



## DESTINATION REPORT

### **MEXICO**

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## GENERAL OVERVIEW



Mexico was colonized by Spain in the early 16th century but gained independence in the early 19th century. Mexico implements a stable multi-party democratic system and is the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. Although 60 indigenous languages are spoken in the country, the most universally understood language is Spanish. Mexico is home to nearly 125 million people. In terms of ethnic affiliation, the Mexican population is over 60 percent mestizo (of Spanish and indigenous descent), 21 percent predominantly Amerindian, and 7 percent Amerindian; the remainder are generally Caucasian. The vast majority of Mexicans are Roman Catholic, although a sizable Protestant community is present in the country as well.

Mexico shares border with the United States to the north and Belize and Guatemala to the south. Its eastern shore lies along the Caribbean Sea and its western coastline borders the Pacific Ocean. A significant area of northwestern Mexico is arid, whereas the eastern coast is tropical. The Caribbean coast has one wet season that is concurrent with the summer months in the Northern Hemisphere. The northern area of Mexico can turn extremely cold in winter and extremely hot in summer. The rainy season common to all of Mexico lasts from May to October, whereas the hurricane season lasts from June to November. The Mexican coastlines are susceptible to tropical storms, which tend to peak between August and October.

# SECURITY ASSESSMENT

## Security Risk Rating

Moderate

## Security Risk Overview

The security situation in Mexico is highly variable depending on location. Petty crimes are common throughout the country, and there are high rates of gang- and drug-related violence. Kidnapping for ransom is a common crime. In northern cities, shootouts have been known to occur in broad daylight and in areas of high traffic, such as shopping centers. Violence has also reportedly spread to tourist hot spots like Los Cabos. Road travel can be hazardous due to criminal activities and poor road conditions. Demonstrations are common, may take place across the country, and have the potential to turn violent. Roadblocks may also be set up during such events. While there are no known indigenous or international terrorist groups operating in Mexico, transnational criminal organizations often employ terrorist-like tactics.

The hurricane season lasts from June to November. Mexico experiences occasional seismic activity, mainly in the state of Oaxaca. The Popocatepetl and Colima volcanoes are both officially considered active.

## Terrorism

No known indigenous or international terrorist groups operate in Mexico and no terrorist attacks have been reported within the past five years. However, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) often employ terrorist-like tactics when battling rival TCOs or the government.

## Civil Unrest

Political protests and other demonstrations are common. Sometimes protesting groups set up informal roadblocks and charge a toll for cars to pass. It is advised to treat these situations with extreme caution, as there is always a potential for violence. Political violence and unexpected roadblocks have been known to occur in Chiapas, Guerrero, and Oaxaca.

Since 2013, teacher-led strikes and protests have taken place across the country over education reforms. These have often involved road blockades and resulted in clashes with security personnel, occasionally resulting in fatalities.

The constitution of Mexico specifically prohibits foreigners from engaging in any political activities within Mexico. Individuals passing by a demonstration may be apprehended by Mexican authorities if they appear to be involved. Participation in protests or demonstrations can result in detention or expulsion from Mexico for up to 10 years.

Political violence can be perpetrated by student groups, organized in support of a particular political leader. Mexico has a long-standing *cacique* tradition, in which student groups loosely affiliated with schools recruit students to participate in street-fighting in gangs with a vaguely political motivation.

There have been a number of incidents involving package bombs targeting police, diplomatic missions, and journalists. Explosive devices have been delivered to the Chilean and Italian embassies, as well as to government buildings, banks, news agencies, hospitals, and churches. Explosive devices have also been placed near ATMs.

## Personal Security

Pickpocketing, purse-snatching, muggings, and other petty thefts are common in Mexico, and thieves often target individuals perceived to be wealthy. Criminals have been known to resort to violence when targets resist. In resort towns, bars and nightclubs may be hotspots for petty crime and drug-dealing.

The Mexican government has made efforts to protect major tourist destinations such as Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Cozumel, Los Cabos, and Puerto Vallarta, and thus levels of drug-related violence and crime tend to be lower in these areas than elsewhere in the country. However, several armed crime incidents have occurred within tourist areas in Acapulco, Guerrero state. Additionally, violent incidents have increasingly been reported in or near tourist areas of Quintana Roo-including Cancun, Playa del Carmen, and other popular vacation spots on the Riviera Maya-raising concerns about safety in areas previously regarded as secure. The US Embassy in Mexico City released a Security Alert on 7 March warning US citizens of an unspecified security threat in Playa del Carmen, advising US citizens to avoid traveling to the neighborhoods of Centro, Calica, Gonzalo Guerrero, Quintas del Carmen, and Villas del Carmen. On 1 March, undetonated explosives were found on a ferry operating between Playa del Carmen and Cozumel. The explosives were discovered days after at least 25 people-including two Americans and three Canadian nationals-were injured when an explosive detonated on a ferry in Playa del Carmen on 21 February. Reports of homicides near popular vacation spots have also prompted the deployment of additional security personnel to patrol beaches, markets, airports, and hotel zones.

In July 2017, the US Department of State updated its safety and security advice for Mexico, warning travelers about allegations of "tainted or substandard alcohol" that has reportedly resulted in travelers becoming ill or "blacking out." It warned that those who choose to drink alcohol while in Mexico should "do so in moderation and to stop and seek medical attention if you begin to feel ill." This update came after an investigation by a US newspaper into a case involving the death of a US tourist at a resort near Playa del Carmen. According to reports, dozens of other cases emerged after the investigation of travelers "blacking out" or becoming ill while staying at resorts in Mexico.

Women walking alone, or in small groups with other women, may find themselves targets of unwanted attention. This attention usually takes the form of verbal harassment. The best way to deal with such a situation is to ignore it; responding may be seen as encouragement. Crimes of a sexual nature-including harassment and assault-and violence against women are common. Police may be unwilling to investigate such crimes, allowing for a high rate of impunity among perpetrators. In resort towns, sexual assaults have been reported, and in many cases the perpetrators have been security guards, hotel employees, and taxi drivers. In Mexico City, incidents of sexual assault have occurred on urban buses on routes in the south of the city.

Kidnapping is a common occurrence throughout Mexico. Particularly common are "express kidnappings," during which a person walking alone is grabbed from the street, taken to an ATM, and forced to withdraw all of the money from their account. Sometimes the kidnapers will contact the victim's family and friends and demand that they deliver a particular sum of money for the victim's safe return. Victims are usually released unharmed after a ransom is paid, but in some cases victims are killed despite the paying of a ransom. It is not advisable to travel after dark within or to remote or isolated locations. In September 2016, a Spanish national was abducted after taking a taxi in the Mexico City neighborhood of Patio de Santa Fe. Her captors subsequently visited several cashpoints and called her family demanding a ransom payment. Despite a ransom having been paid, the victim was found dead the following day in a village just outside Mexico City.

Drug-related crime is a major problem in Mexico, and accounts for the high homicide rates in

northern cities. Tourist areas tend not to overlap with areas in which high volumes of drug trafficking occur. Nevertheless, innocent bystanders have been caught in firefights between rival TCOs, or between TCOs and Mexican authorities seeking to suppress the criminal activity. In many Mexican metropolises, particularly those near the US border and along the Gulf coast, violence related to drug cartels poses a significant danger.

The US Department of State has warned against all travel to the Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Michoacán (except the cities of Morelia and Lázaro Cardenas), Colima, Sinaloa (except parts of Mazatlan, Los Mochis, and the Port of Topolobampo), Guerrero, and Tamaulipas. Travel to these areas is discouraged due to high levels of violence related to TCOs.

The areas associated with highest risk of drug-related violence are Baja California Norte, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Sinaloa, Sonora, and Tamaulipas. Increasing drug-related violence has been reported in Guadalajara. Though the vast majority of drug-related deaths are among gang members, innocent bystanders have also been victims in the past. The Zetas and Sinaloa cartels are said to be fighting over the control of smuggling routes in Coahuila state.

Monterrey is known for a high incidence of organized crime, including abductions, robberies, and, less frequently, criminal activities such as arson and grenade attacks. Disappearances have been reported in areas along the highway between Monterrey, Nuevo Laredo, and Reynosa.

There are 38 municipalities in eastern Chiapas under the control of the leftist revolutionary group the Zapatistas. The group claims to control more than 600,000 acres of land throughout the state. Most people in the state of Chiapas, including those in charge of governing, do not speak Spanish. There are Zapatista sympathizers and opponents in Chiapas, including in San Cristobal. It is advised not to voice an opinion on the leftist organization while traveling in the region to avoid confrontations. It is also not advisable to take pictures of children in the Chiapas region without express permission. The region, as well as its neighbor Guatemala, has a problem with kidnapping, and anyone taking photos of children may be assumed to be a kidnapper.

Civil unions between homosexual couples are legal in Mexico City and Coahuila state; however, public displays of affection between same-sex couples are not considered culturally acceptable. Discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals is common.

Mexico experiences occasional seismic activity. Mexico has at least 14 volcanoes considered active, including the Popocatepetl volcano, which lies approximately 80 kilometers (50 miles) southeast of Mexico City. Active volcanos have a high risk of erupting with little or no warning, and regularly release water vapor, rock, and ash. Authorities warn of mud or molten rock flow, ash clouds, and other activity. An increase in volcanic activity may result in evacuations from the area or travel disruptions. Seismic activity can disrupt daily life and air travel with little warning. Emergency response capabilities can be limited and delayed throughout Mexico during a disaster. On 16 February, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck the southern state of Oaxaca, destroying over a thousand homes in 30 municipalities and leaving nearly a million homes and businesses without power. Although there were no deaths directly linked to the quake, 13 people died after a helicopter crashed in Santiago Jamiltepec while surveying the damage. The region hit by the strike was still recovering from a magnitude 7.1 earthquake that struck central Mexico on 19 September 2017, killing 370 people and injuring 6,000 others, as well as causing severe structural damage. The earthquake followed a magnitude 8.1 earthquake that struck Chiapas on 7 September, killing at least 98 people and destroying 41,000 homes, as well as generating some localized tsunami waves. Officials estimate that it will take up to six years to rebuild structures destroyed by the series of strong earthquakes.

The hurricane season in Mexico normally lasts from June to November, and affects the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. Tropical storms can cause large-scale flooding and major disruptions in the affected localities. Water supplies may be limited and contaminated after a flood. The spread of water- and vector-borne diseases increases after flooding. Infrastructural damage is also common.

## **Law Enforcement**

Despite efforts by the Mexican government to strengthen the police force, Mexican state and local police tend to be underfunded and poorly trained. In some cities, local police are suspected of being in league with criminal organizations. Federal police are generally more effective at preventing, responding to, and investigating crime than local police.

Prison and detention center conditions are poor. Overcrowding, drug and alcohol abuse, and a lack of sanitary conditions are concerns. Torture is reportedly a common method used to obtain confessions. Prisoners often have to pay to obtain food or medicine. US citizens in Mexican prisons have also been made to pay exorbitant "protection fees" to fellow inmates. Lengthy pretrial detention periods, external influence, and corruption further hinder the justice system. Travelers should make every attempt to notify their embassy or consulate in the event of arrest, as authorities may fail to report arrests.

## **Transportation**

**Air:** Mexico is rated Category 1 in the International Aviation Safety Assessment Program (IASA), indicating that the country's civil aviation authority has been assessed by IASA inspectors, and found to license and oversee air carriers in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) safety standards.

**Bus and Metro:** Travel by bus should be avoided if possible as robberies are common. Intercity buses should only be used during daylight hours. Intercity bus travel along non-toll highways should be avoided as such highways are less secure than toll highways, and bus hijackings and armed robberies may occur. Bus travel through Tamaulipas is considered particularly hazardous. Buses traveling through the state are sometimes targeted by criminal groups that take passengers hostage and demand ransoms. In Mexico City, travel in non-municipal buses is not recommended. Incidents of pickpocketing may occur on the metro. Avoid overnight journeys on buses as the risk of an accident increases. Drivers are not always checked for alcohol levels and drugs, resulting in higher numbers of bus drivers falling asleep at the wheel.

**Car:** Driving in Mexico can be hazardous due to reckless local driving practices, poorly maintained roads, and the risk of carjacking. Carjackings may occur on non-toll or toll highways, but most frequently occur on isolated non-toll highways at night. Risk of carjacking is highest near the border with the United States. Drivers of SUVs have been known to be particular targets for such criminal activity.

A permit is needed to drive a vehicle from the United States across the border into Mexico. The following must be presented in order to obtain the permit: proof of citizenship, title for the vehicle, vehicle registration, driver's license, and a processing fee of USD 30. These items must be submitted to branches of the Banjercito Bank, which are found at customs and border crossing points. Additionally, a deposit is required by Mexican law to ensure that the car leaves the country with its driver at the end of the visit. Holders of American Express, Visa, or MasterCard must provide credit card information; all others must provide a cash deposit of between USD 200 and USD 400. Travelers must stop at Banjercito Bank branch offices before leaving the country to recover their

deposit. Be sure to obtain this permit at the legitimate customs office; individuals who loiter at customs offices offering tourists the opportunity to obtain a permit without waiting in line are selling fraudulent permits.

US drivers' licenses are valid in Mexico. Mexican law requires that the owner of the car must be inside the vehicle at any time when it is being driven. Those who rent or borrow cars in Mexico are responsible for any illegal items found in the vehicle, even if they were unaware of their presence.

Those involved in a road accident who do not get an answer from the Mexican emergency line, "911," may call the *Angeles Verdes*, or Green Angels, by dialing "078." The *Angeles Verdes*, operated through the Mexican Ministry of Tourism, have a fleet of trucks and bilingual staff.

**Taxi:** The most reliable mode of transport in Mexico is radio taxi, or *sitio*. Only use taxis booked through hotels, restaurants, and other similar establishments, or those from designated stands, which have the logo of the company and the plate number stamped on the side of the vehicle. Avoid hailing taxis from the street.

Do not take *libre* taxis or Volkswagen Beetle cabs, which are likely to be unregistered. A higher risk of harassment, assault, and other crimes is associated with travel in unregistered taxis and those hailed on the street. In Mexico City, all government-authorized license taxis have license plates starting with A or B. Most taxi-related crimes in the capital occur in the borough of Ixtapalapa. Only use properly marked taxis, and book through a hotel if possible.

Ride-hailing apps such as Uber and Cabify are available in Mexico.

**Train:** Mexico offers limited passenger rail services and most of the passenger trains that do run are tourist-oriented. These include the *Chihuahua Pacific Railway* (running along Copper Canyon), the *Tequila Express* (from Guadalajara to the town of Tequila), and the *Expreso Maya* (which runs through several archaeological sites, as well as many tourism-oriented cities in the Yucatán).

### **Scams, Fraud, Corruption, and Extortion**

In tourist areas, establishments that do not clearly mark their prices are likely to be seeking to take advantage of wealthy foreigners.

Non-physical "virtual kidnappings," in which the victim receives a phone call telling them that a loved one has been kidnapped and they must pay the ransom, are common in Mexico. Other incarnations of virtual kidnappings occur when a victim answers a phone call, and is told that he/she is speaking with a commander of the Zetas, a major drug cartel in Mexico, who claims to be about to harm the intended victim's family if he/she does not comply with their demands. A similar scam is the "grandparent scam," in which a person, usually a grandparent, is called by someone pretending to be an attorney or government employee to alert them that a younger relative has been detained, and a sum must be paid to ensure their release.

Common scams against foreigners, irrespective of destination, include dating and marriage scams, false employment opportunities, and virtual kidnapping for ransom. Avoid giving out personal information at all costs, especially bank or credit card numbers.

Credit card and ATM fraud is not uncommon. Some establishments will use skimming devices to obtain card information. When possible, use ATM machines in accepted hotels, banks, or businesses.

Corruption of government employees is widespread in Mexico and it has been reported that officials have requested or demanded illegitimate payments from foreigners for real or imaginary

violations of local law, or to provide services.

## **Security Advice**

Be prepared. Make an effort to understand your destination environment before you travel: identify the possible threats and prevailing situation, understand your own vulnerabilities and take action to mitigate the risks.

Maintain a low profile and good situational awareness. Ensure you travel with reliable communications equipment, test your mobile (cellular) telephone upon arrival at your destination and keep it fully charged. Make note of emergency telephone numbers, including the police, fire department, ambulance, and embassy or consulate.

Avoid all protests and demonstrations to minimize the risk of exposure to incidental violence. Travelers should walk away or wait inside a shop or restaurant if it is not possible to leave the area. Plan alternate routes to circumvent potential protest locations. Seek the assistance of a local host, or travel with a local driver, where possible.

To minimize the risk of becoming a victim of petty theft, travelers should maintain caution and exercise situational awareness at all times. Avoid overt displays of wealth. If confronted by a criminal, do nothing to antagonize the situation. Carry a "dummy" wallet if possible, and carry a passport photocopy at all times.

Carry handbags on the opposite side from passing traffic to reduce the risk of thieves on motorcycles trying to snatch them.

Avoid walking unless you are confident of the security situation. Do not walk by yourself at night in secluded or troublesome areas of the city. Do not take shortcuts away from main roads.

National holidays and public festivals tend to attract large crowds in some countries. Such public gatherings, despite a typically enhanced security presence, create a potential venue for disorder or violence. In addition, large crowds may well impede local transportation systems.

Do not buy counterfeit or any goods in violation of copyright laws. Doing so may be a violation of local laws and can carry hefty fines or even prison time.

Reduce risk of injury from car crashes by always wearing a seatbelt. Some countries have heavy fines for not wearing a seatbelt. Avoid drinking and driving. Be sure to travel with all appropriate documentation, including passport and visa photocopies. Individuals who intend on driving should be in possession of their International Driving Permit (IDP), vehicle registration, and proof of insurance at all times.

Travelers are subject to the laws of Mexico, even if they are not citizens of Mexico. Travelers can also be prosecuted for violating their home country's laws while in a foreign country. Travelers should be aware of the laws and customs of the country they are traveling to in order to avoid prosecution.

# HEALTH ASSESSMENT

## Health Risk Rating

Moderate

## Travel Health Advice

Routine vaccines for preventable diseases, such as measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, chickenpox (or varicella), poliovirus vaccine, etc. are recommended for all travelers.

Protect against insect bites and insect-borne diseases, such as tick-borne encephalitis or malaria, by using insect repellent and wearing long pants, long-sleeved shirts, boots, and hats if possible.

Prevent foodborne illnesses by avoiding undercooked foods and unpasteurized dairy products and washing hands, especially before eating.

## Immunizations - Required for Entry

Immunization	Notes
None	There are no required immunizations for entry into Mexico.

## Immunizations - General

The following immunizations are recommended for travel to all destinations.

Immunization	Recommendations
<b>Routine</b>	Includes measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, chickenpox (or varicella), poliovirus vaccine, etc.
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	Hepatitis B is spread through contact with blood, sexual relations, and contact with contaminated needles. There are several pre-exposure vaccination options available: PEDIARIX (pediatric formulation containing DTaP, HepA/B, and polio vaccines), TWINRIX (three-dose HepA/HepB combination series), ENGERIX-B, and RECOMBIVAX HB. The full course of three injections is recommended prior to travel.
<b>Influenza</b>	Influenza is transmitted between humans in droplets spread by sneezing or coughing, and by touching objects contaminated with the virus. There are two types of pre-exposure vaccine available: Trivalent Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (TIV) and Live Intranasal Influenza Vaccine (LAIV). TIV is injected into the upper arm or thigh, and LAIV is administered as a nasal spray. Common TIV vaccines include Afluria, Agriflu, FluLaval, Fluarix, Fluvirin, and Fluzone. Common LAIV vaccines include FluMist.

## Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Specific to Mexico

The following are vaccine-preventable diseases that are prevalent in Mexico.

Immunization	Recommendations
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<b>Hepatitis A</b>	Hepatitis A is found in areas with poor sanitation and poor food and water safety, and can also be spread through sexual relations, blood transfusions, and needles. Hepatitis A is common in many small communities in Mexico due to a lack of clean water and unsanitary conditions. There are several pre-exposure vaccine options: PEDIARIX (pediatric formulation containing DTaP, HepB, and polio vaccines), HAVRIX, VAQTA, TWINRIX (three-dose HepA/HepB combination series), AVAXIM, and Epaxal. The first injection should be administered before departure and a booster after six months.
<b>Rabies</b>	Rabies is spread through the bite or scratch of an infected animal. Vaccination against rabies does not make a person immune to rabies. Those who have potentially been exposed should still seek treatment. Left untreated, rabies can be fatal. A three-dose pre-exposure rabies vaccine is recommended for long-term travelers and those in direct contact with animals. The first dose of the vaccine should be administered at least 21 days before travel.
<b>Typhoid</b>	Typhoid is contracted through the ingestion of contaminated food or water. Individuals traveling extensively within the interior of the country or to remote areas, or staying with relatives for extended periods, should undergo vaccination at least one week before travel. Booster shots are necessary, as the vaccine loses effectiveness over the course of several years. Two forms of the vaccine are available: an inactivated shot and a live weakened oral vaccine.

## Health Risks in Mexico

Health Risks	Details	Recommendations
<b>Air Pollution</b>	<p>Authorities have imposed a number of temporary car bans in Mexico City due to high levels of air pollution, which peak during the winter months. Other areas in the country with high levels of particulate matter contributing to poor air quality are Monterrey, Toluca, Puebla, and Salamanca.</p>	<p>Travelers with breathing or other health problems, such as bronchial or sinus conditions, or asthma, should consult a doctor before traveling to air pollution-affected areas in Mexico.</p>
<b>Altitude Sickness</b>	<p>Symptoms include fatigue, rapid pulse, dizziness, headache, and nausea. Altitude sickness can be life-threatening.</p>	<p>To avoid altitude sickness it is recommendable to ascend slowly and stay hydrated. Acetazolamide can help to reduce symptoms: 125mg, twice a day for three days, beginning on the first day of ascent, or 12 hours prior to beginning ascent.</p>
<b>Chagas Disease (American Trypanosomiasis)</b>	<p>Chagas disease is spread via contact with the reduviid bug, which can be found in buildings made of mud, adobe, or palm thatch. It is also possible to contract Chagas disease by consuming products (especially acai palm juice or sugar cane juice) containing crushed insects, as well as through blood transfusions. Highest incidence rates are reported from the states of Chiapas, Distrito Federal, Hidalgo, Guerrero, Jalisco, Morelos, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Veracruz, Yucatán, and Zacatecas.</p>	<p>There is no vaccine to prevent Chagas disease. Take measures to reduce insect exposure, such as by using insecticides and insect repellent.</p>
<b>Chikungunya</b>	<p>Chikungunya is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito, predominantly during the rainy season. Symptoms include sudden joint pain and fever, headache, rash, and vomiting, though not all infected persons exhibit symptoms.</p>	<p>There is no vaccine to prevent chikungunya, but taking precautions against mosquito and insect bites, such as applying insect repellent and using mosquito nets, may help to prevent transmission.</p>

<p><b>Cutaneous Larva Migrans</b></p>	<p>Cutaneous larva migrans is spread through contact with soil and moist sand contaminated with hookworm larva, found in the feces of certain animals. Infection can cause an intensely itchy and red rash that can last between several weeks to a year.</p>	<p>There is no vaccine to prevent cutaneous larva migrans. Travelers are advised to avoid walking barefoot on beaches or other soil, to wash their feet after contact with sand, and to always sit on a towel.</p>
<p><b>Dengue Fever</b></p>	<p>Dengue fever is spread through the bite of an infected <i>Aedes</i> mosquito. Symptoms include headache, sudden-onset fever, rash, and joint pain. Risk of transmission is highest in coastal areas, and during the rainy season between July and October. High altitude areas in central Mexico are considered risk-free.</p>	<p>There is no vaccine to prevent dengue fever. Protect against bites by using insect repellent (with 30-50% DEET, or 7-15% Picaridin) and wearing long pants, long-sleeved shirts, boots and hats. Stay indoors in areas with screens and air conditioning, if possible. The risk of being bitten by a mosquito is highest in the early morning, several hours after daybreak, and in the late afternoon before sunset. The <i>Aedes</i> mosquito, which carries dengue fever, typically lives indoors in dark, cool places such as closets, under beds, in bathrooms, and behind curtains, and prefers to lay its eggs on standing water.</p>
<p><b>Hepatitis E</b></p>	<p>Hepatitis E is endemic in Mexico, and typically contracted through exposure to raw or uncooked shellfish, or unclean drinking water.</p>	<p>There is no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis E. Hepatitis E can be avoided by ensuring appropriate sanitation, particularly regarding drinking water.</p>
<p><b>Leishmaniasis</b></p>	<p>Leishmaniasis is spread through the bite of an infected sandfly. Leishmaniasis is common in Campeche, Chiapas, Guerrero, Jalisco, Morelos, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo; Tabasco, Veracruz, and Yucutan.</p>	<p>There is no vaccine to prevent leishmaniasis. Take precautions against mosquito bites. Be aware that the mesh on any protective netting must be of a finer weave than the norm for prevention of mosquito bites. For netting to be effective against sandflies, it must have at least 18 holes per linear inch (2.54 cm).</p>

<p><b>Malaria</b></p>	<p>Malaria is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. Risk is present in rural areas in Chihuahua, Chiapas, Durango, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Sinaloa, and Sonora states. Some risk is also present in areas surrounding archaeological sites in Chiapas (Palenque, Bonampak, El Cayo, La Mar, Tonina, etc) and Campeche (Becan, Calakmul, Edzna, Hochob, Xpuhil, etc).</p>	<p>There is no vaccine to prevent malaria, but taking a prescription antimalarial drug and precautions against mosquito bites may help to prevent transmission. Malaria prophylaxis is recommended if traveling to endemic areas outside major cities. Recommended malaria prophylaxis medications are atovaquone/proguanil, chloroquine, doxycycline, mefloquine, or primaquine. In the states of Campeche, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Sonora, Quintana Roo and Tabasco, avoidance of mosquitoes is recommended.</p>
<p><b>Tuberculosis (TB)</b></p>	<p>TB is spread through contact with the respiratory secretions of an infected person. TB is endemic in Mexico, and found mainly in the country's south and in Baja California. Multi-drug resistant TB strains are common in Mexico.</p>	<p>The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine has historically been used at birth in most developing countries to prevent TB. The effectiveness of the vaccine in adults has varied between 0 and 80 percent. The BCG vaccine may interfere with TB testing in some cases. Travelers should avoid close contact or prolonged time with TB patients in closed environments. Individuals who anticipate prolonged exposure to TB-infected populations should undergo the tuberculin skin test (TST) or interferon-<math>\gamma</math> release assay (IGRA) before travel and eight to 10 weeks after returning from travel.</p>
<p><b>Zika Fever</b></p>	<p>An outbreak of Zika fever is ongoing in the country. States most affected include Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Veracruz. Zika fever is an acute illness, caused by the Zika virus (<i>Flavivirus</i> genus), which is transmitted through the bite of an infected <i>Aedes</i> mosquito. Symptoms-including sudden-onset fever, rash, joint and body pain, headache, and conjunctivitis-are usually mild and last several days to a week. Women infected with the Zika virus who are pregnant, or become pregnant, are at increased risk of birth defects, including microcephaly.</p>	<p>There is no vaccine to prevent or specific medication available to treat Zika virus infection. Prevention is primarily accomplished by avoiding bites of the infected <i>Aedes</i> mosquitos. Protect against bites by using insect repellent (with 30-50% DEET, 7-15% Picaridin, or IR3535) and wearing long pants, long-sleeved shirts, boots, and hats. Stay indoors in areas with screens and air conditioning, if possible. The risk of being bitten by a mosquito is highest in the early morning, several hours after daybreak, and in the late afternoon before sunset. The <i>Aedes</i> mosquito, which carries the Zika virus, typically lives indoors in dark, cool places as well as around standing water. Travelers who are pregnant, or planning to become pregnant, should consult their health care provider and determine the level of risk for microcephaly or other birth defects before traveling to areas with confirmed Zika virus activity.</p>

## **Food and Water Safety**

In many areas in Mexico, tap water is not potable. Travelers are advised to drink only boiled or bottled water, and to avoid ice cubes. Thoroughly wash and peel all fruits and vegetables with purified water. Avoid raw or undercooked fish and meats.

## **Medical Facilities and Services**

Within Mexico City, the quality of health care is acceptable. However, care provided by emergency responders does not meet international standards. Outside urban areas, medical facilities and service providers are of low standards. Many Mexican medical facilities will require patients to pay for services before providing them and will not deal directly with insurance companies. Hyperbaric chambers can be found in major cities and resort towns where scuba diving is common.

# DESTINATION DETAILS

## Time Zones

### Central

From 1 April 2018 to 28 October 2018, Central Daylight Time (CDT): GMT -5 hours  
From 28 October 2018 to 7 April 2019, Central Standard Time (CST): GMT -6 hours  
From 7 April 2019 to 27 October 2019, Central Daylight Time (CDT): GMT -5 hours

### Mountain

From 1 April 2018 to 28 October 2018, Mountain Daylight Time (MDT): GMT -6 hours  
From 28 October 2018 to 7 April 2019, Mountain Standard Time (MST): GMT -7 hours  
From 7 April 2019 to 27 October 2019, Mountain Daylight Time (MDT): GMT -6 hours

**NOTE :** *The state of Sonora does not observe Daylight Saving Time.*

### Pacific

From 11 March 2018 to 4 November 2018, Pacific Daylight Time (PDT): GMT -7 hours  
From 4 November 2018 to 10 March 2019, Pacific Standard Time (PST): GMT -8 hours  
From 10 March 2019 to 3 November 2019, Pacific Daylight Time (PDT): GMT -7 hours

## Currency

Mexican peso (MXN)

## Credit Cards

Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are the most widely accepted credit cards in Mexico. Travelers visiting remote locations may experience difficulty in finding establishments that accept credit cards. Accordingly, travelers should constantly notify their respective banks regarding their travel plans to avoid having their accounts frozen.

## ATMs

ATMs are widely available throughout Mexico. However, small bills are not commonly dispensed and shopkeepers often do not have change for large bills. Travelers should check with their banks before their trip regarding any fees associated with ATM use.

## Banking Hours

From Monday to Friday, 09:00-16:00; a few banks operate additional hours, including Saturday mornings.

Banking hours may vary based on a particular bank and location.

## Major Holidays

Various services, including transportation, may be affected on/around the following holidays:

Date	Holiday
1 January 2018	New Year's Day
5 February 2018	Constitution Day

19 March 2018	Day off for Benito Juárez's Birthday Memorial
20-21 March 2018	Benito Juárez's Birthday Memorial
1 May 2018	Labor Day/May Day
1 July 2018	Mexican General Election
16 September 2018	Independence Day
19 November 2018	Day off for Revolution Day Memorial
20 November 2018	Revolution Day Memorial
1 December 2018	Inauguration Day
25 December 2018	Christmas Day

**NOTE:** General elections are scheduled to take place on 1 July 2018.

### **Voltage Information**

110V, 60HZ - Plug Type A

## International Airports

Airport Name	Airport Code	Airport Location
Angel Albino Corzo Airport	TGZ	Tuxtla Gutierrez
Bahías de Huatulco Airport	HUX	Huatulco
Cabo San Lucas Airport	CSL	Cabo San Lucas
Cancún Airport	CUN	Cancún
Carlos Rovirosa Pérez Airport	VSA	Villahermosa
Ciudad del Carmen Airport	CME	Ciudad del Carmen
Cozumel Airport	CZM	Cozumel
Del Bajío Airport	BJX	León
Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla Airport	GDL	Guadalajara
Federal de Bachigualato Airport	CUL	Culiacán
Francisco Sarabia Airport	TRC	Torreón
General Francisco J. Mujica Airport	MLM	Morelia
General Francisco Javier Mina Airport	TAM	Tampico
General Guadalupe Victoria Airport	DGO	Durango
General Heriberto Jara Airport	VER	Veracruz
General Juan N. Alvarez Airport	ACA	Acapulco
General Mariano Escobedo Airport	MTY	Monterrey
General Rafael Buelna Airport	MZT	Mazatlán
Gral. Abelardo L. Rodríguez Airport	TIJ	Tijuana
Hermanos Serdán Airport	PBC	Puebla
Ing. Alberto Acuña Ongay Airport	CPE	Campeche
Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo Airport	ZIH	Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo
Lic. Adolfo López Mateos Airport	TLC	Toluca
Lic. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz Airport	PVR	Puerto Vallarta
Lic. Jesús Terán Peredo Airport	AGU	Aguascalientes
Loreto Airport	LTO	Loreto
Los Cabos Airport	SJD	San José del Cabo
Manuel Crescencio Rejón Airport	MID	Mérida
Mexico City Airport	MEX	Mexico City

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Plan de Guadalupe Airport	SLW	Saltillo
Playa de Oro Airport	ZLO	Manzanillo
Ponciano Arriaga Airport	SLP	San Luis Potosí
Querétaro Airport	QRO	Querétaro
Roberto Fierro Villalobos Airport	CUU	Chihuahua
Xoxocotlán Airport	OAX	Oaxaca

# ENTRY & EXIT REQUIREMENTS

The following information is for citizens of the United States. If you are a citizen of a country other than the United States, contact an embassy or consulate for up-to-date requirements. For additional questions regarding entry/exit requirements, contact Global Rescue at (+1) (617) 459-4200.

A passport valid for at least three months is required for entry to Mexico, though a passport with at least six months' validity is recommended. Passports must be in good condition; travelers with passports found to be washed, mutilated, or damaged have been refused entry in the past. Stays of up to 180 days for tourism or business purposes do not require a visa. An onward/return ticket and proof of sufficient funds may also be requested. Non-Mexican citizens under 18 must have notarized written permission from any parent(s) or guardian(s) not traveling with them.

An airport tax is applicable to all departures, and is usually included in the price of the ticket. There is a separate tourist tax of approximately USD 22, which is normally included in airline tickets. Those entering Mexico via a land border or by sea on a private vessel must pay this fee separately.

Visitors entering Mexico by land who plan to travel further than 25 kilometers (16 miles) into the country should stop at an immigration checkpoint to obtain an entry permit, or "Forma Migratoria Multiple," to present at immigration checkpoints.

## IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

**The following items are permitted:**

- Visitors may bring up to USD 300 of gifts duty-free (USD 50 if entering via a land border);
- 1 camera;
- 1 video cassette player;
- 1 computer;
- 1 CD player;
- 5 DVDs;
- 20 CDs or audiocassettes;
- 12 rolls of film;
- 1 cell phone;
- 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, **OR** 200 grams of pipe tobacco (only for persons over 18 years of age);
- 3 liters of wine or liquor (only for persons over 18 years of age);
- Reasonable quantity of perfume/eau-de-cologne for personal use; **AND**
- Medicine with prescription labels for personal use.

**The following restrictions apply:**

- Non-residents must declare local currency in excess of USD 10,000 and declare all foreign currency upon arrival.
- Firearms and ammunition require import permits and declaration forms obtained from the Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional.

**The following items are prohibited:**

- Flowers,

- Fruits,
- Knives,
- Uncanned foodstuff,
- Meat,
- Plants, and
- Vegetables.

## **EXPORT RESTRICTIONS**

### **The following restrictions apply:**

- Non-residents may export up to USD 10,000 in local currency, and up to the amount of foreign currency declared upon arrival.

### **The following items are prohibited:**

- Archaeological relics.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

<b>Intl. Country Code</b>	+52
<b>Fire</b>	911
<b>Police</b>	911
<b>Ambulance</b>	911

### Contact Information for Select Embassies

#### **US Embassy in Mexico City**

Paseo de la Reforma 305  
Colonia Cuauhtemoc  
Mexico City 06500  
Telephone: (+52) 55-5080-2000  
acsgdl@state.gov

#### **British Embassy in Mexico City**

*The British Embassy offices in Mexico City are temporarily closed due to earthquake damage.  
Consular services are currently operating from:*

Torre Cuadro (3rd floor)  
Cda. Blvd. Avila Camacho, 76-3  
Col. Lomas de Chapultepec  
Mexico City 11000  
Telephone: (+52) 55-1670-3200  
ukinmexico@fco.gov.uk

#### **Australian Embassy in Mexico City**

Ruben Dario 55  
Col. Bosque de Chapultepec  
Mexico City 11580  
Telephone: (+52) 55-1101-2200  
australianembassy.mexico@dfat.gov.au

For other embassies, contact Global Rescue at (+1) (617) 459-4200.