

## Country Profile: Mexico

### General Information:

- Mexico is located in North America.
- It is bordered by the United States in the north and to the southeast are Guatemala, Belize, and the Caribbean Ocean. To the south and west is the Pacific Ocean and to the east is the Gulf of Mexico.
- It is comprised of 31 states and a federal district.
- The type of government is a federal presidential republic.
- The capital is Mexico City.
- The official language of Mexico is Spanish. English is spoken in the business community at the border cities.
- The currency of Mexico is the peso.
- The climate varies from tropical to desert.
- Natural resources of Mexico are timber, natural gas, lead, zinc, silver, copper, and petroleum.
- Major ports in Mexico include Veracruz and Tampico in the Gulf of Mexico; Mazatlan, Manzanillo and Acapulco in the Pacific Ocean.
- There are 3 time zones. The Central zone- 6 hours behind GMT; Northwestern states- 7 hours behind GMT; and Northern Baja California- 8 hours behind GMT.
- Summer months are from April to late October.

### Economy:

Mexico has a free market economy. There is a mixture of modern and outdated practices in industries and agriculture. It is increasingly being dominated by the private sector. Recently the government has made improvements on infrastructure, opened competitions in seaports, electricity generation, telecommunications, airports, natural gas distribution and railroads. The largest foreign income for Mexico is oil. In North America, Mexico is the largest auto producer.

Agriculture products include wood products, dairy products, corn, wheat, soybeans, rice, cotton, coffee, beans, fruits, tomatoes, beef, and poultry. Major industries in Mexico are food and beverage, chemicals, tobacco, iron, steel, mining, petroleum, clothing, textiles, motor vehicles, consumer durables, and tourism.

Business hours in Mexico are Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 or 7 p.m. Lunch time is at 2 p.m. Large commercial banks are opened Monday - Friday from 9a.m. to 3 p.m. There are some bank branches that remain open until 5 p.m. In Mexico City, some banks are opened on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

### Culture Etiquette:

#### Greetings:

At the first meeting, a light handshake will suffice in combination with a light touch on the arm. Between friends and family a hug or a kiss on the cheek is the typical greeting.

#### Communication Style:

Indirect communication is preferred over direct.

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### Personal Space and Touching:

The distance between each other while having a conversation is one to two feet. Mexicans are comfortable talking to each other in close proximity; therefore it is considered rude to back away from a person while speaking. Touching is common during conversations.

### Eye Contact:

In rural areas looking directly in the eyes is a sign of disrespect, but in the city it is acceptable. If a child is looking directly into the eyes of an adult, it is seen as a challenge or being disrespectful.

### Views of Time:

People are expected to arrive late for social events. In urban areas people are more likely to arrive late because of traffic congestion on the roads. Social gatherings are flexible with time, but business meetings are expected to start on time. Emphasis on relationships and people is more important than adhering to schedules.

### Gender Issues:

In the rural areas of Mexico, the women are expected to stay at home and take care of the children. They are also expected to be obedient to their husband. In urban settings, women can hold a variety of positions ranging from teachers to doctors. Work opportunities are becoming readily available, but wages for women are still lower.

### Gestures:

Most gestures used in North America is also used in Mexico. Whistling is used to get someone's attention. A kissing sound and "psst-psst" is also used to get someone's attention in public and it is not considered rude.

### Taboos:

Burping out loud is rude. It is rude to stand around with your hands in your pockets. Your hands on the hip suggest anger. Be aware when showing the height of animals; your palm should be faced down. When demonstrating the height of a person, the palm should be sideways with the thumb up. An obscene gesture is making a V with the fingers and placing it on the sides of the nose. It is offensive to show a closed fist with the arm raised at a 90 degree angle.

## **Business Etiquette:**

### Dress:

For men, a stylish dark colored suit with a shirt and tie is appropriate, along with being well groomed. Women should wear a dark colored suit or dress with heels. Business casual and casual attire is not suitable.

### Titles and Business Cards:

When addressing someone use their professional title or Mister, Miss, or Mrs. and surname. It is advisable to have the business card translated into Spanish, but it is not required. When presenting it, show the Spanish side to the receiver. Business cards are exchanged with everyone at the meeting.

### Meetings:

Arrive on time for the meeting even though you may have to wait 30 minutes. When a drink is offered, a refusal is considered an insult. A 5-15 minutes small talk is expected, so allow the host to begin the business discussion.

### Negotiations:

Mexicans value relationship building and harmony, so avoid confrontations, conflicts, and pressure tactics. Indirect style of communication is preferred over direct. During negotiations, Mexicans can become lively, but do not take this as a sign of aggression. When the meeting is finished, return to small talk and say farewell to the host(s).

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### Gift Giving:

A simple gift from one's own country may be presented at the first meeting. When invited over to a Mexican's house, it is appropriate to bring chocolates, wine, spirits, or flowers (not marigolds or red flowers). Gifts should be nicely wrapped and expect the gifts to be opened right away.

### **Travel information:**

When entering Mexico, United States citizens can show any US official identification. A passport is not required. United States citizen must remember the requirements needed to return to the United States. The information for US citizens to enter the US can be found at [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc\\_2223.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html).

Citizens of some countries do not need a visa to enter Mexico, but a valid passport must be presented and an immigration form for tourists and business trips must be filled out. Countries not needing a visa are: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Island, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay or Venezuela. If you are not a citizen of the countries listed, a visa must be requested from the Mexican consulate. If a family member, friend or acquaintance lives in Mexico, the visa request can be made by them.

For more information and details please visit the INM delegations throughout Mexico or visit <http://www.inm.gob.mx/EN/index.php>.

### Sources:

[http://www.hlbi.com/dbifiles/dbi\\_pdf/DBI%20Mexico%20A4.pdf](http://www.hlbi.com/dbifiles/dbi_pdf/DBI%20Mexico%20A4.pdf)

[http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc\\_2223.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html)

<http://www.inm.gob.mx/EN/index.php>

[http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics\\_business\\_student.php?id=134](http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student.php?id=134)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html>

***For more information, please contact us at:***

***Phone: 1-212-560-1919 • Fax: 1-212-560-1920***

***Email: [sales@thomasglobal.com](mailto:sales@thomasglobal.com) • [www.thomasglobal.com](http://www.thomasglobal.com)***

