

Local Information for Yoga in Mexico 2010..

The following is a collection of information and ideas gathered over time by yoga students visiting the Puerto Morelos area. A lot is covered, but this is not meant to take the place of a guide book, especially for the first-time traveler. Enjoy.

- **Puerto Morelos** is a small fishing village in the Yucatan Peninsula, aka the Mayan Riviera, 22 miles (36 KM) south of Cancun, in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo. **Villas Shanti** is a retreat center with 8 rooms surrounding a central courtyard. There are also two rooms in a house on the premises. Amenities include modern air-conditioned rooms with baths, kitchenettes, balconies, daily maid service, and bottled water. Also within the compound is a large Yoga palappa and the private home of Jack and Jean Loew.

- **You must have a passport to travel to Mexico.** A driver's license as another proof of ID may be useful as well.

- Especially if you are a first-time traveler, current **guidebooks** on the Yucatan Peninsula have helpful information about being in a foreign country. You can also check www.puertomorelos.com.mx <<<http://www.puertomorelos.com.mx/>>> . If you don't speak Spanish, a pocket **phrase book** is useful. Although you can get by with English, Many Mexicans seem to appreciate a little effort from visitors.

- Last we checked, no **shots** are absolutely necessary for this area of Mexico. I have not known anyone to get shots before coming to this area. But if you are concerned, you may want to check with your **local Travel Clinic.**

- You may also want to call your **health insurance** provider to find out proper procedure for medical emergencies in foreign countries. If you are concerned, you may want to take traveler's insurance in case a medical evacuation or hospital assistance is needed. Also, and I will mention this again, please send me a list of people to contact in case of an emergency. On the few rare occasions, we have received excellent medical and dental care, in the past.

- One way to make life a little easier in case of **loss or theft**, is to make two copies of your travel identification, along with copies of credit or cash cards. Leave one copy in the States with someone you can call and stash the other in your carry-on bag. There is a closet in every room in which you can lock your valuables.

- **Phones...** There are no public phones at Villas Shanti though there are some on the road near-by as well as in town. **You may want to check the International Plans of your cell phone provider.** You can also go on-line and look up **International Calling Options**

It is also possible, cost effective, and generally works well to

purchase a phone card in town. There are two or three internet cafes in town as well. In case of emergency, you may call Jack and Jean at their private number, 011-52-998-871-0040. Please, for emergencies only.

• **Cash** and **credit cards** seem to be the legal tender of choice. But cash mostly as many places will not accept credit cards. You don't need Mexican currency (called NP, New Peso) until you are in Puerto Morelos. There are at least three **money-changing** venues on the square in PM, open until 9 or 10pm, no fees. There are two ATM machines there; they deliver pesos, although **it's best not to rely solely on your cash card**, as things can break down and change in Mexico all the time. Your bank may charge higher fees for international withdrawals and some limit how much can be withdrawn each time you use your card. Bring cash for transportation to Puerto Morelos and have some US singles handy for tipping in the Cancun airport.

Villas Shanti now has wi-fi up and running so you may bring your lap tops (though for more of a get away and total immersion, you might want to leave them at home!!) and use out in the courtyard or in your rooms. This service is open to only to us, the participants of the workshop.

• **In the winter, Puerto Morelos is generally in the 80's and the air is moist.**

Pack sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses. Things do not dry quickly, so if you swim a lot, bring two bathing suits and beach towels (bath towels are provided). Pack anything like cough drops or gel caps in air tight containers. Leather gets soggy. You may want to bring extras of critical items, like prescription glasses.

Weather can be cool and windy at times, so bring pants, shoes, and a light jacket.

Some other possibly useful items: disposable poncho, bug repellent for visits to ruins, ear plugs if you sleep lightly, water bottle, flashlight, plastic bags for wet suits, mask-snorkel- fins (though you can rent these in town). In case your bags don't arrive with you, pack anything valuable or that you can't live without in your carry-on, such as jewelry, medication and anything you'll need in the first 24 hours of your visit.

***note about sunscreen and snorkeling:* there is a protected reef off the shore of Puerto Morelos. if you plan on snorkeling, waterproof and sweat resistant products should be used so that it doesn't come off in the water. it has been shown that sunscreen is bad for the reef, fish, and plants.. in the past we have been able to purchase sunscreen especially designed for snorkeling.

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