



FINCA — Cold-Start Playbook

From a handful of contacts to a returning core — when you're not in the city yet

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COLD-START PLAYBOOK

INTERNAL · CONFIDENTIAL

From a handful of contacts to a returning core — when you're not in the city yet

Tables compound; rooms don't. New here. Known here.

Your situation: not in CDMX yet · a handful of warm contacts · can line up a couple of partners · no broad audience (clean break from the old community). **This is the exact play to run.**

The cold-start math: *you are not finding 100 people. You are filling 8 seats, 5 times. A handful of contacts + one co-host + "everyone brings one" gets you there. ~4 good suppers in 8 weeks = a core of ~30 people who know each other. That is your audience.*

Doctrine: *When you start from zero, don't build a room — build a table. A table creates proof, intimacy, follow-up, and the first repeat behaviour without pretending you already have an audience.*

Reframe: losing the old community removes ambiguity — no inherited audience, no legacy politics, no inflated traction, no dispute over what's owned. **Finca starts from zero but owns what it builds.** That's cleaner for investors and healthier operationally.

Step 1 — Recruit the Founding Host (one CDMX co-host, do this first)

The keystone move — your first hire-like recruit, not a venue or a deck. One warm, socially generous person already in CDMX who co-hosts with you. Solves three things at once: bodies on the ground, the non-founder-host test (Proof #2), and local legitimacy (a Local Bridge).

Profile: lives in CDMX now · understands locals *and* newcomers · makes people feel safe arriving alone · taste + emotional intelligence · can invite 3-5 thoughtful people · aligned with "no networking energy" · can follow a host briefing · not trying to make Finca a party brand.

Founding Host promise: *First host. First table. First to earn when the format works.* (Makes it real, not a favour.)

Script:

"I'm building a small, beautifully-hosted supper series for people new to Mexico City and people who love it — the kind of table where no one's a stranger by dessert. I want one founding host with me, and you're the first person I thought of. Can I show you the idea?"

Step 2 — Turn your handful into Table #1 (8-10 seats)

List every warm CDMX thread you and Mike have (~12 names). You need **5 yeses**, not all of them.

Anchor mechanic: confirm 3-4 anchors first (people you know will come and are warm in a room), *then* tell everyone else "a few great people are already in." Momentum sells the rest. Backfill the last 2-3 from the co-host's network + a couple of carefully-chosen newcomers (recent arrivals in your

extended network or referred — invited personally, never mass-posted).

Script:

"On [date] I'm hosting an intimate dinner — 8 people, some new to CDMX, some locals who get it. No networking energy, just a genuinely good table. I'd love you there. Come alone — I'll make the introductions."

Step 3 — Partner one venue (for a home, not for money)

Don't sell sponsorship yet. Ask a good restaurant for the back table / private room in exchange for 8-10 covers spending on food and wine. That's your first Trusted Place **and** venue partner — zero cash out.

Script:

"I'll bring you 8-10 quality diners every two weeks and make you our home table. All I need is the back room held and a warm welcome. If it works, you become our first 'Recommended by FINCA' partner."

Step 4 — Design Supper #1 so it *must* produce return

Format: **Come Alone Supper**, 8-10, long table. (Use the Host Briefing template.)

Run-of-show:

1. Pre-dinner WhatsApp: "You're expected. Here's who you'll meet. Come alone — we've got your first hello."
 2. Co-host greets each person at the door.
 3. Seat intentionally — alternate newcomer / local.
 4. One light go-around prompt, then let it breathe.
 5. Short closing toast that names the next supper.
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Step 5 — The 24-hour follow-up (this is the whole business)

Next morning, a personal note to each guest. Two mechanics do the work: the **warm intro** (the reason to return) and "**bring one who'd make it better**" (curated growth, not spam). Use the Post-Event Recap template.

Script:

"So glad you came last night. You and [name] should really meet properly — want me to connect you? Our next table is [date] — bring one person who'd make it better."

Step 6 — Compound it

Supper #2: re-invite all 8 · each may bring one · backfill with new. **Watch the one number: did anyone from #1 come back?** If 3–4 of 8 return, you have a company. Repeat every two weeks. By supper #4–5 you have a returning core, a referral waitlist, and a venue that wants you there. *Then* graduate to a 20-person room and recruit the second host.

At the table stage, a "Regular-forming action" counts broadly: attends Supper #2 · asks for a warm intro · brings one right person · returns to the partner venue · joins the waitlist for the next table · offers to co-host or introduce someone.

Compounding rule — every table should produce three outputs: (1) one person returns · (2) one warm intro is made · (3) one new person is referred. Produce all three and Finca compounds. Miss them and the *experience* needs work before anything scales.

Timeline

- **Pre-move (next 2–4 weeks, from where you are now):** lock the co-host · build the 12-name list · soft-confirm 4 anchors · line up the venue · open a tiny Tally waitlist.
- **Land in CDMX → Supper #1 within ~2 weeks.**
- **Suppers every 2 weeks. 8 weeks ≈ 4 tables ≈ your seed network.**

Optional rehearsal: if the move is >1 month out, run a practice supper *where you are now* with friends + friends-of-friends. It rehearses your hosting, run-of-show, and follow-up so you land in CDMX already good at it.

Execution controls — *the first five tables are research disguised as hospitality*

You're not trying to look successful. You're learning who comes, who returns, who makes the room better, which host can carry it, which venue can be home, and which behaviour repeats.

Guest-mix rule (the mix is the product). Table #1: 2–3 newcomers/recent arrivals · 2–3 globally-minded locals/long-timers · 1–2 connectors · 1–2 creative/founder/operator types · ≥3 comfortable arriving alone · **no dominant personality who hijacks the room.** It should feel like "*I didn't know anyone, but somehow I belonged.*"

Disqualification filter (early quality is fragile — one wrong person distorts an 8-seat signal). Don't invite the flaky, the conversation-dominators, the network/sell-only, the status-obsessed, the party-expecters, the CDMX-as-playground crowd, or anyone who'd make solo arrivals feel judged.

Table Captain. Each supper, quietly spot one guest who could become a future host / venue introducer / partner lead / Local Bridge / connector / testimonial source. Follow up separately: "*You really shaped the energy of the table — I'd love to keep you close as we build this.*" Turns guests into operators, gently.

The Table Review (within 24h — your earliest Belonging Graph). Founders + co-host answer: who arrived alone · who looked nervous · who opened up · who made the table better · who shouldn't return · who should meet whom · who might host later · who might bring someone excellent · did the venue work · what to change.

Founder Absence Test. Run one table where the **co-host leads** and you're remote/light/absent. Did guests still feel welcomed, solo arrivals managed, intros made, return wanted, 24h follow-up done? If yes, Finca isn't dependent on you in the room — *the* most important early signal.

Venue Home Test (after 2 suppers). Did staff remember Finca · did guests like returning · did the venue want you back · easy arrival · good acoustics · warm, local, not-pretentious · could this be "our table"? If yes → first Trusted Place.

Proof Library from day one. After every table capture: 3 quotes · 3 moments · 3 consented photos · 3 intro opportunities · 3 to invite next · 1 venue insight · 1 thing to improve. This becomes the deck, partner proof, landing copy, and host training.

No public hype until return. Show texture, not scale — a place card, a blurred dinner moment, "no one arrives alone." Don't post like there's already a movement. **Earn the story before broadcasting it.**

The first 5 tables (name the arc, don't wing it one at a time):

- 1. **The First Door** — founding table; test arrival + chemistry.
- 2. **The Return** — invite Table 1 back; each may bring one.
- 3. **The Local Bridge** — balance newcomers with globally-minded locals.
- 4. **The Host Test** — the co-host leads (Founder Absence Test).
- 5. **The Regulars Table** — only people who returned, referred, hosted, or contributed.

By Table 5 you'll know if this has a pulse.

The one-sentence invite (whole team uses the same line): *"Finca is a small hosted table for people new to the city and people who love it — come alone, we'll make the introductions."* Don't over-explain the platform yet.

Cold-Start Dashboard (the only five fields, until a table returns)

Metric	Target
CDMX warm leads identified	30-50
Founding Host recruited	1
Anchor guests confirmed	3-4
Table #1 seats filled	8-10
Table #1 guests who return within 45 days	25-30% min

Pause everything else until you have a Founding Host + 15 names

No Open House · no membership/pricing · no app build · no formal venue partnership · no public/PR launch · no giant WhatsApp group · no reviving the old community · no chasing volume. **The first proof is intimacy, not scale.**

The only metric that matters right now

Of the people at your first table, **how many come to a second within ~45 days.** Everything else is noise until that number is real.

*The next move is not a venue or a deck. It's **one co-host and 15 names.***

Everything else waits on those.

Finca — New here. Known here.