



SPANISH IMMERSION AT HABLA

OUR APPROACH

At Habla learning Spanish is a journey that extends beyond the grammatical structures and vocabulary that make up the language. Our learning program is based on developing the four linguistic skills: speaking, writing, listening and reading. What makes Habla distinct is that these foundational skills are enhanced by four elements.

Culture - Language is embedded in a larger cultural context. At Habla students learn language while connecting with the traditions, foods, and customs of the culture as well as learning about current social and political events. Exploring literature and the arts are also central to Habla's Spanish courses.

Story - We share stories and make connections between our personal experiences and the world around us in order to make learning memorable and meaningful.

Community - Creating a safe space for all students is critical to learning a new language. Adult classes at Habla are all six or fewer students and each class is tailored to their language level (many language schools will place students from different levels in the same classroom). We adjust classes based on the learning needs of the students.

Alegría - Creating a learning environment where students feel alegría - joy - is essential to the Habla vision. Our teachers understand that students have different learning rhythms and goals and we are sensitive to different needs.



A DAY AT HABLA

Students are welcome every morning at 9:00 to enjoy a light breakfast and to practice Spanish with professors and other immersion students. At 9:30 we divide into groups according to level and begin class. At 11:30am we have a 20-minute break where we serve a traditional Yucatecan or Mexican lunch before returning to class until 1:30 pm. Classes for kids, teens, and adults all take place at the same time to accommodate families traveling together.

On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons students will participate in a variety of cultural experiences. During this time, students will have the opportunity to practice their Spanish outside of the classroom and learn about Mexican culture. Experiences might include cooking classes, museum trips, dance classes (*salsa* and *jarana*), park visits and touring art galleries. These activities are optional for kids.

Please note: We schedule the times for cultural experiences weekly. Scheduled experiences are subject to change due to circumstances out of our control (weather etc.). Your course payment covers the cultural experiences, including entrance fees and transport to and from Habla.

SPANISH IMMERSION FOR ADULTS

Our adult classes are offered to students eighteen years and older. We offer Spanish for every level from beginning to advanced learners of every age.

A new course starts every Monday and is held on a weekly basis. Spanish Immersion is open nearly every week of the year except for certain holidays. A few weeks a year are considered short weeks (four-day weeks) due to a Mexican holiday and are offered at a discount. See the schedule below to plan your upcoming Immersion experience accordingly. If your weeks are not listed they are regular five-day weeks. During the breaks Habla is still open for private tutoring.



4 day immersion weeks are offered at a special price.

YEAR	DATE(S) CLOSED	HOLIDAY	NOTES
2021	January 1st	New Years Day	Closed
	March 29th - April 2nd	Spring Break	Closed
	May 1st	Labor Day	4 day week
	September 13th	Independence Day	4 day week
	November 15th	Mexican Revolution	4 day week
	December 20th	Holiday Week	4 day week
	December 27th	New Years Week	4 day week
2022	March 21st	Natalicio de Benito Juárez	4 day week
	April 11th	Viernes Santo	4 day week
	September 12th	Independence Day	4 day week
	November 21st	Mexican Revolution	4 day week
2023	March 20th	Natalicio de Benito Juárez	4 day week
	April 4th	Viernes Santo	4 day week
	May 1st	Labor Day	4 day week
	November 20th	Mexican Revolution	4 day week
	December 25th	Holiday Week	4 day week



SPANISH IMMERSION FOR KIDS AND TEENAGERS

The Creative Space is our immersion program divided into two programs—one for kids ages 5-11, and another for teenagers ages 12-17. The Creative Space is a project-based environment where students learn Spanish through hands-on activities. Students learn Spanish by engaging in “story”—the stories other students tell, imaginative storytelling, and the stories they read in authentic literature from Latin America. The Creative Space is also an arts integrated environment—students learn by moving, painting, drawing, writing and engaging with each other in a supportive community setting.

SPANISH SUMMER CAMP FOR KIDS

The Habla Spanish Summer Camp is an opportunity for students to learn in one of our most engaging settings. Each summer is based around a theme that is explored through multiple art forms. The goal is always for students to develop their Spanish. Join students from around the world for this cross-cultural adventure. Offered June through mid-August.

SPECIAL COURSE: *DÍA DE MUERTOS*

At Habla we believe that connecting language with culture is at the heart of language learning. To honor this connection we have designed a course inspired by *Día de Muertos* or *Hanal Pixan* (“Food for the Souls” in Mayan), one of the most important holidays in Mexico. *Día de Muertos* is offered once a year during the final week of October or the first of November. During this week, students will study Spanish by learning about the cultural traditions, artwork, essays, and literature that examine Mexico’s spiritual and playful relationship with death, while also exploring the memories of their ancestors and honoring loved ones who have left this world.

Students will also have the opportunity to participate in cultural experiences during the week, such as Paseo de las *animas*, where students join the Yucatecan community in appreciating the altars for the dead, witnessing the colorful parade, and walking to the traditionally decorated cemetery in *centro*.



We also take an excursion to Cholul, a small community just outside of Merida where students will learn the traditional method for cooking the most popular *Hanal Pixan* dish: *el pib*. Students will learn how to prepare and cook their own pib culminating in a mid-day feast.

To culminate the experience, students will build a Day of the Dead altar and share a written piece to honor our loved ones who have passed. Finally we all gather around the table to enjoy traditional food and drink and celebrate life.

Space is limited for Habla's Día de Muertos program.

DÍA DE MUERTOS PROGRAM DATES 2021-2023

YEAR	IMMERSION WEEK
2021	November 1st - 5th
2022	October 31st to November 4th
2023	October 30th to November 3rd

HOMESTAYS

Students learning Spanish at Habla have the option of staying with a Mexican family. All of our families are carefully selected and have experience inviting students into their homes. All the homes are clean, comfortable, and have private rooms. Air conditioning is optional and is dependent on availability.

Our homestay coordinator maintains contact with the host family and will check regularly to ensure students are having a pleasant stay. If you decide to choose our homestay option, the coordinator will send you a questionnaire so we can learn more about your preferences, health concerns and match you with the best home for you and your family.



Homestays include the following:

- A private, furnished room
- Bed linens and towels
- Hot water
- Housekeeping
- Use of common areas
- Wi-fi
- Fan
- A/C (extra cost, upon availability)
- Three meals a day (breakfast-lunch-dinner)
- Pickup from Mérida airport or bus station for an additional \$20 USD

SPANISH IMMERSION COSTS

First Week.....	\$ 325 USD
Second Week.....	\$ 325 USD
Third Week.....	\$ 300 USD
Additional Weeks (after third week)	\$ 250 USD per week
The Creative Space (ages 5-17)	\$ 250 USD per week
Habla Summer Camp for Kids	\$ 250 USD per week
One-on-one tutoring	\$ 25 USD/hour per person

Upon registering for Spanish Immersion, there will be an initial deposit of \$150 to reserve a space for the week(s) desired. This deposit goes towards your total and is refundable up to 10 days before the course begins. All course costs include breakfast, lunch and afternoon cultural experiences.

DISCOUNTS

Group and family discounts are available for adults and children enrolled in any of Habla’s programs. Discounts apply to Habla programs only, not to homestays.

3-4 participants	15% discount on all programs
5-6 participants	20% discount on all programs
7+ participants	25% discount on all programs



HOMESTAY COSTS

\$35 USD per person per night without A/C
\$40 USD per person per night with A/C

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PAYMENTS

Once Habla receives a new registration, we send a payment request for the initial deposit via PayPal to reserve a space for the week(s) desired. The remaining balance can be paid either via PayPal or in cash upon arrival to Habla. Habla will send the remaining balance two weeks before the course begins. Payments made on weekends will be confirmed on our end the following week. We only accept credit card payments through Paypal.

CANCELLATIONS

In the event a student needs to cancel their reservation with Spanish Immersion, they may do so up to 10 days before the course begins to receive the *full reimbursement* (including your deposit), minus a \$15 processing fee. If cancellations are made up to 10 days before the start of the program, we cannot return the initial deposit of \$150 but will gladly return the price of the course. Once courses begin each week we cannot refund that week's course.

HOMESTAYS

Homestays are a unique experience where students have the opportunity to live with a Mexican family. While some people absolutely love this experience, others decide after a few days that a homestay just isn't for them. That being said, students can request and reserve an unlimited number of weeks with a homestay, however students will be charged one week at a time. Once the payment is made, it is non-refundable.



We kindly ask to be informed by Wednesday of the paid week if students will be reserving another week in the homestay. We ask this out of consideration for our hosts, as they make arrangements in advance for their guests' comfort. If students are satisfied with the homestay and would like to stay longer, we will then charge for the subsequent week and so forth.

Please note: We cannot offer discounts for those in homestays who wish to travel on the weekends. While belongings are in the house, or if the following week has been reserved, the family cannot accommodate other guests. Furthermore, meals are included in the homestay price; therefore, we cannot offer discounts to those who do not eat the meals the family has planned to prepare.

OTHER HOUSING OPTIONS

Some students would rather stay in a hotel or hostel, so we have arranged a list to make the search easier. Some of these hotels are closer to Habla, while others are in *centro* (downtown Mérida), in walking distance of great restaurants and cultural events. All are a short distance from Habla by Uber, bus, or taxi.

Not interested in staying in a hotel or hostel? Look around [Airbnb](#) for something a bit more private. Mérida is packed with gorgeous homes to make for an unforgettable experience.



HOTELS AND BED AND BREAKFASTS

Hotel Zar is a small business hotel in walking distance from Habla and local restaurants, and is a short taxi ride to *centro*. Habla students will enjoy 100 pesos off each night of their stay if they mention they are with Habla.

- Free Wifi
- Room service
- Air conditioning
- Breakfast available
- Laundry service

Location: Colonia México (very close to Habla).

Casa del Maya is a quaint family-owned bed and breakfast where guests can feel at home and have delicious meals after a day of learning. Students can use the code `habla10` when booking their stay on the Casa del Maya website to receive a 10% discount.

- Outdoor pool
- Free Wifi
- Air conditioning
- Complimentary breakfast

Location: Parque Santa Ana, Centro

Hotel Medio Mundo is an intimate bed-and-breakfast style hotel tucked away in centro. Don't miss the hotel's highly-rated restaurant *Lo Que Hay*, which offers a vegan/vegetarian dinner from a different region of the world every night. Hotel Medio Mundo offer discounts up to 50% for guests during low season. Students can email the hotel prior to booking to learn about available discounts.

- Outdoor pool
- Free Wifi
- Air conditioning

Location: Parque Santa Lucia, Centro



HOSTELS

Nomadas is the preferred hostel of younger and older travelers alike and is equipped with dorm-style accommodations and private rooms. Guests can relax in their beautiful garden and even partake in free yoga and dance classes.

- Outdoor pool
- Free Wifi
- Free breakfast

Location: Parque Santa Lucia, Centro

Siete Cuatro Guest House is a popular hostel with a great location. Situated in a newly renovated colonial home, guests will feel at home thanks to the friendly staff and will sleep great in the comfortable rooms. Habla students will receive 10% off their stay by using the code `convenios2019` when booking on Siete Cuatro's website.

- Free Wifi
- Air conditioning
- Free breakfast
- Bicycle hire

Location: Just outside Parque de Santiago, Centro



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

+ How is Habla different than other language schools?

Students who have been to Habla can explain much better than we can about the Habla experience. See the extensive reviews on [Tripadvisor](#) and [Facebook](#) to learn more about Spanish Immersion at Habla.

+ What is your building like? Where are you located?

We are located in one of the most charming neighborhoods of Mérida, Colonia México, in a spacious two floor building surrounded by beautiful gardens and trees. All of our classrooms are equipped with Wi-fi and air conditioning. Habla is located near several bus stops, so students can enjoy easy access to downtown and other neighborhoods.

+ Can I receive college credit?

We do not offer university credit. In some cases universities will award credit for Spanish Immersion. This needs to be arranged prior to enrolling at Habla by the students with their universities. We will be happy to provide curricular documentation and descriptions of our programs to help facilitate the process with your university.

+ Is Mérida safe?

Not only is Mérida one of the safest cities in Mexico, but it's also one of the safest in the world. That being said, we suggest keeping an eye on your belongings when you're in a public place, lock your doors, and practice general vigilance just as you would in any other city.

+ How can I get around Mérida? Is there public transportation? Are there taxis or rideshare options?

Walking is perfectly safe in Mérida and many of the students walk from their homestays or hotels depending on how far away they are. It can be a bit too far to walk from centro (downtown) so most people take a bus or Uber if they are staying in hotels in that area. An Uber ride from Centro is about 50-60 pesos (roughly \$3USD). Buses are 8 pesos per ride. The bus stop to head downtown is just one block away from Habla.



+ How far is your school from the beach?

Habla is about 25 minutes from Progreso, a small town located on the beach with a beautiful *malecón* (pier) and many restaurants with fresh seafood. The ocean is warm year-round and perfect for swimming.

+ How far are you from Mayan sites?

Mérida is located near the most extraordinary sites in the Mayan world. We are about an hour drive to Uxmal and an hour and a half drive from Chichén Itzá. There are also other sites located just outside of the city. We can help you arrange a tour to sites or let you know how to take public transportation.

+ Should I bring my devices? Do you have wireless Internet at Habla?

We have free wireless available at our school that you are welcome to use while studying here. Feel free to bring your computer or other devices and use them as you please.

+ What do I need to bring?

The sun is very strong here so we suggest you pack sunscreen, sunglasses, and clothes that will help keep you cool. A sun hat and light, long-sleeved clothing will help protect your skin, while also keeping your body temperature down. You should also pack insect repellent for mosquitoes, especially during the rainy season (June to October). At Habla we are committed to caring for the environment, so please bring a water bottle you can refill throughout the day to stay hydrated.

+ Do I need to bring adaptors for my electrical equipment?

Our outlets and voltage levels are the same as in the United States and Canada.

+ Can I drink the water?

The rumors are true, you absolutely should not drink the tap water in Mexico unless there is a sign that specifically says *agua potable* (drinkable water). This is typical in higher-end hotels. Otherwise, please stick to bottled water. Because it is typical for most places to have *garrafones*



(5-gallon water jugs), including here in Habla, we recommend bringing your own bottle that you can refill to avoid plastic waste. We brush our teeth using the water from the sink, but it's good practice to use purified water if you want to take extra precaution.

+ Where should I exchange my money?

Here in Mérida (and many places in Mexico, for that matter) a lot of stores and restaurants don't accept *tarjetas* (cards) because renting the card reader is extremely expensive; thus, it's always a good idea to have cash on you. You can exchange dollars to pesos at your bank before leaving the U.S. or exchange them here in the city. We kindly suggest not changing your bills in the airport as the exchange rate isn't normally very good, but sometimes you might get lucky. Depending on your card, you might prefer to take out money from the ATM once you've arrived. This option is usually cheapest as the exchange rate is typically fairly low. Talk with your bank and see what they might recommend as the best ATM option for you in Mexico.

+ How much do I tip?

We generally don't tip cab drivers here in Mexico unless they go out of their way to help (helping with luggage for example) Then you might tip about \$20 pesos. The recommended amount to tip at restaurants is 15%. If you are renting a car and park in a free lot, there will often be someone who watches your car or helps you pull in or out of a space. It is customary to give them a tip of about \$5 to \$10 pesos. If you have someone help you with your bags at the airport, you could tip about \$50 pesos.

+ Someone told me you can't flush toilet paper in Mexico, is that true?

Flushing anything besides bodily waste down toilets (toilet paper, tampons, pads, paper towels, etc.) can severely damage the sewage system of wherever you are staying. Everywhere you go there will be a small trashcan next to the toilet for you to place your toilet paper and other materials. It might be difficult to remember to place these items in the trash can every time, but please try your best to remind yourself until you get the hang of it as the consequences will be very expensive for your host.



+ What if I have an emergency while in Mérida?

If you are worried that you might have a medical issue while visiting, it might be useful to talk with your insurance provider to see where your insurance might cover you while in Mérida. As the capital of the state, Mérida has a wide range of hospitals and clinics to choose from in case of an accident or illness. Star Médica Hospital towards the north of the city and Clínica de Mérida and Centro Médico de Las Américas towards centro are equipped with many doctors and nurses that speak English in case you need medical attention. Mexico also recently implemented a 911 emergency number nationwide, so keep that in mind if you have an emergency.

For our US guests, Mérida is home to a U.S. Consulate in case you have an emergency or if you lose your passport. Please check out the US Consulate's Mérida website (mx.usembassy.gov/merida) to learn more of what to do in case of an emergency.

+ Do I need a passport or visa?

Mexico is a foreign country and you need a passport to enter. However, Mexico does not require citizens from most countries to hold a visa to enter the country. Instead, you will also be asked to fill out an FMM tourist card before your flight lands in Mexico, which allows you to stay up to 180 days in the country. You will need to write your full name, passport number and where you're planning to stay on this card. You will want to say you are coming here as “tourists” and not to work or to formally study.

Please note: You must hold onto this card while you are in Mexico because you will need it to leave the country. While the penalty of losing this card is small, the Mexican government is becoming increasingly more strict about this and your passport may be flagged for future flights into Mexico. This might lead to you being denied entry or granted a limited stay upon your next visit.

[Click here](#) to take a look at our page on [TripAdvisor](#) to see what people have to say about their experiences in Habla.

To register for Spanish Immersion [click here](#).