

My Dream Week in Vallarta at the IFC

By Peggy A. Nelson, IFC Vice President

New to Vallarta? Are you a long timer wanting a refresh? Looking for things to do? I often count on the International Friendship Club's (IFC) activities to complete my week. Taking advantage of the IFC's offerings, what would be my ideal week in Vallarta?

I enjoy languages, and I am thrilled when I can carry on a conversation in Spanish, even if only a small one. It adds so much depth to my experience of everyday life here, and makes it so much easier to do things! I also like to show that I care, by trying. There are four levels of Spanish classes at the IFC Clubhouse, on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Each year here I learn more and feel more at ease because of it. By clicking on the IFC [calendar](#), you can see which levels meet when.

As I enter the Clubhouse on Monday mornings, I'll pass the group that takes advantage of IFC bridge lessons. Monday morning classes are held outdoors, in the shade of the lovely IFC courtyard, nestled above the street noise and traffic. On Fridays, you can take your pick of playing social bridge in either air-conditioned comfort or on the terrace. For those who love bridge, or are curious to learn from friendly folks, this is your group.

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, I have the option of going with my partner or taking friends on the IFC Home Tours. These are always fun, in large part because the IFC volunteers make it so. They are an enthusiastic bunch who love what they do. They help people get on and off the bus and into the stunning and original homes. They always have interesting tidbits along the way about the part of town we are going through or other tales of Vallarta. They are knowledgeable about the incredible homes we are about to see. This season we have added

several new properties to our roster. Be sure to check out the post about each week's featured homes at ifcvallarta.org.

To feel real, real good, I love yoga on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. For me, the stretching of yoga is better than a massage, and lasts longer. I incorporate what I learn into my everyday life. Other people prefer mindful meditation classes on Saturday mornings or, new this year, gently flowing Tai Chi classes Monday and Thursday afternoons.

I keep my eyes peeled on the [IFC Calendar](#), on the IFC website, ifcvallarta.org, for one-off classes and social activities. Meet & Greets are held at various venues around town. I love checking out restaurants or bars I haven't been to before, and getting a chance to chat with people I haven't met before. Same for the Dine-Arounds, usually in groups of about 20, at various restaurants around Vallarta, always led by an IFC volunteer.

My favorite one-off classes are offered by Dan Grippo, Ph.D., typically about Mexican history or religion. Last year Dan hosted a series about pandemics in Latin America brought about by foreign exploration. The year before his topic was the history of religion in Mexico. With religion being so influential, the class was fascinating. Whatever Dan may offer, starting in January, I will be there.

Other one-off programs will be offered throughout the IFC's high season (December-March), so I frequently check the IFC on-line calendar for additions. As examples, I remember art classes last season, which will be held again this year, and writing classes one recent year.

The IFC is not only a social and educational organization, but also a charitable one supporting approximately 20 non-profits in the Vallarta area. As a result, there are often activities involving organizations the IFC supports. I am looking forward to the Salty Paws Jazz Orchestra, a large youth jazz ensemble, perform on Sunday, January 21, 2024 at 4 pm at Oscar's,

This will be my third year enjoying their lively music and supporting the musical development of these young performers. Proceeds from ticket sales will be used to support the educational programs of Instituto de Artes Musicales Puerto Vallarta (IAMPV), which also supports the Vallarta Symphony Orchestra.

Membership is not required for most IFC activities, but one supports the IFC's charitable work through membership. Membership also affords members significant discounts on many IFC classes and events as well as some of the finest restaurants, bars and other venues around Vallarta. There is a list of these on the IFC website.

There is much to love about Vallarta. Brunch at a restaurant on the beach or alongside the Rio Cuale. Live music at night. When I add to this my IFC Spanish classes, yoga and lectures by interesting speakers, I feel I have such a full life here. So much to do and so much to be thankful for, with the IFC high on my list!