

**Mexico** (After <http://geography.about.com/library/cia/blcmexico.htm>)

## Geography

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### Introduction

### Mexico

**Background:** The site of advanced Amerindian civilizations, Mexico came under Spanish rule for three centuries before achieving independence early in the 19th century. A devaluation of the peso in late 1994 threw Mexico into economic turmoil, triggering the worst recession in over half a century. The nation continues to make an impressive recovery. Ongoing economic and social concerns include low real wages, underemployment for a large segment of the population, inequitable income distribution, and few advancement opportunities for the largely Amerindian population in the impoverished southern states. Elections held in July 2000 marked the first time since the 1910 Mexican Revolution that the opposition defeated the party in government, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Vicente FOX of the National Action Party (PAN) was sworn in on 1 December 2000 as the first chief executive elected in free and fair elections.

### Geography

### Mexico

**Location:** Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, between Belize and the US and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Guatemala and the US

**Geographic coordinates:** 23 00 N, 102 00 W

Map North America  
references:

Area: *total*: 1,972,550 sq km  
*land*: 1,923,040 sq km  
*water*: 49,510 sq km

Area - slightly less than three times the size of Texas  
comparative:

Land *total*: 4,353 km  
boundaries: *border countries*: Belize 250 km, Guatemala 962 km, US 3,141 km

Coastline: 9,330 km

Maritime *territorial sea*: 12 nm  
claims: *contiguous zone*: 24 nm  
*exclusive economic zone*: 200 nm  
*continental shelf*: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate: varies from tropical to desert

Terrain: high, rugged mountains; low coastal plains; high plateaus; desert

Elevation *lowest point*: Laguna Salada -10 m  
extremes: *highest point*: Volcan Pico de Orizaba 5,700 m

Natural petroleum, silver, copper, gold, lead, zinc, natural gas, timber  
resources:

Land use: *arable land*: 12.99%  
*permanent crops*: 1.31%  
*other*: 85.7% (2001)

Irrigated land: 65,000 sq km (1998 est.)

Natural tsunamis along the Pacific coast, volcanoes and destructive  
hazards: earthquakes in the center and south, and hurricanes on the Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean coasts

Environment - scarcity of hazardous waste disposal facilities; rural to urban  
current issues: migration; natural fresh water resources scarce and polluted in north, inaccessible and poor quality in center and extreme southeast; raw sewage and industrial effluents polluting rivers in urban areas; deforestation; widespread erosion; desertification; deteriorating agricultural lands; serious air and water pollution in the national capital and urban centers along

US-Mexico border; land subsidence in Valley of Mexico caused by groundwater depletion  
*note:* the government considers the lack of clean water and deforestation national security issues

Environment - *party to:* Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto international agreements: Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling  
*signed, but not ratified:* none of the selected agreements

Geography - strategic location on southern border of US; corn (maize), one note: of the world's major grain crops, is thought to have originated in Mexico

People	Mexico
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Population: 106,202,903 (July 2005 est.)

Age structure: *0-14 years:* 31.1% (male 16,844,400/female 16,159,511)  
*15-64 years:* 63.3% (male 32,521,043/female 34,704,093)  
*65 years and over:* 5.6% (male 2,715,010/female 3,258,846) (2005 est.)

Median age: *total:* 24.93 years  
*male:* 24.04 years  
*female:* 25.85 years (2005 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.17% (2005 est.)

Birth rate: 21.01 births/1,000 population (2005 est.)

Death rate: 4.73 deaths/1,000 population (2005 est.)

Net migration rate: -4.57 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2005 est.)

Sex ratio: *at birth:* 1.05 male(s)/female  
*under 15 years:* 1.04 male(s)/female  
*15-64 years:* 0.94 male(s)/female  
*65 years and over:* 0.83 male(s)/female  
*total population:* 0.96 male(s)/female (2005 est.)

Infant mortality rate: *total:* 20.91 deaths/1,000 live births  
*male:* 22.85 deaths/1,000 live births  
*female:* 18.88 deaths/1,000 live births (2005 est.)

Life *total population:* 75.19 years

expectancy at birth: *male*: 72.42 years  
*female*: 78.1 years (2005 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.45 children born/woman (2005 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 0.3% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 160,000 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 5,000 (2003 est.)

Nationality: *noun*: Mexican(s)  
*adjective*: Mexican

Ethnic groups: mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish) 60%, Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian 30%, white 9%, other 1%

Religions: nominally Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 6%, other 5%

Languages: Spanish, various Mayan, Nahuatl, and other regional indigenous languages

Literacy: *definition*: age 15 and over can read and write  
*total population*: 92.2%  
*male*: 94%  
*female*: 90.5% (2003 est.)

Government	Mexico
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Country name: *conventional long form*: United Mexican States  
*conventional short form*: Mexico  
*local long form*: Estados Unidos Mexicanos  
*local short form*: Mexico

Government type: federal republic

Capital: Mexico (Distrito Federal)

Administrative divisions: 31 states (estados, singular - estado) and 1 federal district\* (distrito federal); Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Coahuila de

Zaragoza, Colima, Distrito Federal\*, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Mexico, Michoacan de Ocampo, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo Leon, Oaxaca, Puebla, Queretaro de Arteaga, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosi, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz-Llave, Yucatan, Zacatecas

Independence: 16 September 1810 (from Spain)

National Independence Day, 16 September (1810)  
holiday:

Constitution: 5 February 1917

Legal system: mixture of US constitutional theory and civil law system;  
judicial review of legislative acts; accepts compulsory ICJ  
jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory (but not enforced)

Executive *chief of state*: President Vicente FOX Quesada (since 1  
branch: December 2000); note - the president is both the chief of state  
and head of government  
*head of government*: President Vicente FOX Quesada (since 1  
December 2000); note - the president is both the chief of state  
and head of government  
*cabinet*: Cabinet appointed by the president; note - appointment  
of attorney general requires consent of the Senate  
*elections*: president elected by popular vote for a six-year term;  
election last held 2 July 2000 (next to be held 2 July 2006)  
*election results*: Vicente FOX Quesada elected president;  
percent of vote - Vicente FOX Quesada (PAN) 42.52%,  
Francisco LABASTIDA Ochoa (PRI) 36.1%, Cuauhtemoc  
CARDENAS Solorzano (PRD) 16.64%, other 4.74%

Legislative bicameral National Congress or Congreso de la Union consists  
branch: of the Senate or Camara de Senadores (128 seats; 96 are elected  
by popular vote to serve six-year terms, and 32 are allocated on  
the basis of each party's popular vote) and the Federal Chamber  
of Deputies or Camara Federal de Diputados (500 seats; 300  
members are directly elected by popular vote to serve three-  
year terms; remaining 200 members are allocated on the basis  
of each party's popular vote, also for three-year terms)  
*elections*: Senate - last held 2 July 2000 for all of the seats  
(next to be held 2 July 2006); Chamber of Deputies - last held 6  
July 2003 (next to be held 2 July 2006)  
*election results*: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA%; seats  
by party - PRI 60, PAN 46, PRD 16, PVEM 5, unassigned 1;

Chamber of Deputies - percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - PRI 222, PAN 151, PRD 95, PVEM 17, PT 6, CD 5, unassigned 4; note - special elections were held in December 2003; the PRI and the PRD each won one seat and were each assigned one additional proportional representation seat

Judicial Supreme Court of Justice or Suprema Corte de Justicia  
branch: Nacional (justices or ministros are appointed by the president with consent of the Senate)

Political Convergence for Democracy or CD [Dante DELGADO  
parties and Ranauro]; Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI [Roberto  
leaders: MADRAZO Pintado]; Mexican Green Ecological Party or  
PVEM [Jorge Emilio GONZALEZ Martinez]; National Action  
Party or PAN [Luis Felipe BRAVO Mena]; Party of the  
Democratic Revolution or PRD [Leonel GODOY]; Workers  
Party or PT [Alberto ANAYA Gutierrez]

Political Confederation of Employers of the Mexican Republic or  
pressure COPARMEX; Confederation of Industrial Chambers or  
groups and CONCAMIN; Confederation of Mexican Workers or CTM;  
leaders: Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce or  
CONCANACO; Coordinator for Foreign Trade Business  
Organizations or COECE; Federation of Unions Providing  
Goods and Services or FESEBES; National Chamber of  
Transformation Industries or CANACINTRA; National  
Peasant Confederation or CNC; National Union of Workers or  
UNT; Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers or CROM;  
Revolutionary Confederation of Workers and Peasants or  
CROC; Roman Catholic Church

International APEC, BCIE, BIS, CDB, CE (observer), EBRD, FAO, G-3, G-  
organization 6, G-15, G-19, G-24, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICCt  
participation: (signatory), ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO,  
ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO, ITU, LAES, LAIA,  
NAM (observer), NEA, OAS, OECD, OPANAL, OPCW,  
PCA, RG, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO,  
UNITAR, UNMOVIC, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO,  
WIPO, WMO, WToO, WTO

Diplomatic *chief of mission:* Ambassador-designate Carlos Alberto de  
representation ICAZA Gonzalez  
in the US: *chancery:* 1911 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC  
20006  
*telephone:* [1] (202) 728-1600  
*FAX:* [1] (202) 728-1698  
*consulate(s) general:* Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Dallas,  
Denver, El Paso, Houston, Laredo (Texas), Los Angeles,

Miami, New Orleans, New York, Nogales (Arizona), Phoenix, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, San Juan (Puerto Rico)

*consulate(s)*: Albuquerque, Brownsville (Texas), Calexico (California), Corpus Christi (Texas), Del Rio (Texas), Detroit, Douglas (Arizona), Eagle Pass (Texas), Fresno (California), Indianapolis (Indiana), Kansas City (Missouri), Las Vegas, McAllen (Texas), Midland (Texas), Omaha, Orlando, Oxnard (California), Philadelphia, Portland (Oregon), Presidio (Texas), Raleigh, Salt Lake City, San Bernardino, Santa Ana (California), Seattle, Tucson, Yuma (Arizona)

Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission*: Ambassador Antonio O. GARZA  
*embassy*: Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, 06500 Mexico, Distrito Federal  
*mailing address*: P. O. Box 9000, Brownsville, TX 78520-0900  
*telephone*: [52] (55) 5080-2000  
*FAX*: [52] (55) 5525-5040  
*consulate(s) general*: Ciudad Juarez, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Tijuana  
*consulate(s)*: Hermosillo, Matamoros, Merida, Nogales, Nuevo, Laredo

Flag description: three equal vertical bands of green (hoist side), white, and red; the coat of arms (an eagle perched on a cactus with a snake in its beak) is centered in the white band

Economy	Mexico
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Economy - overview: Mexico has a free market economy that recently entered the trillion dollar class. It contains a mixture of modern and outmoded industry and agriculture, increasingly dominated by the private sector. Recent administrations have expanded competition in seaports, railroads, telecommunications, electricity generation, natural gas distribution, and airports. Per capita income is one-fourth that of the US; income distribution remains highly unequal. Trade with the US and Canada has tripled since the implementation of NAFTA in 1994. Mexico has 12 free trade agreements with over 40 countries including, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, the European Free Trade Area, and Japan, putting more than 90% of trade under free trade agreements. The government is cognizant of the need to upgrade infrastructure, modernize the tax system and labor laws, and provide incentives to invest in the energy sector, but progress is slow.

GDP \$1.006 trillion (2004 est.)

(purchasing  
power parity):

GDP - real 4.1% (2004 est.)  
growth rate:

GDP - per purchasing power parity - \$9,600 (2004 est.)  
capita:

GDP - *agriculture*: 4%  
composition by *industry*: 27.2%  
sector: *services*: 68.9% (2004 est.)

Labor force: 34.73 million (2004 est.)

Labor force - agriculture 18%, industry 24%, services 58% (2003)  
by occupation:

Unemployment 3.2% plus underemployment of perhaps 25% (2004 est.)  
rate:

Population 40% (2003 est.)  
below poverty  
line:

Household *lowest 10%*: 1.6%  
income or *highest 10%*: 35.6% (2002)  
consumption  
by percentage  
share:

Distribution of 53.1 (1998)  
family income  
- Gini index:

Inflation rate 5.4% (2004 est.)  
(consumer  
prices):

Investment 19.4% of GDP (2004 est.)  
(gross fixed):

Budget: *revenues*: \$160 billion  
*expenditures*: \$158 billion, including capital expenditures of  
NA (2004 est.)

Public debt: 23.5% of GDP (2004 est.)

Agriculture - corn, wheat, soybeans, rice, beans, cotton, coffee, fruit,  
products: tomatoes; beef, poultry, dairy products; wood products



Industries: food and beverages, tobacco, chemicals, iron and steel,  
petroleum, mining, textiles, clothing, motor vehicles,  
consumer durables, tourism

Industrial 3.8% (2004 est.)  
production  
growth rate:

Electricity - 203.6 billion kWh (2002)  
production:

Electricity - *fossil fuel*: 78.7%  
production by *hydro*: 14.2%  
source: *nuclear*: 4.2%  
*other*: 2.9% (2001)

Electricity - 189.7 billion kWh (2002)  
consumption:

Electricity - 98.65 million kWh (2002)  
exports:

Electricity - 367.7 million kWh (2002)  
imports:

Oil - 3.46 million bbl/day (2004 est.)  
production:

Oil - 1.752 million bbl/day (2004 est.)  
consumption:

Oil - exports: 1.863 million bbl/day (2004)

Oil - imports: 205,000 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved 18 billion bbl (2004 est.)  
reserves:

Natural gas - 47.3 billion cu m (2004 est.)  
production:

Natural gas - 55.1 billion cu m (2004 est.)  
consumption:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2004 est.)  
exports:

Natural gas - 7.85 billion cu m (2004 est.)  
imports:

Natural gas - 420 billion cu m (2004)

proved  
reserves:

Current \$-4.113 billion (2004 est.)  
account  
balance:

Exports: \$182.4 billion f.o.b. (2004 est.)

Exports - manufactured goods, oil and oil products, silver, fruits,  
commodities: vegetables, coffee, cotton

Exports - US 87.6%, Canada 1.8%, Spain 1.1% (2004)  
partners:

Imports: \$190.8 billion f.o.b. (2004 est.)

Imports - metalworking machines, steel mill products, agricultural  
commodities: machinery, electrical equipment, car parts for assembly, repair  
parts for motor vehicles, aircraft, and aircraft parts

Imports - US 53.7%, China 7%, Japan 5.1% (2004)  
partners:

Reserves of \$60.67 billion (2004 est.)  
foreign  
exchange and  
gold:

Debt - \$149.9 billion (2004 est.)  
external:

Economic aid - \$1.166 billion (1995)  
recipient:

Currency Mexican peso (MXN)  
(code):

Currency code: MXN

Exchange Mexican pesos per US dollar - 11.286 (2004), 10.789 (2003),  
rates: 9.656 (2002), 9.342 (2001), 9.456 (2000)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications	Mexico
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Telephones - 15,958,700 (2003)  
main lines in  
use:

Telephones - 28.125 million (2003)  
mobile  
cellular:

Telephone system: *general assessment:* low telephone density with about 15.2 main lines per 100 persons; privatized in December 1990; the opening to competition in January 1997 improved prospects for development, but Telmex remains dominant  
*domestic:* adequate telephone service for business and government, but the population is poorly served; mobile subscribers far outnumber fixed-line subscribers; domestic satellite system with 120 earth stations; extensive microwave radio relay network; considerable use of fiber-optic cable and coaxial cable  
*international:* country code - 52; satellite earth stations - 32 Intelsat, 2 Solidaridad (giving Mexico improved access to South America, Central America, and much of the US as well as enhancing domestic communications), numerous Inmarsat mobile earth stations; linked to Central American Microwave System of trunk connections; high capacity Columbus-2 fiber-optic submarine cable with access to the US, Virgin Islands, Canary Islands, Morocco, Spain, and Italy (1997)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 850, FM 545, shortwave 15 (2003)

Radios: 31 million (1997)

Television broadcast stations: 236 (plus repeaters) (1997)

Televisions: 25.6 million (1997)

Internet country code: .mx

Internet hosts: 1,333,406 (2003)

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 51 (2000)

Internet users: 10.033 million (2002)

Transportation	Mexico
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Railways: *total*: 17,634 km  
*standard gauge*: 17,634 km 1.435-m gauge (2004)

Highways: *total*: 329,532 km  
*paved*: 108,087 km (including 6,429 km of expressways)  
*unpaved*: 221,445 km (1999 est.)

Waterways: 2,900 km  
*note*: navigable rivers and coastal canals (2004)

Pipelines: crude oil 28,200 km; petroleum products 10,150 km; natural gas 13,254 km; petrochemical 1,400 km (2003)

Ports and harbors: Altamira, Manzanillo, Morro Redondo, Salina Cruz, Tampico, Topolobampo, Veracruz

Merchant marine: *total*: 57 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 649,389 GRT/942,766 DWT  
*by type*: bulk carrier 2, cargo 6, chemical tanker 5, liquefied gas 5, passenger/cargo 9, petroleum tanker 26, roll on/roll off 4  
*foreign-owned*: 4 (Denmark 1, Germany 1, UAE 1, United States 1)  
*registered in other countries*: 6 (2005)

Airports: 1,833 (2004 est.)

Airports - *total*: 233  
with paved *over 3,047 m*: 12  
runways: *2,438 to 3,047 m*: 28  
*1,524 to 2,437 m*: 84  
*914 to 1,523 m*: 80  
*under 914 m*: 29 (2004 est.)

Airports - *total*: 1,600  
with unpaved *over 3,047 m*: 1  
runways: *2,438 to 3,047 m*: 1  
*1,524 to 2,437 m*: 69  
*914 to 1,523 m*: 454  
*under 914 m*: 1,075 (2004 est.)

Heliports: 2 (2004 est.)

Military	Mexico
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Military branches: *Secretariat of National Defense (Sedena)*: Army and Air Force (FAM)  
*Secretariat of the Navy (Semar)*: Naval Air and Marines (2004)

Military 18 years of age for compulsory military service, conscript

service age and obligation: service obligation - 12 months; 16 years of age with consent for voluntary enlistment (2004)

Manpower available for military service: *males age 18-49*: 24,488,008 (2005 est.)

Manpower fit for military service: *males age 18-49*: 19,058,337 (2005 est.)

Manpower reaching military service age annually: *males*: 1,063,233 (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure: \$6.043 billion (2004)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP: 0.9% (2004)

Transnational Issues	Mexico
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Disputes - international: prolonged drought, population growth, and outmoded practices and infrastructure in the border region have strained water-sharing arrangements with the US; the US has stepped up efforts to stem nationals from Mexico, Central America, and other parts of the world from illegally crossing the border with Mexico

Refugees and internally displaced persons: *IDPs*: 12,000 (government's quashing of Zapatista uprising in 1994 in eastern Chiapas Region) (2004)

Illicit drugs: illicit cultivation of opium poppy (cultivation in 2001 - 4,400 hectares; potential heroin production - 7 metric tons) and of cannabis (in 2001 - 4,100 hectares); government eradication efforts have been key in keeping illicit crop levels low; major supplier of heroin and largest foreign supplier of marijuana and methamphetamine to the US market; continues as the primary

transshipment country for US-bound cocaine from South America, accounting for about 70 percent of estimated annual cocaine movement to the US; major drug syndicates control majority of drug trafficking throughout the country; producer and distributor of ecstasy; significant money-laundering center

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