself at least two hours to change flights in Mexico City. This is a very large and complicated airport, and it is very easy to miss a flight. Do not cut it close. After clearing customs (which you may or may not have to do in Mexico City), you may have to recheck your

bag. Next, go to the Domestic Departures area. It is often the case that gate assignments are not made until 15 minutes before departure. Have your ticket ready to show someone, and make sure to ask for help. This is quite tricky; be on your toes!

In order to ensure that we meet you at the airport in Oaxaca, please make sure that you both e-mail me and send me a letter by U.S. postage with your entire flight plans (all legs and all flights, not just your arrival times! Please include times, departure and arrival cities, and flight numbers). We need your entire itinerary to track you down in case you are not on your flight. Do not just send me partial information. This is critically important!

Make sure you have David Salas' cell phone number available so you can call if there is a problem. I will send out a list of phone numbers to everyone before the course. David Salas and I have never missed a student at the airport. But if, for some reason, you do not find us at the airport, please wait for us. We will not forget you! You should call David if we are not at the airport. If you are unable to make a connecting flight and are stuck either in Mexico City or somewhere in the U.S., you also should call David on his cell phone.

Health

If you are suffering from any chronic health problems or have special needs for accommodation (including dietary requirements or preferences), you should have already made these clear in the application and health form. The combination of walking, hot sun, high altitudes, climbing pyramids, and a busy schedule will take its toll on you by the end of the course. For this reason, you should be aware of your health situation and take steps to maintain your health during the two weeks of the course.

Please also understand that Mexico does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Sadly, there simply are no facilities or special accommodations available in Mexico.

Do What Your Doctor Says!

I am an archaeologist, not a medical doctor. You should consult your doctor and do whatever s/he says about malaria prophylactics, immunizations, and other preventative measures. Hepatitis A is always a concern everywhere in the world, and it is a good idea to be inoculated. You should always have a tetanus booster on a regular basis.

We will be at high altitudes the entire trip, in areas where there is *no malaria*. Moreover, we will be in highland Mexico during cold, dry months, and there will be very few (if any) mosquitos. Tell your doctor this. We will be well above 1000 m above sea level the entire trip, and there is never any malaria at this altitude.

Health & Travel Insurance

You must have health insurance to participate on this trip. You must provide evidence of such insurance before participation, so be sure to bring your documentation along. It is important to be able to pay for any medical treatment in advance, because most insurance policies are on a claim-back basis. I recommend that you have a credit card you can use to draw

on funds if necessary. You should also find out if your insurance company has a toll-free hotline number in case of severe emergencies, and keep this with your insurance documents.

I will register all of you for free UCSD travel insurance. This is required and you have already paid for it through your annual tuition. I suggest that you go to the UCSD Travel webpage and closely read the description of the policy. This includes emergency evacuation and repatriation. If you choose, you may purchase additional insurance or some may already be included in your health plan. Contact your provider to find out. You also might consider purchasing travel insurance that covers the cost of your airplane ticket. If you have to cancel at the last minute, this may give you a partial or full refund.

Common Health Problems to Watch out for

Dehydration. You will be traveling in a very safe and controlled environment. Your greatest health worry should be hydration. It is important to drink above normal quantities of fluids. I recommend that each student drink at least 2 liters of water per day beyond normal beverages at meals. Again, we will always have potable water in the van. Dehydration can be caused by a number of factors: too much sun, too much exercise, too much alcohol, and—especially—a stomach bug. It is quite likely that some of us will suffer from a minor stomach ailment while in Mexico. No matter how you get a stomach bug, your danger is dehydration. If you do not hydrate yourself, your condition may get much worse quickly.

If you are suffering from dehydration, David and I will monitor your intake of fluids. We probably will give you rehydration fluids (such as Pedialyte) to drink. You may not want to do so, but it is important to drink enough water. Nothing will spoil your trip faster than dehydration. If you require further medication, such as antibiotics for a bad stomach, we will see that you get it.

Please note that it is important that you do not resist our suggestions for rehydrating or getting quick medical treatment. Because of the pace of the course, we cannot wait a few days in a hotel for you to get better on your own schedule. We cannot make the entire group wait for you to get over a stomach problem. If your condition deteriorates to a point where you are no longer able to participate, we will make sure to get you to an airport so that you can return safely home.

How to Avoid *Turista* (Travellers' Stomach Bug). Travellers anywhere in the world often get stomach bugs. When I have been in Mexico for a long time, I frequently get sick when I return to the U.S.A. Often, it is simply a matter of your system getting accustomed to the local micro-flora and -fauna.

Once upon a time, Mexico was famous for “Montezuma’s Revenge,” which is locally called *turista*. Nowadays, this reputation is—for the most part—unjustified. But there are a few “Does and Don’ts” that apply for both visiting tourists and local residents.

First, do not drink water from the tap. Use “Van Water,” water from coolers, bottled water, and water provided by hotels in pitchers. This is purified and probably safer than the water you drink out of the tap at home.

Second, think before ingesting ice. If you are in a sit-down restaurant, the ice is almost certainly made from purified water. Mexican restaurants are very careful about this. But if you are on the street buying from a street vendor, who knows where the ice comes from?

Third, avoid “street meat,” veggies, fruits, and ice cream sold on the street. Food sold by street vendors can be delicious, but hygiene is generally poor. The food may have been outside

without refrigeration for many hours. Moreover, the vendors may not be clean and harbor germs on their hands. Finally, some beverages (such as pozole or atole) are served in vessels that may only get a cursory rinse between customers. If you must eat street food, try breads, nuts and the like, but avoid meats, fruits and veggies (which are so tempting), and raw seafood.

Fourth, make sure you wash your hands and face frequently, particularly before eating. Soap kills an awful lot, even if you are washing with tap water. *Most of the germs you ingest come from your hands, not from your food.*

Fifth, you may consider brushing your teeth with purified water rather than tap water. I do not do this, but my gut is somewhat more accustomed to Mexican bugs.

Sixth, be careful with raw fruits and vegetables. Fresh produce is one of the great joys of Latin America, but uncooked items can carry bacteria. Specifically, think about whether or not the item has absorbed a lot of water (like lettuce or strawberries) or is not protected by a thick skin or rind (again, like strawberries). Avocados and other thick-skinned fruit are fine. The best restaurants will have their own sources of clean fruits and vegetables, but cheaper street vendors may not. Often, such vegetables are washed in road- or street-runoff water.

How to Get over *Turista*. The best medicine is prevention. The next best is avoiding alcohol, drinking a lot of clean water, and getting a good night's rest. Your third defense is good old **Pepto Bismol**. Liquid works much better than the pills. This is a harmless natural product that is much better for you in the long run than antibiotics. You can drink a whole bottle a day, and you will have no long- or short-term ill effects. People often hate Pepto because of the taste. But it is really good for getting rid of both the symptoms and the cause of *turista*. And remember—stay hydrated! Everyone should bring a bottle of Pepto and should use it freely.

The next step is **Imodium** or Lomotil. Imodium is the more-mild of the two. Both will quickly and effectively relieve your symptoms but do little to kill the bug (Lomotil, an opiate, is particularly effective for bad cramps because it completely stops peristalsis). Your fifth line of defense is antibiotics. If you have a fever—often a sign of acute food poisoning—David will almost certainly insist that you take antibiotics. He knows what kind of over-the-counter medication (or injection) is necessary and will get it for you. Food poisoning is rotten, and generally hits you within four to six hours of the meal in which you ingested the bug. It should pass in 24-48 hours, but will leave you shaky and quite weak, and relapses are possible. Antibiotics will greatly increase the rate of healing. If you need a doctor or medic, we will take you to one.

Sunburn. Perhaps the most common problem will be sunburn. Make sure you have sunscreen and that you use it. Also, you may wish to wear a hat outdoors.

Heat Rash. People with poor circulation may develop heat rash on their legs, particularly above the ankle and to the knee. Mild heat rash is expressed by small, itchy blisters. You probably will think you have bug bites. More serious cases will look like bad bruises with very tender red, purple, or black running sores. Try to keep your feet elevated, and do not scratch!

Bug Bites. For the most part, we will be at high altitude and mosquitos and other bugs will not be a problem.

Other Considerations. Please wear closed-toe shoes at all times because there are lots of rusty metal objects lying around and it is easy to stub your toe at the ruins.

As in any place, women cannot take their safety for granted. It is wise, therefore, to know the rules, and here are a few well-tested guidelines. If you are being pestered by someone, don't talk to them. It is often useful to pretend you do not understand Spanish, even if you do.

Women should always travel with a friend and if possible with a male companion. In many rural and indigenous parts of Mexico, foreign women are treated as “honorary men,” that is, you can get away with lots of things that local women would never try. It is, however, always wise to be conservative and respectful in your behavior. Idle chats with strange men, particularly drunks, is often taken as a sign of your interest in them (invariably sexual), and should be avoided. If you are harassed (unlikely, but it can happen), it is useful to avoid speaking and simply walk away and ignore the person concerned. In most situations, the presence of other women is the safest retreat. Try not to go into a cantina where the only patrons are men. These places can be very uncomfortable for both sexes, and have just one purpose: getting alcoholics falling-down drunk. Please do not go to these places!

Special care should be taken in Mexico City. Please do not go out except in a significant group of four or more people. Late at night, walking back from a club is a good way to get robbed. I suggest a hotel taxi. There are “safety rules” about taxis: taxis that are based at the hotel are the safest. You also can rely on taxis provided by restaurants. But do not simply flag down a passing taxi in Mexico City as you might in the USA. Ask someone to call you one instead.

Southern Californians often have a particularly bad and incorrect impression that all of Mexico is dangerous and full of narcos and gangs. This simply is not true. There are parts of Mexico that are dangerous, especially in the border region and in states like Michoacan and Guerrero. But you will be very far from all of them. We do not travel to areas that are not safe for tourists.

Despite these caveats, you should not let fear ruin your experience of Mexico. Even Mexico City is safe compared to many cities in the USA: St. Louis, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C. are *much* more dangerous! The vast majority of Mexicans are very friendly, and typically they are much more welcoming of foreigners than their American counterparts. Many people enjoy being hosts and sharing their country with guests—an attitude that is fairly uncommon in the U.S.A.

When you return to the U.S.A. and pass a Mexican in the street, you should ask yourself why we do not treat them with the same sense of courtesy and hospitality that you will experience in Mexico!