

2012

GUIDE **OF**
 **YUCATAN**
LIVING

An English-language
Resource for Merida and
the Yucatan Peninsula

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GUIDE TO YUCATAN LIVING

An English-language Resource
for Merida and the Yucatan Peninsula

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE GUIDE TO YUCATAN LIVING

Welcome to the first printing of the **Guide to Yucatan Living**, a guide to services and products in Yucatan for English-speaking residents. As the producers of three successful Yucatan websites for English-speaking residents, we have recognized the need for this guide for a long time. Finally, this year, we had the resources and time to publish what we hope is a useful guide for all.

This guide attempts to bring the reader a listing of known services and products to fulfill the needs of those of you who live, work or are otherwise deeply interested in life in the Yucatan. Merida is an ever-expanding city, with a quickly growing population of these products and services, so no printed guide will ever be all-encompassing. This guide will allow the reader to have access to service providers who are accustomed to or interested in working with the English-speaking public. The guide cannot guarantee satisfaction with every provider and is not intended to be an endorsement of these providers. It is a guide, a serving suggestion, a gentle assistance to those of you who are making a life for yourself in Yucatan.

Because we believe that life without art is boring, the **Guide to Yucatan Living** also attempts to provide readers with pleasing photographs of life in Yucatan, helpful articles and a user-friendly and eye-pleasing design.

We hope you enjoy the First Edition of the **Guide to Yucatan Living!**

Saludos!

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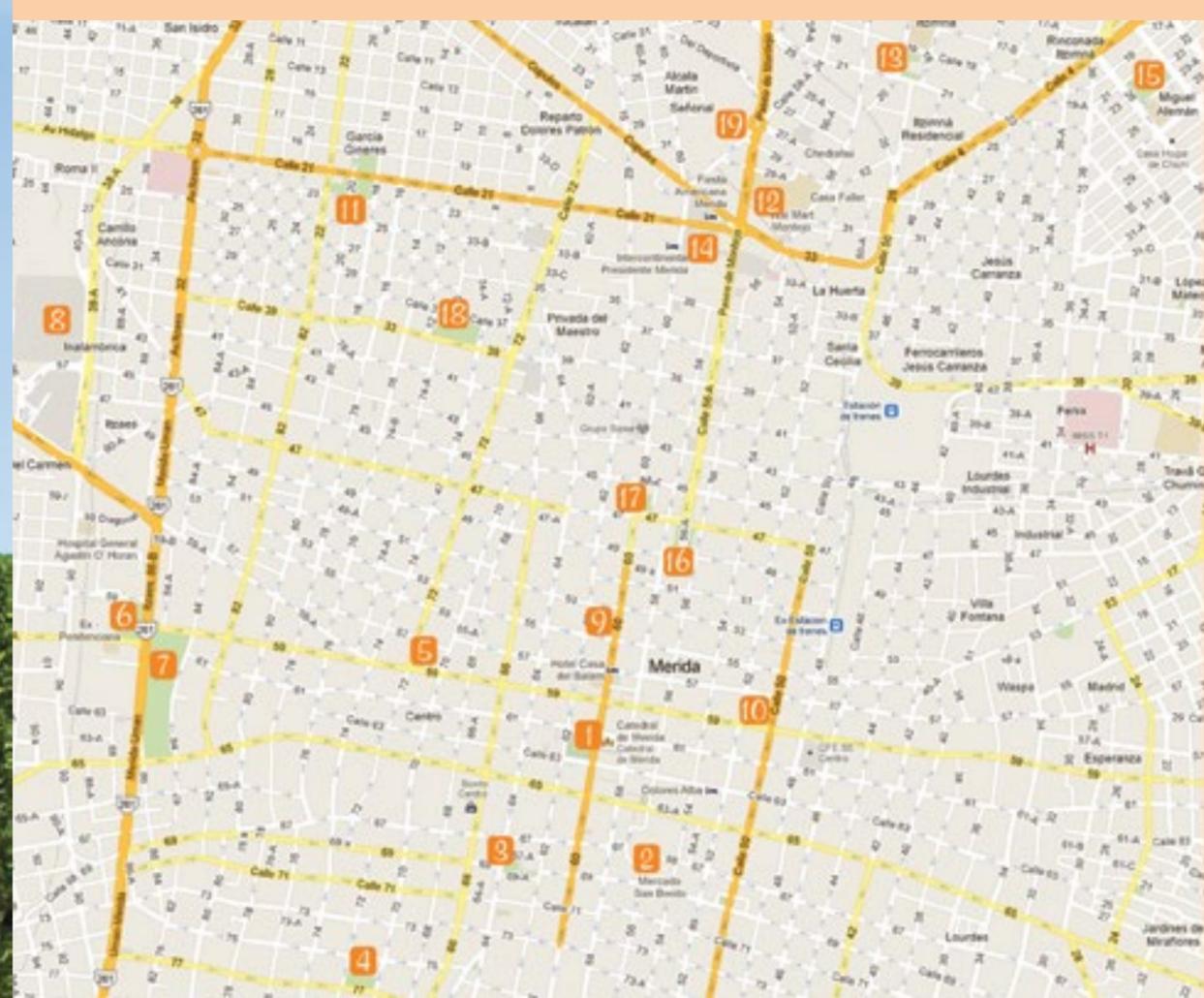
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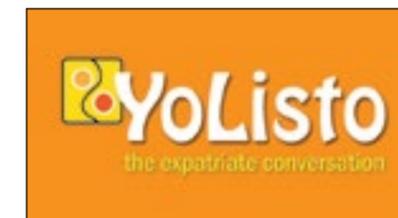


- Merida Centro*
- 1 - Plaza Grande
 - 2 - Central Market
 - 3 - San Juan Park
 - 4 - San Sebastián Park
 - 5 - Santiago Park
 - 6 - Parque de la Paz
 - 7 - Centenario Zoo
 - 8 - Inalámbrica Stadium
 - 9 - Santa Lucía Park
 - 10 - Mejorada Park
 - 11 - Parque de las Américas
 - 12 - WalMart
 - 13 - Itz'inná Park
 - 14 - Hotel Zone
 - 15 - Parque Alemán
 - 16 - Remate
(Southern end of Paseo de Montejo)
 - 17 - Santa Ana Park
 - 18 - Ibérica Park
 - 19 - Flag Monument
(Monumento A la Bandera)

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or view the online version at any of our websites. Thank you!

One moment, you find yourself in the center of a small *pueblo* outside of town. Students dressed in crisp school uniforms ride by down the middle of the street on their bicycles, laughing and calling to each other in the hot midday sun. There is not another car in sight. In the distance, a 16th Century church rises against the bright blue sky. You wonder "Where am I?".

Then, there's the far-off stare of a *huipile*-clad woman in the streets of the *mercado*, her dark hair bound and coiled behind her, children at her side. As if she wonders what she is doing in this crowded market with cars and fumes and cell phones. Where have all the *chicle* hunters gone?

Another time, you are struck by the unaffected smile of a city worker as you walk by. He is doing his job, sweeping trash in the street. You aren't young or beautiful. You smile, he smiles and you both say *Buenos Días* because that is what people do here.

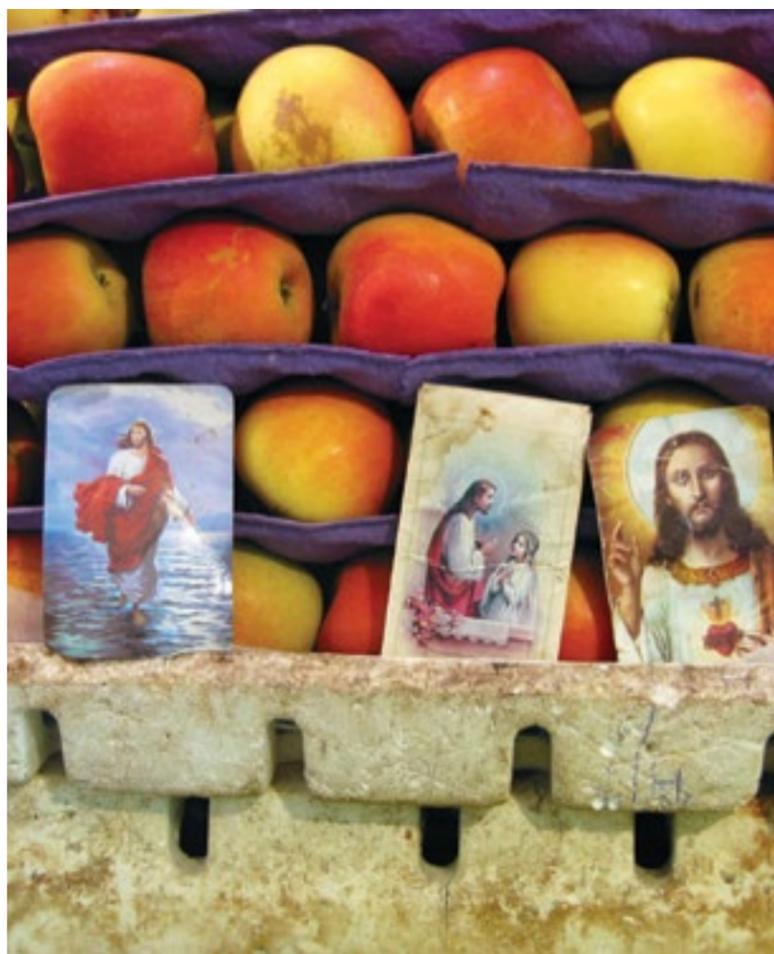
You notice the morning traffic of black crows as they commute in flocks up Paseo Montejo, going north for the day. They swoop straight down the avenue in surges, flying between the trees, like strangely silent, flying businessmen. At dusk, the reverse commute is noisy and raucous, thousands of black-suited birds screeching and reciting the details of their day, ecstatic about the encroaching evening and their nightly party in the trees.

There are those precious Sunday mornings in the *centro*. Not in the *Plaza Grande*, where the crowds gather, but out in the surrounding neighborhoods. Whole blocks with no cars, no people, just the quiet heat of midday, the background cries of boys playing out their soccer dreams in a distant street. Old men rock on old chairs in old doorways, stubbled and bare-chested. Old women sit inside their homes watching televised Catholic mass from Mexico City. Briefly, the silence is broken as a family drives up, unpacks itself from a little car, carries aluminum-covered dishes into a dark doorway.

Then there's the sound of empty coconut shells clapping together when a horse-drawn *calesa* trots by, mixing centuries with uncanny ease.

Or that wonderful Latin-American phenomenon of lovers in the park, when each bench is occupied as if it were a hotel room with a Do Not Disturb sign hung on the door. Lovers mate in full sight, fully clothed. Whispers and smiles swirl around them like honeybees, protecting their intimacy from passers-by. Sometimes, a woman will glance up from her lovers' conversation but though her face is caught by the streetlight, she doesn't see you walking by.

Sometimes, you happen to notice the dripping, tropical crowded undercurrent of *revolución* just after a heavy rain, when you can sense the plants in your garden starting to close in, plotting an overthrow of order with their newly-emboldened viridian chaos.



Or you're driving past a Mayan *pueblo* after sunset, when each small home glows from within, bare lightbulbs or christmas-lit altars casting light out onto the paths. The present recedes like a tide to reveal a timeless place where people visit in the streets and children play quietly, dogs lie down unafraid and women laugh.

Every once in awhile, it's just the pink prick of bougainvillea, the hollow drum of the *ceiba* tree, the swishing miniskirts of palm trees with long legs, the flaming flowers of the *flamboyanes*, and the yellow dripping *lluvia de oro* and its sweet-smelling rain of gold.

And then there's that indescribable high when the red grease slips out from between two ends of the folded *tortilla* and drips onto your hand, just as the almost-sweet spices of *cochinilla* are taken over by the intensity that spreads across your tongue like a *habanero* prairie fire and blossoms into your throat like a bright red hibiscus of pain.

And afterwards the cool, pop-rock elixir that pours out of the sea-green iconic bottle, like foam from a Caribbean wave, quenching the fire that burns from your mouth to the back of your brain. Brief relief, and then the flames surge back, unabated and hissing for more. Why is it that Coca Cola tastes so delicious here?

At times, it's that lazy moment when the day reaches the golden hour, and the sun casts elaborate shadows through the iron *protectores* across your window onto the brightly-colored *mosaico* tile floor.

Or the moment when you sit in Santiago Park, on a park bench painted with one hundred coats of green paint, listening to the birds and church bells chiming, watching a young family on a bench opposite you. The children are making faces at each other while they eat ice cream. And the young parents are just quietly enjoying them.



“And afterwards the cool, pop-rock elixir that pours out of the sea-green iconic bottle, like foam from a Caribbean wave...”

Late one night, you wander down to the *centro* and find the *zócalo* ringed by groups of men, in twos and threes, dressed smartly in their *guayaberas* and carrying old guitars. From around the square, the strains of singing and strumming reaches you and you realize they are all here just to sing. And they have been coming here for decades. Where else could you be but Mérida?

Sometimes the beauty of it just stops you in your tracks. For a moment.





Emergency Numbers

Awhile ago, friends of ours had a medical emergency in the middle of the night and didn't know who to call. We ourselves have needed to report something unusual on the street (in our case, an alarm system that refused to shut down) and didn't know how to contact the police. The number in our *Sección Amarilla* (yellow pages) wasn't correct. And frankly, even when we are not rushed or in a panic, we find the *Sección Amarilla* puzzling at best. When you are hurt or in trouble or just plain annoyed, but you don't know the language, information you may need is a lot harder to find. So Yucatan Living has printed up bookmarks which are available at the Mérida English Library, in vacation rentals, Hotels, B&Bs and in most real estate agency offices. The bookmarks are free, just like the website. Find one and keep it handy in case of an emergency. And of course, if you don't have a bookmark, here they are... just in case!

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066 from land phone or

113 from cell phone

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Evolución (999) 193-0628





Casa de los Mosaicos

Accommodations

The accommodations listed in this Guide have been visited by the staff of this publication and are just a fraction of the quality accommodations that are available in the Merida area and in the state of Yucatan.



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HOTEL HACIENDA MÉRIDA

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HOTEL MARIONETAS

www.hotelmarionetas.com

HOTEL MEDIOMUNDO

www.hotelmediomundo.com

HOTEL VILLA MERIDA

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LOS ARCOS

www.losarcosmerida.com/index.htm

LUZ IN YUCATAN

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HACIENDA PETAC

www.haciendapetac.com

HACIENDA SANTA CRUZ

www.haciendasantacruz.com

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HACIENDA SANTA ROSA

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HACIENDA TEMOZON

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A Typical Maya Ceremony

There are many Maya ceremonies that have been passed down through the generations and are still performed today in the Yucatan. They will vary a little from one Shaman to another but will have many things in common.

The Shaman chooses the center point for the ceremony, opens the energy there, and sets his altar. This often includes four colored items, red in the east, black in the west, white in the north, and yellow in the south. Blue/green can be used for the center (the sky and the earth). Generally we have seen colored cloths used, but candles or other items can also be appropriate. Items on the altar can include things like crystals, flowers, small pots of water, offerings, corn, candles, feathers, and more. The Shaman or Priest burns copal and blesses the altar with its smoke.

The people participating in the ceremony form a circle around the altar and generally they are cleansed with the smoke of the copal before the ceremony begins. They are asked to wear white.

To begin the Shaman will blow the conch shell three times (one each for the underworld, the surface, and the sky) in each of the four cardinal points, then to the Earth and finally to the Sky. If it is a cleansing, the Shaman then moves around the circle, stopping at each person to chant and pass a bundle of herbs dipped in water over their body to cleanse them of any negativity.

There are always offerings to share with the *Aluxes* (the Maya version of elves) and the directions. The copal is kept burning throughout the ceremony. Drums, rattles, and whistles are often used to help raise energy. The prayers and chants are usually in Maya but many Shamans now speak Spanish as well.

When the ceremony is over, the Shaman closes the circle by blowing the shell again in the four directions and the center.

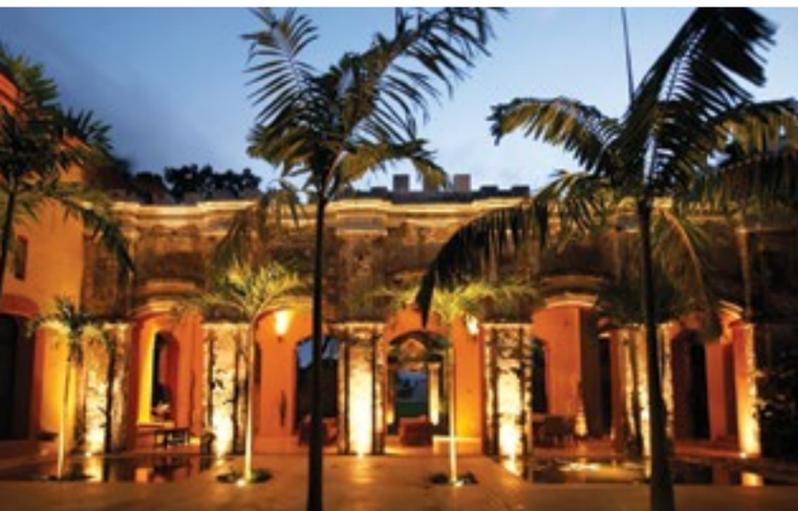
The Maya believe that ceremony creates a personal connection with spirit.

For more information about house blessings by a Maya shaman, contact **Elizabeth Arnott** at www.mayaceremony.webs.com. For more information about Maya ceremonies in general and other types of ceremonies, contact **Trudy Woodcock** at www.casakin.org.



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Architects



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www.arturocampos.com.mx

Arturo Campos is a Yucatan-born architect who does both renovation of colonial homes and new, modern designs. He won the prestigious Mexican VI Biennial Architecture Award and the CEMEX award in 2006 for Casa Cambiante (photos at his website).



MARIO HEREDIA

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Design, Renovations, New Residential, Commercial
www.yucatanliving.com/sponsors/architect-mario-heredia.htm

Mario Heredia is a locally born and raised architect with over 10 years of local experience. His work includes Clínica Mérida, many commercial and residential buildings in Yucatan and Quintana Roo. He specializes in eco-friendly beach residences.

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(999) 926-0018

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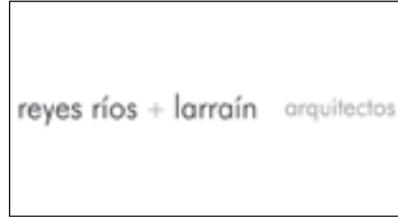
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"Two projects, two houses... we can sum it up in three words: quality, punctuality and honor. We have confidence in their work". Lourdes and Toño Payes. Yucatán Country Club, Mérida, Yucatán, México.

"Has been a pleasure to work with them. They are very professional and have attended to all our requests and requirements in a very friendly and timely manner". Jack and Gerry Maguire. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

*"Two architects who do surprisingly outstanding work. We found them orderly with original ideas, fair and controlled budgets, and a respect for deadlines. Punto Exacto... a great team!!".
Jean Marie Barnabé and Marcela Cravioto. Club de Golf La Ceiba, Mérida, Yucatán, México.*



PUNTO EXACTO ARQUITECTURA



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Many people come to Merida to investigate and invest in the real estate market these days... what's the attraction? The fact that there are everything from haciendas to beachfront homes to high rise condominiums is certainly a draw, but probably the most unique treasure in architecture in the Yucatan is the large selection of old colonial buildings in the historical center, with lovely European architecture, antique floor tiles and high beamed ceilings that can be renovated into truly special homes. There are old colonial buildings in many large cities in Mexico, but many of the best values are found here in Merida.

Typical Yucatecan homes are constructed with stone (if they are more than fifty years old) or a combination of stone and concrete block. The old stone walls, which are a combination of rough-hewn limestone and plaster are called *mampostería*. Most colonial homes in the historic *centro* of the city have walls made from *mampostería* either as exterior walls or throughout the entire building. Concrete block walls are also common in newer buildings. Houses built of red brick or *tabique* (tah-BEE-kay) are rare, and houses built with wood are even more scarce.

The roof of a colonial building, called a *techo* (TAY-cho), is almost always flat, and slightly sloped to provide for rain runoff. Originally, roofs were laid down first with heavy wooden *vigas* (beams), and then covered with tile and concrete. But in the 19th century, iron *vigas* were used.

These were often railroad tracks used originally for the small scale *henequén* trucks, and repurposed when *henequén* farming fell out of favor. To guard against rain and leaks, the roof is covered with *impermeabilizante* (em-perm-ay-ah-beel-ay-SAN-tay), a latex-based, thick waterproof paint. This is laid down over a layer of very thin paper or cloth for added protection. A roof needs a new layer of *impermeabilizante* every three or four years in the Yucatan.

Traditionally, stone or block walls are covered first with a two layers of hand-applied plaster, a rough coat and then a fine coat. For an authentic restoration, several coats of *cal* paint are applied as final coats. This local style of paint is mixed on site, and consists of a colored powder, white *cal* powder (essentially cement) and a dash of white glue as a binder, creating a paint similar to those used in *frescos*. It is brushed on in *manos* (literally "hands"), as in *dos manos* or two coats of paint. Because the paint is mixed locally, people find it easy to be creative with color. As you look around the neighborhoods of Merida, you can see the results of their creativity. *Cal* paint will eventually show discoloration from moisture, and may eventually flake off due to excess moisture in the stone wall beneath it.

Read the rest of this article on the **Yucatan Living website** here: www.yucatanliving.com/real-estate-yucatan/features-of-a-yucatan-colonial-home.htm

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LA PERIFERÍA

Calle 54 #468 x 53 y 55

THE YUCATAN MUSIC MUSEUM

Calle 57 #466 x 48 y 50

YUCATAN MUSEUM OF POPULAR ART

Calle 50 #487 x 57 y 59

COLONIA SANTA ANA

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Paseo Montejo at Calle 45

ART ON SUNDAYS

Paseo de Montejo between Avenida Colón
(Walmart and the Fiesta Americana)

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EXPLORARTE

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GALERÍA NAHUALLI, CASA DE LOS ARTISTAS

Calle 60 #405 x 43 y 45, Centro

GALERÍA TATAYA

Calle 60 x 45 y 47, Centro

SOHO GALLERIES

Calle 60 #400A x 43 y 41, Centro

NORTHERN MÉRIDA

HABEMUS GALLERY

Calle 11 #101-E x 20 y 22, Colonia México

KATRINA SCHIKORA'S STUDIO

Calle 24 #96 x 15 y Laureles, Cholul

PLAZA GRANDE

AMARO RESTAURANT GALLERY

Calle 59 #507 x 60 y 62

ART ON THE STREET

Calle 60 in the park next the Theater

GALERÍA AT (UADY)

Calle 60 x Calle 57 inside the UADY building

GALERÍA DEL PASAJE PICHETA

Inside the Pasaje Picheta, next to the Governor's
Palace on Calle 61

GALERÍA MANOLO RIVERO

Calle 60 x Calle 51, Centro (inside hotel)

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Calle 57 at the corner of Calle 62

GOVERNOR'S PALACE

Corner of Calle 61 and Calle 60

KOREAN IMMIGRATION MUSEUM

Calle 65 #397-A x 44 y 46, Centro

JOSE PEÓN CONTRERAS GALLERY

Calle 60 at the corner of Calle 57

MACAY

Calle 60 x Calle 61 y 63

MÉRIDA CITY MUSEUM

Old Post Office Building at Calle 65 x 56

OLIMPO

Corner of Calle 62 y 61, Centro

YUCATAN PAINTING GALLERY

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HACIENDA YAXCOPOIL

KM 186, South of Merida. On Highway 261, on the way to Uxmal

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ANTIGÜEDADES JORGE

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BAZAR BAGDAD

Calle 49 #504 x 62 y 60, Centro

BODEGA 41

Calle 60 #386 x 41 y 43, Centro

DR. GUZMÁN'S EL BAZAR

Calle 19 #201-D x 22 y 24 Colonia García Ginerés

LUNA DEL ORIENTE

On Calle 65 x 68 y 66, Centro

THE ANTIQUE LOT

Corner of Calle 50 y Calle 81

VINTAGE

Calle 60 #428 x 47 y 49, Centro

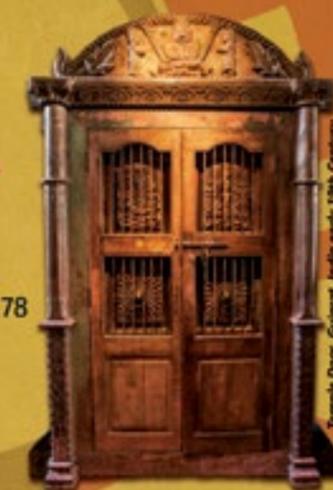
XUNAAN BAZAR

Calle 60 #441 x 49 y 51, Centro

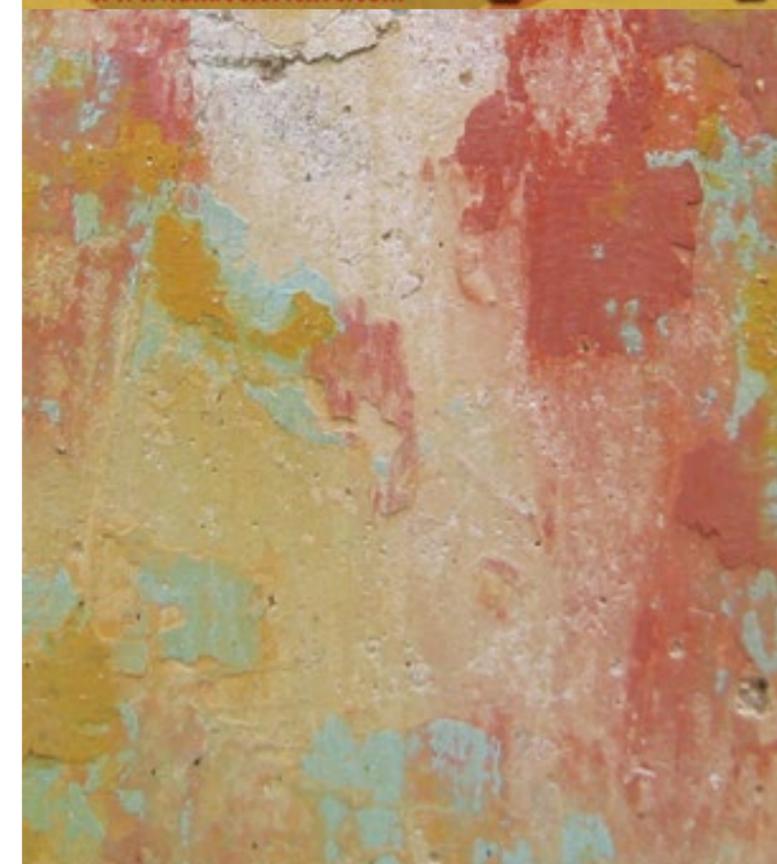


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Before we moved to Yucatan, we spent two years renovating a 70-year-old Spanish Revival home in central California. While the process was initially enjoyable, unexpected problems resulted in a project that took twice as long and cost much more than we had budgeted. In the end, we swore we would never build again and bought a fully renovated house when we moved to Merida's *Centro Histórico*.

Despite our experience, we soon became engaged in the renovation of a smaller colonial house in Santa Ana. Perhaps we're slow learners, or we just can't accept defeat. Contrary to our expectations, the project was completed quickly and on budget, despite the minor delay caused by a major hurricane near the end of construction.

If you plan to renovate one of Merida's lovely colonial homes, or to build a new home in the area, don't be surprised if your experience is like either or neither of ours. Having said all that, there are some things that you should consider if you are going to build or renovate in Yucatan.

The most important thing we have learned is to choose a local architect and construction firm that has several years of experience in Yucatan. There are many qualified architects in the Yucatan, as the state university includes an excellent school of architecture, and many Yucatecan architects now speak English.

Local architects and contractors are well connected and know the local markets and best practices. They can advise you on construction and design techniques that work best in a tropical climate using materials that are most common to the area. They know the authorities in the government and the culturally accepted way to make things happen. In the long run, they will probably achieve the results you want at a better price.

Always obtain a design and *presupuesto* BEFORE starting work. It may be impossible to have a design that is complete in every detail, but the closer it is to including all line items required to complete the project, the fewer unhappy surprises there will be later on.

Follow the laws of Mexico. In the past, many construction projects in Mexico have been carried out by an informal labor force and paid *abajo de agua* (literally, under water, but it means 'under the table'). Recent changes by federal and local governments makes this approach more risky than it used to be. Avoid using free-lance labor on large projects, and for your safety and theirs, be sure that all workers are paid Social Security.

To read more about this subject, go to www.yucatanliving.com/real-estate-yucatan

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Driving Between Merida and Cancun

The Yucatan has some of the best highways in Mexico, called *carreteras*. If you live here or fly into Cancun to travel to Merida, you will eventually wind up taking the 180 *carretera* that connects the Mayan Riviera to Merida. There are actually two highway 180 routes, the *cuota* (the toll road) and the *libre* (free) road.

The *libre* road will take you through many traditional Mayan *pueblos* and small colonial towns. If you have the time, this route is a grueling treat for the senses, but is a slower and more scenic route.

Most people who visit on a schedule or have business to conduct don't have the luxury of taking eight hours or more to drive between Cancun and Merida, so they use the *cuota* road, which takes a little over three hours. The maximum posted speed limit is 110 kmh (about 70 mph) and is even occasionally enforced.

When you come to Merida on the 180 *cuota*, be sure to carry at least \$400 pesos (for a normal passenger car... more if you are driving something larger) to pay the two tolls, one at the *Caseta X-Can* at the Valladolid exit and the other at *Caseta Piste* at the Chichen Itzá exit.

There is also an *Aduana* (customs) inspection and sometimes a military checkpoint at the state border between Yucatan and Quintana Roo. If you temporarily imported your own vehicle (drove from the USA or Canada), you'll need to show your car documents and your passport here. The military men may ask you to step out of your vehicle so they can inspect it for illegal drugs, firearms and contraband chickens. This exercise is routine across Mexico, so there's no reason to be tense (unless you really DO have contraband chickens). Be polite and smile. The young men managing these checkpoints are just doing their job and are usually bored.

For more information on driving in Yucatan, including what to look for on the *libre* road, go to www.yucatanliving.com/yucatan-survivor/driving-in-yucatan.htm

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Avenida Colón
www.alamo.com

EUROPCAR

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Plaza Americana, Centro
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www.europcar.com/car-rental-MEXICO-MERIDA.html

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www.meridayucatanrental.com

HERTZ

Merida International Airport
(999) 121-9717
www.hertz.com

LA CURVA

(999) 278-0942
www.yucatanseasonalcarrental.com

NATIONAL

Fiesta Americana Hotel
(999) 920-7722 or (999) 923-2493
www.nationalcar.com.mx



Churches

BAPTIST

- Baptist Church Berea
Calle 35 Diagonal #361 x 46 y 48, Centro
- Baptist Church "El Mesías"
Calle 28 x 16 Colonia Morelos Oriente
- Baptist Church Jesucristo es El Señor
Calle 22 x 29 y 31 #108
- Apartments 2 and 3, Colonia México
- First Baptist Church
Calle 62 #538 x 67 y 69, Centro

BUDDHIST

- Sokka Gakkai Buddhist Gathering
Calle 66 near 49

CATHOLIC

- Cathedral Calle 60 x 61, Centro
- Itzimná Colonia Itzimná
- La Ermita Calle 66 x 77, Centro
- Mejorada Calle 50 x 59, Centro
- San Cristóbal Calle 50 x 65, Centro
- San Juan Calle 64 x 69, Centro
- San Sebastián Calle 70 x 75, Centro
- Santa Ana Calle 60 x 45, Centro
- Santa Lucía Calle 60 x 55, Centro

CHRISTIAN

- Centro Cristiano "La Nueva Jerusalén"
Calle 20 #106 x 23 y 25 Colonia Chuburná
- Centro de Fe "Sinaí"
Calle 66-B #889 x 109-D Colonia Obrera
- Christian Church "Emmanuel"
Calle 112 #425-A x 59-H, Colonia Bojórquez
- Christian Community "Príncipe de Paz"
Avenida Itzáes x 71 y 73, Centro

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- Salón del Reino de los Testigos de Jehová
Calle 90 #482-B x Avenida Jacinto Canek
y 47 Colonia Inalámbrica
- Calle 38 #469 x 35 y 39 Colonia Jesús Carranza
- Calle 26 #211 x 25 y 27 Col. San Pedro Cholul

METHODIST

- La Rosa de Sarón
Calle 62 #300-F x 35, Centro

PRESBYTERIAN

- Antioquia Calle 74 #468, Centro
- El Divino Salvador
Calle 66 #520 x 63, Centro
- El Verbo de Dios Calle 20 x 21 y 19
Colonia Chuburná
- Shalom Calle 26 #215 x 27
Colonia García Ginerés

OTHER

- Adonai de México
Calle 35 Diagonal #361
x 46 y 48 Colonia Mérida
- Calvary Chapel
Calle 27 #363 Colonia San Vicente Chuburná
- Iglesia de Dios en México
Calle 38 #464 Colonia Jesús Carranza
- El Nazareno
Calle 57 #380 x 34 y 36, Centro



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Furniture

There are many places to buy furniture in Merida, including even places like Costco and Sam's Club. This list includes some of the places you might not think of which have been used consistently by expatriates in the area.

ARTEUROPEO FURNITURE

Furniture and interior design services
Calle 21 #21, 101 x 20, Colonia México
www.arteuropo.com

CALLE VEINTE

Avenida Villas la Hacienda #250 in front Pocito
www.calleveinte.com.mx

COLOMER

Calle 20 #99 x 19 y 21, Colonia Itzimná
www.colormuebles.com

GRINGO FURNITURE

(Full room packages)
www.gringofurniture.com

LUNA DEL ORIENTE

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MARBOL

(check the website for locations)
www.marbol.com.mx

MOSAICOS MERIDANOS

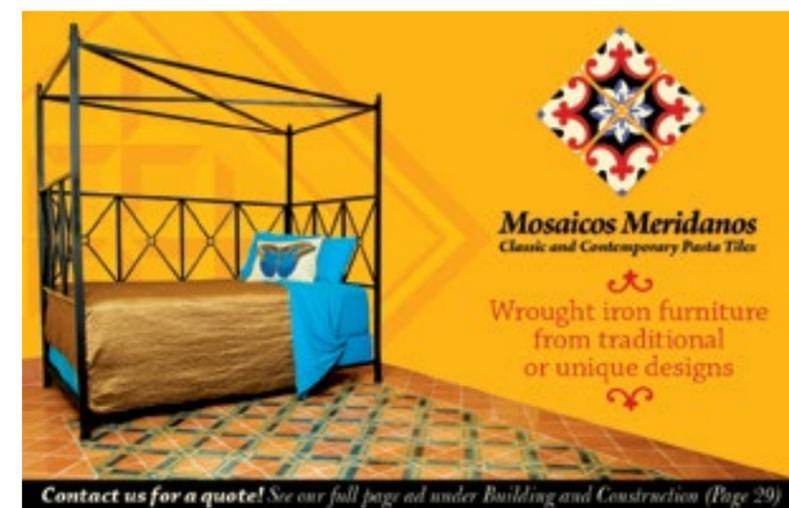
Pasta tiles and wrought iron furniture
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AKI

Santiago Calle 72 #495 x 59 y 57, Centro
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Avenida Itzáes x Calle 90, Centro

CAFÉ ORGÁNICO

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Calle 33-D Avenida Reforma x Colón
Monday-Friday, 9 AM - 7:30 PM
Saturday, 9 AM - 2:30 PM

CHEDRAUI

Paseo de Montejo By Monumento a la Bandera
Avenida Itzáes x Calle 77
Plaza las Américas Inside the Mall
Selecto Across from Gran Plaza

COSTCO

Calle 60 #220 Fraccionamiento del Norte

MEGA & COMERCIAL MEXICANA

North Calle 60 x Circuito Colonias
Gran Plaza Inside the mall

MERCADO GRANDE LUCA DE GÁLVEZ (TRADITIONAL MARKET)

Calle 56 x 65, Centro

MONIQUE'S BAKERY

Organic breads and pastries,
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NEIGHBORHOOD MARKETS

Santa Ana Calle 60 y 47, Centro
Santiago Calle 72 y 59, Centro
San Sebastián Calle 70 y 77, Centro

PASCADELI

Importer/wholesaler to restaurants,
open to the public
Calle 56 #368, x 37 y 39, Centro
(Just east of Paseo de Montejo
a few blocks south of Walmart)

SAM'S CLUB

Prolongación Montejo By La Gran Plaza

SLOW FOODS MARKET

Organic and whole foods market
Calle 33-D Avenida Reforma x Colón
Saturday only, 10 AM - 1 PM

SORIANA

Centro Calle 56 #514, Centro
Villa Palmira Calle 95 #502 x 62,
Colonia Delio Moreno Cantón

SUPERAMA

Prolongación Montejo Going north,
before the Club Campestre

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(999) 925-7487
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Monday-Friday, 9 AM - 1 PM

PROGRESO

(969) 935-0022
Calle 80 #176 x 31 (next to SMAPAP)
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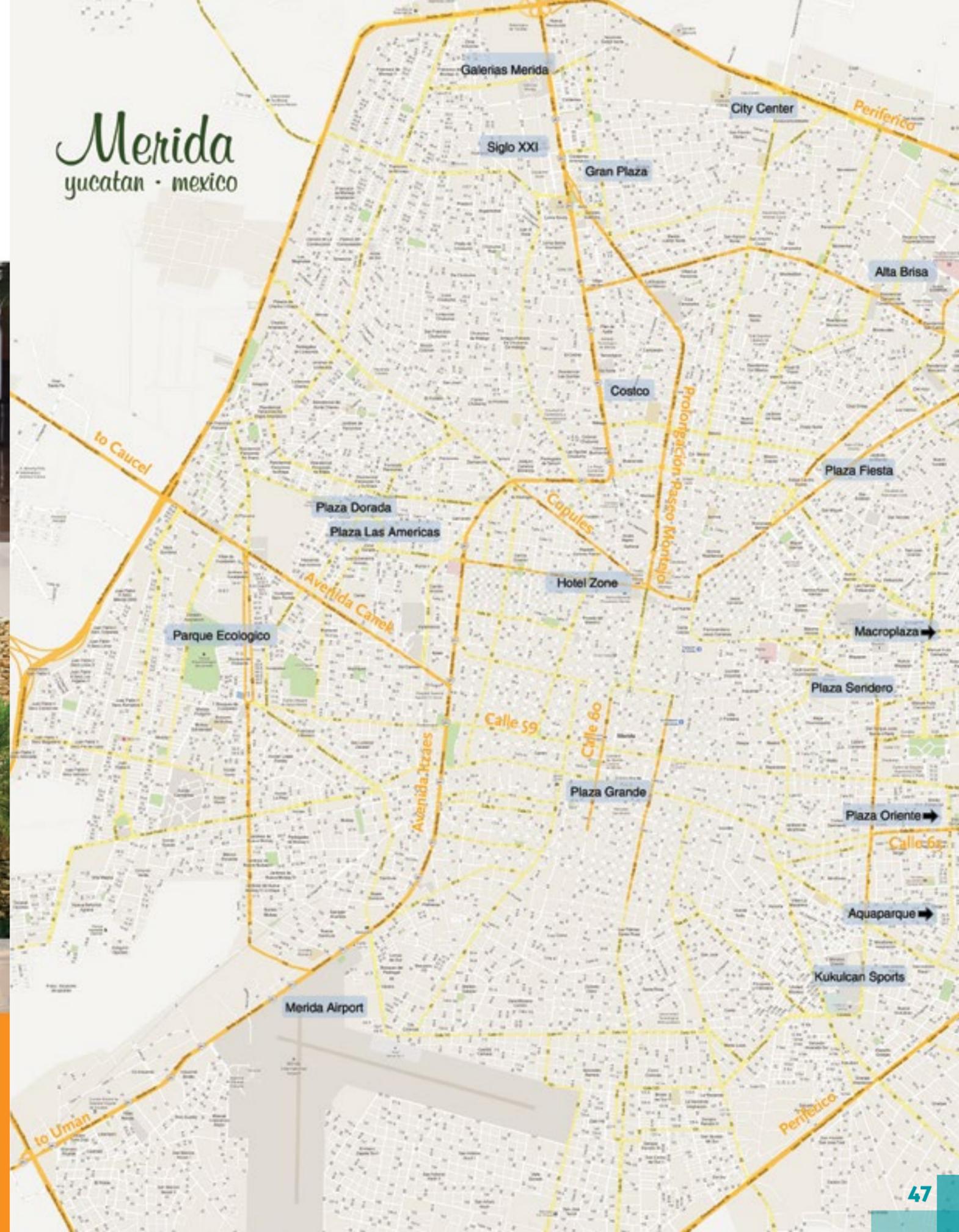
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Colonia Residencial Pensiones

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(if you live South of Calle 61)
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Colonia Serapio Rendón

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Cash, Credit Cards, Checks, Oh My!



In Mexico, cash is universally the most welcome form of payment. While checking accounts exist in Mexico, checks are not generally accepted in the same types of places you might be used to. There are many reasons for this, including a history of devaluation, revolution and hyperinflation. In the last twenty years, Mexico's banking system has become the modern, stable and world class system that it is today. Despite the improvements, fears and old habits persist.

Here are a few tips about where you can and cannot use monetary instruments that are NOT cash, such as checks, credit cards and debit cards:

- In a local or central market (*mercado*), only cash will be accepted. In addition, most merchants will be unable to change large bills, so be sure to bring plenty of coins, as well as 20 and 50 peso bills.
- In most modern restaurants, credit and debit cards are commonly accepted. In a *cocina económica*, however, only cash will be accepted. If you have any doubt, it is best to ask before ordering to avoid any embarrassing or uncomfortable situations. *Aceptan tarjetas de crédito?* means "Do you accept credit cards?"
- National and international franchises (such as Home Depot) may accept checks, but don't count on it. And even though they do accept checks, the process you will have to go through

may not be worth the trouble. They will almost always accept debit and credit cards.

- Household employees should be paid in cash. Keep in mind that paying someone with an *Al Portador* check, while technically equivalent to cash, requires a visit to the bank from which the check is drawn.
- Taxis, buses, ferries and other transportation will only accept cash.
- More and more Pemex gas stations accept debit cards, but most only accept cash.
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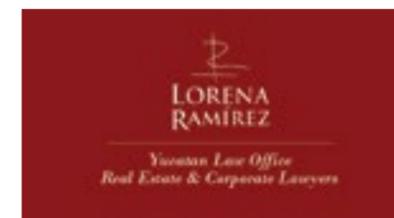
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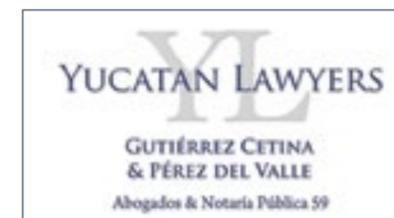
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Visiting the dentist has never been a favorite activity of ours, and to this day, the only thing that makes it a little bit easier here in Yucatan is that it is definitely *más barato* (cheaper). After many experiences in the dental chair, we have decided that our ideal dentist is detail-oriented, sanitary to a fault and has a great smile. A dentist with a good magazines in the lobby or a television to watch to distract you is a nice plus. Lots of diplomas on the wall can be soothing, and a good chairside manner is important. We are happy to say that we know a number of dentists who have those qualities here in Merida. In fact, the longer we are here, the more good dentists we meet (and hear about) and the happier everyone seems to be with their dental work. Merida has a good dental university (UADY) and every year, they churn out more and better dentists, many of whom choose to stay and set up practices in the area.

In fact, here is an interesting side note on the subject of UADY. One of our dentists is a woman, and she told us in mid 2011 that the MAJORITY of students in the UADY dental school now are female. So while there is a growing contingent of female dentists in Merida now, we expect that contingent to explode in the next few years.

Prices for dental work are famously lower than prices in the States and Canada. We polled the dentists on our list, and prices for a checkup ranged from free to \$500 pesos. Prices for a filling are between \$350 to \$700 pesos and \$250 to \$600 pesos for a cleaning. We know from talking with fellow expatriates that the prices of more expensive procedures like implants are somewhat lower than in the States, but the real savings is in crowns, bridges, other aesthetic procedures and orthodonture.

Unlike in the States, even today many dentists here do not have offices in upscale medical buildings. When we first moved here, we were a little uncomfortable about that, but now we

have gotten used to the idea and if it does concern you, there are new dentists in what we consider traditional medical-building environments. One dentist explained that his less-than-fancy office made it possible for him to keep his prices lower so that everyone can afford his services (he estimated that his clients are 50% Yucatecos and 50% *extranjeros*). He also told us that he is able to always keep one room and one dentist "unscheduled" so that people can get emergency treatment with very little notice.

Speaking of appointments, we have found that any dentist we called was able to give us an appointment within a week to ten days, and often we can even see the dentist the next day. Some of the more popular English-speaking dentists are getting a little busier, but it is still easy to make an appointment. Also, many dentists here are used to providing service within a set time period for those foreigners who come here specifically for dental work.

Perhaps the most important feature of dentistry that we have noticed here is the level of care and attention paid by dentists, and this has not changed in the ten years we have been going to dentists in the Yucatan. A friend of ours had a series of implants over the course of a year. His dentist went to the various specialist's appointments with him. He was on call any time for problems and he paid an unexpected (though welcome) amount of attention to our friend's well-being and the outcome of the procedures. Another dentist told us that his Number One rule is to treat every client as if they were a member of his family. Knowing what we now know about how Mexicans feel about their family members, we can see that this is a very good strategy, for both dentist and patient.

For more about dentists in the Yucatan, go to www.yucatanliving.com/health/dentists-in-merida.htm



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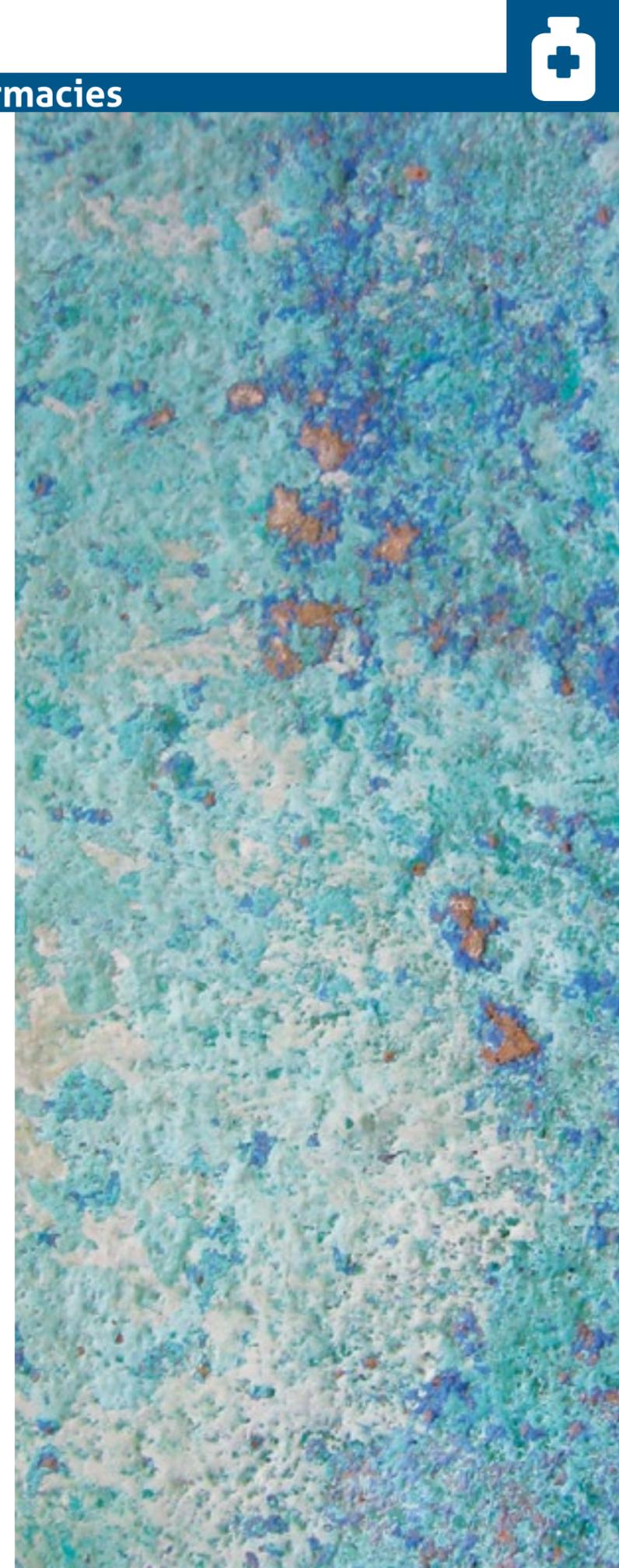
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That said, when you need something delivered in a hurry, you will probably want to go with a more specialized service like Fedex or DHL or UPS or the Mexican equivalent, Estafeta. These services are quite developed in the cities of the Yucatan, and in Merida, you can get your package picked up and delivered at your home or office, or you can go to their offices.

In our experience, Fedex is the best service for delivering quickly to the USA. DHL seems to do better delivering to countries in Europe. Our experience stops there, but there are businesses here that rely on imports from China, India and other faraway places, so we're pretty sure these countries are all served by these companies.

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Inspecting a Colonial House

We asked our friend Jorge Sosa, whose company Handyman fixes homes in Merida, to give us a few tips about what he looks for when evaluating a colonial home in the Yucatan. The following are some tips on what to look for when buying a colonial (or any other) home here.

First, review the condition and placement of the walls. You are probably going to find cracks and even plaster falling off the walls. These are nothing to worry about as they can be easily repaired. The most important thing to determine is if the walls are made from cement block or from stone. The stone wall construction is called *mampostería*, and walls made this way can be anywhere from one to two and a half feet wide. Of course, we all love the old stone walls, but there are some things to keep in mind when you are assessing them.

Repairing these walls is done all the time, and if the house is more than ten years old, some repair will probably be in order. If there are spots of excessive humidity on the walls, repair will consist of digging out the old plaster around the stones and replacing it with new plaster. This is a messy process (one you don't want to have to live in the midst of...) because it creates a lot of very fine *polvo* (dust).

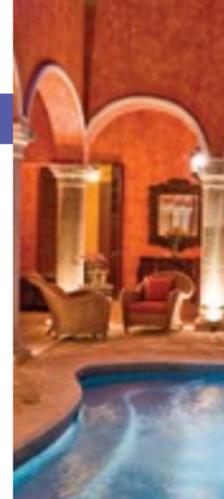
Look carefully at where the walls are placed. Cement block walls are easily moved or altered. You want a door there? a window? No problem! But if that wall is made of *mampostería*, creating

a new door or window in that space may not be so easy... in fact, it may not be possible without tearing down a large section of the wall. These walls were often built without supporting columns or reinforcement, so removing or altering them may compromise another wall or the ceiling. It can be done, but no contractor can give you an honest bid for this type of project, since it is impossible to know what the opening will need in time and materials until the job has been started.

Run your hands along the walls. If a very fine dust comes off on your fingers, that probably means the walls are painted with *cal* paint. This is basically a form of very thin plaster with color added to it. While this type of paint allows the old stone walls to breathe, it also tends to stain and flake off. You should count on having to repaint every few years, depending on the humidity in your house. If the *cal* paint is on an outside wall, you will probably have to paint every second year to keep it looking beautiful. There are vinyl paints here, of course (called *vinílica*), and they can be used on any kind of wall. If you use *vinílica* on a *mampostería* wall, you run the risk of bubbling as the wall releases its humidity over time. *Vinílica* on a cement block wall will last for a long time, as long as there are no humidity problems.

Another thing to keep in mind is the height of the walls. When assessing how much it is going to cost to paint a room, keep in mind that many of these old colonials have very high ceilings. This fact almost doubles the cost of painting a room because of the increased area of the walls. Painters will also have to set up *andamios* (scaffolding) in order to paint the walls and ceilings. You haven't lived until you've watched painters setting up scaffolding around your precious furniture, balancing on old boards with full buckets of paint twenty feet in the air! Plan to paint before you move in if at all possible.

For more helpful information along these lines, go www.yucatanliving.com/real-estate-yucatan/merida-colonial-home-purchasing-tips.htm



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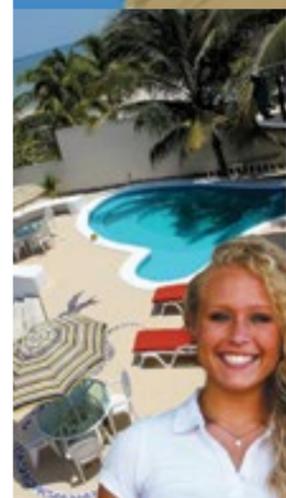
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Restaurants

What is on the YucatanLiving.com website is a comprehensive list of local restaurants, with hours, addresses, phone numbers, directions from the Centro and reviews.

After years of living here, we still sit around some nights wondering where to eat. Or we know where we want to eat, but we don't know if it's open on Monday night. Or what time it closes. Or we don't know how to get there.

We were finally spurred into doing something about it by one of our readers who very generously gave us the information for many of the restaurants in our website list. (Thanks, Jos!) The listing on our website does not have paid announcements. The restaurants have not been consulted. This list consists of every restaurant our readers or we have come across and written about. The list is a living thing... it shrinks and grows daily. There are comments from readers.

For that reason, the list of restaurants is not here in this printed guide. The link above will take you to the list on YucatanLiving.com. You can search an alphabetical listing and see what type of restaurants there are to choose from. If you click on the name of one that looks interesting, you'll find hours, addresses, directions, information about things like drink options, air conditioning and parking. You'll also maybe find a review or two.

If you have suggestions for restaurants that are not on the list (and they are legion... the Yucatan is growing and always changing...), send your information to info@yucatanliving.com. When you send a suggestion, please try to send us as much information as you can. We'll publish it and keep that restaurant list growing and relevant!

We hope you enjoy the many flavors and atmospheres that Merida's and the Yucatan's restaurants have to offer!

For more information visit: www.yucatanliving.com/category/merida-restaurants



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Schools in Merida



When we moved to Merida, we brought along our 16-year-old daughter. We arrived in January and she had five more months before graduating from the 11th grade in California. At the time, we were not very impressed with the public school system in California and were not unhappy to take her out of that environment. In Merida, we looked around for a school and came up empty-handed. Finally, we located a correspondence high-school on the Internet and she completed 11th grade sitting at our desk at home. Though she was able to spend time traveling around the Yucatan and Chiapas – for which she will be forever grateful – she missed her friends terribly and eventually convinced us to send her back to California to finish out her senior year.

Our attempt at home-schooling was probably too little and at the wrong time in our daughter's life to work for her. But we have heard that some parents choose to bring their children to Merida and home-school them for the first year while they learn to speak Spanish. Learning a new language is much easier at a young age and it's debatable whether fluency will be achieved faster in a school with other children or at home with a tutor.

On our website we have comprehensive information about schools in Merida for English-speaking children. First, an explanation of terms is probably in order. In the United States, we have kindergarten, primary school (usually grades 1-6), junior high school (grades 7-8 or 7-9) and high school (grades 9-12 or 10-12). In Merida and throughout Mexico, the divisions are very similar but the names are different. Kindergarten is called *Jardín de Niños* (literally 'garden of children') or just Kinder. Primary school is *Primaria* and Junior High School is *Secundaria*. High School is *Preparatoria*.

There are quite a few *primaria* and *secundaria* schools in Merida that welcome English-speaking children and who have English-speaking teachers or programs to help them in their transition.

There are still few if any *Preparatorias*, however, that make any allowances for English language students. While most classes will be held in Spanish and older children are expected to keep up, it is also true that more and more children in Merida are bilingual, so an English-speaking student will have plenty of assistance and support from other students.

Most schools in Merida require a sign-up fee and then a monthly or annual fee for attendance.

The list here and on the website should help you get started with your investigation of schools in the area. We not only list the name and location of the school, but also whenever possible, the English-speaking contact to make it easier for expatriates to initiate the conversation.

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www.calle-55.com
info@calle-55.com

AMERICAN SCHOOL

(999) 941-9371
 North Mérida just off the road to Progreso
 Calle 3B #244 x 20 y 18, Colonia Xcumpich
 English Speaking Contact According to Mrs.
 López, there is always someone around who
 speaks English who can come to the phone.
 There is also someone who speaks
 some French and German.
 Levels Kinder and Primaria

CENTRO EDUCATIVO PALMERSTON

(999) 944-5457
 Calle 21 #144, Colonia Buenavista
 (across from Rogers Hall)
 English Speaking Contact Victor Ávila
 Levels Kinder, Primaria

CENTRO EDUCATIVO RENACIMIENTO (CER)

(999) 944-4808
 Calle 33 #468 x 10 y 14
 Fraccionamiento Montebello
 English Speaking Contact María Teresa García is
 the English coordinator and can come
 to the phone to speak with you
 Levels Primaria, Secundaria and Preparatoria
www.cerenacimiento.edu.mx

COLEGIO IBEROAMERICANO DE MERIDA, A.C.

(999) 925-2712 or (999) 925-3112
 Levels Kinder, Primaria
 (999) 911-0101
 Levels Secundaria, Preparatoria
 Avenida Colón #196-A x 12 y 14
 Colonia García Ginerés
www.iberomerida.com

COLEGIO PENINSULAR ROGER'S HALL

(999) 944-5364 or (999) 944-5434 Ext. 107
 Calle 21 #131, Colonia Buenavista
 (just down the street from Office Depot)
 English-speaking Contact Pilar Gutiérrez
 Levels Kinder, Primaria, Secundaria, Preparatoria

EDUCREA

(999) 925-7931
 Calle 23 #209 x 30 y Avenida Itzáes
 Colonia García Ginerés
 English Speaking Contact Carlos Monforte, who
 speaks some English. Better to ask for Rebecca
 Góngora who is the English coordinator.
 Levels Kinder, Primaria, Secundaria, Preparatoria
www.educrea.com.mx

ESCUELA MODELO

Calle 56-A #444, Paseo de Montejo
 English Speaking Contact Marisol Bolio Pérez,
 Director of English, after 3 PM
 Levels Primaria, Secundaria and Preparatoria
www.modelo.edu.mx

INSTITUTO CUMBRES (BOYS)

(999) 944-4090
 Calle 5 x 18 S/N ("S/N" means "without a
 number"), Glorieta Cumbres,
 Fraccionamiento Montecristo (North Merida)
 Levels Primaria, Secundaria, Preparatoria
www.cumbresmerida.com

INSTITUTO GODWIN (GIRLS)

(999) 948-0096
 Calle 5 x 18 S/N ("S/N" means "without a
 number"), Glorieta Cumbres,
 Fraccionamiento Montecristo (North Merida)
 Levels Primaria, Secundaria, Preparatoria
www.cumbresmerida.com

INSTITUTO GARDNER

(999) 944-1881
 Avenida Villas La Hacienda #348
 x Prolongacion Montejo
 English Speaking Contact Dr. Carlos Nuñez
 Armesto speaks English, and all the teachers
 speak English as well
 Levels Kinder

INSTITUTO MODERNO AMERICANO (IMA)

(999) 943-0511 or (999) 943-5629
 Calle 28 #202-A x 23-B y 25
 San Pedro Cholul
 English Speaking Contact Sandra Padilla
 Levels Preschool thru Secundaria
 (Preparatoria & Universidad is CELA)
www.ima.cela.edu.mx

MJ - INTERNATIONAL

(999) 984-3939
 Calle 66 #618-C x 77 y 79, Centro
 English Speaking Contact María Eugenia Limón
 Levels Kinder, Primaria

PIAGET

Centro Educativo Piaget, A.C.
 Calle 33 #140 x 20 y 22, Chuburná
 English speaking contact Martise Brown Spradlin
 Levels Kinder, Primaria, Secundaria, Preparatoria

SAINT PATRICK'S

(999) 948-0985
 Calle 31 #144, Colonia México
 English Speaking Contact Cindy Rey, English
 coordinator. Also, Emmy Dennis speaks some
 English as well.
 Levels Kinder

THE WORKSHOP

(999) 941-8900
 Calle 46 #317 x 19 y 17
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 north of the Periférico)
 Levels Preschool and Elementary (Primaria)
www.workshop.edu.mx



Spanish Schools



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Contact: Diana Castillo
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www.merida.af.org.mx

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www.benjaminfranklin.com.mx

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Contact: Agustín or Rachel
Languages: Spanish
www.calle-55.com

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(999) 920-2810
Calle 11 #203-C x 26, Col. García Ginéres
(999) 926-9494
Calle 14 #106 x 25, Colonia México
Contact: Chloe Pacheco or José Luis López
Languages: Spanish, English, French, Italian, German, Japanese
www.cis-yucatan.com.mx

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www.habla.org/en

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(969) 935-7980 or 044 (999) 738-6196
Calle 29 #127-A x 74 y 76, Progreso
Contact: Alma Torres Ugalde and José Humberto Vargas Ávila
Languages: Spanish, English, Italian, French, German, Cooking
www.yucatanliving.com/sponsors/ilet-language-cooking-school.htm

INSTITUTO DE LENGUA Y CULTURA DE YUCATÁN

(999) 125-3048 Calle 13 #214 x 28 y 30, Colonia García Ginerés
Contact: Cecilia Novelo
Languages: Spanish
www.ilcymex.com

INSTITUTE OF MODERN SPANISH

(999) 911-0790 or toll-free 1-800-4MERIDA
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When we first moved here, we took formal classes. We chose the Benjamin Franklin Institute because at the time, they provided the only classroom situation we could find without having to ask directions or get in our car. We took classes three mornings a week, struggling through grammar and pronunciation in a classroom setting.

Where we really started to learn our day-to-day Spanish, however, was where the rubber meets the road: when we had to. We learned to communicate with the *albañiles* working on our office restoration, with the woman who cleaned our house and with José on the street where we parked our car. We learned to talk with our neighbor who took us to *la corrida* (a bullfight), with our Cuban neighbor who fixed our plumbing and eventually with our clients who came to us for help promoting their services to an English-speaking public. None of this would have worked as well, of course, if we hadn't had that foundation in grammar and pronunciation.

We have learned that our experiences are not particularly unique. Many expatriates who come here to live either see learning Spanish as a gift or a necessity. And everyone trying to learn Spanish in Mexico has told us how helpful and patient the locals are when it comes to listening, communicating and teaching their language.

Oftentimes, we have learned the most from conversations with waiters or bus drivers or tour guides who are happy to exchange on-the-spot Spanish lessons for a few English lessons in return. And listening to how Spanish speakers mangle English has taught us how the Spanish language works. As we try to fit Spanish into the syntax and expressions that are comfortable in English, we realize that our Spanish-speaking friends are doing the same in reverse. Parsing those mistakes teaches us how to do it right in Spanish. *Entiendes?* Sure you do... and if you don't yet, keep trying. You will!

Here are a few more random thoughts about learning Spanish that we've learned or realized over the years:

- Learning Spanish has probably been one of the most mind-altering events of our adult lives, although the effect has not been sudden or dramatic, nor particularly obvious to an outside observer.
- Learning Spanish has had the effect of rearranging the furniture of our understanding of the world around us.
- Learning Spanish has given us insight into the entire Latin culture that makes up such a large part of the world and its history.
- Learning Spanish has taught us subtleties and nuances in life that as English speakers we had never considered.
- Learning Spanish has opened up cracks in our worldview, allowing us a glimpse into an entirely new way of looking at the world.
- Learning Spanish has given us an appreciation for the way that Spanish-speaking people think, talk, love, party, plan, lie, count, pray, learn... it has taught us that it is probably impossible to really grok people who speak a different language until you can speak and understand their language.

More than anything, learning Spanish has given us an increased appreciation for the intricate, infinite, delicate, magnificent and awesome differences that all somehow dance together to form humanity.

For more on this subject, go www.yucatanliving.com/yucatan-survivor/merida-spanish-schools.htm

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Calle 37 #539 x 72-A y 74,
Colonia García Ginéres
Languages: Spanish
www.lengualternativa.com

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Contact: Christian Cuellar, Academic Director
Languages: Spanish
www.simerida.com

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www.goldsgymerida.com.mx

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www.yucatancountry.com



Chichén Itzá: The First Tourist



When John Masterson Burke died on December 3, 1909, he was worth millions. As one of the biggest philanthropists in the nation, newspapers across the United States made note of his passing. They talked of the fortune he had donated to charity, of how he had made his millions investing in South America and U.S. railroads. But Burke had one milestone that he himself may not have been aware of during his life: He was the first tourist from the United States to visit Chichén Itzá.

Burke 'found' Chichén Itzá thanks to a long series of bewildering circumstances that could only happen in Yucatan. It began when Pedro Sáinz de Baranda y Borreiro, governor of Yucatán, hero of the first Mexican revolution, and longtime resident of the Yucatan frontier town of Valladolid (35 kilometers from Chichén Itzá), decided to go into textile manufacturing. The governor had no experience in the industry, but what he lacked in knowledge, he made up for in *chutzpah*.

His business model was unique. Instead of building his factory in a large city and shipping raw cotton in from the hinterlands, as the New England mills relied on cotton plantations in the American South, Baranda built his factory where the cotton was grown, which also happened to be his hometown of Valladolid. It was a gutsy move, particularly since Valladolid was on the

fringe of what was considered the frontier in Mexico.

Baranda mitigated his financial risk by going into partnership with an expatriate from South Carolina, John J. MacGregor, who was affiliated with a New York mercantile house. The New York capitalists, through MacGregor, invested \$20,000 (Mexican) in the new factory, which Baranda christened the *Aurora Yucateca*. The investors purchased the latest, steam-driven machinery from the United States and had it shipped and delivered to Valladolid along with four engineers to install and run it. Before the machinery even produced a single bolt of cloth, two of the engineers died of malaria, prompting the other two to flee the country as soon as humanly possible.

Without experienced supervision, the factory was plagued with technical problems and in its first months of operation only produced 18 yards. The New York investors saw their textile investment about to unravel, so they plucked 22-year-old John Burke from a New York iron and steel foundry, and sent him to Yucatan to serve as superintendent of the mill.

Burke was an experienced manager, despite his youth. He had been working since the age of 12, starting as a clerk for a woolen merchant before joining the foundry. He probably did not



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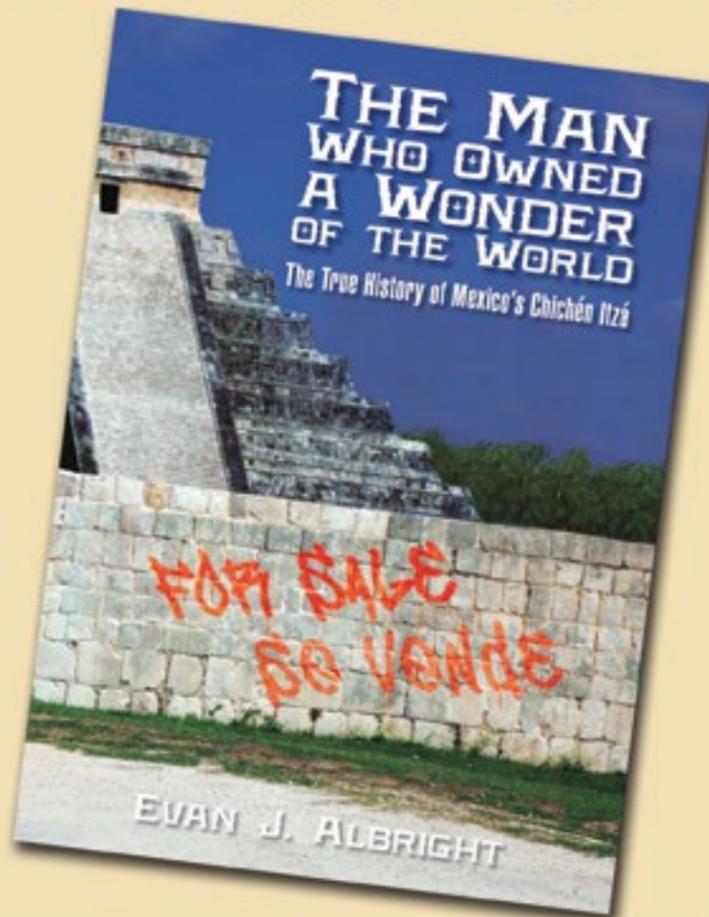
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speaking Spanish before arriving in Valladolid in 1835, but even if he had, it would have been of limited use as most of his workers spoke Maya. Despite the challenges of language and culture, he soon righted the ship that was the *Aurora Yucateca* and within a short time the factory was running efficiently and within a few years, profitably.

Three years into his tenure, while scouting the countryside outside Valladolid for growers of cotton, Burke met a young Maya who told him of magnificent ruins that were part of a nearby cattle ranch called the Hacienda Chichén. There, he was told, he would find a pyramid so tall that from its pinnacle one could see the top of the cathedral of Valladolid, almost seven leagues away.

On July 4, 1838, Burke arrived at Chichén Itzá, climbed the tree-covered pyramid known as *El Castillo* and from the top trained his spyglass to the east toward Valladolid. He celebrated American Independence by becoming the first gringo to ever set foot in Chichén Itzá. He would not be the last.

By Evan J. Albright

(Excerpted from his book [The Man Who Owned a Wonder of the World: The Secret History of Mexico's Chichén Itzá](#))

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You can see them anywhere. By the airport, on the beach... emaciated, mange-covered, tic-infested dogs. Especially at the beach, they travel in packs and sometimes exhibit aggressive behavior towards human and their pets. They tear holes in garbage bags left out on the street, looking for food. Some can be friendly, while others are terrified of humans. There are those that are completely feral, and sadly, there are those that are clearly house pets abandoned by their "family".

Many of us who visit the Yucatan want to help resolve this issue, because we love animals or because our hearts break when we look in their eyes. To make ourselves feel better, we give them food and water, maybe even a blanket by the fence for them to sleep. We think we are helping, but this is not enough. The best thing is to adopt them and give them a home, whether here in Mérida or in your home country. It is surprisingly easy to bring a dog home. You just need a health certificate from a local vet to bring a dog into the United States or Canada.

When you provide food for a street animal but do not adopt it, you can contribute to the problem. The animal will get healthier, stronger and will reproduce. If you are just visiting, for a week or a few months, and you feed a dog while you are here, you train that dog to rely on you. If you don't adopt the dog and take it home, it will suffer when you leave, and perhaps be worse off than before.

To really help the beach dogs, local residents are working on long term solutions. A spectacular effort has been undertaken by the truly dedicated people who run the animal shelters in Yucatan (AFAD in Cholul and Evolución in Umán), by YAPA (Yucatán Ayuda Por Los Animales) and by Planned Pethood (a vet clinic and member of the Planned Pethood organization based in the USA). These groups now hold annual free Spay/Neuter clinics every January. In the three years the clinic has been

offered, more than 5000 dogs and cats have been sterilized in the greater Merida area and at the beach.

Planned Pethood is also behind the new Free Vet Care Clinic that will be opening in late 2012 in Chelem. This will be a FREE clinic open to adopted and non-adopted animals. If you become friendly with a dog or cat in your area, you will be able to take it to the clinic for a free spay or neuter. This free year-round clinic and the annual January clinics should have an amazing impact on the quality of life for both the human and animal population of Yucatan.

It is good to know that many veterinarians in Mérida and at the beach will give special prices for the spay and neuter of street dogs and cats. Some will give free sterilizations to a certain number of street animals every month.

We encourage you to be kind to the animals you see in Yucatan, but also to approach them carefully. And if your heart melts for a needy animal, be part of the solution. Adopt it, get it sterilized, or both!

AFAD
www.afad.org.mx
Evolución
www.evolucionanimal.org
YAPA
yapamerida.blogspot.com



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We get so many requests from visitors and residents alike about how they can volunteer to help the people and the animals of the Yucatan.

Whether it is from a sense of guilt for all the wealth that we live with in the countries north of the border and elsewhere, or just because we so appreciate the Yucatan culture and want to do our part to keep it alive and well, almost everyone who comes here ends up doing something to give back. We once had a project where we interviewed expats all along the Riviera Maya... eight cities in all. In every single one of them, the expats were involved in local dog shelters, spay and neuter clinics and some sort of projects to help children of lesser means. We encourage everyone to look around them and see where they can help. And then to approach this work with a humble spirit that recognizes that while you might be sharing something of your financial or physical wealth, the people in the Yucatan that you are working with are sharing with you a unique wealth of their own.

ANIMALS

AFAD

Animal rescue and adoption programs
www.afad.org.mx

EVOLUCIÓN

You can adopt a dog, foster a dog or just go in and walk a dog
www.evolucionanimal.org

PET BIRD SANCTUARY

Go to Yolisto and send a private message to Nubinskis. If you are not a Yolisto member, now is the time to join the conversation at
www.yolisto.com

YAPA

Support and resource group to aid the several Merida animal rescue and care centers.
www.yapamerida.blogspot.mx

CHILDREN

CHILDREN

Hacienda Chichen's Mayan Community Support Along with Yucatan Adventures, they create and support programs to aid the Mayan children, families and communities near Chichén Itzá
www.yucatanadventure.com.mx/volunteering

PROYECTO ITZAES

Has a variety of programs but they all begin with literacy.
<http://wp.proyectoitzaesusa.org>

ENVIRONMENT

MERIDA VERDE

A nonprofit organization whose goal is to work with people in the City of Merida, to improve the quality of life and preserve their environment.
Contact: julie.hoover@gmail.com

FOOD BANKS

FOOD BANK OF MERIDA

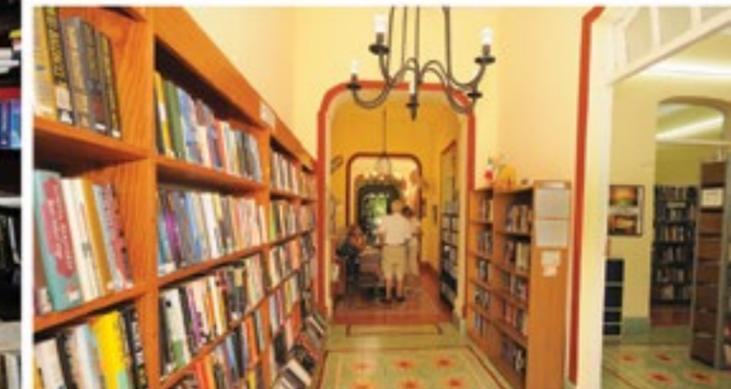
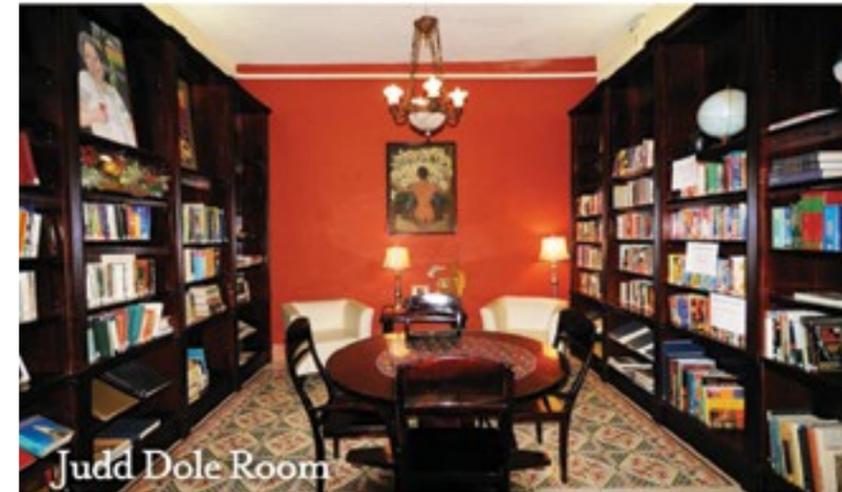
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MEL Nite

Informal Social Night with open bar, munchies and lots of friendly people! Join us on the MEL Patio!
3rd Friday of every month from 7 to 10 PM

Saturday Morning LECTURE SERIES

Fascinating speakers on a wide variety of subjects!
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Annual CHILI COOK OFF

Chili contest and tasting. Antique vendors and local restaurant sampling. This MEL Fundraiser is just plain fun!
Check website for date, time and admission price

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MEL Patio

House & Garden Tours



Real Estate and Restoration WORKSHOP

"Know before you Buy. Know before you Build"
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MEL HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR

Walking Tour of 3 to 4 properties in the Centro
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9 to 9:30 AM | Registration with Coffee & Pastries
9:30 to 10 AM | Orientation & Centro architectural history
10 - Noon | Tour
\$200 pesos per person

Check www.meridaenglishlibrary.com
often for new information, times and dates!

HIV-AIDS

BRAZOS ABIERTOS

Their goal is to decrease the spread of HIV and sexually-transmitted diseases in Yucatan and to improve access to healthcare.
www.hivyucatan.org

OASIS SAN JUAN DE DIOS

Offers individual attention to local people infected with AIDS or HIV
Calle 11 #101 x 22, Carretera a Chicxulub, Colonia San Isidro, Conkal
Contact: Carlos Renán Méndez Benavides
osanjuanyuc@hotmail.com

WOMEN

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Calle 21 Avenida Colón #197-A por 18 y 16, Colonia García Ginerés
(999) 925-2277
www.facebook.com/ImpulSurEnglish

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB

Community Service projects include providing higher education support and mentoring for several young ladies.
www.iwcmerida.com

UNASSE YUCATAN

(999) 924-3044
Calle 47 # 487 x 54 y 56, Santa Ana
www.unasse.com

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www.alberguesanjoaquin.org

ARTISTAS DE LA PLAYA

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Contact Ginnie LaRoi at (999) 144-4792 for more information or to make a donation.

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PROGRESO APOYO

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kbmorgan_99@yahoo.com

PROTECCIÓN DE PERROS Y GATOS DE PROGRESO

This is the protective animal welfare organization for the area in and around Progreso.
Location: Flamingo's Restaurant on the Malecón in Progreso
Dates and Time: All Last Mondays, 8:00 PM
Admission: Free but BYOD (buy your own dinner)

SANTA IN CHELEM

chelemchristmasdreams@gmail.com
www.chelemdreamstoydrive.com



Long ago Valladolid was given the nickname of the Sultanness of the East, indicating its function as the business center of the Eastern Peninsula. But it seems to have always been number three, behind Merida (number one) and Campeche (number two) in the hit parade of colonial cities on the Yucatan Peninsula. When we first moved to Merida, we traveled to Valladolid on the way to somewhere. On the way to Tulum, or on the way back from Cancun or Playa del Carmen. We would stop by and have a delicious lunch around the patio at the Méson del Marqués Hotel, look around the *zócalo* and not find much, and then move on. Valladolid didn't feel like a destination in our minds, especially compared to the places we were going to or coming from. Cancun, Campeche, Playa del Carmen, Merida... they have all seen an influx of government money for sprucing things up over the past few years, building hotels or renovating colonial facades and making the *centro histórico* more attractive to tourists. But now, it is Valladolid's turn.

Valladolid has recently been designated one of Mexico's *pueblos mágicos*, a very special and important distinction.

So what makes Valladolid interesting? First, there is a lot of history here. The very first city in Mexico called Valladolid had its name changed to Morelia in Michoacan. The next settlement called Valladolid was set up near its current location in a place filled with mosquitoes and humidity (in the Yucatan? no, really?) and after protests from the early Spanish settlers, was moved to where it now stands. Of course, the current location was then a Mayan settlement, and the fact that the Spaniards tore down the settlement (which probably included a sacred site or ten) and used the stones to build their colonial town encouraged the local Mayan population to revolt, which had to be "put down" (according to Wikipedia). This should have been an indication to the Spaniards of the nature of the Mayans in this locale, but apparently it was not. They were reminded

again, however, when the Caste War broke out near Valladolid sometime in the early 1840s.

The spark that ignited the fire of the Caste War was the execution of three Mayans over land disputes, a consistent problem between conquering Spaniards and the Mayans whose party they insisted on crashing.

At one point during the Caste War, Valladolid was completely under Mayan rule, with every Spaniard and *Criollo* (Mexican-born Spaniards) either fleeing to Merida or dead in the process. Eventually, after Merida stumbled into victory over the Mayans that had surrounded the city, Valladolid came back under colonial rule but it never quite regained its previous economic or cultural importance... until now.

The last time we visited Valladolid, we had a distinctly different experience and impression of this mysterious Sultanness. Dare we say it?

Valladolid is starting to seem almost hip.

VALLADOLID



EMERGENCY NUMBERS

BUS STATION (ADO)

Calle 39 x 46 y 44, Colonia Centro
(985) 856-3448

CITY POLICE

Calle 62 x 41 y 39, Colonia Bacalar
(985) 856-1234

FIRE

Avenida Chanyokdzonot, before UNO
(985) 856-3516

GENERAL EMERGENCIES (PROTECCIÓN CIVIL)

(985) 856-4949

GENERAL HOSPITAL

Calle 47 x 50 y 52, Colonia Sisal
(985) 856-2883

RED CROSS (AMBULANCE)

Calle 40 #257, Colonia San Juan
(985) 856-2413

STATE POLICE

Calle 334 x 27 y 25, Colonia Fernando Novelo
(985) 856-3516

ACCOMMODATIONS

CASA AXIS MUNDI

www.casaaxismundi.com

CASA HAMACA GUEST HOUSE

www.casahamaca.com

CASA QUETZAL

www.casa-quetzal.com

EL MESON DE MARQUÉS

www.mesondelmarques.com

ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS

CASA DE LOS VENADOS

Calle 40 #204 x 41, Colonia Centro
Open 10 AM - 5 PM
www.casadelosvenados.com

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CENOTES SAMULA AND X'KEKEN

KM 7 Southeast of Valladolid

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MUNICIPAL MARKET

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MUSEO SAN ROQUE

Calle 41 x 38 y 40, Colonia Centro

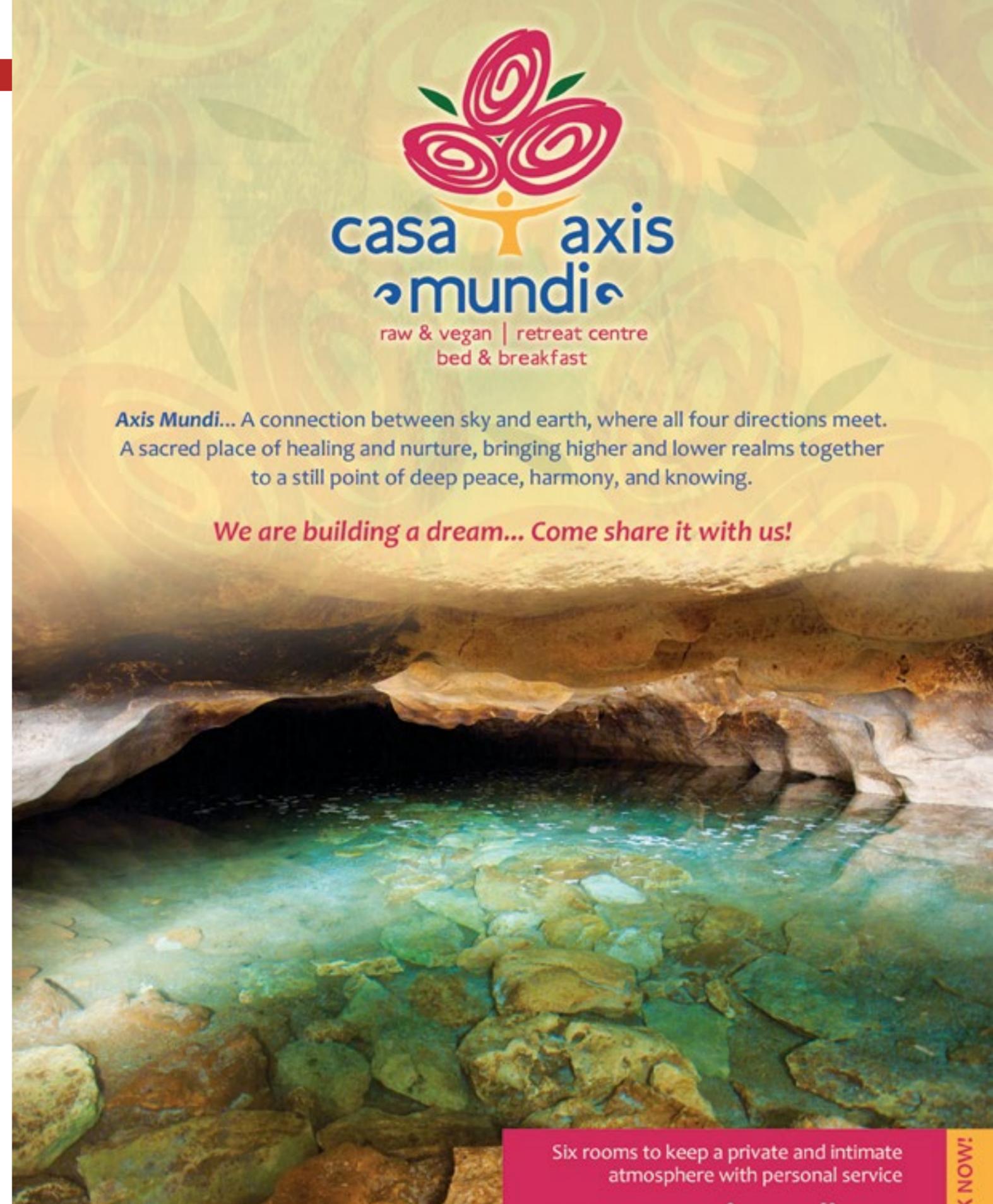
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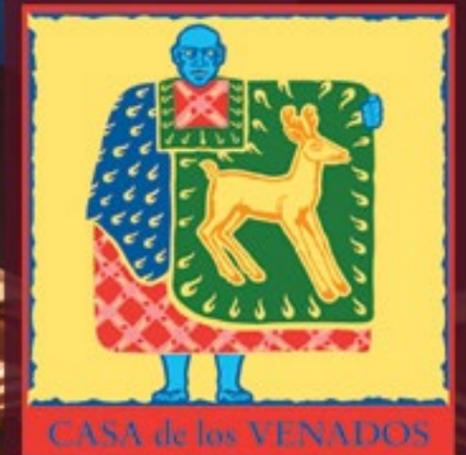
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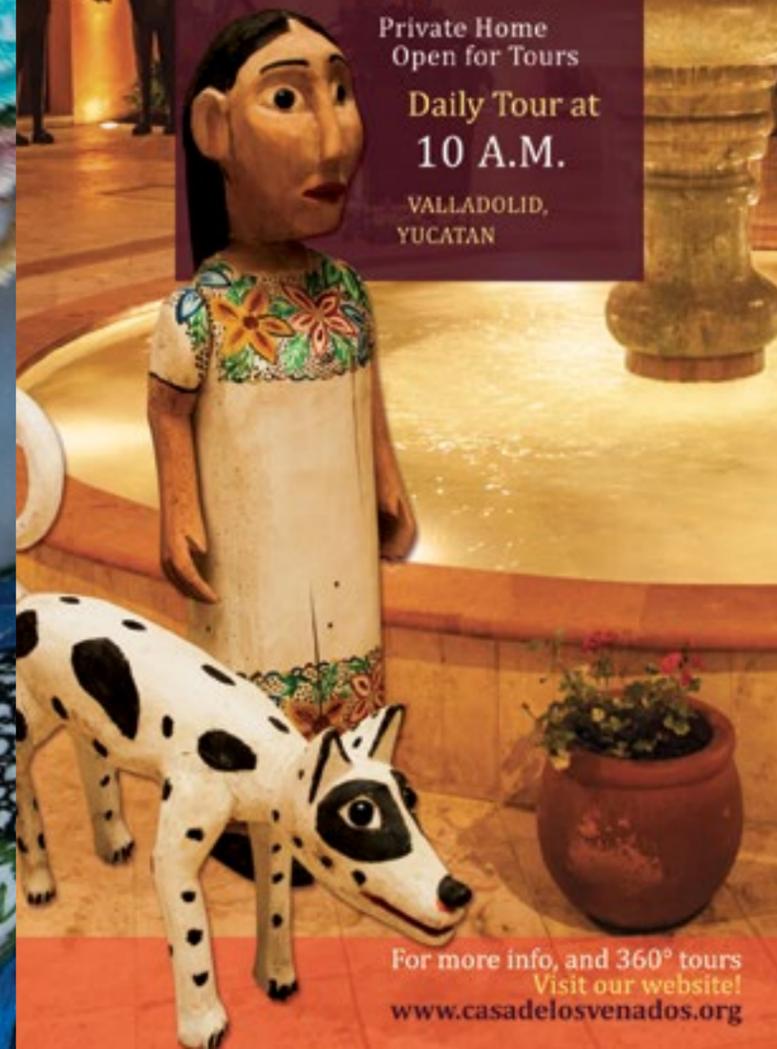
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Yucatan Peninsula





The Yucatan Gulf beach fishing villages and vacation home communities are nestled on either side of the lively port city of Progreso. Far to the west, around the point of the Peninsula, is the flamingo-viewing town of Celestún, where tourists go to tour the mangroves, see flocks of pretty pink birds and eat a fresh-cooked meal while watching a sunset over the water. East of Celestún, but still pretty far west, is Sisal, a sleepy fishing village that was once the main port of export for the *henequén* rope and twine that bears its name. Sisal's community is small now, but foreigners and residents have been slowly buying up the beachfront land and building vacation homes there. The westernmost communities that can be driven to directly from Progreso are Chelem and Chuburná, both popular expatriate communities for inexpensive beach living.

Just west of Progreso is the community of Yucalpetén, which could almost be called a suburb of the port. Progreso itself is the commercial center of the beach communities, with its beachside promenade, the *malecón*, the dock for cruise ships and commercial vessels, a *mercado*, restaurants, banks, an immigration office, grocery stores and more.

To the east of Progreso, a long line of beachside communities stretches across the Yucatan Peninsula, beginning with Chicxulub Puerto, named for the crater centered near there that is credited with ending the reign of the dinosaurs.

Next are the upscale beach communities of Uaymitun and San Bruno, both of which are just areas of beachside homes that range from small to luxuriously magnificent. During the summer, restaurants and dance clubs pop up along this stretch, but during the winter these areas are quiet and peaceful. To the east of these communities, the Reef Yucatan Hotel, the only all-inclusive hotel on the Yucatan Beach Coast, anchors a stretch of beach centered around Telchac Puerto. Between the Reef Yucatan and Telchac Puerto is the small community of Puerto Abrigo, with its sleepy marina and a number of homes placed along a sweepingly beautiful empty beach. Telchac Puerto is a bonafide village, with restaurants and small stores and a main road to Motul (an alternate way to reach the beach without going through Progreso). To the east of Telchac, there are the similarly-sized fishing villages of San Crisanto, Chabihau and Santa Clara. The coastal road, Highway 27, ends at Dzilam Bravo and heads inland from there.

During the winter, the beach is quiet and tranquil. Many Merida families have second homes along the beach, some of which have been in the family for generations. During Easter and from June til August, wives and children spend their days enjoying the companionship of friends and family at the beach, and working husbands commute to Merida to work during shortened work weeks. Summers are hot in the city, but noticeably cooler along the beach, and the summer

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Sunday 8AM - 1PM

months at the beach are full of life, parties, activities and people.

The number of full-time foreign homeowners in beach towns and villages continues to grow, and mixing with returning seasonal homeowners from the States and Canada (Snowbirds), they give the beach communities a different feel from mid-November through April. The ebb and flow of expatriate activities, from fundraisers for the Apoyo programs that support local school children to well-organized spay-and-neuter clinics and Christmas toy drives, bring beach communities like Chelem and Chuburna, and to a lesser extent, Telchac, alive in the winter. Several expatriates have taken on personal projects, such as organizing Little League baseball teams, offering free art classes, tending a community garden and producing a monthly market for local artisans.

With the increase in foreigners, the types of food and music have changed as well, mixing tastes and sounds from North of the Border with the flavors that can only be found in the Yucatan. In the town of Chelem, an expat favorite, you can enjoy Texas style BBQ and a double chocolate brownie with a scoop of Blue Bell ice cream and a generous pour of Kahlua for dessert! Everywhere along the coast, of course, you can enjoy plenty of great Yucatecan seafood dishes to select from, like *tikin x'ic* (grilled fish with achiote) and *ceviche* of all kinds, or *tamales* wrapped in banana leaves and smoked on a grill.

The Yucatan Gulf coast is a water sportsman's paradise. Local fishermen use nothing but a heavy mono-filament line to catch an unbelievable number of fish. Just twenty miles out, the lime basin of the Gulf offers views of balletic jellyfish. Head into the coastal *rias* and catch glimpses of flamingos and brown pelicans or take a quick dip in one of the many smaller *cenotes* nestled in the maze of mangroves. Sail your boat to Alacranes National Park Reef for a pristine scuba experience. The

marinas are numerous, mostly near Progreso, and offer slips for all size watercraft. Some of the larger marinas have mechanics on site, showers, swimming pools, restaurants, and more. The Progreso beach offers jet-ski rentals, and even kite-surfing lessons with a world class, internationally recognized athlete. Or just sit under a *palapa* and watch the world go by with a plate of *pescado frito* (fried fish) and a *cerveza*...

You can't beat the beach!

PROGRESO

GENERAL EMERGENCY NUMBERS

General Emergency

From land phone 066

Green Angels Roadside Assistance

078

Red Cross (Cruz Roja)

(Free but they accept donations)

(969) 935-1624

Police Department

(969) 935-0026

Utilities

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ACCOMMODATIONS

CASA ROSA

www.casarosamexico.com

HOTEL YAKUNAH

www.hotelyakunah.com.mx

FLAMINGOS INN

www.flamingosinn.com

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ZONES

DZIBILCHALTÚN

KM 16 North of Mérida
Exit off the Merida-Progreso carretera

XCAMBO

KM 3 South of Highway 27 (coastal road)
On Highway 172 (south of Telchac Puerto)

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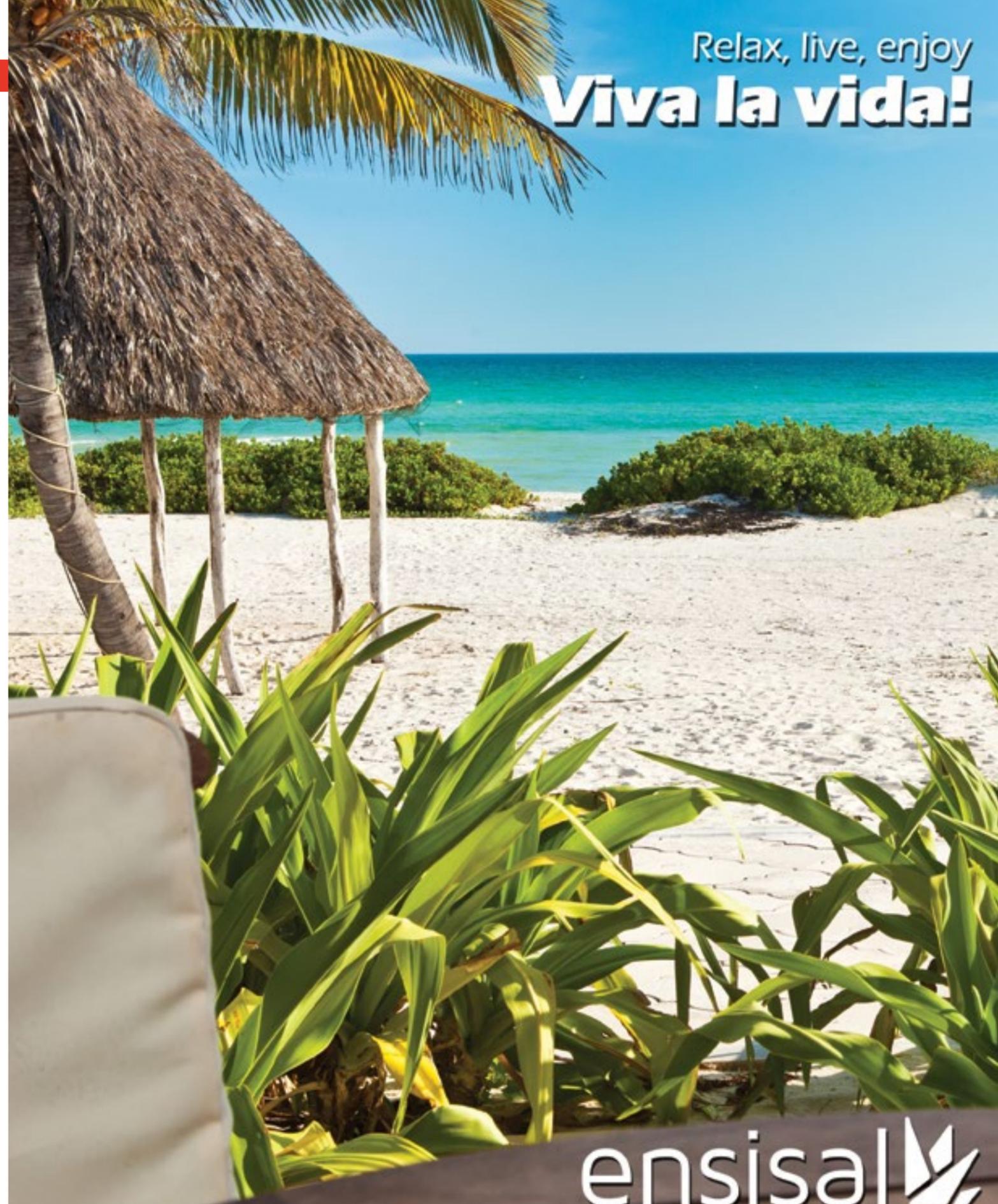
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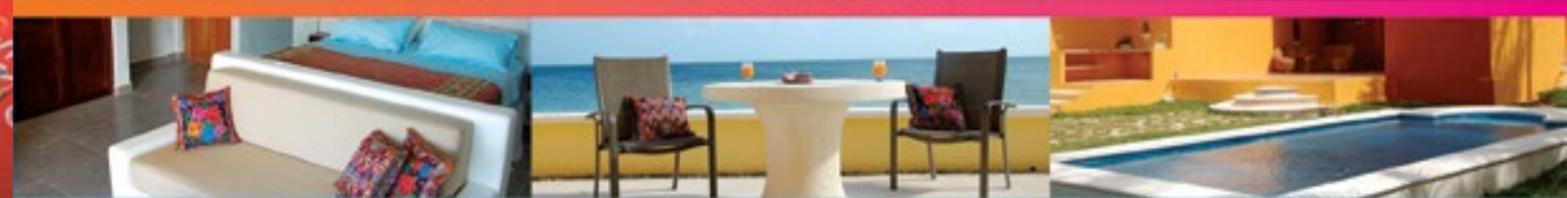
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GUIDE TO YUCATAN LIVING

An English-language Resource for Merida and the Yucatan Peninsula

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HOW TO DIAL A PHONE IN MEXICO | FROM ANYWHERE TO SOMEWHERE ELSE

Land line to land line in same city
(example: Merida to Merida)
Complete dialed number: 123-4567

Land line to cell phone in the same city
(example: Merida to Merida)
Complete dialed number: 044 (969) 123-4567

Land line to cell phone in another neighboring town
(example: Progreso to Merida)
Complete dialed number: 045 (999) 123-4567
If you are calling from Progreso to a Progreso-based cell phone and the person happens to be in Merida for the afternoon, you dial 044 (969) 123-4567

Land line to land line in another neighboring town
(example: Progreso to Merida)
Complete dialed number: 01 (999) 123 4567

Cell phone to cell phone
Complete dialed number: (999) 123-4567

Cell phone to cell phone in another faraway town
(example: Merida to Playa del Carmen)
Complete dialed number: (984) 123-4567

Cell phone to land line in the same town
(example: Merida to Merida)
Complete dialed number: (999) 123-4567 or 123-4567

Cell phone to land line in another town
(Merida to Playa del Carmen)
Complete dialed number: 01 (984) 123-4567

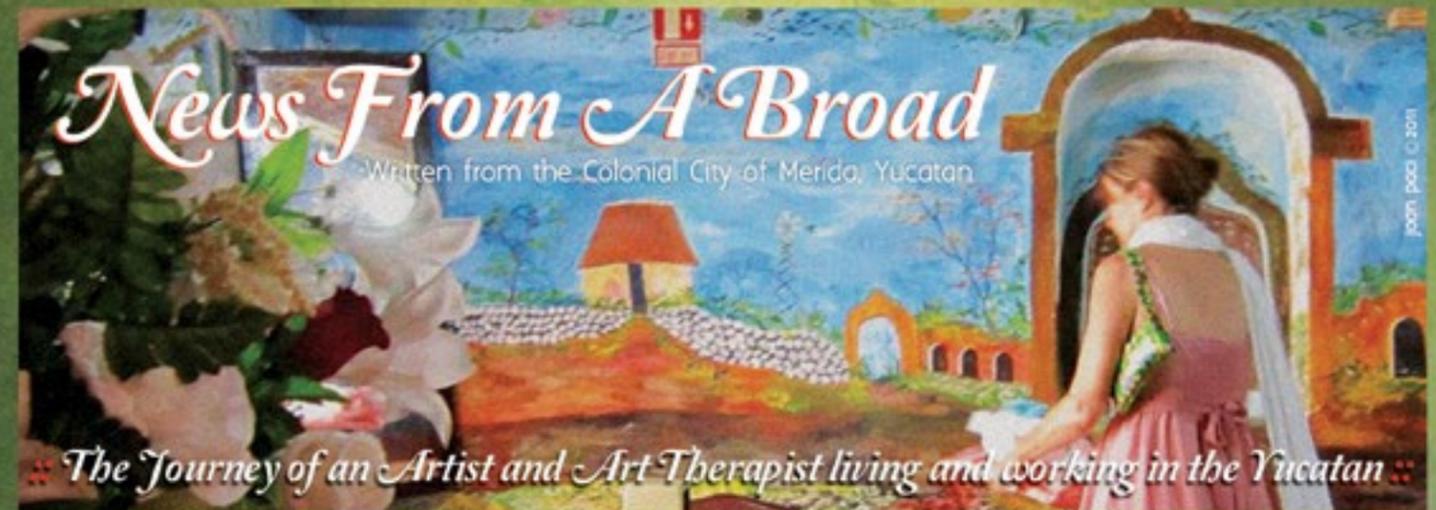
Cell phone to US or Canada cell phone or land line
Complete dialed number: 001 (408) 123-4567
There is no difference in dialing protocol for dialing a landline or a cell phone number

US or Canada to cell phone in Mexico
Complete dialed number: 011 52 1 (999) 123-4567

US or Canada to land line in Mexico
Complete dialed number: 011 52 (999)-123-4567

In this Guide, any phone number with 044 at the front is a cell phone number.

(Gracias especial to Khaki Scott and Malcolm Bedell)



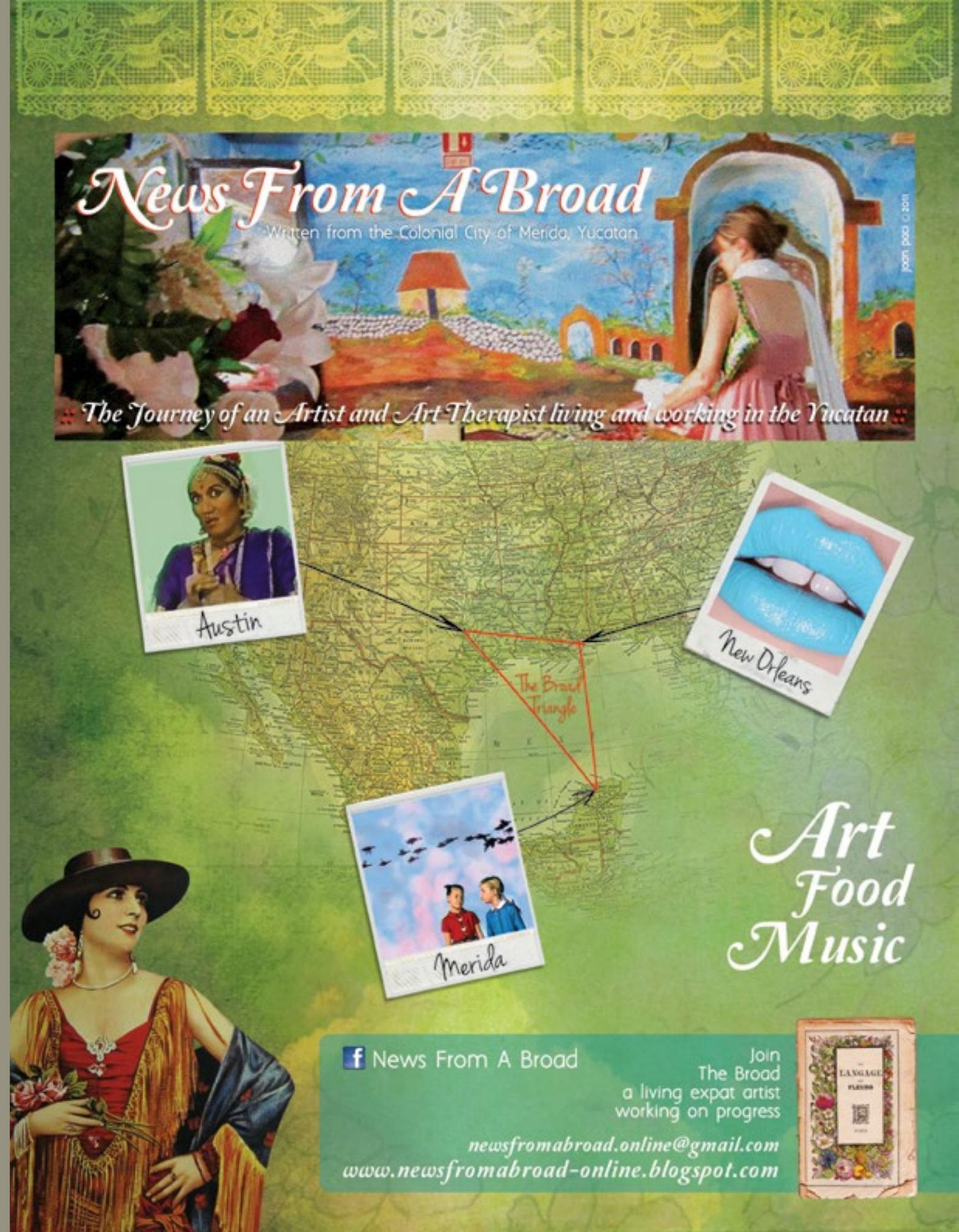
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