



OSEA FAQ Sheet on Safety, Medical Assistance, and Security

FAQ: Is it safe to live and work among the Maya

There are more than six million Maya peoples living throughout the countries of Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, México, the United States and Canada. It is important to remember that the Maya in each of these nations have their own very different social, cultural, historical, political, and economic particularities and situations. The Maya of Yucatan are one the group of Maya whose proper name is Maya. Other Mayas use their specific social and linguistic name as their first identity, e.g., Quiche. This area of Yucatán has not had any periods of violence since the mid 19th century Caste War ended.

The culture, society, history, and politics of the Maya of Yucatán is quite unlike both the country of Guatemala and the Mexican state of Chiapas where there are also Maya peoples living under conditions of greater economic impoverishment. The Maya of Yucatán live in political and economic contexts that differ dramatically from Maya in other parts of the world due in part to the well-developed tourism industry of Merida, Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Tulum region. Not only are the Maya better off economically (thus no political unrest here), but tourism combined with Maya and Yucatecan hospitality create an inviting, open culture of security, safety, and warmth for visitors and tourists of all types

FAQ: Is it safe to live, work and travel in Yucatán?

Yucatán is a part the region known as "Southern" or "Southeastern México". However Yucatán is quite unlike the areas of Oaxaca and Chiapas where there have been travel warnings. It is also completely different than those parts of Northern and Central México that have been prone to violence due to drug trafficking. Over 4 million international tourists visit the Yucatán Peninsula every year. The Mexican government takes important steps to ensure that this very important tourism region is safe and secure for international visitors.. The Yucatecos and Maya are renown in Mexico for being peaceful, non-violent/non-aggressive, chivalrous, warm, and friendly.

[Please review Dr. Castañeda's "White Paper on Safety in Yucatán and México for Educational Tourism and Travel"](#)

FAQ: Is it safe to be a student in Pisté and Mérida?

The Yucatán peninsula is among the safest places to be for any person of any age, sex/gender, nationality or religion: It is a major international tourist region that receives more than 4 million tourists a year from all over the world. Pisté and Mérida are two of the most important tourist destinations in the state of Yucatán. People live and work with foreigners of all nationalities and have the greatest respect for visitors of all types, including students. There have never been any international or even USA political warnings or restrictions to tourists visiting Yucatán. There is a high volume of expats and foreign students who feel safe and help to foster safety in Mérida. It is safe for women to walk around at night in the tourist areas of Mérida. Previous OSEA students have noted that they see adolescent children and girls walking around at night in their neighborhoods and in the center of town in Pisté, a community of 7,000 persons.

Print Name of Participant or Parent/Guardian

Signature

Date



FAQ: What health precautions should I take or what health issues should I be concerned with?

There are no extra-ordinary health issues to be concerned about other than your own pre-existing health concerns. Unlike other parts of Latin and Central America, travelers do not need to worry about taking precautionary medicines to prevent any number of illnesses such as malaria. The health conditions of Yucatán are good enough to attract more than 4 million tourists a year. Health and stomach problems are typically caused by sun intoxication, dehydration, and improper diet. The county, state and federal government have been very concerned with eliminating sources of dengue in cities and rural areas. Thus the state health agency has monthly visit to every rural community to exterminate mosquito breeding areas. The county government of Pisté sprays the streets once a week to eliminate mosquitos.

FAQ: Do students get sick?

Students, like other local persons, do get sick. Most sickness is caused by a combination of dehydration and over exposure to the sun in combination with poor dietary choices. OSEA staff strives to ensure that students take care of themselves in the manner appropriate for the climate. As in any study abroad program, students will need to adapt to the local diet. Often medical doctors prescribe lmodium for stomach problems—unfortunately this medicine is detrimental to adaptation to diet and to the maintenance of normal digestion and elimination of waste.

OSEA participants need to consume lots of water, but not just water. Juices and pop drinks are also important in the Yucatán climate because they provide sugars and sodium that the body needs. It is crucial that participants eat the local diet including hot chile, lemon juice on most foods, not just the beans and tortillas. The chile, lemon, tomato are important sources of vitamin C and other nutrients that help the body maintain strength and health in the hot humidity.

FAQ: How do students get medical attention while at OSEA?

There are six clinics in the community of Pisté where OSEA is based. Four are private and two are public. In case of student illness, OSEA staff accompanies the participant to one of these clinics. The visit with a private doctor at their clinic will be \$100-200 pesos (13 pesos to US\$) plus the cost of any medications, which could range from 100 to 600 pesos. Major hospitals and private medical practices are an hour and thirty minutes away in Mérida. Ambulance service is available in Pisté. Further, in cases of extreme medical emergencies, there is an airport for emergency landing in Pisté and there are three international airports within relatively close distance. The Chichén Itzá airport is 30 minutes away from Pisté, the Mérida airport (MID) is less than two hours away from Pisté, and the Cancun airport is within three hour drive.

FAQ: Who pays for the medicines and medical attention that students may need in case of illness.

Students and any other participant in OSEA are in all cases financially responsible for securing their own health insurance and paying for their on-site health care. This includes any doctor consultations, medicine, treatment, and emergency transportation. All payments are made directly by students to any health provider. Students are responsible to collect and save any receipts they require for insurance or tax purposes. Please review the website for additional information about maintaining your health while in the field. This can be found at http://www.osea-cite.org/resources/re_travelinfo_health.php