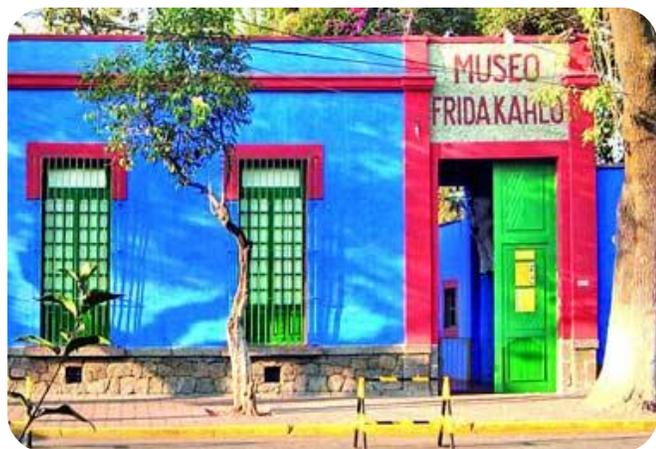




La Casa Azul in Coyoacán



Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter who was born on July 6, 1907, in the house known as *La Casa Azul* in *Coyoacán*. She was a revolutionary artist born amidst political chaos in Mexico. She claimed to be born in 1910, the year of the outbreak of the *Mexican Revolution*, because she wanted her life to have begun at the same time as the modern Mexico.

Since she was a child, Frida was faced with sickness. She contracted *polio* at age six, which left her right leg thinner than the left. In 1925, Frida had a *tragic accident* that left her permanently disabled. Badly injured and immobile for several months, Frida took up painting to occupy her time. She had as many as thirty-five operations as a result of this accident. The injuries also prevented Kahlo from having a

child because of the permanent damage. Drawn from personal experiences, Kahlo's works are often characterized by their suggestions of *physical* and *psychological pain*. She always insisted, "I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality".

She had one great love, *Diego Rivera*. Kahlo met him in 1928 and married him in 1929, despite the disapproval of her mother. She shared his faith in communism, but their marriage was often troubled. Kahlo and Rivera both had irritable temperaments and numerous extramarital affairs. The bisexual Kahlo's affairs included *Leon Trotsky*, *Isamu Noguchi* and *Josephine Baker*. The couple divorced in November 1939, but remarried in December 1940. Diego Rivera had a great influence on Frida's painting style.

Although Frida's work has been described as *surrealism*, Diego argued that Frida was a *realist*. Frida is "down to earth," having depicted "real images to express frankly what she felt inside". Like much of Mexican art, Frida's paintings interweave fact and fantasy as if the two were inseparable and equally real. The artist passed away in *La Casa Azul* on July 13, 1954. A few days before her death, she wrote in her diary: "I hope the exit is joyful — and I hope never to return". In his autobiography, Diego Rivera would write that the day Kahlo died was the most tragic day of his life, adding that, too late, he had realized that the most wonderful part of his life had been his love for her.

Today, Kahlo's works can now be found in collections in Mexico, Europe, and the United States. *La Casa Azul* has been maintained as a museum since 1958. Located at *Londres 247*, the house speaks of the daily life of Frida and Diego. Inside its walls, the visitor can better discover these personalities from the twentieth century.

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Can you imagine handling a car accident or going to the hospital for an emergency and hardly speak the local language? People who provide essential services like the plumber, the gasoline station attendant, the car mechanic, the electrician, or your maid may only speak Spanish. Understanding Spanish is quite important if you plan to truly interact with Mexicans and get the most of your experience in Mexico. There are many reasons why expats should learn Spanish, here are some:

- **Investment in learning a second language.** You will be able to communicate with over 450 million people in over 20 countries world-wide. Spanish is one of the world's leading and most widely spoken languages.
- **Understand the culture.** Knowing the language will enable you to have a greater insight of Mexico. You will recognize minor things that make a big difference in the culture that you are now a part of.
- **Make friends with local speakers.** You will get an opportunity to make new friends and integrate easily into society. It's easy to hang around with other expats, but forming friendships with Mexicans will significantly enhance your overseas experience.
- **Make the most of your experience.** Understanding Spanish will definitely save you from unpleasant feeling of not knowing where you are. It'll introduce a new dimension to your travel experience in the country.
- **Increase your productivity.** You will get more done. You will be able to communicate more with your local colleagues, and negotiate with Mexican clients, suppliers, contractors or others upon whom your business success depends.
- **Increase your chances of employment.** Being knowledgeable about a second language can greatly boost your career possibilities and open many doors.
- **Proven brain benefits of being bilingual.** Learning a new language delays dementia, boosts problem-solving skills, improves cognitive skills and creates a faster response time.

How to start?

There is not a one-fit-all solution, the best way to learn the language is to find a programme that works best for you. You can start to learn Spanish using self-study books, language-learning softwares and online courses available. Watching movies, listening to podcasts and reading about the local culture in Spanish are also some of the best ways to build up your fluency and confidence. Once in Mexico, language schools are the first choice for a number of expats. This is an interesting way of meeting other expats in a similar situation. There is also the option of having a private teacher come to your office and teach you there. **Con Acento Latino** offers Spanish classes tailor-made and held in your office or home.

Be prepared to make mistakes, some on them even very embarrassing, but never give up you will keep improving gradually. Living abroad is a lifetime opportunity to learn a new language. Being able to understand Spanish will give you a chance to engage in the full experience in Mexico.

Follow us at [Twitter@ExpatsMeetpoint](https://twitter.com/ExpatsMeetpoint) to learn Mexican slangs that will help you to interact with Mexicans.

Making a New House your Home

Juan Pitayolas works a lot. In the morning he puts on a tie, he grooms himself amongst boxes to go to work. He looks at himself in the mirror, but he does not like what he sees surrounding him. The light of the sun gets in his way, his furniture is arranged against the wall, and the empty space is wasted.

Juan Pitayolas got sick one day and had to stay at home. He decided to clean his body by cleaning his room. He allowed the day to set the pace for his space. In the mornings the sun hits the back wall and during the day moves to the middle of the room, this makes it easy to have plants. The room has to be distributed to profit from the sun. The plants will grow with the water saved in the shower while it gets warm. They will clean the air in the place. The bed will look to the exterior and towards the door too. It will be the viewpoint of the room. From there the time that passes could be distinguished. The sun moves and the reflection of the light on the wall too. The exterior of the room lives too. It has to move the environment; it has to give it rhythm. On the upper corner he will hang a painting, a few centimeters from the ceiling. Is a weird place for a painting, but it will make a glance travel: fist to the handle, then to the floor, the wall in the back, the plants, the window and it will finally call the attention to the painting. The room will be explored with one single look.

Weeks have passed since the place was revived. The room is alive, moves and makes you move. Things happen in there. It is an habitable space. Now Juan Pitayolas looks around to know he is at home. *Article by **Átimo**.*

Átimo knows how to coordinate the times of each person to the natural times to live in harmony synchronizing what is made with the place one lives in. Get to know the furniture and the spaces designed by **Átimo** www.atimourbano.com.

