



IWLS

International Wilderness Leadership School

MEXICO VOLCANOES & ROCK CLIMBING

Pre-Departure & Travel Information

Reminders

Please make sure you have completed the following before you course departure date:

- Registration Form (needs to be submitted along with a deposit to secure your space on a course)
- Health Form (30 days prior to departure)
- Rental Equipment Form (30 days prior to departure)
- Release, Acknowledgment of Risk and Indemnity Agreement (30 days prior to departure)
- Travel itinerary to IWLS office (30 days prior to departure)
- Copy of Passport to IWLS office (30 days prior to departure)
- Paid in Full (90 days prior to departure)

Mexico

The course starts in Mexico City, one of the largest cities in the world, and an epicenter of Mexican history and culture. It is a fascinating city, rich with history and culture. We stay here the first and last night of our trip. We'll also explore the rural side of Mexico. Peaceful towns such as Hidalgo, Amecameca and Tlachichuca are representative of the rich Mexican heritage.

Arrival Information

Day 0: Pre-trip meeting at 6pm at Hotel Catedral

Day 1: This is the start date listed on the website. Meet at Hotel Catedral at 9:00 AM.

Please notify the IWLS office of your expected arrival or flight information as soon as possible and let us know of any delays for changes. We will have an IWLS representative available to pick you up from the airport.

Airline Routing and/or Other Travel Options

The Mexico City International airport is a major international hub with daily flights from many major US cities. Make certain that your ticket matches the full name on your passport. Plan your arrival in Mexico City no later than 6pm the night before your course start date. If time permits, we recommend arriving one day early to provide leeway for any flight or baggage connection trouble. Please make certain that we have your flight and arrival information so that we can meet you at the airport! Always reconfirm your flights within 72 hours of departure time.

Baggage

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Typically you are allowed two 50 lb. bags at no extra charge. For bags weighing 50-70 lbs. there is usually an additional charge per bag. It is often cheaper to have two bags over 50 lbs. than a third bag. If you travel through other countries for a stopover you may be charged excess baggage fees for anything over 44lbs. (20 kilos) each flight. If possible, pack your backpack and gear inside a large duffle bag.

Documents

A passport is required for all international travel with IWLS. Please make a photocopy of your passport and send it to the IWLS office. Check the expiration date of your passport and have it renewed. Some countries will not allow you to enter the country if your passport expires within 6 months of your return date. Make certain to copy your passport, airline tickets, credit cards, traveler's checks, immunization book, etc. This can be very helpful in the event that anything is lost or stolen. It is also a good idea to send an electronic copy of your documents to a personal email account.

Visas

No visa is required before arriving in the country.

Immunizations

There may be some suggested immunizations based on the location of your course. We recommend that you check with your doctor for the most current immunization information. Another good resource is the [CDC website](#). If you have received immunizations, either in the past, or for this trip, make certain to bring your immunization book/card.

Arrival and Departure Taxes

There is generally a departure tax, typically \$20-\$35, but it depends on current exchange rates.

Currency

In Mexico the exchange rate is about ten pesos to one dollar, but it may vary throughout the year. Traveler's checks and cash are both easily exchangeable. ATM's with the Cirrus network are widely available and work well. Check with your bank before traveling.

Language

Spanish is the official language, but English is common.

Sending Money

We recommend bringing at least \$500 USD for international courses and \$250 for domestic courses in cash or travelers checks. This money is to cover any personal expenses before or after your course. If you are



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planning on traveling in-conjunction with your course the suggested amounts above may not be enough. Always carry a credit card for emergencies as well, however they are not accepted in all locations so make sure you have enough cash for the necessary expenses.

Local Transportation

From Mexico City we will take a private van and 4X4 vehicles to the start of each climb.

Time Zones

Central Standard Time

Climate

Mexico is warm at this time of year, with daytime temperatures generally in the 80's and 90's. Trekking temperatures can vary from warm days to cooler nights, and temperatures high on the mountain can reach as low as -10F.

Photography

We recommend bringing a small lightweight digital camera. A camera with a view finder will allow you to see the photo in high light conditions as well as increase the battery life. A camera that can accommodate AA batteries will allow you to carry extra batteries that won't cost an arm and a leg. Remember to bring an extra memory card.

Food

Snack food may be difficult to locate in international locations so flexibility is key. Avoid all foods washed with water as many sources may be contaminated, examples of these foods are lettuce and unpeeled fruits and vegetables. Your instructors will provide you direction in you food choices but the decision of what to consume is ultimately your responsibility.

During the course, food will be provided in the field and we will eat out occasionally while in the city. Bring money for additional local fare and bottled water.

Drinking Water

All of our water will be treated with Iodine, water filters, or boiling. To be safe treat all water or drink bottled water. The Polar Pure Crystal Iodine system is convenient and works well. Filters will not go above base camp because of their weight so Iodine tablets or crystals are essential.

Cultural Considerations



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When travelling internationally, special attention needs to be paid to local customs and laws. For example in some Latin American cultures it is considered unacceptable to wear shorts in public. Another consideration would be the display of wealth in an impoverished area; this can be seen as disrespectful and possibly lead to unwanted confrontation. We recommend reading up on the customs of the area that you are travelling to prior to your departure, The Lonely Planet is an excellent resource. Please consult your instructors for information specific to your location.

Medical

Please consult your physician and have them complete the health form provided by IWLS. If you require any personal medications, or, have any pre-existing medical problems, make certain to re-confirm with your guide upon arrival. Furthermore, IWLS requires that all students have their own health insurance. Individuals are solely responsible for any medical costs, including all associated rescue, evacuation, and transportation costs. Please take time to review your medical insurance policy. Make certain that your coverage extends to the location of your course, and that it provides coverage for any potential, associated, costs. Many policies will provide coverage for travel abroad for a small additional fee. AIG travel guard, listed below, offers temporary health insurance for an additional fee.

Medications

Please make sure you have the following medications for personal use on your IWLS course:

- All prescription and/or non-prescription medications you are currently taking.
- A broad-spectrum antibiotic prescribed by your doctor (this is required).
- Aspirin or Ibuprofen

The following high altitude medications are required, in conjunction with the general medications listed above, for all IWLS courses that go above 15,000ft.

- Acetazolamide, also known as Diamox can be taken to help in the acclimatization process and/or to relieve the symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness or AMS.
- Dexamethasone, also know as Decadron can be taken to relieve the symptoms of High Altitude Cerebral Edema or HACE.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is required for international courses and highly recommend for domestic courses. In many case travel insurance will cover medical expenses, evacuation costs, lost baggage, travel delays, and other costs in the event you need to cancel your trip. We have worked with almost every provider of travel insurance and feel strongly that the Adventure Travel Protection Plan from AIG/ Travel Guard is the best one available. It is one of the only plans that covers high altitude climbing and has significant benefits if purchased within 15 days of making your trip deposit. Details can be found on [our website](#).



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**FOR THINGS YOU CAN'T
IMAGINE WHEN TRAVELING,**

**AIG Travel
Guard.**

Lodging / Hotels

If you are planning on arriving in Mexico City early, or, if you wish to extend your stay after the trip, we would be happy to assist you with hotel reservations. The hotel we use is Hotel Catedral <http://www.hotelcatedral.com/> Rooms are in the 40-60 dollar range.

Will there be a place for me to store my things while I'm on the course?

While in the field, we will be storing extra gear and personal items at Hotel Catedral. IWLS is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items. Therefore, we recommend you do not leave any valuable items.

Training and Fitness

Your course will consist of long days of moderate activity which will require good aerobic (endurance) conditioning. You should create a well-rounded work out plan prior to your course which combines endurance, strength, flexibility and balance. Depending on the nature of your course the training program will vary slightly but the underlying principle should be aerobic conditioning. Examples of aerobic exercises include running, cycling, Nordic skiing, and swimming. Ideally you want to start your work out with a warm up of 5-10 minutes at 50-60% of your maximum heart rate, then continue for another 20-60 minutes at 65-80% of your maximum heart rate, and finish with a cool down of 5-10 minutes at 50-60% of your maximum heart rate. This should be practiced 3-4 times a week for up to eight weeks before your course start date. A strength training workout (ie. weight-lifting) could be a good supplement to your work out plan, but not a substitute. Good conditioning will not only improve your chances for success but will also improve the quality of your course. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions on specific training programs. The possibilities are endless, so get creative and have fun!

Our Instructors

IWLS instructors are widely recognized as some of the very best in their field and have practical leadership experience from around the globe. They are well trained and have an uncommon enthusiasm for sharing their skill and knowledge, borne out of a passion for outdoor exploration. IWLS leaders are technically skilled, passionate about wilderness, and committed to each and every student. Their dedication insures each student an educational experience that will exceed their expectations! In addition to the technical skills, IWLS instructors are equally experts in the "softer skills" of risk management, client care, and group dynamics. Not only will they insure a quality experience for each student, but will also work to impart this judgment to them.

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