

First week in Mexico

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While I've reached the mid-point in my summer internship, my time in Mexico is only beginning. My first week in Mexico City has been very exciting – filled with plenty of new sights, sounds, and experiences.

Of course, all the newness has required adjustment. In particular, adapting to the immense size of the city has proven to be a bit of a challenge. With a population of over 20 million people, Mexico City is the second largest city in the world. Though numbers alone don't quite do the city justice. I was only able to fully appreciate the

size of Mexico City on my flight. The aerial view is both overwhelming and incredible - urban sprawl as far as the eye can see.

Despite its size, I've grown to appreciate Mexico City for its vibrant nature. At all hours of the day (and night), people are active out and about the city. There is always something going on, from city-wide free museum days to Sunday bike rides on the Paseo de la Reforma. I have even grown accustomed to the late night chatter and the calls of the street vendor selling "*ricos, deliciosos y calientitos tamales oaxaqueños.*"

It was also exciting to finally begin work in the archives. Last week, I spent two days in the Bank of Mexico in search of data on education and family planning. Admittedly, the work was a bit tedious. I found reading through dense government records filled with bureaucratic jargon in another language to be particularly challenging. In the end however, the search proved successful. I located surveys that provide key insight into Mexican social values and attitudes towards issues such as family planning, the role of women, and sex education in the 1980s and 90s. I am interested in analyzing how this survey information compares to data on education and health resources. At the end of the first week, I came away with more material than I ever could have expected and hope for similar luck as I move on to the National Archive.

During the weekend, I took time to explore the city. I toured Chapultepec Park and the National Museum of Anthropology on Saturday and then headed south to Coyoacán to visit the home of Frida Kahlo. I also began my quest in search of the perfect taco. Sadly, I realize that my time in Mexico City will go by all too quickly and that I'll only be able to experience a small part of the entire city. In the next week, I hope to take in as much as possible before traveling to Oaxaca on Monday.

Until next time,

Rachel