

Mexico

Mexico,^{[a][b]} officially the **United Mexican States**,^[c] is a country in the southern portion of North America. Covering 1,972,550 km² (761,610 sq mi),^[11] it is the world's 13th largest country by area; with a population of almost 130 million, it is the 10th most populous country and has the most Spanish speakers in the world.^[1] Mexico is a constitutional republic comprising 31 states and Mexico City, its capital and largest city, which is among the world's most populous metropolitan areas. The country borders the United States to the north; as well as Guatemala and Belize to the southeast. It has maritime borders with the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Caribbean Sea to the southeast, and the Gulf of Mexico to the east.^[12]

Human presence in Pre-Columbian Mexico dates back to 8,000 BC as one of six cradles of civilization. Mesoamerica hosted civilizations including the Olmec, Maya, Zapotec, Teotihuacan, and Purepecha. Aztec domination of the area preceded Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire, which established the colony of New Spain centered in the former capital, Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City).^[13] The Mexican War of Independence in the early 19th century was followed by political and socioeconomic upheaval. The Mexican–American War resulted in significant territorial losses in 1848.^[14] Liberal reforms introduced in the Constitution of 1857 prompted domestic conflict, French intervention, and the establishment of an Empire, countered by the Republican resistance led by Benito Juárez. The rise of Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship in the 19th century^[15] sparked the Mexican Revolution in 1910, which led to profound changes, such as the 1917 Constitution. Over the 20th century, Mexico experienced significant economic growth; as well as issues of repression and electoral fraud. The late 20th century saw a shift towards neoliberal policies, exemplified by the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, amidst unrest in Chiapas.

Mexico is a newly industrialized and developing country,^[16] with the world's 12th-largest economy by nominal GDP and 12th-largest by PPP. Mexico ranks first in the Americas and seventh in the world by the number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.^[17] It is also one of the world's 17 megadiverse countries, ranking fifth in natural biodiversity.^[18] It is a major tourist destination: as of 2022, it is the sixth most-visited country in the world, with 42.2 million international arrivals.^[19] Mexico's large economy and population, global cultural influence, and steady democratization make it a regional and middle power,^{[20][21][22]} increasingly identifying as an emerging power.^{[23][24][25]} Mexico has made significant political and socioeconomic gains in recent decades.^[26] However, as with much of Latin America, Mexico continues to struggle with poverty, systemic corruption, and extensive crime.^[27] Since 2006, an ongoing conflict between drug trafficking syndicates has led to over 127,000 deaths.^{[28][29][30]} Mexico is a member of United Nations, the G20, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Trade Organization

United Mexican States

Estados Unidos Mexicanos (Spanish)



Flag



Coat of arms

Anthem:

Himno Nacional Mexicano

(English: Mexican National Anthem)

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Capital and largest city	Mexico City <div>19°26′N 99°8′W</div>
Official languages	Spanish (<i>de facto</i>)
Co-official languages	68 Indigenous languages
Ethnic groups	See below
Religion (2020) ^[1]	<div><div>88.9% Christianity</div><div><div><div>└ 77.7% Catholicism</div><div>└ 11.2% Protestantism</div></div></div><div>8.1% no religion</div><div>2.4% other religion</div><div>0.5% prefer not to say</div></div>
Demonym(s)	Mexican
Government	Federal presidential republic ^[2]
<div><div>•</div><div>President</div></div>	Claudia Sheinbaum

(WTO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the Organization of American States, Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Organization of Ibero-American States.

Etymology

Mēxihco is the Nahuatl term for the heartland of the Aztec Empire, namely the Valley of Mexico and surrounding territories, with its people being known as the Mexica. It is generally believed that the toponym for the valley was the origin of the primary ethnonym for the Aztec Triple Alliance, but it may have been the other way around.^[31] In the colonial era (1521–1821) when Mexico was known as New Spain this central region became the Intendency of Mexico. After New Spain achieved independence from the Spanish Empire in 1821 and became a sovereign state the Intendency came to be known as the State of Mexico, with the new country being named after its capital: Mexico City. The country's official name has changed as the form of government has changed. The declaration of independence signed on 6 November 1813 by the deputies of the Congress of Anáhuac called the territory *América Septentrional* (Northern America); the 1821 Plan of Iguala also used *América Septentrional*. On two occasions (1821–1823 and 1863–1867), the country was known as *Imperio Mexicano* (Mexican Empire). All three federal constitutions (1824, 1857, and 1917, the current constitution) used the name *Estados Unidos Mexicanos*^[32]—or the variant *Estados-Unidos Mexicanos*,^[33] all of which have been translated as "United Mexican States". The phrase *República Mexicana*, "Mexican Republic", was used in the 1836 Constitutional Laws.^[34]

History

Indigenous civilizations before European contact (pre-1519)

The earliest human artifacts in Mexico are chips of stone tools found near campfire remains in the Valley of Mexico and radiocarbon-dated to circa 10,000 years ago.^[35] Mexico is the site of the domestication of maize, tomato, and beans, which produced an agricultural surplus. This enabled the transition from paleo-Indian hunter-gatherers to sedentary agricultural villages beginning around 5000 BC.^[36] The formative period of Mesoamerica is considered one of the six independent cradles of civilization, this era saw the origin of distinct cultural traits such as religious and symbolic traditions, maize cultivation, artistic and architectural complexes as well as a vigesimal (base 20) numeric system^[37] that spread from the Mexican cultures to the rest of the Mesoamerican cultural area. In this period, villages became more dense in terms of population, becoming socially stratified with an artisan class, and developing into chiefdoms. The most powerful rulers had religious and political power, organizing the construction of large ceremonial centers.^[38]

The earliest complex civilization in Mexico was the Olmec culture, which flourished on the Gulf Coast from around 1500 BC. Olmec cultural traits diffused through Mexico into other formative-era cultures in Chiapas, Oaxaca, and the Valley of Mexico.^[39] In the subsequent pre-classical period, the Maya and Zapotec civilizations developed complex centers at Calakmul and Monte Albán, respectively. During this

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period the first true Mesoamerican writing systems were developed in the Epi-Olmec and Zapotec cultures. The Mesoamerican writing tradition reached its height in the Classic Maya Hieroglyphic script, the earliest written histories date from this era. The tradition of writing was important after the Spanish conquest in 1521, with indigenous scribes learning to write their languages in alphabetic letters, while also continuing to create pictorial texts.^{[40][41]}

In Central Mexico, the height of the classic period saw the ascendancy of Teotihuacán, which formed a military and commercial empire. Teotihuacan, with a population of more than 150,000 people, had some of the largest pyramidal structures in the pre-Columbian Americas.^[42] After the collapse of Teotihuacán around 600 AD, competition ensued between several important political centers in central Mexico such as Xochicalco and Cholula. At this time, during the Epi-Classic, Nahua peoples began moving south into Mesoamerica from the North, and became politically and culturally dominant in central Mexico, as they displaced speakers of Oto-Manguean languages. During the early post-classic era (ca. 1000–1519 AD), Central Mexico was dominated by the Toltec culture, Oaxaca by the Mixtec, and the lowland Maya area had important centers at Chichén Itzá and Mayapán. Toward the end of the post-Classic period, the Aztecs (or Mexica) established dominance, establishing a political and economic empire based in the city of Tenochtitlan (modern Mexico City), extending from central Mexico to the border with Guatemala.^[43]

Spanish conquest and colonial era (1519–1821)

Although the Spanish Empire had established colonies in the Caribbean starting in 1493 the Spanish first learned of Mexico during the Juan de Grijalva expedition of 1518. The Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire began in February 1519 when Hernán Cortés founded the Spanish city of Veracruz. The 1521 capture of Tenochtitlan and posterior founding of the Spanish capital Mexico City on its ruins was the beginning of a 300-year-long colonial era during which Mexico was known as *Nueva España* (New Spain). Two factors made Mexico a jewel in the Spanish Empire: the existence of large, hierarchically organized Mesoamerican populations that rendered tribute and performed obligatory labor and the discovery of vast silver deposits in northern Mexico.^[44]

The Kingdom of New Spain was created from the remnants of the Aztec empire. The two pillars of Spanish rule were the State and the Roman Catholic Church, both under the authority of the Spanish crown. In 1493 the pope had granted sweeping powers to the Spanish monarchy for its overseas empire, with the proviso that the crown spread Christianity in its new realms. In 1524, King Charles I created the Council of the Indies based in Spain to oversee State power in its overseas territories; in New Spain the crown established a high court in Mexico City, the *Real Audiencia* ('royal audience' or 'royal tribunal'), and then in 1535 created the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The viceroy was the highest official of the State. In the religious sphere, the Diocese of Mexico was created in 1530 and elevated to the Archdiocese of Mexico in 1546, with the archbishop as the head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Castilian Spanish was the language of rulers. The Catholic faith was the only one permitted, with non-Catholics and Catholics (excluding Indians) holding unorthodox views being subject to the Mexican Inquisition, established in 1571.^[45]

Spanish military forces, sometimes accompanied by native allies, led expeditions to conquer territory or quell rebellions through the colonial era. Notable Amerindian revolts in sporadically populated northern New Spain include the Chichimeca War (1576–1606),^[46] Tepehuán Revolt (1616–1620),^[47] and the Pueblo Revolt (1680), the Tzeltal Rebellion of 1712 was a regional Maya revolt.^[48] Most rebellions were small-scale and local, posing no major threat to the ruling elites.^[49] To protect Mexico from the attacks of English, French, and Dutch pirates and protect the Crown's monopoly of revenue, only two ports were open to foreign trade—Veracruz on the Atlantic (connecting to Spain) and Acapulco on the Pacific (connecting to the Philippines). Among the best-known pirate attacks are the 1663 Sack of Campeche^[50] and 1683 Attack on Veracruz.^[51] Of greater concern to the crown was the issue of foreign invasion, especially after Britain seized in 1762 the Spanish ports of



Teotihuacan was the 6th largest city in the world at its peak (1 AD to 500 AD)



Temple of Kukulcán (El Castillo) in the Maya city of Chichen Itza



Artistic depiction of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital and largest city in the Americas at the time. The city was completely destroyed in the 1521 siege of Tenochtitlan and rebuilt as Mexico City.



Storming of the Teocalli by Cortez and his Troops (painted in 1848)

Havana and Manila in the Seven Years' War. It created a standing military, increased coastal fortifications, and expanded the northern presidios and missions into Alta California. The volatility of the urban poor in Mexico City was evident in the 1692 riot in the Zócalo. The riot over the price of maize escalated to a full-scale attack on the seats of power, with the viceregal palace and the archbishop's residence attacked by the mob.^[52]

Independence era (1808–1855)

On 16 September 1810, secular priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla declared against "bad government" in the small town of Dolores, Guanajuato. This event, known as the Cry of Dolores (Spanish: *Grito de Dolores*) is commemorated each year, on 16 September, as Mexico's independence day.^[53] The upheaval in the Spanish Empire that resulted in the independence of most of its New World territories was due to Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Spain in 1808. Hidalgo and some of his soldiers were eventually captured, Hidalgo was defrocked, and they were executed by firing squad on 31 July 1811. The first 35 years after Mexico's independence were marked by political instability and the changing of the Mexican state from a transient monarchy to a fragile federated republic.^[54] There were military coups d'état, foreign invasions, ideological conflict between Conservatives and Liberals, and economic stagnation.

Former Royal Army General Agustín de Iturbide became regent, as newly independent Mexico sought a constitutional monarch from Europe. When no member of a European royal house desired the position, Iturbide himself was declared Emperor Agustín I. The United States was the first country to recognize Mexico's independence, sending an ambassador to the court and sending a message to Europe via the Monroe Doctrine not to intervene in Mexico. The emperor's rule was short (1822–1823) and he was overthrown by army officers in the Plan of Casa Mata.^[55] After the forced abdication of the monarch, Central America and Chiapas left the union to form the Federal Republic of Central America. In 1824, the First Mexican Republic was established. Former insurgent General Guadalupe Victoria became the first president of the republic — the first of many army generals to hold the presidency. In 1829, former insurgent general and fierce Liberal Vicente Guerrero, a signatory of the Plan of Iguala that achieved independence, became president in a disputed election. During his short term in office, from April to December 1829, he abolished slavery.^[56] His Conservative vice president, former Royalist General Anastasio Bustamante, led a coup against him and Guerrero was judicially murdered.^[57]

Mexico's ability to maintain its independence and establish a viable government was in question. Spain attempted to reconquer its former colony during the 1820s but eventually recognized its independence. France attempted to recoup losses it claimed for its citizens during Mexico's unrest and blockaded the Gulf Coast during the so-called Pastry War of 1838–1839.^[58] General Antonio López de Santa Anna emerged as a national hero because of his role in both these conflicts; Santa Anna came to dominate the politics for the next 25 years, often known as the "Age of Santa Anna", until his overthrow in 1855.^[59]

Mexico also contended with indigenous groups that controlled the territory that Mexico claimed in the north. For example, the Comanche controlled a huge territory in sparsely populated central and northern Texas.^[60] Wanting to stabilize and develop that area — and as few people from central Mexico had chosen to resettle to this remote and hostile territory — the Mexican government encouraged Anglo-American immigration into present-day Texas, a region that bordered that United States. Mexico by law was a Catholic country; the Anglo-Americans were primarily Protestant English speakers from the southern United States. Some brought their black slaves, which after 1829 was contrary to Mexican law. In 1835, Santa Anna sought to centralize government rule in Mexico, suspending the 1824 constitution and promulgating the Seven Laws, which placed power in his hands. As a result, civil war spread across the country. Three new governments declared independence: the Republic of Texas,



Guanajuato was one of the richest and most opulent cities in New Spain



Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla's Cry of Dolores on 16 September 1810, by J.J. del Moral. The call to arms marks the beginning of Mexico's War of Independence against Spanish colonial rule.



Capture of Alhóndiga de Granaditas in Guanajuato by Hidalgo's army on 28 September 1810, by José Díaz del Castillo



Entry of the Army of the Three Guarantees to Mexico City on 27 September 1821

the Republic of the Rio Grande and the Republic of Yucatán.^{[61]:129–137} The largest blow to Mexico was the U.S. invasion of Mexico in 1846 in the Mexican–American War. Mexico lost much of its sparsely populated northern territory, sealed in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Despite that disastrous loss, Santa Anna returned to the presidency yet again before being ousted and exiled in the Liberal Revolution of Ayutla.



Battle of El Álamo (1836), between the Mexican army led by President Antonio López de Santa Anna and American troops.

Liberal era (1855–1911)



Portrait of Liberal President Benito Juárez. Known for his efforts to modernize the country, defend its sovereignty, and promote liberal reforms, especially during the mid-19th century.

The overthrow of Santa Anna and the establishment of a civilian government by Liberals allowed them to enact laws that they considered vital for Mexico's economic development. The Liberal Reform attempted to modernize Mexico's economy and institutions along liberal principles. They promulgated a new Constitution of 1857, separating Church and State, stripping the Church and the military of their special privileges (*fueros*); mandating the sale of Church-owned property and sale of indigenous community lands, and secularizing education.^[62] Conservatives revolted, touching off civil war between rival Liberal and Conservative governments (1858–1861).

The Liberals defeated the Conservative army on the battlefield, but Conservatives sought another solution to gain power via foreign intervention by the French, asking Emperor Napoleon III to place a European monarch as head of state in Mexico. The French Army defeated the Mexican Army and placed Maximilian Habsburg on the newly established throne of Mexico, supported by Mexican Conservatives and propped up by the French Army. The Liberal Republic under Benito Juárez was a government in internal exile, but with the end of the Civil War in the United States in April 1865, the Reunified U.S. government began aiding the Mexican Republic. Two years later, the French Army withdrew its support, but Maximilian remained in Mexico. Republican forces captured him and he was executed. The "Restored Republic" saw the return of Juárez, "the personification of the embattled republic,"^[63] as president.

The Conservatives had been not only defeated militarily but also discredited politically for their collaboration with the French invaders and Liberalism became synonymous with patriotism.^[64] The Mexican Army that had its roots in the colonial royal army and then the army of the early republic was destroyed and new military leaders had emerged from the War of the Reform and the conflict with the French, most notably Porfirio Díaz, a hero of the Cinco de Mayo, who now sought civilian power and challenged Juárez on his re-election in 1867. Díaz then rebelled but was crushed by Juárez. Having won re-election, Juárez died in office in July 1872, and Liberal Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada became president, declaring a "religion of the state" for the rule of law, peace, and order. When Lerdo ran for re-election, Díaz rebelled against the civilian president, issuing the Plan of Tuxtepec. Díaz had more support and waged guerrilla warfare against Lerdo. On the verge of Díaz's victory on the battlefield, Lerdo fled from office into exile.^[65]

After the turmoil in Mexico from 1810 to 1876, the 35-year rule of Liberal General Porfirio Díaz (r.1876–1911) allowed Mexico to rapidly modernize in a period characterized as one of "order and progress". The Porfiriato was characterized by economic stability and growth, significant foreign investment and influence, an expansion of the railroad network and telecommunications, and investments in the arts and sciences.^[66] Díaz ruled with a group of advisors that became known as the *científicos* ('scientists').^[67] The most influential *científico* was Secretary of Finance José Yves Limantour.^[68] The Porfirian regime was influenced by positivism.^[69] They rejected theology and idealism in favor of scientific methods being applied towards national development. An integral aspect of the liberal project was secular education. The Díaz government led a protracted conflict against the Yaqui that culminated with the forced relocation of thousands of Yaqui to Yucatán and Oaxaca. As the centennial of independence approached, Díaz gave an interview where he said he was not going to run in the 1910 elections, when he would be 80. Political opposition had been suppressed and there were few avenues for a new generation of leaders. But his announcement set off a frenzy of political activity, including the unlikely candidacy of the scion of a rich landowning family, Francisco I. Madero. Madero won a surprising amount of political support when Díaz



The Execution of Emperor Maximilian, 19 June 1867. Gen. Tomás Mejía, left; Maximilian, center; Gen. Miguel Miramón, right. Painting by Édouard Manet 1868

changed his mind and ran in the election, jailing Madero. The September centennial celebration of independence was the last celebration of the Porfiriato. The Mexican Revolution starting in 1910 saw a decade of civil war, the "wind that swept Mexico."^[70]

Mexican Revolution (1910–1920)



Francisco I. Madero, who challenged Díaz in the fraudulent 1910 election and was elected president when Díaz was forced to resign in May 1911

The Mexican Revolution was a decade-long transformational conflict.^[71] It began with scattered uprisings against President Díaz after the fraudulent 1910 election, his resignation in May 1911, demobilization of rebel forces, an interim presidency of a member of the old guard and the democratic election of a rich, civilian landowner, Francisco I. Madero in fall 1911. In February 1913, a military coup d'état overthrew Madero's government, with the support of the U.S., resulting in Madero's murder by agents of Federal Army General Victoriano Huerta. During the Revolution, the U.S. Republican administration of Taft supported the Huerta coup against Madero, but when Democrat Woodrow Wilson was inaugurated as president in March 1913, Wilson refused to recognize Huerta's regime and allowed arms sales to the Constitutionalists. Wilson ordered troops to occupy the strategic port of Veracruz in 1914, which was lifted.^[72] A coalition of anti-Huerta forces in the North, the Constitutional Army led by Governor of Coahuila Venustiano Carranza, and a peasant army in the South under Emiliano Zapata defeated the Federal Army in 1914, leaving only revolutionary forces.^[73]

Following the revolutionaries' victory against Huerta, they sought to broker a peaceful political solution, but the coalition splintered, plunging Mexico again into a civil war. Constitutionalist general Pancho Villa, commander of the Division of the North, broke with Carranza and allied with Zapata. Carranza's best general Alvaro Obregón defeated Villa, his former comrade-in-arms in the Battle of Celaya in 1915, and Villa's northern forces melted away Carranza became the de facto head of Mexico, and the U.S. recognized his government^[73] while Zapata's forces in the south reverted to guerrilla warfare. After Pancho Villa was defeated by revolutionary forces in 1915, he led an incursion raid into Columbus, New Mexico, prompting the U.S. to send 10,000 troops led by General John J. Pershing in an unsuccessful attempt to capture Villa. Carranza pushed back against U.S. troops being in northern Mexico. The expeditionary forces withdrew as the U.S. entered World War I.^[74] Although often viewed as an internal conflict, the revolution had significant international elements:^[75] Germany attempted to get Mexico to side with it, sending a coded telegram in 1917 to incite war between the U.S. and Mexico, with Mexico to regain the territory it lost in the Mexican-American War^[76] but Mexico remained neutral in the conflict.

In 1916, the winners of the Mexican revolution met at a constitutional convention to draft the Constitution of 1917, which was ratified in February 1917. The Constitution empowered the government to expropriate resources including land, gave rights to labor, and strengthened anticlerical provisions of the 1857 Constitution.^[73] With amendments, it remains the governing document of Mexico. It is estimated that the revolutionary war killed 900,000 people out of Mexico's 15 million population at the time.^{[77][78]} Consolidating power, President Carranza had peasant leader Emiliano Zapata assassinated in 1919. Carranza had gained the support of the peasantry during the Revolution, but once in power, he did little to institute land reform, which had motivated many to fight in the Revolution. Carranza returned some confiscated land to their original owners. President Carranza's best general, Obregón, served briefly in his administration but returned to his home state of Sonora to position himself to run in the 1920 presidential election. Since Carranza could not run for re-election, he chose a civilian to succeed him, intending to remain the power behind the presidency. Obregón and two other Sonoran revolutionary generals drew up the Plan of Agua Prieta, overthrowing Carranza, who died fleeing Mexico City in 1920. General Adolfo de la Huerta became interim president, followed by the election of General Álvaro Obregón.



Tomás Urbina, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata in the National Palace during the Mexican Revolution, 1914

Political consolidation and one-party rule (1920–2000)

The first quarter-century of the post-revolutionary period (1920–1946) was characterized by revolutionary generals serving as Presidents of Mexico, including Álvaro Obregón (1920–24), Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–28), Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–40), and Manuel Avila Camacho (1940–46). The post-revolutionary project of the Mexican government sought to bring order to the country, end military intervention in politics, and create organizations of interest groups. Workers, peasants, urban office



Plutarco Elías Calles, the ruler of the Maximato and the founder of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, that held uninterrupted power in the country from 1929 to 2000

workers, and even the army for a short period were incorporated as sectors of the single party that dominated Mexican politics from its founding in 1929. Obregón instigated land reform and strengthened the power of organized labor. He gained recognition from the United States and took steps to settle claims with companies and individuals that lost property during the Revolution. He imposed his fellow former Sonoran revolutionary general, Calles, as his successor, prompting an unsuccessful military revolt. As president, Calles provoked a major conflict with the Catholic Church and Catholic guerrilla armies when he strictly enforced anticlerical articles of the 1917 Constitution which ended with an agreement. Although the constitution prohibited the reelection of the president, Obregón wished to run again and the constitution was amended to allow non-consecutive re-election and won the 1928 elections but was assassinated by a Catholic activist, causing a political crisis of succession. Calles could not become president again, so he sought to set up a structure to manage presidential succession, founding the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which went on to dominate Mexico for the rest of the 20th century.^[79]

Despite not holding the presidency, Calles remained the key political figure during the period known as the Maximato (1929–1934), that ended during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas, who expelled Calles from the country and implemented many economic and social reforms.

This included the Mexican oil expropriation in March 1938, which nationalized the U.S. and Anglo-Dutch oil company known as the Mexican Eagle Petroleum Company, which would result in the creation of the state-owned Pemex. Cárdenas's successor, Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940–1946) was more moderate, and relations between the U.S. and Mexico vastly improved during World War II, when Mexico was a significant ally. From 1946 the election of Miguel Alemán, the first civilian president in the post-revolutionary period, Mexico embarked on an aggressive program of economic development, known as the Mexican miracle, which was characterized by industrialization, urbanization, and the increase of inequality between urban and rural areas.^[80] The Green Revolution, a technological movement that led to a significant worldwide increase in crop production, began in the Yaqui Valley of Sonora in the middle of the 20th century.^[81]

With robust economic growth, Mexico sought to showcase it to the world by hosting the 1968 Summer Olympics. The government poured huge resources into building new facilities, prompting political unrest among university students and others. Demonstrations in central Mexico City went on for weeks before the planned opening of the games, with the government of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz cracking down. The culmination was the Tlatelolco Massacre,^[82] which killed around 300 protesters based on conservative estimates and perhaps as many as 800.^[83] Although the economy continued to flourish for some, social inequality remained a factor of discontent. PRI rule became increasingly authoritarian and at times oppressive in what is now referred to as the Mexican Dirty War.^[84]



Armored cars in the Zócalo during the protests of 1968

In the 1980s the first cracks emerged in the PRI's complete political dominance. In Baja California, the PAN candidate was elected as governor. When De la Madrid chose Carlos Salinas de Gortari as the candidate for the PRI, and therefore a foregone presidential victor, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of former President Lázaro Cárdenas, broke with the PRI and challenged Salinas in the 1988 elections. In 1988 there was massive electoral fraud, with results showing that Salinas had won the election by the narrowest percentage ever. There were massive protests in Mexico City over the stolen election. Salinas took the oath of office on 1 December 1988.^[85] In 1990 the PRI was famously described by Mario Vargas Llosa as the "perfect dictatorship", but by then there had been major challenges to the PRI's hegemony.^{[86][87][88]}



NAFTA signing ceremony, October 1992. From left to right: (standing) President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (Mexico), President George H. W. Bush (U.S.), and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (Canada).

Salinas embarked on a program of neoliberal reforms that fixed the exchange rate of the peso, controlled inflation, opened Mexico to foreign investment, and began talks with the U.S. and Canada to join their free-trade agreement, which culminated in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on 1 January 1994; the same day, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Chiapas began armed peasant rebellion against the federal government, which captured a few towns but brought world attention to the situation in Mexico. The armed conflict was short-lived and has continued as a non-violent opposition movement against neoliberalism and globalization. In 1994, following the assassination of the PRI's presidential candidate Luis

Donaldo Colosio, Salinas was succeeded by victorious PRI candidate Ernesto Zedillo. Salinas left Zedillo's government to deal with the Mexican peso crisis, requiring a \$50 billion IMF bailout. Major macroeconomic reforms were started by Zedillo, and the economy rapidly recovered and growth peaked at almost 7% by the end of 1999.^[89]

Contemporary Mexico



Vicente Fox won the 2000 general election and became the first president not from the PRI since 1929, and the first elected from an opposition party since Francisco I. Madero in 1911.

After 71 years of rule, the incumbent PRI lost the 2000 presidential election to Vicente Fox of the opposing conservative National Action Party (PAN). In the 2006 presidential election, Felipe Calderón from the PAN was declared the winner, with a very narrow margin (0.58%) over leftist politician Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).^[90] López Obrador, however, contested the election and pledged to create an "alternative government".^[91]

After twelve years, in the 2012 presidential election, the PRI again won the presidency with the election of Enrique Peña Nieto. However, he won with a plurality of around 38% and did not have a legislative majority.^[92]

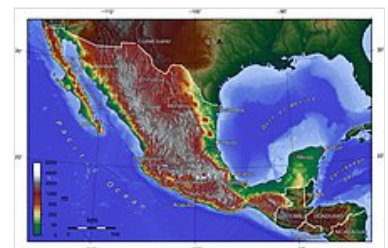
During the twenty-first century, Mexico has contended with high crime rates, bureaucratic corruption, narcotrafficking, and a stagnant economy. Many state-owned industrial enterprises were privatized starting in the 1990s with neoliberal reforms, but Pemex, the state-owned petroleum company is only slowly being privatized, with exploration licenses being issued.^[93] In a push against government corruption, the ex-CEO of Pemex, Emilio Lozoya Austin, was arrested in 2020.^[94]

After founding the new political party MORENA, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (commonly known as AMLO) won the 2018 presidential election with over 50% of the vote. His political coalition, led by his left-wing party founded after the 2012 elections, included parties and politicians from across the political spectrum. The coalition also won a majority in both the upper and lower Congress chambers. His success is attributed to the country's opposing political forces exhausting their chances as well as AMLO's adoption of a moderate discourse with a focus on reconciliation.^[95] The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Mexico occurred on 28 February 2020. The COVID-19 vaccination in Mexico began in December 2020.

Claudia Sheinbaum, López Obrador's political successor, won the 2024 presidential election in a landslide and upon taking office in October became the first woman to lead the country in Mexico's history.^[96] She was sworn in as Mexico's president on 1 October 2024.^[97]

Geography

Mexico is located between latitudes 14° and 33°N, and longitudes 86° and 119°W in the southern portion of North America, with a total area of 1,972,550 km² (761,606 sq mi), is the world's 13th largest country by total area. It has coastlines on the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of California, as well as the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, the latter two forming part of the Atlantic Ocean.^[98] Within these seas are about 6,000 km² (2,317 sq mi) of islands (including the remote Pacific Guadalupe Island and the Revillagigedo Islands). Almost all of Mexico lies in the North American Plate, with small parts of the Baja California peninsula on the Pacific and Cocos Plates. Geophysically, some geographers include the territory east of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (around 12% of the total) within Central America.^[99] Geopolitically, however, Mexico is entirely considered part of North America, along with Canada and the United States.^[100]



Topographic map of Mexico

The majority of Mexican central and northern territories are located at high altitudes, and as such the highest elevations are found at the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt which crosses Mexico east to west: Pico de Orizaba (5,700 m or 18,701 ft), Popocatepetl (5,462 m or 17,920 ft) and Iztaccihuatl (5,286 m or 17,343 ft) and the Nevado de Toluca (4,577 m or 15,016 ft). Two mountain ranges known as Sierra Madre Oriental and Sierra Madre Occidental, which are the extension of the Rocky Mountains from northern North America crossed the country from north to south and a fourth mountain range, the Sierra Madre del Sur, runs from Michoacán to Oaxaca. The Mexican territory is prone to volcanism.^[101]

Mexico has nine distinct regions: Baja California, the Pacific Coastal Lowlands, the Mexican Plateau, the Sierra Madre Oriental, the Sierra Madre Occidental, the Cordillera Neo-Volcánica, the Gulf Coastal Plain, the Southern Highlands, and the Yucatán Peninsula.^[102] An important geologic feature of the Yucatán peninsula is the Chicxulub crater, the scientific consensus is that the Chicxulub impactor was responsible for the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event. Although Mexico is large (a little over 2,000 mi (3,219 km) in length from its farthest land points), much of its land mass is incompatible with agriculture due to aridity, soil, or terrain. In 2018, an estimated 54.9% of land is agricultural; 11.8% is arable; 1.4% is in permanent crops; 41.7% is permanent pasture; and 33.3% is forest.^[101] Mexico is irrigated by several rivers, with the longest being the Rio Grande, which serves as a natural eastern border with the United States.^[103] The Usumacinta River in turn, serves as a natural southern border between Mexico and Guatemala.^[104]



Pico de Orizaba, the highest mountain in Mexico

Climate

The climate of Mexico is varied due to the country's size and topography. Tropic of Cancer effectively divides the country into temperate and tropical zones. Land north of the Tropic of Cancer experiences cooler temperatures during the winter months. South of the Tropic of Cancer, 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. Maritime air masses bring seasonal precipitation from May until August. Many parts of Mexico, particularly the north, have a dry climate with only sporadic rainfall, while parts of the tropical lowlands in the south average more than 2,000 mm (78.7 in) of annual precipitation. For example, many cities in the north like Monterrey, Hermosillo, and Mexicali experience temperatures of 40 °C (104 °F) or more in summer. In the Sonoran Desert temperatures reach 50 °C (122 °F) or more.^[105]



Mexico map of Köppen climate classification

There are 7 major climate types in Mexico^[106] with warm sub-humid climate being coastal up to 900 meters found mostly in the southern region of Mexico; dry and desertic climates being found in the northern half of the country; temperate humid and sub-humid being found mostly on pastures at an elevation of 1,800 meters and higher in central Mexico and cold climate usually found at an elevation of 3,500 meters and beyond. Most of the country's territory has a temperate to dry climate.^[106] Areas south of the Tropic of Cancer with elevations up to 1,000 m (3,281 ft) (the southern parts of both coastal plains as well as the Yucatán Peninsula), have a yearly median temperature between 24 and 28 °C (75.2 and 82.4 °F). Temperatures here remain high throughout the year, with only a 5 °C (9 °F) difference between winter and summer median temperatures. The Pacific coast is subject to natural hazards such as tsunamis and both Mexican coasts with the exception of the south coast of the Bay of Campeche and northern Baja California are vulnerable to serious hurricanes during the summer and fall. Although low-lying areas north of the Tropic of Cancer are hot and humid during the summer, they generally have lower yearly temperature averages (from 20 to 24 °C or 68.0 to 75.2 °F) because of more moderate conditions during the winter.^[105]

Biodiversity

Mexico ranks fourth^[107] in the world in biodiversity and is one of the 17 megadiverse countries. With over 200,000 different species, Mexico is home of 10–12% of the world's biodiversity.^[108] 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.^[109] Mexico is also considered the second country in the world in ecosystems and fourth in overall species.^[110] About 2,500 species are protected by Mexican legislation.^[110] In 2002, Mexico had the second fastest rate of deforestation in the world, second only to Brazil.^[111] It had a 2019 Forest Landscape Integrity Index mean score of 6.82/10, ranking it 63rd globally out of 172 countries.^[112] According to SGI there is Deforestation and soil erosion especially in rural areas of Mexico. In the 2022 report it was noted environmental protection laws have improved in major cities but remain unenforced or unregulated in rural regions.^[113]



Mexican wolf

In Mexico, 170,000 square kilometers (65,637 sq mi) are considered "Protected Natural Areas". These include 34 biosphere reserves (unaltered ecosystems), 67 national parks, 4 natural monuments (protected in perpetuity for their aesthetic, scientific or historical value), 26 areas of protected flora and fauna, 4 areas for natural resource protection (conservation of soil, hydrological basins, and forests) and 17 sanctuaries (zones rich in diverse species).^[108] Plants indigenous to Mexico are grown in many parts of the world and integrated into their national cuisines. Some of Mexico's native culinary ingredients include maize, tomato, beans, squash, chocolate, vanilla, avocado, guava, chayote, epazote, camote, jicama, nopal, zucchini, tejocote, huitlacoche, sapote, mamey sapote, and a great variety of chiles, such as the habanero and the jalapeño. Most of these names come from the indigenous language of Nahuatl. Tequila, the distilled alcoholic drink made from cultivated agave cacti is a major industry. Because of its high biodiversity Mexico has also been a frequent site of bioprospecting by international research bodies.^[114] The first highly successful instance was the discovery in 1947 of the tuber "Barbasco" (*Dioscorea composita*) which has a high content of diosgenin, revolutionizing the production of synthetic hormones in the 1950s and 1960s and eventually leading to the invention of combined oral contraceptive pills.^[115]



Puma in a cloud forest, Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve

Government and politics

The United Mexican States are a federation whose government is representative, democratic, and republican based on a presidential system according to the 1917 Constitution. The Constitution establishes three levels of government: the federal Union, the state governments, and the municipal governments.

The federal legislature is the bicameral Congress of the Union, composed of the Senate of the Republic and the Chamber of Deputies. The Congress makes federal law, declares war, imposes taxes, approves the national budget and international treaties, and ratifies diplomatic appointments.^[116] The federal Congress, as well as the state legislatures, are elected by a system of parallel voting that includes plurality and proportional representation.^[117] The Chamber of Deputies has 500 deputies. Of these, 300 are elected by plurality vote in single-member districts (the federal electoral districts) and 200 are elected by proportional representation with closed party lists^[117] for which the country is divided into five electoral constituencies.^[117] The Senate comprises 128 senators: 64 (two for each state and two for Mexico City) are elected by plurality vote in pairs, 32 are the first minority or first-runner-up (one for each state and one for Mexico City), and 32 are elected by proportional representation from national closed party lists.^[117]

The executive is the President of the United Mexican States, who is the head of state and government, as well as the commander-in-chief of the Mexican military forces. The President also appoints the Cabinet and other officers. The President is responsible for executing and enforcing the law and has the power to veto bills.^[116]

The highest organ of the judicial branch of government is the Supreme Court of Justice, the national supreme court, which has eleven judges appointed by the President and approved by the Senate. The Supreme Court of Justice interprets laws and judges cases of federal competency. Other institutions of the judiciary are the Federal Electoral Tribunal, collegiate, unitary, and district tribunals, and the Council of the Federal Judiciary.^[116] Three parties have historically been the dominant parties in Mexican politics: the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), a catch-all party^[118] and member of the Socialist International^[119] that was founded in 1929 to unite all the factions of the Mexican Revolution and held an almost hegemonic power in Mexican politics since then; the National Action Party (PAN), a conservative party founded in 1939 and belonging to the Christian Democrat Organization of America;^[120] and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) a left-wing party,^[121] founded in 1989 as the successor of the coalition of socialists and liberal parties.



The National Palace on the east side of Plaza de la Constitución or Zócalo, the main square of Mexico City; it was the residence of viceroys and Presidents of Mexico and now the seat of the Mexican government.



Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the Congress of Mexico

Foreign relations

The foreign relations of Mexico are directed by the President of Mexico^[122] and managed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.^[123] The principles of the foreign policy are constitutionally recognized in the Article 89, Section 10, which include: respect for international law and legal equality of states, their sovereignty and independence, trend to non-interventionism in the domestic affairs of other countries, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and promotion of collective security through active participation in international organizations.^[122] Since the 1930s, the Estrada Doctrine has served as a crucial complement to these principles.^[124]



Headquarters of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs

Mexico is a founding member of several international organizations, most notably the United Nations,^[125] the Organization of American States,^[126] the Organization of Ibero-American States,^[127] the OPANAL^[128] and the CELAC.^[129] In 2008, Mexico contributed over 40 million dollars to the United Nations regular budget.^[130] In addition, it was the only Latin American member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development since it joined in 1994 until Chile gained full membership in 2010.^{[131][132]}

Mexico is considered a regional power^{[133][134]} hence its presence in major economic groups such as the G8+5 and the G-20. Since the 1990s Mexico has sought a reform of the United Nations Security Council and its working methods^[135] with the support of Canada, Italy, Pakistan and other nine countries, which form a group informally called the Coffee Club.^[136]

Military



Allende-class frigates in Tuxpan



Mexican Air Force F-5 Tiger II

The Mexican Armed Forces are administered by the Secretariat of National Defense (*Secretaria de Defensa Nacional*, SEDENA). There are two branches: the Mexican Army (which includes the Mexican Air Force), and the Mexican Navy. The Secretariat of Public Security and Civil Protection has jurisdiction over the National Guard, which was formed in 2019 from the disbanded Federal Police and military police of the Army and Navy. Figures vary on personnel, but as of are approximately 223,000 armed forces personnel (160,000 Army; 8,000 Air Force; 55,000 Navy, including about 20,000 Marines); approximately 100,000 National Guard (2021). Government expenditures on the military are a small proportion of GDP: 0.7% of GDP (2021 est.), 0.6% of GDP (2020).^[137]

The Mexican Armed Forces maintain significant infrastructure, including facilities for the design, research, and testing of weapons, vehicles, aircraft, naval vessels, defense systems and electronics; military industry manufacturing centers for building such systems, and advanced naval dockyards that build heavy military vessels and advanced missile technologies. Since the 1990s, when the military escalated its role in the war on drugs, increasing importance has been placed on acquiring airborne surveillance platforms, aircraft, helicopters, digital war-fighting technologies,^[138] urban warfare equipment and rapid troop transport.^[139] Mexico has the capabilities to manufacture

nuclear weapons, but abandoned this possibility with the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1968 and pledged to use its nuclear technology only for peaceful purposes.^[140] Mexico signed the UN treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.^[141]

Historically, Mexico has remained neutral in international conflicts,^[142] with the exception of World War II. However, in recent years some political parties have proposed an amendment of the Constitution to allow the Mexican Army, Air Force or Navy to collaborate with the United Nations in peacekeeping missions, or to provide military help to countries that officially ask for it.^[143]

Law enforcement and human rights

The Mexican Federal Police was dissolved in 2019 by a constitutional amendment during the administration of President López Obrador, being replaced by the National Guard, a national gendarmerie formed from units and assets of the Federal Police, Military Police, and Naval Police.^[144] As of 2022, the National Guard numbered 110,000 personnel. López Obrador had increasingly used military forces for domestic law enforcement, particularly against drug cartels.^[145] There have been serious abuses of power reported in security operations in the southern part of the country and in indigenous communities and poor urban neighborhoods. The National Human Rights Commission has had little impact in reversing this trend, engaging

mostly in documentation but failing to use its powers to issue public condemnations to the officials who ignore its recommendations.^[146] Most Mexicans have low confidence in the police or the judicial system, and therefore, few crimes are actually reported by the citizens.^[147] There have been public demonstrations of outrage against what is considered a culture of impunity.^[148]

Mexico has fully recognised same-sex marriage since 2022,^[149] and anti-discrimination laws regarding sexual orientation have existed in the nation since 2003.^[150] However, hate crimes towards the LGBT community remain an issue in Mexico.^{[151][152]} Other crime and human rights violations in Mexico have been criticized, including enforced disappearances (kidnappings), abuses against migrants, extrajudicial killings, gender-based violence, especially femicide, and attacks on journalists and human rights advocates.^[153] A 2020 report by the BBC gives statistics on crime in Mexico, with 10.7 million households with at least one victim of crime.^[154] As of May 2022, 100,000 people are officially listed as missing, most since 2007 when President Calderón attempted to stop the drug cartels.^[155] Drug cartels remain a major issue in Mexico, with a proliferation of smaller cartels when larger ones are broken up and increasingly the use of more sophisticated military equipment and tactics.^{[156][157]}

Mexico's drug war, ongoing since 2006, has left over 120,000 dead and perhaps another 37,000 missing.^[158] Mexico's National Geography and Statistics Institute estimated that in 2014, one-fifth of Mexicans were victims of some sort of crime.^[159] The mass kidnapping of 43 students in Iguala on 26 September 2014 triggered nationwide protests against the government's weak response to the disappearances and widespread corruption that gives free rein to criminal organizations.^[160] More than 100 journalists and media workers have been killed or disappeared since 2000, and most of these crimes remained unsolved, improperly investigated, and with few perpetrators arrested and convicted.^{[161][162]}



Mexican Federal Police celebration



Demonstration on 26 September 2015, in the first anniversary of the disappearance of the 43 students in the Mexican town of Iguala

Administrative divisions

The boundaries and constituent units of Mexico evolved from its colonial-era origins. Central America peacefully separated from Mexico after independence in 1821. Yucatán was briefly an independent republic. Texas separated in the Texas Revolution and when it was annexed to the U.S. in 1845, it set the stage for the Mexican–American War and major territorial loss to the U.S. The sale of northern territory known in the U.S. as the Gadsden Purchase was the last loss of Mexican territory. The United Mexican States are a federation of 31 free and sovereign states, which form a union that exercises a degree of jurisdiction over Mexico City.^[163] Each state has its constitution, congress, and a judiciary, and its citizens elect by direct voting a governor for a six-year term, and representatives to their respective unicameral state congresses for three-year terms.^[116] Mexico City is a special political division that belongs to the federation as a whole and not to a particular state.^[163] Formerly known as the Federal District, its autonomy was previously limited relative to that of the states.^[116] It dropped this designation in 2016 and is in the process of achieving greater political autonomy by becoming a federal entity with its constitution and congress.^[164] The states are divided into municipalities, the smallest administrative political entity in the country, governed by a mayor or municipal president (*presidente municipal*), elected by its residents by plurality.^[116]



Economy

As of April 2024, Mexico has the 12th largest nominal GDP (US\$1.848 trillion), the 12th largest by purchasing power parity (US\$3.303 trillion) and a GDP in PPP per capita of US\$24,971.^[165] The World Bank reported in 2023 that the country's gross national income in market exchange rates was the second highest in Latin America after Brazil at US\$1,744,711.4 million.^[166] Mexico is established as an upper-middle-income country. After the slowdown of 2001 the country recovered and grew 4.2, 3.0 and 4.8 percent in 2004, 2005 and 2006,^[167] even though it is considered to be well below Mexico's potential growth.^[168] By 2050, Mexico could potentially become the world's fifth or seventh-largest economy.^{[169][170]}

The electronics industry of Mexico has grown enormously within the last decade. Mexico has the sixth largest electronics industry in the world after China, the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Mexico is the second-largest exporter of electronics to the United States where it exported \$71.4 billion worth of electronics in 2011. The Mexican electronics exports grew 73% between 2002 and 2012. The manufactured value-added sector, which electronics is part of, accounted for 18% of Mexico's GDP.^[171]

Mexico produces the most automobiles of any North American nation.^[172] The industry produces technologically complex components and engages in some research and development activities.^[173] The "Big Three" (General Motors, Ford and Chrysler) have been operating in Mexico since the 1930s, while Volkswagen and Nissan built their plants in the 1960s.^[174] In Puebla alone, 70 industrial part-makers cluster around Volkswagen.^[173] In the 2010s expansion of the sector was surging. In September 2016 Kia opened a \$1 billion factory in Nuevo León,^[175] with Audi also opening an assembling plant in Puebla the same year.^[176] BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Nissan currently have plants in construction.^[177] The domestic car industry is represented by DINA S.A., which has built buses and trucks since 1962,^[178] and the new Mastretta company that builds the high-performance Mastretta MXT sports car.^[179] In 2006, trade with the United States and Canada accounted for almost 50% of Mexico's exports and 45% of its imports.^[11]



Mexican Stock Exchange building, in Mexico City



Headquarters of América Móvil in Mexico City, the largest mobile network operator outside Asia

During the first three quarters of 2010, the United States had a \$46.0 billion trade deficit with Mexico.^[180] In August 2010 Mexico surpassed France to become the 9th largest holder of US debt.^[181] The remittances from Mexican citizens working in the United States are significant; after dipping during the 2008 Great Recession and again during COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 they are topping other sources of foreign income.^{[182][183]} Remittances are directed to Mexico by direct links from a U.S. government banking program.^[184]



Skyscrapers in San Pedro Garza García, Nuevo León

Although multiple international organizations coincide and classify Mexico as an upper middle income country, or a middle class country,^{[185][186]} Mexico's National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), which is the organization in charge to measure the country's poverty reports that a huge percentage of Mexico's population lives in poverty. According to said council, from 2006 to 2010 (the year on which the CONEVAL published its first nationwide report of poverty) the portion of Mexicans who live in poverty rose from 18%–19%^[187] to 46% (52 million people).^[188] Despite this situation, CONEVAL reported in 2023 that the country's poverty rate has been decreasing in recent years, as the organization registered, within the period between 2018 and 2022, a 5.6% decrease, from 41.9% to 36.3% (from 51.9 million to 46.8 million people), according to its Multidimensional Poverty Index, though the extreme poverty rate rose by 0.1% (410 thousand people) within the same period, remaining at 7.1% (9.1 million people), and the number of people lacking access to healthcare services has significantly increased, from 16.2% to 39.1% (50.4 million people),^{[189][190]} though some specialists have expressed a degree of doubt regarding the accuracy of these rates.^[191] According to the OECD's own poverty line (defined as the percentage of a country's population who earns 60%^[192] or less of the national median income) 20% of Mexico's population lived in a situation of poverty in 2019.^[193]

Among the OECD countries, Mexico has the second-highest degree of economic disparity between the extremely poor and extremely rich, after Chile – although it has been falling over the last decade, being one of few countries in which this is the case.^[194] The bottom ten percent in the income hierarchy disposes of 1.36% of the country's resources, whereas the upper ten percent dispose of almost 36%. The OECD also notes that Mexico's budgeted expenses for poverty alleviation and social development are only about a third of the OECD average.^[195] This is also reflected by the fact that infant mortality in Mexico is three times higher than the average among OECD nations whereas its literacy levels are in the median range of OECD nations. Nevertheless, according to a Goldman Sachs report published in 2007, by 2050 Mexico will have the 5th largest economy in the world.^[196] According to a 2008 UN report the average income in a typical urbanized area of Mexico was \$26,654, while the average income in rural areas just miles away was only \$8,403.^[197] Daily minimum wages are set annually. The daily minimum wage will be \$248.93 Mexican pesos (US\$13.24) in 2024 (\$375 in the country's northern border), making it comparable to the minimum wages of countries like Uruguay, Chile and Ecuador. The minimum wage has rapidly increased throughout the last few years, as it was set at 88.15 pesos in 2018.^[198]

Communications

The telecommunications industry is mostly dominated by Telmex (*Teléfonos de México*), previously a government monopoly privatized in 1990. By 2006, Telmex had expanded its operations to Colombia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and the United States. Other players in the domestic industry are Axtel, Maxcom, Alestra, Marcatel, AT&T Mexico.^[199] Because of Mexican orography, providing a landline telephone service at remote mountainous areas is expensive, and the penetration of line-phones per capita is low compared to other Latin American countries, at 51.8% percent; however, 81.2% of Mexican households have an internet connection and 81.4% of Mexicans over the age of 6 have a mobile phone.^[200] Mobile telephony has the advantage of reaching all areas at a lower cost, and the total number of mobile lines is almost two times that of landlines, with an estimation of 97.2 million lines.^[200] The telecommunication industry is regulated by the government through Cofetel (*Comisión Federal de Telecomunicaciones*).



Telmex Tower in Mexico City

The Mexican satellite system is domestic and operates 120 earth stations. There is also extensive microwave radio relay network and considerable use of fiber-optic and coaxial cable.^[201] Mexican satellites are operated by Satélites Mexicanos (Satmex), a private company, leader in Latin America and servicing both North and South America.^[202] It offers broadcast, telephone, and telecommunication services to 37 countries in the Americas, from Canada to Argentina. Through business partnerships Satmex

provides high-speed connectivity to ISPs and Digital Broadcast Services.^[203] Satmex maintains its satellite fleet with most of the fleet being designed and built in Mexico. Major players in the broadcasting industry are Televisa, the largest Mexican media company in the Spanish-speaking world,^[204] TV Azteca and Imagen Televisión.

Energy



The Central Eólica Sureste I, Fase II in Oaxaca

Energy production in Mexico is managed by the state-owned companies Federal Commission of Electricity and Pemex. Pemex, the public company in charge of exploration, extraction, transportation, and marketing of crude oil and natural gas, as well as the refining and distribution of petroleum products and petrochemicals, is one of the largest companies in the world by revenue, making US\$86 billion in sales a year.^{[205][206][207]} Mexico is the sixth-largest oil producer in the world, with 3.7 million barrels per day.^[208] In 1980 oil exports accounted for 61.6% of total exports; by 2000 it was only 7.3%.^[173] Mexico owns 7 oil refineries on its territory, with the newest one being built in 2022^[209] and another refinery within the United States.^[210] Mexico has 60 hydroelectric power plants which generate 12% of the country's electricity^[211] with the largest being the 2,400 MW Manuel Moreno Torres Dam on the Grijalva River in Chicoasén, Chiapas. This is the world's fourth most productive hydroelectric plant.^[212]

Mexico is the country with the world's third-largest solar power potential.^[213] The country's gross solar potential is estimated at 5kWh/m² daily, which corresponds to 50 times the national electricity generation.^[214] Currently, there is over 1 million square meters of solar thermal panels^[215] installed in Mexico, while in 2005 there were only 115,000 square meters of solar PV (photo-voltaic) panels.^[215] The project SEGH-CFE 1 located in Puerto Libertad, Sonora in the Northwest of Mexico was completed in December 2018 and has a capacity of 46.8 MW from an array of 187,200 solar panels,^[216] all of its generated electricity is sold directly to the CFE and absorbed into the utility's transmission system for distribution throughout their existing network.^[217] The Villanueva solar park in Coahuila which opened in 2019, is the largest solar power plant in the Americas with a capacity of 828 MW.^[218] Mexico does have one nuclear power plant, the Laguna Verde Nuclear Power Station located in the state of Veracruz^[219] and numerous wind farms,^[220] with the largest wind farm in Latin America being located in the state of Oaxaca.^[221]

Science and technology

The National Autonomous University of Mexico was officially established in 1910,^[222] and the university became one of the most important institutes of higher learning in Mexico.^[223] UNAM provides world class education in science, medicine, and engineering.^[224] Many scientific institutes and new institutes of higher learning, such as National Polytechnic Institute (founded in 1936),^[225] were established during the first half of the 20th century. Most of the new research institutes were created within UNAM. Twelve institutes were integrated into UNAM from 1929 to 1973.^[226] In 1959, the Mexican Academy of Sciences was created to coordinate scientific efforts between academics.

In 1995, the Mexican chemist Mario J. Molina shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry with Paul J. Crutzen and F. Sherwood Rowland for their work in atmospheric chemistry, particularly concerning the formation and decomposition of ozone.^[227] Molina, an alumnus of UNAM, became the first Mexican citizen to win the Nobel Prize in science.^[228]



Large Millimeter Telescope in Puebla

In recent years, the largest scientific project being developed in Mexico was the construction of the Large Millimeter Telescope (Gran Telescopio Milimétrico, GMT), the world's largest and most sensitive single-aperture telescope in its frequency range.^[229] It was designed to observe regions of space obscured by stellar dust. Mexico was ranked 56th in the Global Innovation Index in 2024.^[230]

Tourism

As of 2017, Mexico was the 6th most visited country in the world and had the 15th highest income from tourism in the world which is also the highest in Latin America.^[231] The vast majority of tourists come to Mexico from the United States and Canada followed by Europe and Asia. A smaller number also come from other Latin American countries.^[232] In the 2017



The resort town of Cancún, May 2008

Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, Mexico was ranked 22nd in the world, which was 3rd in the Americas.^[233]

The coastlines of Mexico are rich in sunny beach stretches. According to the Constitution of Mexico Article 27, the entirety of the coastlines is under federal ownership. On the Yucatán peninsula, one of the most popular beach destinations is the resort town of Cancún, especially among university students during spring break. To the south of Cancun is the coastal strip called Riviera Maya which includes the beach town of Playa del Carmen and the ecological parks of Xcaret and Xel-Há. To the south of Cancún is the town of Tulum, notable for its ruins of Maya civilization. Other notable tourist destinations include Acapulco with crowded beaches and multi-story hotels on

the shores. At the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula is the resort town of Cabo San Lucas, noted for its marlin fishing.^[234] Closer to the United States border is the weekend draw of San Felipe, Baja California.^[235]

In Mexican cities along the Mexico–United States border, the most lucrative hospitality industry is now medical tourism, with remnants of the traditional motivations that drove tourists to Mexico's northern borderlands for nearly a century. Dominant medical tourism for tourism planning are the purchase of medication, dentistry, elective surgery, optometry, and chiropractic.^[236]

Transportation

Despite its difficult topography, Mexico's roadway is extensive and most areas in the country are covered. The roadway network in Mexico has an extent of 366,095 km (227,481 mi),^[237] of which 116,802 km (72,577 mi) are paved,^[238] making it 9th largest of any country.^[239] Of these, 10,474 km (6,508 mi) are multi-lane expressways: 9,544 km (5,930 mi) are four-lane highways and the rest have 6 or more lanes.^[238]

Starting in the late nineteenth century, Mexico was one of the first Latin American countries to promote railway development,^[147] and the network covers 30,952 km (19,233 mi). The Secretary of Communications and Transport of Mexico proposed a high-speed rail link that will transport its passengers from Mexico City to Guadalajara, Jalisco.^{[240][241]} The train, which will travel at 300 kilometers per hour (190 miles per hour),^[242] will allow passengers to travel from Mexico City to Guadalajara in just 2 hours.^[242] The whole project was projected to cost 240 billion pesos, or about 25 billion US\$^[240] and is being paid for jointly by the Mexican government and the local private sector including one of the wealthiest men in the world, Mexico's billionaire business tycoon Carlos Slim.^[243] The federal government has also been funding the construction of an inter city railway line connecting cities such as Cozumel, Mérida, Chichen Itza, Cancún and Palenque;^[244] another inter city train connecting the city of Toluca and Mexico City^[245] and has restored the Interoceanic train corridor, which connects the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.^[246]

Mexico has 233 airports with paved runways; of these, 10 carry 72% of national cargo and 97% of international cargo.^[247] The Mexico City International Airport remains the busiest in Latin America and the 36th busiest in the world^[248] transporting 45 million passengers a year.^[249] Two additional airports operate simultaneously to help relieve congestion from the Mexico City International Airport: the Toluca International Airport and the Felipe Ángeles International Airport.^[250]

Demographics

According to Mexico's National Geography and Statistics Institute, the country's estimated population in 2022 was of 129,150,971 people.^[251] Since at least the 1970s, Mexico has been the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world.^[252]

Throughout the 19th century, the population of Mexico had barely doubled. This trend continued during the first two decades of the 20th century, in 1900 the Mexican population was a little more than 13 million.^[253] The Mexican Revolution (c. 1910–1920) greatly impacted population growth with the 1921 census reporting a loss of about 1 million inhabitants. The growth rate increased dramatically between the 1930s and the 1980s when the country registered growth rates of over 3% (1950–1980).



Baluarte Bridge, the highest bridge in the Americas.

The Mexican population doubled in twenty years, and at that rate, it was expected that by 2000 there would be 120 million people living in Mexico. Mexico's population grew from 70 million in 1982^[254] to 123.5 million inhabitants in 2017.^[255] Life expectancy increased from 36 years in 1895 to 75 years in 2020.^[1]

Ethnicity and race

Mexico's population is highly diverse, but research on Mexican ethnicity has felt the impact of nationalist discourses on identity.^{[256][257][258]} Since the 1930s, the Mexican government has promoted the view that all Mexicans are part of the Mestizo community, within which they are distinguished only by residence in or outside of an indigenous community, degree of fluency in an indigenous language, and degree of adherence to indigenous customs,^{[259][260]} according to Mexico's 2020 census, 6.1% of Mexico's population speaks an Indigenous language and 19.4% of the population identifies as indigenous.^[1]



Population density of Mexico

It is not until very recently that the Mexican government began conducting surveys that account for other ethnic groups that live in the country, such as Afro-Mexicans (who comprised 2% of Mexico's population in 2020)^[1] or White Mexicans who range from 27%^{[261][262]} to 47%^{[263][264]} of the population using skin color as reference.^{[265][266]} Asians and Middle Easterners represent around 1% of the population each. While Mestizos are a prominent ethnic group in contemporary Mexico, the subjective and ever-changing definition of this category has led to its estimations being imprecise.^{[267][268]}

Languages

Spanish is the *de facto* national language spoken by the vast majority of the population, making Mexico the world's most populous Hispanophone country.^{[269][252]} Mexican Spanish refers to the varieties of the language spoken in the country, which differs from one region to another in sound, structure, and vocabulary.^[270]

The federal government officially recognizes sixty-eight linguistic groups and 364 varieties of indigenous languages.^[271] It is estimated that around 8.3 million citizens speak these languages,^[272] with Nahuatl being the most widely spoken by more than 1.7 million, followed by Yucatec Maya used daily by nearly 850,000 people. Tzeltal and Tzotzil, two other Mayan languages, are spoken by around half a million people each, primarily in the southern state of Chiapas.^[272] Mixtec and Zapotec, with an estimated 500,000 native speakers each, are two other prominent language groups.^[272] Since its creation in March 2003, the National Indigenous Languages Institute has been in charge of promoting and protecting the use of the country's indigenous languages, through the General Law of Indigenous Peoples' Linguistic Rights, which recognizes them *de jure* as "national languages" with status equal to that of Spanish.^[273] That notwithstanding, in practice, indigenous peoples often face discrimination and do not have full access to public services such as education and healthcare, or to the justice system, as Spanish is the prevailing language.^[274]



Map for the year 2000 of the indigenous languages of Mexico having more than 100,000 speakers

Aside from indigenous languages, there are several minority languages spoken in Mexico due to international migration such as Low German by the 80,000-strong Mennonite population, primarily settled in the northern states, fueled by the tolerance of the federal government towards this community by allowing them to set their educational system compatible with their customs and traditions.^[275] The Chipilo dialect, a variance of the Venetian language, is spoken in the town of Chipilo, located in the central state of Puebla, by around 2,500 people, mainly descendants of Venetians that migrated to the area in the late 19th century.^[276] English is the most commonly taught foreign language in Mexico. It is estimated that nearly 24 million, or around a fifth of the population, study the language through public schools, private institutions, or self-access channels,^[277] however, a high level of English proficiency is limited to only 5% of the population.^[278] French is the second most widely taught foreign language, as every year between 200,000 and 250,000 Mexican students enroll in language courses.^{[279][280][281]}

Emigration and immigration

As of 2019, it is estimated that 11.7 million Mexicans live outside Mexico, in addition to 13.5 million born abroad and another 12 million descendants; the vast majority of this combined population (98–99%) are in the U.S.^[282] The largest Mexican communities outside Mexico are in the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston and Dallas–Fort Worth.^[283] Between 1965 and 2015, more than 16 million Mexicans migrated to the United States alone—by far the top destination for both temporary and permanent migration—representing one of the largest mass migrations in modern history.^[284] As a result of these major migration flows in recent decades, an estimated 37.2 million U.S. residents, or 11.2% of the country's population, identified as being of full or partial Mexican ancestry.^{[285][286]}



Mexico–United States barrier between San Diego's border patrol offices in California, US (left) and Tijuana, Mexico (right)

Among the remaining 2% of Mexican expatriates not residing in the U.S., the most popular destinations are Canada (86,780), primarily the provinces of Ontario and Quebec,^[287] followed by Spain and Germany; the latter two countries account for two-thirds of all Mexicans living in Europe.^[288] It is estimated that 69,000 Mexicans live in Latin America, led by Guatemala (18,870) followed by Bolivia (10,610), Chile (10,560), and Panama (5,000).^[288]

Historically, and relative to other countries in the Western Hemisphere, Mexico has not been a destination of mass migration.^[289] As of 2020, an estimated 1.2 million foreigners settled in Mexico,^[290] up from nearly 1 million in 2010.^[291] In 2021, Mexico officially received 68,000 new immigrants, a 16% increase from the prior year;^[292] the overall number of migrants, including those unauthorized to enter or stay in the country, may be higher than official figures.^[289] The vast majority of migrants in Mexico come from the United States (900,000), making Mexico the top destination for U.S. citizens abroad.^[293] The second largest group comes from neighboring Guatemala (54,500), followed by Spain (27,600).^[290] Other major sources of migration are fellow Latin American countries, which include Colombia (20,600), Argentina (19,200) and Cuba (18,100).^[290] Communities descended from the Lebanese diaspora and German-born Mennonites have had an outsized impact in the country's culture, particularly in its cuisine and traditional music.^{[294][295]}

Urban areas

In 2020 there were 48 metropolitan areas in Mexico, in which close to 53% of the country's population lives.^[296] The most populous metropolitan area in Mexico is the *Metropolitan Area of the Valley of Mexico*, or Greater Mexico City, which in 2020 had a population of 21.8 million, or around 18% of the nation's population. The next four largest metropolitan areas in Mexico are Greater Monterrey (5.3 million), Greater Guadalajara (5.2 million), Greater Puebla (3.2 million) and Greater Toluca (2.3 million).^[297] Urban areas contain 76.81% of Mexico's total population.^[298]

Largest metropolitan areas in Mexico								
2020 National Population Census ^[297]								
	Rank	Name	State	Pop.	Rank	Name	State	Pop.
 Valley of Mexico	1	Valley of Mexico	Mexico City, State of Mexico, Hidalgo	21,804,515	11	Aguascalientes	Aguascalientes	1,225,432
	2	Monterrey	Nuevo León	5,341,171	12	San Luis Potosí	San Luis Potosí	1,221,526
	3	Guadalajara	Jalisco	5,286,642	13	Mérida	Yucatán	1,201,000
	4	Puebla–Tlaxcala	Puebla, Tlaxcala	3,199,530	14	Mexicali	Baja California	1,031,779
 Monterrey	5	Toluca	State of Mexico	2,353,924	15	Saltillo	Coahuila	1,031,779
	6	Tijuana	Baja California	2,157,853	16	Cuernavaca	Morelos	1,028,589
	7	León	Guanajuato	1,924,771	17	Culiacán	Sinaloa	1,003,530
	8	Querétaro	Querétaro	1,594,212	18	Morelia	Michoacán	988,704
	9	Juárez	Chihuahua	1,512,450	19	Chihuahua	Chihuahua	988,065
	10	La Laguna	Coahuila, Durango	1,434,283	20	Veracruz	Veracruz	939,046
				 Guadalajara				
				 Puebla–Tlaxcala				

Religion

Although the Constitutions of 1857 and 1917 put limits on the role of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico, Roman Catholicism remains the country's dominant religious affiliation. The 2020 census by the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* (National Institute of Statistics and Geography) gives Roman Catholicism as the main religion, with 77.8% (97,864,218) of the population, while 11.2% (14,095,307) belong to Protestant/Evangelical Christian denominations—including Other Christians (6,778,435), Evangelicals (2,387,133), Pentecostals (1,179,415), Jehovah's Witnesses (1,530,909), Seventh-day Adventists (791,109), and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (337,998)—; 8.1% (9,488,671) declared having no religion; 0.4% (491,814) were unspecified.^{[1][300]}

The 97,864,218^[1] Catholics of Mexico constitute in absolute terms the second largest Catholic community in the world, after Brazil's.^[301] 47% percent of them attend church services weekly.^[302] The Pentecostalism is the second Christian creed in Mexico, with more than 1.3 million adherents. Migratory phenomena have led to the spread of different aspects of Christianity, including branches Protestants, Eastern Catholic Churches and Eastern Orthodox Church.^[303]

According to the 2020 census, there are 58,876 Jews in Mexico.^[1] The presence of Jews in Mexico dates back to the 16th century when Spaniards arrived to the Americas, however the modern Jewish Community began to be formed in the late 19th and early 20th century when Jews from Europe and the Ottoman Empire immigrated to the country due to instability and anti-semitism.^[304] Islam in Mexico (with 7,982 members) is practiced mostly by Arab Mexicans.^[1] In the 2020 census 36,764 Mexicans reported belonging to a spiritualist religion,^[1] a category which includes a tiny Buddhist population and about 74 thousand people reported to practice religions with "ethnic roots" (religions mostly African and indigenous origins).^[1]

There is often a syncretism between shamanism and Catholic traditions. Another religion of popular syncretism in Mexico (especially in recent years) is the Santería, mainly due to the large number of Cubans who settled in the territory after the Cuban Revolution.^[305] One of the most exemplary cases of popular religiosity is the cult of Holy Dead (Santa Muerte). Other examples are the representations of the Passion of Christ and the celebration of Day of the Dead, which take place within the framework of the Catholic Christian imaginary, but under a very particular reinterpretation.^[306]

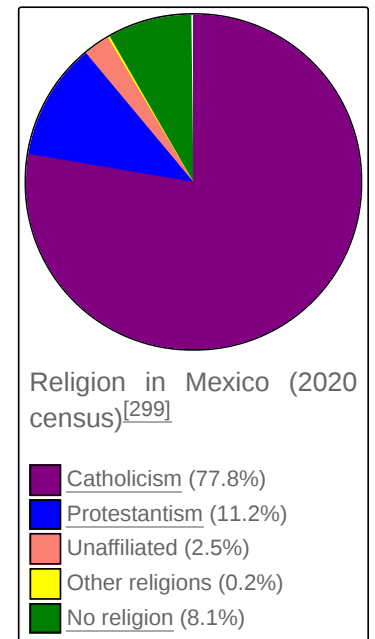
Health

In the 1930s, Mexico made a commitment to rural health care, mandating that mostly urban medical students receive training in it and to make them agents of the state to assess marginal areas.^[307] Since the early 1990s, Mexico entered a transitional stage in the health of its population and some indicators such as mortality patterns are identical to those found in highly developed countries like Germany or Japan.^[308] Mexico's medical infrastructure is highly rated for the most part and is usually excellent in major cities,^{[309][310]} but rural communities still lack equipment for advanced medical procedures, forcing patients in those locations to travel to the closest urban areas to get specialized medical care.^[147] Social determinants of health can be used to evaluate the state of health in Mexico.

State-funded institutions such as Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) and the Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE) play a major role in health and social security. Private health services are also very important and account for 13% of all medical units in the country.^[311] Medical training is done mostly at public universities with many specializations done in vocational or internship settings. Some public universities in Mexico, such as the University of Guadalajara, have signed agreements with the U.S. to receive and train American students in medicine. Health care costs in private institutions and prescription drugs in Mexico are on average lower than that of its North American economic partners.^[309]

Education

As of 2020, the literacy rate in Mexico is 95.25%, a slight increase from 94.86% in 2018, and significantly higher than 82.99% in 1980.^[312] Literacy between males and females is relatively equal.



Secretariat of Health, Mexico City, Mexico

According to most rankings, the publicly funded National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) is the best university in the country. Other prominent public universities include the National Polytechnic Institute, the Metropolitan Autonomous University, the University of Guadalajara and the Autonomous University of Nuevo León and El Colegio de México.^{[313][314][315][316]}



Central Library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico

In terms of private academic institutions, among the most highly ranked is the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education; other prominent private universities include Universidad Iberoamericana, Universidad Panamericana, ITAM and Universidad Anáhuac.^{[313][314][315]}

Culture

Mexican culture reflects a long and complex history of interactions between various peoples through migration, conquest, and trade. Three centuries of Spanish rule resulted in the blending of Spanish culture with those of different indigenous groups. Efforts to assimilate the native population into Christian European culture during the colonial era were only partially successful, with many pre-Columbian customs, traditions, and norms persisting regionally (particularly in rural areas) or becoming syncretized; conversely, many Spanish settlers integrated into local communities through acculturation or intermarriage. However, a high degree of stratification along the lines of class, ethnicity, and race perpetuated distinct subcultures.^[317]



The Cry of Dolores. Every year on the eve of Independence Day, the President of Mexico re-enacts the cry from the balcony of the National Palace in Mexico City,

The Porfirian era (*el Porfiriato*) (1876–1911), which brought relative peace after four decades of civil unrest and war, saw the development of philosophy and art, often with government support. Since that time, as accentuated during the Mexican Revolution, cultural identity has had its foundation in *mestizaje*: the blending of different races and cultures, of which the indigenous (i.e. Amerindian) element is the core. In light of the various ethnicities that formed the Mexican people, José Vasconcelos in *La Raza Cósmica* (The Cosmic Race) (1925) defined Mexico and Latin America to be the melting pot of all races (thus extending the definition of the *mestizo*) not only biologically but culturally as well.^[318] Other Mexican intellectuals grappled with the idea of *Lo Mexicano*, which seeks "to discover the national ethos of Mexican culture."^[319] Nobel laureate Octavio Paz explores the notion of a Mexican national character in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*.

Art



Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, two of the most famous Mexican artists

Painting is one of the oldest arts in Mexico. Cave painting in Mexican territory is about 7500 years old and has been found in the caves of the Baja California Peninsula.^[320] Pre-Columbian Mexican art is present in buildings and caves, in Aztec codices, in ceramics, in garments, etc.; examples of this are the Maya mural paintings of Bonampak or the murals found in Teotihuacán, Cacaxtla and Monte Albán.^[39] Mural painting with Christian religious themes had an important flowering during the 16th century, early colonial era in newly constructed churches and monasteries. Examples can be found in Acolman, Actopan, Huejotzingo, Tecamachalco and Zinacantepec.^[321]

As with most art during the early modern era in the West, colonial-era Mexican art was religious during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Starting in the late seventeenth century, and, most prominently in the eighteenth century, secular portraits and images of racial types, so-called *casta* painting appeared.^[322] Important painters of the late colonial period were Juan

Correa, Cristóbal de Villalpando and Miguel Cabrera. In early post-independence Mexico, nineteenth-century painting had a marked romantic influence; landscapes and portraits were the greatest expressions of this era. Hermenegildo Bustos is one of the most appreciated painters of the historiography of Mexican art. Other painters include Santiago Rebull, Félix Parra, Eugenio Landesio, and his noted pupil, the landscape artist José María Velasco.^[323]

In the 20th century artists such as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco, the so-called "Big Three" of Mexican muralism achieved worldwide recognition. They were commissioned by the Mexican government to paint large-scale historical murals on the walls of public buildings, which helped shape popular perceptions of the Mexican Revolution

and Mexican cultural identity.^[324] Frida Kahlo's largely personal portraiture is considered by many as the most important historical work by a female artist.^[325]

In the 21st century, Mexico City became home to the highest concentration of art museums in the world. Institutions like the Museo Jumex, the largest collection of its kind, founded by collector Eugenio López Alonso and bolstered by art advisor Esthella Provas, changed the notion of contemporary art in Latin America.^{[326][327]} The Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo founded by Rufino Tamayo is also considered a preeminent institution and introduced foreign artists to a wider population.^[328] The country is also an epicenter for International art galleries including Kurimanzutto and FF Projects,^{[329][330]} and leading artists including Gabriel Orozco, Bosco Sodi, Stefan Brüggemann, and Mario García Torres.^[331]



Mural by Diego Rivera showing the pre-Columbian Aztec city of Tenochtitlán. In the Palacio Nacional in Mexico City.

Architecture

The architecture of Mesoamerican civilizations evolved in style from simple to complex. Teotihuacan, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987, is one of the foremost examples of ancient pyramid construction. The cities of the Maya stand out to modern architects as examples of integration between large urban centers (with elaborate stone construction) and a thick jungle, generally with a complex network of roads. Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica also saw distinctive architectural influences from the Olmec, the Puuc and oasiamecan peoples.^[39]

With the arrival of the Spanish, architectural theories of the Greco-Latin order with Arab influences were introduced. In the first few decades of Spanish presence in the continent, the high level of Christian missionary activity, especially by mendicant orders like the Dominicans or Franciscans, meant the construction of many monasteries, often with Romanesque, Gothic or Mudéjar elements. In addition, the interaction between Spaniards and Indigenous people gave rise to artistic styles such as the tequitqui (from the Nahuatl: worker or builder). Years later, Baroque and Mannerist styles prevailed in large cathedrals and civil buildings, while in rural areas, haciendas or stately estates with Mozarabic tendencies were built.^[321] In the 19th century, the neoclassical movement arose as the country gained independence and sought to establish itself as a republic. A famous example is the Hospicio Cabañas, an orphanage and hospital complex completed in 1829. The art nouveau, and the art deco were styles introduced into the design of the Palacio de Bellas Artes to mark the identity of the Mexican nation with Greek-Roman and pre-Columbian symbols.^[332]



Palacio de Bellas Artes (Palace of Fine Arts), with numerous murals, artworks and a major performance space



The National Auditorium

As a new sense of nationalism developed in the 20th century, a strengthened central government issued formal policies that sought to use architecture to show Mexico's modernity and differentiation from other nations. The development of Mexican modernist architecture was especially manifested in the mid-1950s construction of the Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico City, the main campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Designed by the most prestigious architects of the era, including Mario Pani, Eugenio Peschard, and Enrique del Moral, the buildings feature murals by artists Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Chávez Morado. It has since been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.^[333]

Juan O'Gorman was one of the first environmental architects in modern Mexico to develop the "organic" theory, trying to integrate buildings onto the landscape within the same approaches of Frank Lloyd Wright.^[334] In the search for a new architecture that does not resemble the styles of the past, it achieves a joint manifestation with the mural painting and the landscaping. Luis Barragán combined the shape of the space with forms of rural vernacular architecture of Mexico and Mediterranean countries (Spain-Morocco), integrating color that handles light and shade in different tones and opens a look at the international minimalism. He won the 1980 Pritzker Prize, the highest award in architecture.^[335]

Cuisine



Mole sauce, which has dozens of varieties across the Republic, is seen as a symbol of *Mexicanidad*^[336] and is considered Mexico's national dish.^[336]

The origin of the current Mexican cuisine was established during the Spanish colonial era, a mixture of the foods of Spain with native indigenous ingredients.^[337] Foods indigenous to Mexico include corn, pepper vegetables, calabazas, avocados, sweet potato, turkey, many beans, and other fruits and spices. Similarly, some cooking techniques used today are inherited from pre-Columbian peoples, such as the nixtamalization of corn, the cooking of food in ovens at ground level, grinding in molcajete and metate. With the Spaniards came the pork, beef and chicken meats; peppercorn, sugar, milk and all its derivatives, wheat and rice, citrus fruits and another constellation of ingredients that are part of the daily diet of Mexicans.

From this meeting of two millennia old culinary traditions, were born pozole, mole sauce, barbacoa and tamale in its current forms, chocolate, a large range of breads, tacos, and the broad repertoire of Mexican street foods. Beverages such as atole, champurrado, milk chocolate and aguas frescas were born; desserts such as acitrón and the full range of crystallized sweets, rompope, cajeta, jericya and the wide repertoire of delights created in the convents of nuns in all parts of the country.

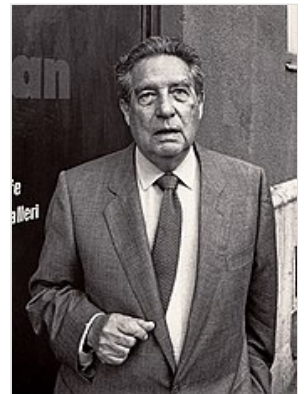
In 2005, Mexico presented the candidature of its gastronomy for World Heritage Site of UNESCO, the first time a country had presented its gastronomic tradition for this purpose.^[338] The result was negative, because the committee did not place the proper emphasis on the importance of corn in Mexican cuisine.^[339] On 16 November 2010 Mexican gastronomy was recognized as Intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO.^[340] In addition, Daniela Soto-Innes was named the best female chef in the world by *The World's Best 50 Restaurants* in April 2019 and Elena Reygadas in 2023.^[341]

Literature

Mexican literature has its antecedents in the literature of the indigenous settlements of Mesoamerica. Poetry had a rich cultural tradition in pre-Columbian Mexico, being divided into two broad categories—secular and religious. Aztec poetry was sung, chanted, or spoken, often to the accompaniment of a drum or a harp. While Tenochtitlan was the political capital, Texcoco was the cultural center; the Texcocan language was considered the most melodious and refined. The best well-known pre-Columbian poet is Nezahualcoyotl.^[342]

There are historical chronicles of the conquest of the Aztec Empire by participants, and, later, by historians. Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *True History of the Conquest of the New Spain* is still widely read today. Spanish-born poet Bernardo de Balbuena extolled the virtues of Mexico in *Grandeza mexicana* (Mexican Grandeur) (1604). Baroque literature flourished in the 17th century; the most notable writers of this period were Juan Ruiz de Alarcón and Juana Inés de la Cruz. Sor Juana was famous in her own time, called the "Ten Muse".^[343]

Nineteenth-century liberal of Nahua origin Ignacio Manuel Altamirano is an important writer of the era, along with Vicente Riva Palacio, the grandson of Mexican hero of independence Vicente Guerrero, who authored a series of historical novels as well as poetry, the late colonial-era novel by José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, *The Mangy Parrot* ("El Periquillo Sarniento"), is said to be the first Latin American novel.^[343] In the modern era, the novel of the Mexican Revolution by Mariano Azuela (*Los de abajo*, translated to English as *The Underdogs*) is noteworthy. Poet and Nobel Laureate Octavio Paz, novelist Carlos Fuentes, Alfonso Reyes, Renato Leduc, essayist Carlos Monsiváis, journalist and public intellectual Elena Poniatowska, and Juan Rulfo (*Pedro Páramo*), Martín Luis Guzmán, Nellie Campobello, (*Cartucho*).



Octavio Paz, the only Mexican awarded with the Nobel Prize in Literature

Cinema

Mexican films from the *Golden Age* in the 1940s and 1950s are the greatest examples of Latin American cinema, with a huge industry comparable to the Hollywood of those years. Mexican films were exported and exhibited in all of Latin America and Europe. *María Candelaria* (1943) by Emilio Fernández, was one of the first films awarded a Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1946, the first time the event was held after World War II. The famous Spanish-born director Luis Buñuel realized in Mexico between 1947 and 1965 some of his masterpieces like *Los Olvidados* (1949) and *Viridiana* (1961). Famous actors and actresses from this period include María Félix, Pedro Infante, Dolores del Río, Jorge Negrete and the comedian Cantinflas.

More recently, films such as *Como agua para chocolate* (1992), *Sex, Shame, and Tears* (1999), *Y tu mamá también* (2001), and *The Crime of Father Amaro* (2002) have been successful in creating universal stories about contemporary subjects, and were internationally recognized. Mexican directors Alejandro González Iñárritu (*Babel*, *Birdman*, *The Revenant*, *Bardo, False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths*), Alfonso Cuarón (*A Little Princess*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Gravity*, *Roma*), Guillermo del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*, *Crimson Peak*, *The Shape of Water*, *Nightmare Alley*), screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga and photographer Emmanuel Lubezki are some of the most known present-day film makers.



Alfonso Cuarón, the first Mexican filmmaker to win the Academy Award for Best Director

Music and dance



Pedro Infante was one of the best ranchera singers.

Mexico has a long tradition of music from the prehispanic era to the present. Much of the music from the colonial era was composed for religious purposes.^{[344][345]}

Although the traditions of European opera and especially Italian opera had initially dominated the Mexican music conservatories and strongly influenced native opera composers (in both style and subject matter), elements of Mexican nationalism had already appeared by the latter part of the 19th century with operas such as Aniceto Ortega del Villar's 1871 *Guatimotzin*, a romanticized account of the defense of Mexico by its last Aztec ruler, Cuauhtémoc. The most well-known Mexican composer of the twentieth century is Carlos Chávez (1899–1978), who composed six symphonies with indigenous themes, and rejuvenated Mexican music, founding the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional.^[346]

Traditional Mexican music includes mariachi, banda, norteño, ranchera, and corridos. Corridos were particularly popular during the Mexican Revolution (1910–20) and in the present era include narcocorridos. The embrace of rock and roll by young Mexicans in the 1960s and 1970s brought Mexico into the transnational, counterculture movement of the era. In Mexico, the native rock culture merged into the larger countercultural and political movement of the late 1960s, culminating in the 1968 protests and redirected into counterculture rebellion, *La Onda* (the wave).^{[347][348]}

On an everyday basis most Mexicans listen to contemporary music such as pop, rock, and others in both English and Spanish. Folk dance of Mexico along with its music is both deeply regional and traditional. Founded in 1952, the Ballet Folklórico de México performs music and dance of the prehispanic period through the Mexican Revolution in regional attire in the Palacio de Bellas Artes.^[349]

Media

Telenovelas, or soap operas are very traditional in Mexico and are translated to many languages and seen all over the world. Mexico was a pioneer in edutainment, with TV producer Miguel Sabido creating in 1970s "soap operas for social change". The "Sabido method" has been adopted in many other countries subsequently, including India, Peru, Kenya, and China.^[350] The Mexican government successfully used a telenovela to promote family planning in the 1970s to curb the country's high birth rate.^[351]

Bilingual government radio stations broadcasting in Spanish and indigenous languages were a tool for indigenous education (1958–65) and since 1979 the Instituto Nacional Indigenista has established a national network of bilingual radio stations.^[352]



Televisa headquarters in Mexico City

There was a major reform of the telecommunications industry in 2013, with the creation of new broadcast television channels. There had been a longstanding limitation on the number of networks, with Televisa, with a virtual monopoly; TV Azteca, and Imagen Television. New technology has allowed the entry of foreign satellite and cable companies. Mexico became the first Latin American country to transition from analog to all digital transmissions.^[353]

Sports



Azteca Stadium, Mexico City

Organized sport in Mexico largely dates from the late nineteenth century, with only bullfighting having a long history dating to the early colonial era. Once the political turmoil of the early republic was replaced by the stability of the Porfiriato did organized sport become public diversions, with structured and ordered play governed by rules and authorities. Baseball was introduced from the United States and also via Cuba in the 1880s and organized teams were created. After the Mexican Revolution, the government sponsored sports to counter the international image of political turmoil and violence.^[354] Mexico's most popular sport is association football.

The bid to host the 1968 Summer Olympics was to burnish Mexico's stature internationally, with it being the first Latin American country to host the games. The government spent abundantly on sporting facilities and other infrastructure to make the games a success, but those expenditures helped fuel public discontent with the government's lack of spending on social programs.^[354] Mexico City hosted the XIX Olympic Games in 1968, making it the first Latin American city to do so.^[355] Mexico hosted the 1970 FIFA World Cup and the 1986 FIFA World Cup^[356] and will co-host, along with Canada and the United States, the 2026 FIFA World Cup. With its past hosting of the 1970 and 1986 tournaments, Mexico will become the first country to host or co-host the men's World Cup three times.^[357]

Mexico is an international power in professional boxing.^[358] Fourteen Olympic boxing medals have been won by Mexico.^[359] The Mexican professional baseball league is named the Liga Mexicana de Beisbol. While usually not as strong as the United States, the Caribbean countries and Japan, Mexico has nonetheless achieved several international baseball titles.^{[360][361]} Lucha Libre (freestyle professional wrestling) is also major crowd draw with national promotions such as AAA, CMLL and others.^[358]



El Santo, one of the most iconic Mexican luchadores

Despite efforts by animal rights activists to outlaw bullfighting, it remains a popular sport in the country, and almost all large cities have bullrings. Plaza México in Mexico City, which seats 45,000 people, is the largest bullring in the world.^[362]

See also



- Index of Mexico-related articles
- Outline of Mexico
- Mexican War of Independence

Notes

- Spanish: *México* or *Méjico*, pronunciation: [ˈmexiko] ; Classical Nahuatl: *Mēxihco*; Yucatec Maya: *Meejikoo*
- Usually, in Spanish, the name of the country is spelled *México*; however, in Peninsular (European) Spanish, the variant *Méjico* is used alongside the usual version. According to the *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas* by the Royal Spanish Academy and Association of Academies of the Spanish Language, the version with J is also correct; however, the spelling with X is recommended, as it is the one used in Mexico.^[10]
- Spanish: *Estados Unidos Mexicanos* ([esˈtaðos uˈniðos mexiˈkanos]); Classical Nahuatl: *Mēxihcatl Tlacetililli Tlahtohcāyōtl*, lit. 'Mexican United States'

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