

Daily Schedule

- **7:00 AM** – Breakfast
- **8:00 AM–12:00 PM** – Clinic
 - In Puerto: You may leave early if no patients, but try to stay the full 4 hours—there's always something to learn.
 - In Oaxaca: Must stay the full time—however it's easier since there's more going on.
- **12:30 PM or 1:00 PM** – Return home and eat lunch
- **Afternoon Classes**
 - Puerto: 2:00 PM–4:00 PM, runs 2 hours
 - Oaxaca: starts at 3:00 PM or 4:00 PM, runs 2 hours
- **After Classes** – Free time!
 - Puerto: beach, surfing, explore
 - Oaxaca: markets, architecture, explore

Weekends: Turtle release, huatulco beach, hierva de agua, monte alban, so many more!

A real example: We took a trip for the weekend to Oaxaca city, saw Monte Alban, hierva de agua, and learned how traditional rugs are made

A reflection on the cultural or societal context connected to that tip: Lunch is later than what is had in the US. This was ok with me, as the meals they serve are HUGE. I did not need to buy dinner every night. When I did, it was a salad, because I was not eating enough veggies.

Getting to Clinic

- **Taxi** (fast, more expensive, remember you're going to get charged more bc you're a tourist)
- **"Colectivo" trucks** (only in puerto, blue-covered, 12 pesos; watch the sign for route)
- **Bus** (only in Oaxaca, 10 pesos)
- **Walking** (only if close)

A real example: During my placement, I often took the small blue "colectivos", the local shared truck beds with sautered benches in a truck bed, with a blue tarp material on top. Although I can't remember their official name, these vehicles provided an efficient and engaging way to travel. Passengers should always hold on firmly, as the ride can be quite fast and bumpy. It is common for men to offer their seats to women and children

A reflection on the cultural or societal context connected to that tip: These vans represent the puerto's local primary public transportation, relied upon by residents more than tourists, who typically opt for taxis. Drivers and fellow passengers are generally welcoming and willing to assist with directions or route information. Men giving up their seats highlighted a more patriarchal aspect of local society compared to the United States.

Taxis operate under regulated fare structures to protect passengers. There is a difference between collective and a regular taxi. For example, a shared taxi trip from Copala to Puerto should cost approximately \$45 MXN per person, whereas a private ride from Zicatela to Rinconada should be around 90 MXN total, not per passenger. If a driver attempts to charge more, or applies a per-person rate for a private trip, report the incident to local authorities or your program coordinator. In one instance, a driver tried to add 30 MXN to our fare while I was with my family. My host mother insisted on the correct rate and promptly addressed the overcharge. Always verify the agreed fare before departing.

Clinic Tips

- Bring a **notebook** and pick a topic each day (ex: diabetes, dengue, health barriers)
- Due to us not having licenses to practice, we cannot participate. The program states we must not be exposed to bodily fluids. This means besides sometimes taking blood pressure, height, weight, circumference and talking to the patient in conversation, you will be shadowing.
- Ask nurses/doctors to teach you simple skills (blood pressure, height, weight)
- Rural clinics in Puerto usually have one doctor and one nurse; Oaxaca Level 1 has many specialists
- Try the **CRIT** (children's rehab center) in Oaxaca for physical therapy and other services. Love the staff, love the rotation, also a key piece of the healthcare system that was not talked about through other clinics I worked at.

A real example: During my clinical shifts in Puerto, there were times when no patients arrived for the entire four-hour block. Even then, you can always find something to learn. Whether it's counseling on birth control, administering vaccines, discussing dengue or Chagas prevention, or observing how clinics engage with community health and vector control programs.

A reflection on the cultural or societal context connected to that tip: Mexico's healthcare system differs greatly from what you may know. Some treatments and medications are very easy to obtain, while others are harder to access. Always ask questions to understand why certain services are available or limited, this context will deepen your learning and appreciation of the local system.

Uniform & Gear

- **Puerto:** any color scrubs or business casual; your choice. I recommend scrubs though
- **Oaxaca:**
 - Level 2 hospital: white scrubs & shoes (you can borrow them in Oaxaca from Becari school- thank you <3)
 - Everywhere else, business casual or scrubs. Business casual is more common here
- Always bring your **white coat**, a few **masks**, and **comfy shoes** (you'll walk >10 000 steps/day)
- **Bug spray** is a must—you don't want dengue (more common in Puerto)

A real example: One person from my group got dengue, and trust me, you don't want it.

A reflection on the cultural or societal context connected to that tip: Dengue is especially common in Puerto. Many residents distrust government efforts to control mosquitoes (such as adding pellets to drinking water that kill mosquitos), so they may reject prevention programs. This mistrust can make it harder to share important information and can lead to more frequent outbreaks.

Safety & Contacts

- Trust your gut—if something feels off, speak up.
- Keep emergency numbers saved (program staff, OSU office, embassy)
- Site coordinators: Sol (Soledad) in Puerto; Martha in Oaxaca
- Host family

Do this. Have them in your phone before you arrive.

Spanish Classes

- **School:** Tourist school (Puerto: OASIS; Oaxaca: Becari), not an actual university. You will not get graded, have exams, and usually no homework.
- **Length:** 2 hours each, unless it's a private in puerto, then it's 1.5
- **Notes:**
 - Not university-level, but useful grammar review
 - Speak up if you don't like your teacher—ask for a change!
 - Oaxaca teachers ask what you want to learn (better for medical terms)

A real example: My first Spanish teacher spent every class on his phone. We'd read aloud from his ipad, then wait in awkward silence until he realized we'd finished. One week, he suddenly had to leave, and our replacement teacher was fantastic. We asked the program to keep her, and they did.

A reflection on the cultural or societal context connected to that tip: Everyone learns differently, and teaching styles vary. Because this school is for foreign students, language gaps can make it hard to get the most from a class. Speak up for your needs, this program is flexible, and advocating for yourself will help you learn more.