



Mexico



With a Native American heritage and a distinct Spanish flavour, Mexico is vibrant, colourful and unique. Its varied terrain ranges from cactus-studded deserts to white sandy beaches and blue waters, tropical rainforest and jungle-clad hills to steep rocky canyons and narrow gorges, and from snow-capped volcano peaks to bustling cities.



Relax at Valladolid, Yucatan © Larry&flo

Since the height of Mayan and Aztec civilisations, Mexico has suffered the destructive force of the Conquistadors, European colonial rule, civil and territorial wars, rebellions, dictatorships, recessions and earthquakes. Yet its people remain warm and friendly, much of the countryside remains unspoilt by development, and its cities display a unique style of architecture. The extraordinary history is reflected in the ancient Mayan temples strewn across the jungles and ruins of Aztec civilisations, rural indigenous villages, Spanish colonial cities and silver mining towns, and traditional Mexican ports.

Buildings display a unique combination of colonial and pagan architecture, blending together Art Nouveau, Baroque, Art Deco and Native American design into the structure of their churches and public structures. The country's culture displays a similar blend of the traditional and modern, where pagan meets Christian in a series of festivals, or fiestas throughout the year.

Besides a combination of unique culture and fascinating cities, Mexico also boasts several hundred miles of coastline extending down through both the Pacific and the Caribbean, which has branded the country as a popular summer retreat destination. Beach resort cities such as Acapulco, Cancun and those of the Baja California peninsula are accepted vacation havens. The countryside is also rich in archaeological treasures with pyramids, ruins of ancient cities and great stone carvings of ancient gods standing as testament to a country once ruled by the Aztecs and Mayans.

Basics

Time: Mexico spans four different time zones: GMT -6, -7 and -8 with daylight saving, and GMT -7 all year round in the state of Sonora.

Electricity: 130 volts, 60Hz. Two-pin flat blade attachment plugs are standard.

Money: Mexican currency is the New Peso (MXN) divided into 100 centavos. Credit cards are widely accepted, particularly Visa, MasterCard and American Express. Travellers cheques are generally accepted, but cannot be cashed on Sundays. ATMs are available in most cities and towns and are the most convenient way to get money, but for safety reasons they should only be used during business hours. Although most businesses will accept foreign currency it is best to use pesos. Foreign currency can be exchanged at one of many *casas de cambio* (exchange houses), which have longer hours and offer a quicker service than the banks.

Currency Exchange Rates				
MXN1.00	MXN5.00	MXN10.00	MXN100.00	MXN1,000.00
A\$ 0.10	A\$ 0.49	A\$ 0.98	A\$ 9.80	A\$ 98.01
C\$ 0.08	C\$ 0.42	C\$ 0.84	C\$ 8.38	C\$ 83.81
€ 0.05	€ 0.27	€ 0.54	€ 5.38	€ 53.76
NZ\$ 0.12	NZ\$ 0.60	NZ\$ 1.20	NZ\$ 12.02	NZ\$ 120.24
R 0.61	R 3.05	R 6.10	R 61.00	R 610.00
£ 0.05	£ 0.23	£ 0.47	£ 4.69	£ 46.91
US\$ 0.07	US\$ 0.37	US\$ 0.75	US\$ 7.48	US\$ 74.80

Note: These rates are not updated daily and should be used as a guideline only.

Language: Spanish is the official language. Some English is spoken in tourist regions.

Entry requirements for Americans: United States citizens travelling by land or sea must either be in possession of a passport, WHTI-compliant document, or a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license, as well as proof of citizenship, such as an original or certified birth certificate. To enter or re-enter the USA by air a passport or other valid travel document is required. A visa is not required for stays of up to 180 days, if holding a Tourist Card/FMT form issued free of charge by airlines, embassies and at border crossings. Business travellers do not require a visa for up to 30 days if holding a FMTTV form.

Entry requirements for UK nationals: British passport holders must have a passport and carry a Tourist Card/FMT Form. A visa is not required for stays of up to 180 days if holding an endorsed British Citizen passport. If the passport is endorsed British National (Overseas) the visa exemption is for a maximum of 90 days. British passport holders travelling on business can stay visa-free for one month if in possession of a FMTTV form, which can be acquired on arrival. All other passport holders require a visa to travel to Mexico. Travellers must have a return or onward ticket (unless a British Citizen with a Tourist Card or visa), as well as necessary documents for further travel, and sufficient funds.

Entry requirements for Canadians: Canadian passport holders must have a passport, or a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license, as well as proof of citizenship, such as an original or certified birth certificate. A visa is not required for stays of up to 180 days if in possession of a Tourist Card/FMT form issued free of charge by airlines. Business travellers do not require a visa for up to 30 days if holding a FMTTV form. Travellers are required to have the necessary documents for further travel, and sufficient funds.

Entry requirements for Australians: Australian nationals must have a passport. A visa is not required for stays of up to 180 days if in possession of a Tourist Card/FMT form issued free by airlines. Travellers are required to have tickets and documents for a return or onward journey, and sufficient funds.

Entry requirements for South Africans: South Africans require a passport. A visa and Tourist Card/FMT form with consular stamp is required and is valid for 90 days after date of issue and good for one entry only. Travellers are required to have tickets and documents for a return or onward journey, and sufficient funds.

Entry requirements for New Zealanders: New Zealanders must have a passport. No visa is required for a touristic stay of up to 180 days, if holding a Tourist Card/FMT form issued by airlines (free of charge). Travellers are required to have tickets and documents for a return or onward journey, and sufficient funds.

Entry requirements for Irish nationals: Irish nationals must have a passport. A visa is not required for stays of up to 180 days if in possession of a Tourist Card/FMT form issued free by airlines. Business travellers do not require a visa for up to 30 days if holding a FMTTV form. Travellers are required to have tickets and documents for a return or onward journey, and sufficient funds.

Passport/Visa Note: All visitors must hold a tourist card (FMT form), which is issued free of charge and obtainable from airlines, Mexican Consulates, Mexican international airports and border crossing points. As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling by air outside the United States are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States.

Health: Swine flu update: The Mexican government believes the worst of the swine flu outbreak has past as tourism sites and restaurants reopen. Conflicting advice from governments and agencies have left would-be-tourists unsure if it is safe to travel to Mexico. The US Center of Disease Control had advised cancelling all but essential travel to Mexico although the World Health Organisation is advising against any travel restrictions. Airlines are still running between Mexico and most countries. As of mid-May '09 Mexico had 701 infected patients and 26 deaths although there is an encouraging drop in the number of new cases. For the latest information, including daily updates visit the WHO. Those entering Mexico from an infected area require a yellow fever certificate. There are no vaccination requirements for visitors to Mexico, however visitors should take medical advice if travelling outside the major tourist areas. A malaria risk exists in some rural areas, but not on the Pacific and Gulf coasts, and dengue fever is on the increase. Sensible precautions regarding food and water should be followed and visitors are advised to be cautious of street food and stick to bottled water. Medical facilities are basic, so medical insurance is recommended.

Tipping: Tipping is customary in Mexico by almost all services as employees are not paid sufficient hourly wages and rely on tips. Waiters and bar staff should be tipped 10 to 15% if a service charge hasn't already been added to the bill. The American custom of tipping 15 to 20% is practiced at international resorts, including those in Los Cabos.

Climate: The coast and lowlands are hot and humid all year. The interior highlands are milder and drier, but can become freezing between December and February. Rainfall is scarce throughout most of the country.

Safety: There is a risk of indiscriminate terrorist attacks in public places. Crime is high in Mexico, especially in Mexico City, where robberies and muggings are prevalent. Travellers should avoid displays of wealth and be particularly vigilant on public transport, at stations and tourist sites. Only use authorised taxi services, from the taxi rank. All bus travel should be in daylight hours and if possible it is advisable to travel first class. Women travelling on their own should be alert, especially in tourist areas, as a number of serious sexual assaults have occurred in Cancun recently. Visitors drawing money from cash machines or exchanging money at bureaux de change should do so in daylight hours and be especially vigilant on leaving. There have been reports of tourists being approached by 'questionnaire agents', who use visitors' personal details to mislead relatives about their well-being, so be cautious. Visitors are advised to be wary of people presenting themselves as police officers attempting to fine or arrest them for no apparent reason, leading to theft or assault; if in doubt ask for identification, and, if possible make a note of the officer's name, badge number and patrol number. The practice is most common in Cancun where increasing numbers of motorists in rental cars have been stopped and threatened with imprisonment if an immediate fine is not paid. Hurricanes may affect the coastal areas between June and November.

Customs: Mexicans are not impatient and do not appreciate this emotion in others, so travellers should behave accordingly and expect opening hours and public transport times to be flexible and laid back. Mexicans are friendly and hospitable people and courteous behaviour and polite speech in return, is greatly appreciated. Travellers should also note that it is common for Mexicans to communicate closer than one arm's length from each other and that it is not an attempt to be forward.

Business: Business in Mexico tends to be conducted formally, particularly in initial meetings. Face-to-face contact is important in order to build a good working relationship. Dress tends to be formal with suits and ties the norm, though it can be more relaxed in hotter areas. It is always important to be punctual, although your counterpart may be late, as it is normal for Mexicans to run behind schedule. Greetings are polite and formal, using surnames and titles unless otherwise indicated. A handshake is standard, though follow your host's lead. Business cards are usually exchanged and it can be helpful to have them printed in English on one side and Spanish on the other. English is usually used in a business context, but an attempt at speaking Spanish will be highly appreciated, and an interpreter may be necessary. Women should be aware that business in Mexico is very male dominated. Business hours can vary, though usually from 9am to 5pm, often closing at lunchtime for an hour.

Communications: The international access code for Mexico is +52. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 001 for North America). City/area codes are in use, e.g. (0)55 for Mexico City, (0)744 for Acapulco and (0)998 for Cancun. Some US long-distance phone companies have access numbers which can be dialled in order to use your phone card - calls are usually cheaper than direct-dialled calls from a hotel room. If calling internationally from a phone booth only use the official TelMex phone booths, as all others charge very high fees. GSM 1900 mobile networks cover most of the country. Internet access is widely available in most of the country, especially in tourist-orientated areas.

Duty Free: Travellers to Mexico over 18 years do not have to pay duty on 400 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g pipe tobacco; 3 litres wine or other alcoholic beverages; perfume, eau-de-cologne or lotions for personal use; a video camera and one standard camera. Non-residents are allowed to bring in 12 rolls of film or video cassettes,

and goods to the value of US\$300 without incurring duty fees. Prohibited goods include fresh food products and the import of canned food. The export of archaeological artefacts is strictly forbidden.

MEXICO CITY

Sprawling across a valley encircled by ice-capped volcanoes and mountains, atop an ancient Aztec civilisation, Mexico City is North America's highest city, and one of the world's most densely populated. With a long and fascinating history that runs from ancient native civilisations through to the invasion of the Conquistadors and subsequent colonial rule, Mexico City has a vast number of fascinating sights and attractions.

In the city centre, constructed out of the stones of the ancient palaces and temples, is the vast open space of the Zócalo - Mexico's city square - said to be the second largest in the world after Moscow's Red Square. At La Merced you'll discover the city's largest and most vibrant market, with a vast array of bizarre and exciting stalls, while the huge expanse of the Bosque de Chapultepec park houses the National Museum of Anthropology, with a fascinating collection of pre-Hispanic artefacts. At Teotihuac´n visitors will discover one of the most impressive and mysterious archaeological sites in Mexico, constructed by an ancient, and long forgotten culture.



Aztec dancer, El Zocalo

The sprawling capital is a place to both love and hate, with everything you'd anticipate in a large city. It has world-class museums and galleries, a remarkable architectural legacy and elegant buildings, palaces and cathedrals, green open spaces and colonial suburbs, historical ruins, attractive squares, modern skyscrapers and great economic, cultural and political importance. It also has poverty, overcrowding and slums, incredible pollution, traffic congestion, crime, unemployment, and a constant cacophony of people and noise. It is exhilarating, frenetic and fascinating, an unabated reserve of vibrancy and life.

Despite its problems and somewhat bewildering energy Mexico City is a magnet for Mexicans and tourists alike: a modern, cosmopolitan and ever growing city that is attractive in so many ways. Despite its renown for the appalling, throat-rasping levels of pollution, Mexico City's skies often remain remarkably clear, and it does make for incredible sunsets.

Attractions

El Zócalo

In the middle of the city's historic centre is the enormous paved Plaza de la Constitución, or Zócalo, the second largest city square in the world, and Mexico City's centre of government and religion. The Presidential Palace dominates one side of the square, a magnificent colonial building that was built on the site of the former Aztec Palace, with remarkable interior murals narrating the story of Mexico's history. Dominating an adjacent side of the square is the great Metropolitan Cathedral, displaying a wealth of architectural styles and occupying the site of the once sacred grounds of the Aztec. The ornate interior contains its chief treasure, the King's Chapel and gilded altar. The Cathedral is one of the buildings subsiding into the soft ground on which the city is built and builders are continuously at work to prevent its uneven descent. The square itself is filled with activity, with vendors and buskers, informal traditional Aztec dance performances, family groups, workers on lunch break and passing tourists. It is also the place for demonstrations, government rallies and protest marches, as well as festivals and public holiday events. Every evening the presidential guards, in a show of great ceremony, lower the national flag from the central flagpole. And encircling the square is the continuous buzz of the ubiquitous green Volkswagen taxis.

Templo Mayor

Templo Mayor (Great Temple) was the principal temple of the Aztecs, believed to mark the centre of the universe. It was part of the sacred complex of the ancient city of Tenochtitlán, and today it has been excavated to show the multiple layers of construction, viewed from a raised walkway with explanatory material available. The temple was first built in 1375, and enlarged several times, each rebuilding accompanied by a frenzied bloody sacrifice of captured warriors to rededicate the sacred area. At the centre is a platform on which stands a sacrificial stone in front of the shrine to the tribal god, Huizilopochtli. Within the site is the excellent Museo del Templo Mayor, a museum displaying artefacts from the original site and providing an overview of Aztec civilisation. The most important display is the first artefact to be discovered on the site, the great wheel-like stone carving of the Aztec goddess of the moon, Coyilxauhqui.

Address: Seminario 8, Historical District; **Telephone:** 542-02-56; **Transport:** Take metro to Zocalo. Templo Mayor is off Zocalo, to the right of the city cathedral if you face it; **Opening time:** Tuesday to Sunday, from 9am to 5pm ; **Admission:** \$16 (adults), children free

Palacio de Bellas Artes

Situated at one end of the Alameda Central that was once an ancient market place and is now a large park, is the splendid white marble structure of the Palacio de Bellas Artes (Palace of Fine Arts). A concert hall and an arts centre, it houses some of Mexico's finest murals and the Art Deco interior is worth seeing alone. The Palacio has two museums: the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes and the Museo de la Arquitectura. The art museum's collection includes over 6,000 paintings, sculptures and engravings from 1650 to 1954 with masterpieces by

prominent Mexican artists such as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo. One of the highlights of the Palacio is the theatre's stained glass stage curtain, which is lit before performances and for public viewing. The Ballet Folklorico performs here every Wednesday and Sunday.

Address: Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas and Av. Juárez; **Telephone:** (01)5512 3633; **Opening time:** Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 6pm; **Admission:** (\$3) Adults

Bosque de Chapultepec and the Museo Nacional de Antropología

Bosque de Chapultepec is Mexico City's largest park, covering an enormous area containing lakes, the zoo and several museums, including the Museo Nacional de Antropología. The park attracts thousands of people, especially on weekends when families come to picnic, relax in the woods and visit the museums. The huge National Museum of Anthropology is one of the finest of its kind in the world, housing a fascinating collection of pre-Hispanic artefacts, from the first people in the Americas, to the Teotihuacán Empire, the Aztecs and the Mayans. Highlights include the famous Aztec Sun Stone or Calendar Stone found beneath the Zócalo (main square) in 1790. There are also exhibits illustrating the modern way of life in today's indigenous communities.

Address: Avenida Paseo de la Reforma and calzada Gandhi, Chapultepec Park, Mexico City; **Telephone:** (01)55 531 902; **Website:** www.mna.inah.gob.mx; **Transport:** Nearest subway stations are Auditorio and Chapultepec; **Opening time:** Tuesday to Sunday 9am to 7pm; **Admission:** Museum: \$45 (adults), children under 13 free. Free admission on Sundays

San Ángel

Formerly a separate village, San Ángel is one of the more charming of Mexico's suburbs, an exclusive neighbourhood with ancient mansions and colonial houses along cobbled streets. It is famed for its Saturday craft market in the pretty Plaza San Jacinto, which brings colour, crowds and a festive atmosphere to the area, and has excellent art and handicrafts for sale. It is crammed with little restaurants and cafes, offering the city's best dining experiences, albeit expensive. There are several museums of interest, including the Studio Museum of Mexico's famous pair, the artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo.

Address: Southwest of Mexico City

Zona Rosa

The Zona Rosa (Pink Zone) is the city's major dining, nightlife and shopping district. It is a compact area, a dense knot of streets crammed with bars, shops, boutiques, restaurants and hotels. The streets are all named for famous cities such as Londres and Hamburgo and the best activity here is to people watch from a chic sidewalk café, as the endless stream of tourists and a mixture of the city's purposeful middle classes pass by. It is where the symbol of Mexico City stands, a gilded statue of Winged Victory, the Independence Monument.

Transport: Line one on the metro to Insurgentes Station

Teotihuacán

Situated 31 miles (50km) from Mexico City, Teotihuacán is the site of Mexico's largest ancient city, constructed by a long forgotten culture, and dating from around 300 to 600 BC. It is believed that after thriving for about 2,000 years, a great fire caused the city to be abandoned and the Aztecs arrived in the region to find a forsaken city. Recognising signs of its previous magnificence they named it what it is today, Teotihuacán, 'place of the gods'. The central thoroughfare is the Avenue of the Dead, a 1.3-mile (2km) stretch lined with the palaces of the elite and connecting the three main site areas, the Pyramid of the Sun, Pyramid of the Moon and the Citadel. The Pyramid of the Sun is the third largest pyramid in the world, a huge red painted structure built over a cave, found to contain religious artefacts relating to sun worship. From the top of the stairs the views over the ruins are fantastic. The more graceful Pyramid of the Moon is situated at one end of the Avenue with an altar in the plaza believed to have been used for religious dancing. The Citadel at the other end of the Avenue is a large square complex that was the residence of the city's ruler. Within the walls is its main feature, the Templo de Quetzalcóatl, are some striking serpent carvings. The Tepantitla Palace holds Teotihuacán's most famous fresco, the faded 'Paradise of Tláloc'. There is a museum housing excellent displays of the city's artefacts, models and explanatory diagrams of the site.

Telephone: (59) 4956 0276; **Transport:** A 'Los Pirámides'/Autobuses Teotihuacan bus departs from Gate 8 of Mexico City's Terminal del Norte every half hour; **Opening time:** Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 5pm;

Admission: \$40, free on Sundays

Guanajuato

Guanajuato is considered to be one of Mexico's colonial gems, founded around the rich silver deposits discovered by the Spanish in 1558. It is a city of history, where the cry of rebellion against the Spanish was raised and the struggle for Independence began, a history of wealthy silver barons and oppressed Indian miners. The city has an unusual layout, crammed into a narrow valley, with houses and streets forced into irregular positions due to the naturally hilly topography. Brightly painted higgledy-piggledy houses perch on the slopes, reached by narrow crooked alleyways of cobbled stone; hidden plazas, steep irregular stairways, underground tunnels and thoroughfares lend the city much of its charming character. Along with its picturesque setting and unusual beauty, Guanajuato has many historical buildings and magnificent architecture, including several churches and museums, and has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The most narrow, and most visited, alley is the Callejón del Beso (Alley of the Kiss) where the balconies of the leaning houses on either side almost touch each other, a feature in the local romantic legend about furtive lovers exchanging kisses. Cultural events are an important part of the city, which hosts several festivals during the year. Every weekend the famous strolling musicians, or

callejoneadas, in traditional dress, lead processions through the narrow winding alleyways, strumming, singing and telling stories to the crowds that follow.

Transport: Bus from Mexico City (about four hours)

Airports

Mexico City International Airport (MEX)

Location: The airport is situated six miles (10km) east of Mexico City.

Time: Local time is GMT -6 (GMT -5 between the first Sunday in April and the second last Saturday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +52 (0)2482 2424.

Getting to the city: There is a Mexico City Metro subway system linking the airport to downtown Mexico City. Taxis are regulated and passengers can pay in advance at the taxi counter in Arrivals. There are also suburban bus services including Autobuses del Oriente (ADO), Autobuses Estrella Roja and Autobuses Pullman de Morelos. Some hotels offer a pick-up service, however it is worth checking their charge as it's generally cheaper to take a taxi. Car rental is available.

Car rental: Car rental companies include Avis, Budget, Hertz and National (driving in Mexico City is not recommended for first-time visitors).

Airport Taxis: Taxis are regulated and passengers can pay in advance at the taxi counter in Arrivals. Authorized taxis are white and mustard yellow with an aeroplane logo. It takes about 45 minutes to the city centre and costs around US\$20.

Facilities: Facilities at the airport include ATMs, banks, bureau de change, business facilities, a post office, restaurants, shops, hotel reservations and tourist information. There are facilities for disabled travellers but those with special needs should contact their airline in advance.

Parking: The airport has four well-maintained and organised parking lots with a capacity for almost 5,000 vehicles.

Departure Tax: US\$18 to US\$38.

Website: www.aicm.com.mx

Cancun International Airport (CUN)

Location: The airport is situated nine miles (17km) southwest of the hotel and resort area in Cancun.

Time: GMT -6 (GMT -5 between the first Sunday in April and the second last Saturday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +52 (0)9848 7200 or 9886 0028.

Transfer between terminals: A shuttle bus runs between the main entrances to the terminals every 10 mins.

Getting to the city: Both taxis and colectivos can be used to get to the town. An official taxi company provides services from the airport and can be paid for at the airport just after the arrivals hall. US\$14-20/20-25 mins. Colectivos are small buses that provide a door-to-door service; the driver will usually wait until it is full before leaving, US\$6/30 mins.

Car rental: Car rental companies include Avis, Budget, Hertz, Thrifty and National.

Facilities: Cancun airport has all the appurtenances one would expect at one of the world's mega-airports. Facilities include ATMs, bureau de change, business facilities, restaurants, shops, a beauty salon and tourist information. There are facilities for disabled passengers but those with special needs are advised to contact their airline in advance.

Parking: Parking is available.

Departure Tax: US\$18 to US\$29.

Website: www.cancun-airport.com

Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla International Airport (GDL)

Location: The airport is situated 10 miles (16km) south of Guadalajara.

Time: Local time is GMT -6 (GMT -5 between the first Sunday in April to the second last Saturday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +52 (0)33 3688 5120.

Getting to the city: The airport minibus service and authorised taxis both go to the city centre. Fares can be paid for in advance at the taxi booth outside the arrivals hall.

Car rental: Car rental companies include Avis, Budget, Hertz and Europcar.

Facilities: There are shops, bars and restaurants at the airport. Other facilities include ATMs, banks, bureau de change, a post office, business facilities (fax and internet), hotel reservations and tourist information. Disabled facilities are relatively good; those with special needs are advised to contact their airline in advance.

Parking: Parking is available.

Departure Tax: US\$18 to \$US29.

Website: www.guadalajara.aerpuertosgap.com.mx

General Juan N Alvarez International Airport (ACA)

Location: The airport is situated 16 miles (26km) southeast of Acapulco.

Time: Local time is GMT -6 (GMT -5 from first Sunday in April to second last Saturday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +52 (01)744 466 9446.

Getting to the city: An airport minibus service (Servicio Colectivo) goes regularly to the city centre, dropping off on request. Authorised taxis are available outside Arrivals, they take around 35 minutes to the beach area hotels and cost about US\$20.

Car rental: Car rental companies Alamo, Avis, Budget, National and Hertz are represented at the airport.

Facilities: There are shops, bars and restaurants at the airport. Other facilities include banks, bureau de change, a post office, a tourist information kiosk and business facilities (including fax and internet). Disabled facilities are good; those with special needs should contact their airline in advance.

Parking: Parking is available.

Departure Tax: US\$18 to US\$29.

Mexico Climate and Weather

The coast and lowlands are hot and humid all year. The interior highlands are milder and drier, but can become freezing between December and February. Rainfall is scarce throughout most of the country.

The climate of Mexico varies according to altitude. The low-lying coastal areas are typically tropical, hot and humid, but the weather in Mexico City, which is sited at an altitude of 2,300 metres above sea level, is far more moderate. Mexico City has pleasant summers and mild winters, with an annual average temperature of 64 °F (18 °C). Seasonal variations in temperature are small, but May is the warmest month of the year, and January the coldest, when night frosts are possible. Mexico City has a high average annual rainfall, most falling in summer, the wettest month being July, and the driest month February.

Tourism

Mexican Tourist Office, Acapulco: +52 (7) 484-8555 or www.visitmexico.com

Mexico Embassies

Mexican Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 728 1600.

Mexican Embassy, London, United Kingdom: +44 (0)20 7499 8586.

Mexican Embassy, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 233 8988.

Mexican Embassy, Canberra, Australia: +61 (0)2 6273 3963.

Mexican Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 362 2822.

Mexican Embassy, Dublin, Ireland: +353 (0)1 667 3105.

Mexican Embassy, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 (0)4 472 0555.

Foreign Embassies in Mexico

United States Embassy, Mexico City: +52 (0)55 5080 2000.

British Embassy, Mexico City: +52 (0)55 5242 8500.

Canadian Embassy, Mexico City: +52 (0)55 5724 7900.

Australian Embassy, Mexico City: +52 (0)55 1101 2200.

South African Embassy, Mexico City: +52 (0)55 282 9260/65.

Irish Embassy, Mexico City: +52 (0)55 5520 5803.

New Zealand Embassy, Mexico City: +52 (0)55 5283 9460.

Mexico Emergency Numbers

Emergencies: 060 and 080.

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