

General Information about Mexico

MEXICO

Official Name

United Mexican States

Language

Spanish

Geography

Land area covers: 1,220,606.sq. miles

Continental area: 1,217,420.sq. miles
and 3, 186sq. miles are made
up of islands.

Exclusive economic zone area: 1,957,270.sq. miles

Terrain: 18,000 ft., coastal lowlands, central
high plateaus, and mountains up to

Mexico is located in the North America region, together with Canada and the United States of America; it is in the Western Hemisphere, west of the Greenwich meridian. The border with the United States of America is 1,959 miles long, to the north, and a total border of 714 miles with Guatemala and Belize to the south-east.

Climate

Tropical to desert.

Mexico's latitude and topography account for its highly varied range of climates, which range from warm, with annual mean temperatures above 78.8°F, to cold, with annual mean temperatures under 50°F however annual mean, temperatures range between 50°F and 78.8°F in 93% of the country's territory; 23% of which has a warm-sub-humid climate, 28% is dry, 21% very dry

and 21% temperate-sub-humid.

Population

Total population

97.4 million.

According to the XII Population and Housing Census, 2000. Figure that keeps the country ranking the eleventh most populated in the world.

Growth rate

1.9 percent:

Average annual population growth rate for the period 1990-2000.

It is important to distinguish two periods, the first one goes from 1990 to 1995, when population growth rate was 2.1%; and the second corresponds to the following lustrum (1995-2000), with an average annual rate of 1.58%. These figures confirm a gradual decrease of demographic growth in the country.

Economically active population

39.6 million, according to the National Employment Survey 2000,

55.7% of the population aged 12 years and over.

Structure by sex

Male: 47.59 millions

Female: 49.89 millions

Geographic distribution

Population density, 2000: 50 inhabitants/km².

Entities such as Distrito Federal, Mexico and Morelos have 5 643, 611 and 313 inhabitants/km², respectively; the opposite occurs in Chihuahua, Sonora, Campeche

and Durango with about 12. An extreme case is Baja California Sur, where this indicator shows sparsely 6 inhabitants/km².

In Mexico the population distribution is polarized, thus, 25% of it live in localities with 2 500 inhabitants or less; on the other hand, 26.4 % live in localities with more than 500 thousand inhabitants. The rest is distributed in three groups: 13.7% reside in semi-rural settlements going from 2 500 to less than 15 thousand people; similar figures are for small cities with 15 thousand to less than 100 thousand; and 21.0% of the total population is settled in the so called intermediate cities, with 100 thousand to less than 500 thousand people.

People

Ethnic groups: Indian-Spanish (mestizo) 60%, Indian 30%, Caucasian 9%, other 1%.

Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world and the second most-populous country in Latin America after Portuguese-speaking Brazil. About 70% of the people live in urban areas. According to some estimates, the population of the area around Mexico City is about 20 million, which would make it the largest concentration of population in the world. Cities bordering on the United States such as Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez and cities in the interior such as Guadalajara, Monterrey, and Puebla have undergone sharp

rises in population.

Housing

Occupied dwelling units: 21.9 millions, Census 2000

78% have drainage

89% have piped water available inside

95% have electricity

States with more residents per dwelling are: Guanajuato, Tlaxcala, Chiapas, Puebla, Aguascalientes, Queretaro, Guerrero and San Luis Potosi; while Chihuahua, Distrito Federal, Baja California Sur and Tamaulipas show the lowest figures for this indicator.

Religions

Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 6%, other 5%.

Government

Type: Representative, democratic and federal republic, accordance with its Political Constitution.

Branches

Executive: President, chief of state and head of government, elected each 6 years.

Legislative: Bicameral.

Judicial: Supreme Court, local and federal systems.

Principal Government Officials

Vicente Fox Quesada President
Jorge G. Castañeda Foreign Affairs Minister

Administrative subdivisions:

31 states and a federal district.

Political parties:

Green Ecological Party (PVEM),
Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)
Labor Party (PT)
National Action Party (PAN)
Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)

Natural resources

Due to its geographical location, shape, climate, orography and geology, Mexico has a wide variety of ecological characteristics that is unique worldwide; they include a wealth of different soils, and a diversity of flora and plant communities that feature practically all those known throughout the world.

Some parts of the country contain almost no vegetation, as is the case in the most arid desert zones and in areas that are covered in snow all year. Conversely, there are lush rain forests where the vegetation reaches a height of 131 feet in areas with over 4,000 mm. of annual rainfall.

Between these two extremes, there is a large variety of shrub communities, forming extensive, varied bushland, grassland, conifer and holm oak forests in almost all mountain systems, palm groves and jungles with varying degrees of foliage life, highly developed mangroves in the southern parts of both coasts, and pioneer plant communities in coastal dune areas, among many others.

As regards non-renewable resources, the country's petroleum and silver reserves deserve special mention. At the outset of 2000 oil reserves stood at 58.204 million of millions barrels, and Mexico is the worlds foremost silver producer; output reached 5,473,654 pounds in 2000.

Infraestructure

253,666 km of paved and hard-top roads
26,656 km. of railroads
57 international and 28 domestic airports, and 108 harbors
76 maritime ports in Mexico with 114,829.4 ft. of docking facilities.

Communications

In 2000 Mexico had a total of 12.332 million telephone lines were also in service.

Education

Education is mandatory from ages 6 through 14. Education is one of the Government of Mexico's

highest priorities. Primary, including preschool, enrollment totaled 17.2 million in 2000. Enrollment at the secondary public school level rose from 1.4 million in 1972 to 5.4 million in 2000. A rapid rise also occurred in higher education. Between 1959-2000 bachelor enrollments rose from 62,000 to more than 2.0 million.

Health

In 2000, Mexico registered 120.0 physicians, 191.1 nurses and 77.5 hospital beds per 100 000 people.

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática de México, INEGI, 2000