

Casita Cielo Azul

San Francisco (San Pancho), Nayarit, Mexico



ARRIVAL AND TRANSPORTATION

» What to Expect on Arrival at the Airport

When you enter the customs area there will be a “stop light.” The customs agents will direct you push the button. If you get the green light, you are free to pass and go on your way. If you get the red light, they will search your luggage. As long as you haven’t brought anything illegal with you, it will only take a minute and you’ll be on your way. Upon leaving the customs/baggage area you’ll enter the main arrival area of the airport. Go straight past the greeters (timeshare salesmen/women). Near the door you’ll see a desk where you can arrange for a cab should this be your mode of transportation. If you’re renting a car, just go to the appropriate desk.

» Driving Directions from the Puerto Vallarta International Airport

Upon departing the Puerto Vallarta airport, turn left (north) and follow the signs to Tepic (and/or Compostela) on Highway 200 rather than signs to Puerto Vallarta. The airport is on the north end of the city and you want to continue heading north, away from Puerto Vallarta.

You will pass signs directing people to Nuevo Vallarta and Bucerias, then the highway enters into a jungle area. **Drive with care!** People pass drivers under circumstances that could be deemed suicidal. If you come upon a slow-moving stream of traffic, turn on your flashers to warn other drivers behind you of the slow down. If you see oncoming traffic with their flashers on it could indicate an accident or problem ahead, so proceed with care.

After passing the turn-off for Sayulita, you have approximately 10 kilometers to go before reaching San Pancho (sign says San Francisco). **IMPORTANT:** In Mexico, when making a left turn off a highway you must put on your RIGHT turn signal and pull off the road onto the right shoulder and wait for all traffic behind you as well as oncoming traffic to pass. You then cross the highway into town. A left turn signal

indicates to the driver BEHIND you that he can pass you. In some locations they’ll actually have a MARKED left turn lane, go on and use that left turn signal.

You will now be on the main street in San Pancho, called Tercer Mundo. Take care of the topes, or speed bumps. Continue on Tercer Mundo past the soccer field. The third street on your right after the soccer field is Calle America Latina. Turn right, and you will see a terra cotta-colored building with a palapa roof on the corner. Go one block and there will be a green house on your right, on the corner of Calle America Latina and Calle Chile.

Our caretaker, Angela Peters, lives in the green house, #29 Calle Chile. Her phone number is (311) 258 4015.

About a half-block past Angela’s house on the right side is Casita Cielo Azul—it’s the villa with a beautiful rock walled entrance. *Note: We have no exact street address; having one means little. Our neighbors to the north are 111 and the neighbors two doors to the south are 777 while across the street is 20000. Just follow the above directions and you’ll have no problem.*

» Bus from Puerto Vallarta Airport to San Pancho

The easiest way to catch a bus to San Pancho is to take a cab from the airport to the Central Camionera/ Central Bus Station (about a half-mile from the airport). From there, you will have a choice of many buses that travel north and stop locally at the pueblos, including San Pancho. PACIFICO is the name of the bus company that makes most of the runs. The buses are new, air conditioned, efficient and inexpensive. It will take about one hour and cost you \$5 US or less.

» Getting to San Pancho from the Airport via Taxi

If you want a taxi, go to one of the booths marked “TAXI” in the airport arrivals lobby and buy the ticket there. This way you are guaranteed the correct price for the zone you are going to. They use a zone pricing system, with fares clearly posted at the ticket booths. Tell them you are going to San Pancho, San Francisco, Nayarit. Federally licensed airport taxis

exclusively provide transportation from the airport, and their fares are more than three times as high as city (yellow) taxi fares. The trip to San Pancho should run you about \$50. Only airport cabs may pick up passengers leaving the airport. However, if you don't have too much baggage, you can cross the highway using the new overpass, and there you'll find yellow cabs lined up which can be less expensive.

OTHER USEFUL TIPS

» Exchanging Money

It's best to exchange your money at the airport, a bank or a Casa de Cambio prior to heading to San Pancho as there are no ATMs or Casas de Cambio in San Pancho. There is a new ATM in Sayulita, to the south of us, as well as at the Pemex on the highway in Lo de Marcos to the north of us.

» Tipping

In the airport, first person you will encounter in the airport is the **baggage porter**. If you do not need their assistance, a polite "No, gracias" will do. If you do use their services, the porter will take your luggage through customs as you pass the checkpoint. Outside the airport, the porter will hand off your bags to the porter that is responsible for your ground transportation or a taxi driver. The taxi driver or porter will put your luggage in the vehicle and unload it at your hotel. Each of these individuals is usually tipped the equivalent of \$1 US per bag.

The only time a tip is warranted for a **taxi driver** is if the driver assists you with your luggage or offers you some sort of valuable assistance.

Tipping in **bars and restaurants** is similar to the US. For service in restaurants, a tip of 15-20% of your bill is the average amount for good service.

At Casita Cielo Azul, it is customary to tip the **maids** on the days that they clean. The tip can just be left on your pillow—that way it is obvious. A tip for any cooking service is suggested as well.

All **gas stations** in Mexico are full service. If you rent a car and find yourself in a gas station for a fill-up, it is customary to tip 10-15 pesos. If you have the attendant check the oil, change a filter or provide some other type of service, a slightly larger tip should be left.

Baggers in the grocery stores are not paid—they work for tips—so please be generous and offer at least a couple of pesos.

» Time Zone

Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico is in the Central Time Zone (two hours ahead of California and one hour behind New York). Despite its proximity, San Pancho, San Francisco, Nayarit, Mexico, is **one hour behind Puerto Vallarta**. So, if your flight arrives at 2:00 p.m. in Puerto Vallarta, it is 1:00 p.m. in San Pancho. This is especially important to remember in regard to your departure flight—plan accordingly.

HOUSE AND SERVICES

» Casita Cielo Azul Layout

The ground floor is made up of two private rooms, Casita Angela and Casita Kiley, on opposite sides of the house. These two casitas, each have their own Mexican-tiled bathroom with walk-in shower. Each has its own private outdoor private terrace sitting area. There is a full kitchen on the first floor that is shared by guests renting the Kiley or the Angela.

The second floor is all one unit, Casita Nico. Nico is made up of one bedroom with a queen-size bed and a second bedroom/living room with two twin-size beds. A private kitchen, dining area and sitting area are all located out on the large terrace that runs the entire width of the house. There is also a rooftop deck accessible from Casita Nico for the added enjoyment of guests in this casita.

» The Pool and Garden

The pool measures 20' x 40' and is 4' to 5' deep. Introduce yourself to Morales, who stops in to maintain the pool every other day or so. He has his own key and may actually have come and gone by the time you wake up. He speaks English, so if you have any questions regarding the pool, ask away. The pool is raised a couple of steps above the ground, offering a cement bench for sitting that wraps around the entire pool. The pool and hardscape area, complete with two dining locations, as well as the garden, are common spaces for all guests at Casita Cielo Azul. If you are cooking, feel free to snip some basil or pick limes for your margarita.

» **Drinking Water**

We supply bottled drinking water for your use.

» **Housekeeping Services**

The casitas and kitchens are cleaned every 2–3 days, which includes the changing of towels and linens.

» **Arranging for a Cook**

If you would like the services of a personal cook, please either ask us ahead of time or speak to Angela.

SAN PANCHO

» **The Beach**

There is a cooler, beach chairs, beach towels and an umbrella for your use. Please return anything you use when you are done, so that other guests may also enjoy them.

The beach is two and a half blocks from the house. You can get there by going back to Tercer Mundo (the main street coming into town) and turning right.

Humpback whales winter in the bay every year. Dolphins, giant mantas, sea turtles and over a hundred species of birds also live here.

» **Restaurants**

Restaurants in San Pancho are open depending on the time of year. You can count on the beach restaurants being open year-round.

We have our favorites:

- For dinner Ola Rica in San Pancho, just two and a half blocks from the house, toward the beach.
- For breakfast, La Taza (next door to Ola Rica) or Ceci-Bon Cafe (where Tercer Mundo and America Latina meet).

There are also a couple of really good taco stands, all with very clean, purified water, absolutely safe—one at the corner of Tercer Mundo and Calle Africa across the street from the soccer field. The other a half-block northeast of our house.

A few new restaurants have opened in town that we have never gone to.

» **Giving Back to the San Pancho Community**

We have here in San Pancho a fabulous grassroots organization called **EntreAmigos**. Meaning “among friends,” EntreAmigos is a volunteer organization whose mission is to improve educational and enrichment opportunities for the children of San Pancho, regardless of ability to pay. If as you’re packing for your vacation in San Pancho you find that you have a bit of extra space in your suitcase, it would be fabulous if you could pick up a few things off the wish list below to donate.

Through the financial and material support of volunteers, EntreAmigos provides a library and computer center, art classes and special programs for kids, community beautification projects, an art and gift gallery (proceeds benefiting our educational projects and a meeting space for community groups). EntreAmigos seeks to unite the people of San Pancho—educators, parents, other nonprofit organizations, and Mexican and foreign residents—in fostering positive change for our community.

We have received an urgent request for materials from the director and teachers at the elementary school. Public schools in Mexico have no budget for materials. At the beginning of the year they receive an allotment and that is expected to last throughout the year. To give you an example, each class receives one liter of glue for the year. If you have spent five minutes in an elementary school class you will know that one liter of glue might last a few weeks, but never an entire school year. EntreAmigos has a policy where any teacher can take out materials from our storeroom for their classes, but our supply of school supplies and art materials is also nearly depleted.

Wish List:

White glue, lined paper, pencils, erasers, lined paper, scissors, crayons, lined paper, colored markers, pens, metric rulers—and did I mention lined paper? If you happen to find a great deal on a backpack those are greatly needed as well.

GRACIAS!

**Enjoy your stay in San Pancho
and at Casita Cielo Azul!**