

Mexico

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The United Mexican States, or commonly Mexico, is a federal constitutional republic in North America. It is bordered on the north by the United States; on the south and west by the North Pacific Ocean; on the southeast by Guatemala, Belize, and the Caribbean Sea; and on the east by the Gulf of Mexico. The United Mexican States are a federation comprising thirty-one states and a federal district, the capital Mexico City, whose metropolitan area is one of the world's most populous. Mexico is a newly industrialized country and the 12th largest economy in the world by GDP by purchasing power parity. The economy is strongly linked to those of its North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) partners. Despite being considered an emerging world power, the uneven distribution of income and the increase in insecurity are issues of concern. Covering almost 2 million square kilometers, Mexico is the fifth-largest country in the Americas by total area and the 14th largest independent nation in the world. With an estimated population of 109 million, it is the 11th most populous country and the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world. The Tropic of Cancer effectively divides the country into temperate and tropical zones. Land north of the twenty-fourth parallel experiences cooler temperatures during the winter months. South of the twenty-fourth parallel, temperatures are fairly constant year round and vary solely as a function of elevation. This gives Mexico one of the world's most diverse weather systems in the world. Mexico is one of the 18 megadiverse countries of the world. With over 200,000 different species, Mexico is home of 10% of the world's biodiversity. Mexico ranks first in biodiversity in reptiles with 707 known species, second in mammals with 438 species, fourth in amphibians with 290 species, and fourth in flora, with 26,000 different species. Mexico is also considered the second country in the world in ecosystems and fourth in overall species. Approximately 2,500 species are protected by Mexican legislations. The Mexican government created the National System of Information about Biodiversity, in order to study and promote the sustainable use of ecosystems. Mexico is home to the largest number of U.S. citizens abroad (estimated at one million as of 1999), which represents 1% of the Mexican population and 25% of all U.S. citizens abroad. Other significant communities of foreigners are those of Central and South America, most notably from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Cuba, Venezuela, Guatemala, and Belize. Throughout the 20th century, the country followed a policy of granting asylum to fellow Latin Americans and Europeans (mostly Spaniards in the 1940s) fleeing political persecution in their home countries. Mexico has a free market economy in the trillion dollar class. It contains a mixture of modern and outmoded industry and agriculture, increasingly dominated by the private sector. Recent administrations have expanded competition in seaports, railroads, telecommunications, electricity generation, natural gas distribution, and airports. Per capita income is one-fourth that of the US; income distribution remains highly unequal. Trade with the US and Canada has tripled since the implementation of NAFTA in 1994. Mexico has 12 free trade agreements with over 40 countries including, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, the European Free Trade Area, and Japan, putting more than 90% of trade under free trade agreements. Mexico has a lot to offer for a property investment. Property in Mexico can also surrender an annual rent, depending on where the property is situated. Cost of ongoing ownership is also relatively low in Mexico (maintenance, taxes, etc). Tourism, a major income generator, increases interest of foreigners into investing in Mexico real estate. This also boosts the development of luxury homes, hotels, and resorts, mostly in coastal areas. According to the World Tourism Organization, Mexico has one of the largest tourism industries in the world. In 2005 it was the seventh most popular tourist destination worldwide, receiving over 20 million tourists per year; it is the only country in Latin America to be within the top 25. Tourism is also the third largest sector in the country's industrial GDP. The most notable tourist draws are the ancient Meso-American ruins, and popular beach resorts. The coastal climate and unique culture — a fusion of European (particularly Spanish) and Meso-American cultures; also make Mexico attractive. The peak tourist seasons in Mexico are during December and during July and August, with brief surges during the week before Easter and during spring break at many of the beach resort sites which are popular among vacationing college students from the United States.