

# MEXICO FACTS IN BRIEF

- Official Name: Estados Unidos Mexicanos (United Mexican States).
- Population: 111 million people
- Capital City: Mexico City
- National Independence Day: September 16, 1810
- National Heritage Day : Battle of Puebla Day or Battle of Cinco de Mayo on May 5, 1862
- National Currency: Peso
- National Tree: Montezuma Cypress, Sabino, or Ahuehuete
- National Flower: Dahlia
- National Drink: Tequila
- National Sports: Football (Soccer) Bullfighting
- National Dance: Mexican Hat Dance
- National Music: Mirachi

## Geography

- Boundaries west and south – Pacific Ocean; north the United States;. south east the Caribbean Sea, Guatemala and Belize; east the Gulf of Mexico.
- Covers almost 2 million square kilometers. It is the 14th largest country in the world.
- Has world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest border - between Mexico and USA. This border is 2<sup>nd</sup> only to the Canada USA border.
- Has 4 mountain ranges. Two crossing it to its north and south - Sierra Madre Oriental and Sierra Madre Occidental. These ranges are an extension of the Rocky Mountain. The country is crossed by a Trans-Mexican volcanic belt from the east and west at the center. The 4th mountain range is Sierra Madre De Sur.
- Experiences frequent volcanoes because it is situated in the 'Ring of Fire', which has the most violent earthquakes and volcanic zones.
  - Has smallest volcano in the world, the Cuexcomate, which is situated in Mexico in the city of Puebla, and is only 43 feet tall. 75 feet wide

## Climate

- Yearly temperature between 24 28 oC with only approximately 5oC winter/summer. In Valley of Mexico yearly temperature 16-18oC

## Government

- Federation of 31 states and 1 federal district – the capital city.
- Democratic, represented and republican government.
- The Mexican flag has 3 vertical stripes on it. green, red and white. The green stands for hope, the white for purity and the red for the blood of the Mexican people.

## People

- Estimated population of 111 million – 11<sup>th</sup> most populated country in the world.
- Largest number Spanish speakers in the world. (The Spanish ruled over Mexico for more than 300 years.)

- Majority are Roman Catholics. [Mexican culture](#) has the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Catholic population in the world.
  - Favourite sports are football (soccer), baseball and bull fighting. The largest bullfighting ring of the world, Plaza de Toros is in Mexico.

## History

- 40,000 BC: Earliest presence of people.
- Cultures matured in advanced Civilizations.
  - 1400 to 400 BC: Olmecs
  - 300 BC to 199 AD: Mayan
  - 1325 to 1521: Aztecs
  - These civilizations were famous in the new world for their significant technological, cultural, and scientific advances, including the construction of pyramid-temple complexes, the development of a sophisticated [mathematics](#) and [astronomy](#), a highly accurate calendar system, hieroglyphic writing, commerce and trade, the compiling of a large body of [medicine](#), and the elaboration of complex theologies fascinating religious beliefs.
- 1519: Spain invaded and by 1521 conquered and colonized as New Spain. Within 300 years its indigenous population fell by more than half.
- 1821: Gained Independence from Spain now celebrated on September named Mexico but faced instability and dictatorship for the next 90 years.
- 1846: [Mexican American War](#) broke out, ending two years later with Mexico ceding almost half of its territory to the United States in 1847-48. Sold northern territories to US for 15 million. – leaving Mexico bankrupt.
- 1861 -1867: France invaded Mexico to collect debts. Mexico defeated French in Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. The victory is celebrated as Cinco de Mayo - Mexican Heritage national holiday.
- 1910-1920: [Mexican Revolution](#) which was brought about by social inequity. Wealth and power in the hands of a few and injustice was everywhere. This resulted in the death of 10 percent of the nation's population, over 900,000. In 1917, the Constitution was established and the country's current political system emerged.
- 1926-1929: The Cristero War widespread conflict was the fight between those favoring separation of Church and State and those favoring supremacy of the Roman Catholic. Another 90,000 died in this conflict.
- 1930-1970: The Mexican Economic Miracle Mexico experienced impressive economic growth despite the falling foreign investment during the [Great Depression](#).
- 1970-1994: Party's management lead country into an economic collapse and political unrest due to blatant fraud, poor handling of 1985 earthquake, decreasing value of peso.
- 1994: Entered into North American Free Trade Agreement with US and Canada
- 1995-1997: US intervened and boosted the peso. By 1996, the economy grew and in 1997, Mexico repaid, ahead of schedule, all U.S. Treasury loans.

## Biodiversity

- More than 2,500 species are declared as 'protected' by Mexican government.
- Known for its flora and fauna is one of the 17 mega-diverse countries in the world
- Ranked respectively in biodiversity in the world – 1<sup>st</sup> reptiles, 2<sup>nd</sup> mammals, 4<sup>th</sup> amphibians, 4<sup>th</sup> flora Has 707 species of reptiles, 438 species of mammals 290 species of amphibians, and about 26,000 species of flora. Important reptiles rattlesnakes, turtles and lizards,. Important animals jaguars, pumas and bears.

- Jaguar is the largest wildcat in North America.
- A rare kind of rabbit known as the volcano rabbit is found in Mexico. Since, the rabbit inhabits areas near Mexican volcanoes it is referred to by this name.
- The world's smallest dog, The Chihuahua breed originated here and is named after a Mexican state.
- Monarch butterflies migrate to Mexico from Canada and US every year.
- The oldest living tree in the world (Arbol de Tule) is 40 feet tall and is situated in Mexico.
- The poinsettia plant native to Mexico and is named after Ambassador Poinsett 1<sup>st</sup> US Ambassador to Mexico.
- Ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world of ecosystems. Mexico houses about 34 unaltered ecosystems and a number of parks and monuments. It also has 17 sanctuaries and 26 areas for protected flora and fauna.
- Archeologists have found hundreds of dinosaur bones in northern parts of Mexico.

### **Food**

- Tacos, fajitas, quesadillas, tortilla, burritos, enchiladas are invariable part of the world famous Mexican cuisine. Almost all big restaurants in all parts of the world serve [Mexican food](#).
- Mexico has introduced chocolate, chillies and corn to the world. Chocolate was considered the drink of the gods by the early [Aztec culture](#) inhabitants.
- Largest manufacturer of salt in the world.
- Name tomato comes from the Aztec language.
- Caesar salad is named after Caesar Cardini, an Italian Mexican chef, restaurant and hotel owner.

### **Other Interesting Facts**

- Mexico has a free market economy. It has the highest per capita income in all of Latin America. It is also the 13<sup>th</sup> largest economy worldwide.
- The Chichen Itza pyramid is considered one of the wonders of the world and it is said that if you stand by the pyramid, you can hear a bird singing.
- Mexico receives over 20 million tourists every year.
- The literacy rate in Mexico is almost 98% and has made Mexico's economy one of the fastest growing economy on earth.
- Mexican telecom tycoon Carlos Slim Helu tops the Forbes list of richest people in the world 2010.
- Hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> astronomers convention in 700 A.D. This shows how rich was ancient Mexican culture.
- Use of printing press in North America first started in Mexico city in 1539.
- Mexican children take the name of both their parents (father's last and mother's maiden) to preserve the heritage.
- Swine flu (also called the H1N1 virus) originated in Mexico.
- [Famous Mexican actors and actresses](#) - Salma Hayek, George Lopez, Anthony Quinn, Jessica Alba, Eva Longoria
- Famous Mexican Singers – Gloria Estefan, Antonio Aguilar
- Actor Anthony Quinn was the first Mexican to win an Academy Award for his role in the 1952 movie Viva Zapata.

### **Facts about Mexico City**

- Largest city of Mexico - 21.2 million. This makes Mexico City the largest metropolitan area in the Americas and one of the largest metropolis in the world.

- Oldest city in the entire continent of North America. The city also has the highest elevation in this continent.
- Built on a lake - experts say that it sinks about 6-10 inches every year.
- Built over the ruins of the Aztec city - Tenochtitlán.
- Has largest park within a city in the world - Chapultepec Park in Mexico city covering over 2000 acres, is the In the present 21<sup>st</sup> century,
- Has more than 10 major working archaeological sites
- The floating gardens in the Mexico City have been in existence for more than 700 years, since the time of the Aztecs.