





# Destination Guide for Mexico



## Overview

### Destination Guide Content

## Destination Risk Levels

-  Medium Medical Risk for Mexico
-  Medium Travel Risk for Mexico
-  Low Travel Risk for Yucatan state; La Paz, Los Cabos (Baja California Sur state)
-  High Travel Risk for **States and other areas affected by heightened levels of violence between organised criminal groups**

**States and other areas affected by heightened levels of violence between organised criminal groups: HIGH**

*Baja California state:* The entire state, except the municipalities of Ensenada and San Quintin.

*Chihuahua state:* The entire state, including the capital Chihuahua City.

*Colima state:* The entire state, including the capital Colima City.

*Guanajuato state:* Areas south of Guanajuato, San Felipe and San Miguel de Allende municipalities towards the borders with Jalisco, Michoacan, and Queretaro states.

*Guerrero state:* The entire state, including the capital Chilpancingo.

*Jalisco state:* Municipalities bordering Colima and south-western Michoacan; areas north-east of Mexicacan, Jalostotitlan, San Miguel el Alto, and San Julian towards the borders with Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas states; and areas north of Tequila municipality towards the borders with Nayarit and Zacatecas states.

*Mexico state:* Areas east of Villa del Carbon; north-east of Temoaya, Oztolotepec and Xonacatlan; north-west of Atizapan de Zaragoza, and Naucalpan de Juarez towards the borders with Mexico City and Hidalgo state; west of Temascalapa, Teotihuacan, Acolman, Atenco, and Texcoco towards the borders with Mexico City and Hidalgo state; south of Texcoco; north of Juchitepec, Temamatla, Cocotitlan, and Tlalmanalco towards the borders with Mexico City and Puebla state; and south-west of Ixtapan del Oro, Valle de Bravo, Temascaltepec, Zinacantepec, Villa Guerrero, and Ixtapan de la Sal towards the borders with Guerrero and Michoacan states.

*Michoacan state:* The entire state, including the capital Morelia.

*Morelos state:* The entire state, including the capital Cuautla.

*Nuevo Leon state:* Areas north of Garcia, General Escobedo, Apodaca, Juarez, Cadereyta and General Teran municipalities extending to the borders with Coahuila and Tamaulipas states.

*Sinaloa state:* The entire state, excluding Ahome and Mazatlan municipalities.

*Sonora state:* The entire state, excluding the capital Hermosillo.

*Tabasco state:* The entire state, excluding Centro municipality, containing the capital Villahermosa.

*Tamaulipas state:* The entire state, excluding the Tampico metropolitan area (comprising Altamira, Ciudad Madero and Tampico municipalities).

*Veracruz state:* Areas north-west of Papantla municipality towards the borders with Hidalgo, Puebla, San Luis Potosi and Tamaulipas states; south-east of Boca del Rio and Piedras Negra; south of Hueyacan de Ocampo and Soteapan; west of Soconusco; and north-west of Santiago Tuxtla Hueyapan, and San Juan Evangelista towards the border with Oaxaca state.

*Zacatecas state:* The entire state, including the capital Zacatecas city.

#### *Northern states*

The north-western states of **Baja California**, **Sonora**, and **Sinaloa** have long been afflicted by violence related to disputes between organised crime groups, including the various factions falling under the umbrella of the Sinaloa Cartel. The region remains strategic for drug and human trafficking into the US.

Border cities of Baja California, including the state capital Mexicali and Tijuana, face exceptionally high levels of violent crime. Areas of Baja California south of Tijuana, including Ensenada and the Valle de Guadalupe area, pose comparably lower risks of violent crime, though travel to remote areas should be undertaken with precautions. Neighbouring Sonora has seen an increase in violence associated with disputes between various cells of the Sinaloa Cartel and other criminal networks over the past years. These groups are reportedly fighting over control of lucrative drug- and migrant-trafficking routes into the US. Associated violence has for the most part spared the state capital Hermosillo, where petty and street crime are the most prevalent risks.

Sinaloa, especially the state capital Culiacan and mountainous areas to the east, experiences high levels of drug-related crime, including armed carjackings. Security operations targeting the Sinaloa Cartel's leadership have been known to trigger backlash in parts the state, posing incidental risks to bystanders and significant disruption to travel. While not exempt from an organised criminal presence, associated violence has for the most part spared the municipality of Ahome, which contains the city of Los Mochis and Mazatlan.

**Chihuahua** registers one of the highest kidnapping rates in the country. Sonora has seen a state-wide escalation in violence related to organised crime in recent years, though the state Hermosillo has thus far been spared. **Zacatecas** sits in a strategic position at the crossroads of key federal highways connecting ports along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts to the northern border cities.

In north-eastern Mexico, disputes between warring factions of the Gulf and Northeast cartels frame the security environment of **Tamaulipas** and several municipalities of **Nuevo Leon** to the north of the Monterrey metropolitan area. In addition to drug trafficking into the US, fuel theft has played an increasingly prominent role in the Mexican north-east in recent years. Rates of armed carjacking, extortion and kidnapping have remained high in much of the north, especially in rural areas. The security environment in the seaport of Tampico, to the far south of Tamaulipas, has seen significant improvements in recent years.

#### *Central states*

Despite being the bastion of one of the largest criminal networks in Mexico, the security environment in most of **Jalisco**, including Guadalajara and Puerto Vallarta, is largely stable. However, municipalities to the far south and far north see spillover armed clashes from disputes associated with the New Generation Jalisco Cartel's (CJNG) expansion into surrounding states.

**Colima** and **Guanajuato** remain embroiled in turf wars involving the CJNG and other organised crime groups. Elevated violence in Colima along the Pacific coast relates to the seaport Manzanillo's key importance as a point of entry for synthetic drug precursors from Asia. Criminal conflicts in Guanajuato revolve around the state's dense fuel pipeline network and local drug-dealing rackets along the industrial corridor, which stretches from Leon to Celaya along Federal Highway 45. Such violence has largely spared the overwhelmingly touristic areas to the north, including the capital Guanajuato City and San Miguel de Allende.

**Michoacan** faces very high levels of violence associated with turf wars between the CJNG and local criminal groups over the control of lands for agriculture, particularly avocado produce. The state also faces occasional social unrest by indigenous communities, agricultural workers and teachers' unions.

Violent, often gang-related crime remains rampant in the municipalities of **Mexico state** comprising the Mexico City metropolitan area. More rural areas to the south-west of Toluca have a heightened presence of organised crime groups from neighbouring states. **Morelos**, to the south of the capital Mexico City, faces persistent violence related to drug-trafficking and local extortion rackets. The state consistently ranks among the highest for kidnapping, which overwhelmingly targets local businesspeople.

Along the Gulf Coast, parts of **Veracruz** experience persistent violence driven by drug, fuel and human trafficking, as well as local extortion rackets. These areas include the Huasteca and Papaloapan Basin sub-regions, as well as the environs of Acayucan, Poza Rica and Tuxpam. Meanwhile, the security environment in the metropolitan area of Veracruz City, the state capital Xalapa and major urban centres such as Coatzacoalcas, Cordoba, and Orizaba has improved significantly in recent years.

#### *Southern states*

**Guerrero** is a hotspot of organised criminal activity, political violence and social unrest. Turf wars between La Nueva Familia Michoacana and various local gangs, including 'Los Tlacos' and 'Los Ardillos', frame developments. Targeted attacks on local government officials often occur in the context of these disputes. Disruptive protests by teachers' unions, student teachers (locally known as *normalistas*), agrarian organisations and other local social actors are also a recurring feature of the security environment.

The security environment in **Chiapas**, Mexico's southernmost state, has deteriorated significantly in recent years. Escalating conflict between organised criminal groups, notably the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG, is the key driver of the change. Operations by a wide variety of armed actors, including paramilitaries and vigilante groups, also play a role in this landscape.

#### **Yucatan state; La Paz, Los Cabos (Baja California Sur state): LOW**

The south-eastern state of **Yucatan**, including its capital Merida, has consistently maintained the lowest rates of violent crime in Mexico. The security environment is generally benign. Organised crime maintains a minimal and largely non-violent presence compared to other parts of the country. Standard precautions against petty and street crime, including potential scams, should be taken when visiting touristic hotspots, such as the Yucatan's numerous archeological sites. Protests pertaining to local socio-economic and environmental issues are generally peaceful and sporadic. Atmospherics in the **Baja California Sur's** capital La Paz and the popular resort cities of San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas are benign for most travellers. While an organised crime presence exists in La Paz and Los Cabos, associated violence is minimal compared to other major coastal resort cities in Mexico and highly unlikely to impact visitors. Travellers should take standard precautions against petty crime in touristic hotspots, including potential scams, and avoid outlying areas where violent crime is more likely to occur. Protests are relatively uncommon and generally peaceful.

## Standing Travel Advice

- Travel to HIGH travel risk areas should be for essential purposes and should be arranged in close liaison with local contacts. Workforce should carefully plan all aspects of their itinerary and be confident in their accommodation, transport, communication and security arrangements prior to travel. Measures include travelling with a private, low-profile vehicle and trusted driver and undertaking movement in daylight hours only. Journey plans should allow sufficient time for delays, such as a breakdown. Given the difficulties associated with arranging secure accommodation in US border areas, avoid overnight stays and arrange lodging in the US where possible.
- Crime poses a significant risk in Mexico and criminals are often armed; take stringent security precautions at all times. If accosted by a criminal, assume that the assailant is armed and do nothing to resist or antagonise them.
- Keep a low profile and avoid displaying valuables in public, as victims are often specifically targeted based on appearance, as well as on perceived vulnerability and/or lack of awareness.
- Short-term 'express' kidnapping poses a risk to business travellers. Foreign nationals should maintain a low profile while in the country. Longer-term international assignees should avoid establishing routines and vary the timings and routes of journeys.
- Avoid providing personal information to anyone outside of your trusted group; do not volunteer information to strangers. Refrain from posting personal and travel information on social media and networking sites.
- Virtual kidnapping is a crime where-in a target typically receives a call and is threatened and extorted for payment using deception and personal information. It is recommended to ignore calls and messages from unknown numbers if possible. In the event of receiving such a call, it is advised to hang up and contact the International SOS Assistance Centre.
- Physical theft of credit cards is a concern. Avoid withdrawing money from ATMs on the street and instead opt for those located in bank branches.
- Occasional politically motivated unrest is a possibility. Avoid all demonstrations as a precaution.
- Do not travel on foot after dark, or in unfamiliar or peripheral districts.
- Driving standards are variable. Do not self-drive, but pre-arrange hire of a private vehicle and experienced local driver through your hotel or host company. Keep windows up and doors locked at all times, and do not undertake road travel outside urban centres after dark.
- Protesters, community self-defence groups, and organised criminal groups may erect roadblocks to block passage into and out of towns and municipalities. Do not attempt to cross any roadblocks, as this may provoke a hostile reaction. Vigilantes and organised criminal groups have fired at vehicles that fail to stop at roadblocks.
- Transportation booked through the hotel or company or a rideshare app is suitable in most urban areas. Never hail a taxi from the street.
- In the event of a security emergency, it is advisable to reach out the Assistance Centre for support.
- Vigilantly monitor your financial statements and accounts during and after travel. If your financial information was compromised, it can take several weeks before fraudulent purchases are attempted.
- Certain business travellers, including employees of media and non-governmental organisations, may wish to take additional precautions to safeguard personal electronics and communications.
- Be aware of your surroundings and take precautions against unwanted attention. Drink spiking is a concern, especially in resort areas.

## Active Alerts (10)

### Notice

28 October 2024 at 07:41

Sinaloa state: Exercise caution, expect heightened security amid violence between organised criminal groups (Revised)

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Violent crime, Police/security operation, Transport disruption

#### **Situation:**

Exercise caution and expect heightened security in Sinaloa state **over the coming weeks** amid escalating violence between organised criminal groups. Despite the deployment of thousands of additional military personnel to the state in recent weeks, violence has continued unabated. The surge in violence comes amid reported disputes between rival factions of the Sinaloa Cartel. Security operations targeting either faction's leadership could prompt violent reprisals from criminal groups, posing incidental risks to bystanders. Monitor associated developments and follow official directives.

#### **Advice:**

- Exercise caution and expect a heightened security force presence due to the escalating violence between criminal groups.
- Journeys to and operations within HIGH-risk areas, including throughout Sinaloa, should be during daylight hours only and closely co-ordinated with trusted local contacts and resources.
- Both federal security forces or organised criminal groups may erect checkpoints to block passage into and out of towns and municipalities. They have fired at vehicles that fail to stop at checkpoints. When approaching a checkpoint set up by federal forces or suspected criminal groups, follow their directives and do not resist or antagonise them. If you are a victim of a serious crime, contact your local diplomatic mission and local support network.
- Shelter in a secure location if the security forces begin to gather or if a shoot-out begins. Leave an area only if it is safe to do so.
- Monitor our Mexico alerts for updates.

#### **More Detail:**

At least 23 people were killed across the state on 27-28 October, including one during a shootout in [Mazatlan](#). On 21 October, a military operation near Culiacan resulted in the deaths of 19 suspected cartel members. The incident marks one of the deadliest clashes between the security forces and cartels within the last decade.

Since 9 September, a sharp increase in armed clashes between rival criminal groups has been recorded in Culiacan and its environs. Related incidents have been reported in [Badiraguato](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Desarrollo Urbano Tres Rios](#), [El Dorado](#), [Elota](#) and [Navolato](#) (all Sinaloa). Tensions in other urban centres of Sinaloa remain high. Close to 300 people have reportedly been killed across the state since 6 September, with Culiacan experiencing the brunt of the violence. So far, at least 3,300 military personnel have been deployed to the state.

### **Assessment:**

The fallout between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel affiliated with Ismael 'El Mayo' Zambada and Joaquin 'El Chapo' Guzman's sons is driving this surge in violence. Allegedly, 'El Chapo' Guzman's sons, also known as the 'Chapitos', double-crossed 'El Mayo' Zambada, abducting and turning him over to the US authorities on 25 July. The conflict between the rival factions is expected to continue **over the coming weeks** and is likely to result in a deterioration of Sinaloa's overall security environment in the medium-to-long term.

Armed criminals will continue to engage in public gunfights across Culiacan and its environs. They are also likely to enforce illegal blockades or checkpoints on Federal Highway 15 and other thoroughfares, disrupting travel intermittently and raising the risks of road banditry. While business travellers and uninvolved domestic workforce are still unlikely to be targeted directly, associated violence poses incidental risks to bystanders.

Security operations targeting the leadership of either faction of the Sinaloa Cartel are likely to trigger further violence. As an instance, in January 2023, the arrest of Ovidio 'El Raton' Guzman, one of the 'Chapitos', resulted in widespread and violent unrest in Culiacan and other areas of Sinaloa.

Such violence and security operations are likely to remain heavily concentrated in Culiacan and rural areas of the state. The MEDIUM-risk urban centres of Los Mochis and Mazatlan (both Sinaloa) should face lesser impacts in comparison. However, these cities may also experience sporadic instances of violence in the short-to-medium term. Managers should closely monitor events for triggers signalling potential escalation, including:

- Removal of additional high-ranking members of the Sinaloa Cartel factions.
- Targeted attacks on local authorities or prominent political figures.
- Increase in security or arrest operations by government security forces at the federal and state level.
- Reports of mass casualty incidents at restaurants, bars and other public venues in Culiacan or other urban centres.
- Disruption to the operations of the Culiacan ([CLN](#)), Los Mochis ([LMM](#)) or Mazatlan ([MZT](#)) international airports.
- Reports of public violence increasing significantly in Los Mochis or Mazatlan.
- Roadblocks and checkpoints causing increased disruption to supply chains, leading to shortages of some basic commodities in urban centres.

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■ Special Advisory

28 October 2024 at 05:11

Mazatlan (Sinaloa state): Movement can resume with caution following shooting on 27 October (Revised)

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Shooting, Road disruption

**Situation:**

Movement can resume with caution near [Parque Lineal](#) in Mazatlan (Sinaloa state) following a shooting incident earlier on 27 October. Gunfire was exchanged at around 20.50 (local time) on Avenida Oscar Perez Escoboza. One person was killed and one other injured, with several vehicles being damaged in the crossfire. The authorities have cordoned off the area while they investigate the incident.

**Advice:**

- Movement can resume with caution near the Parque Lineal area.
- If planning to travel to the affected area **in the coming hours**, ensure routes are clear prior to setting out.
- Expect a significantly heightened security force presence in the area and follow all official directives.
- Monitor our alerts on Mexico for updates.

**More Detail:**

A total of 23 people were killed in violent incidents across the state on 26-27 October, with at least eight shooting incidents reported in Mazatlan. In response to the violence, the local authorities in Mazatlan have urged residents to stay at home, and some schools have organised online classes on 28 October.

The incident comes amid escalating violence between rival organised criminal groups across the state. More than 170 people have been killed and more than 200 have been reported missing since 9 September. The government deployed more than 2,500 military personnel to the state in order to quell the wave of violence.

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■ Advisory

28 October 2024 at 01:13

Southern states: Exercise caution, expect weather-related disruption over coming days (Revised)

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Storm, Flood, Landslide, Transport disruption

**Situation:**

Exercise caution and expect weather-related disruption in southern states **over the coming days**. The National Meteorological Service (SMN) has forecast very heavy to intense rainfall of up to six inches (15cm) for parts of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Tabasco and Veracruz states **until 28 October**. It has also forecast very heavy rains of up to three inches (8cm) for parts of Campeche and Quintana Roo states and warned of strong winds in some areas. Consequent power outages, flooding, landslides and short-notice travel disruption are possible.

**Advice:**

- Plan journeys accounting for weather-related disruption in the coming days. Liaise with local contacts to ascertain the status of routes and the feasibility of journeys before setting out.
- Monitor the SMN [website](#) (in Spanish) for up-to-date information on weather conditions and related warnings.
- Be prepared to adjust plans accordingly and allow additional time to complete journeys. Do not attempt to cross flooded roads. If you come across one, turn around and seek an alternative route to your destination.
- Disruption to essential services, such as electricity, may occur in affected states. Charge all communication devices and keep backup batteries.
- Monitor our Mexico alerts for updates.

**More Detail:**

Floodings and landslides have been registered in Veracruz state on 27 October after the Coatzacoalcos and Papaloapan rivers overflowed. According to local media, at least five people have been killed. Evacuations are ongoing in [Tlacotalpan](#), which is the most-affected municipality due to its proximity to the Papaloapan river. Furthermore, [Highway 140D](#) (Puebla-Orizaba) remains closed at the KM231 landmark, in direction of Puebla state, following landslides on 26 October.

Recovery operations have been reportedly ongoing in Veracruz since the recent passage of former tropical storm Nadine. The weather system made landfall in Belize City (Belize) on 19 October and has since dissipated over southern Mexico, causing floodings.

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 Notice

27 October 2024 at 22:02

Puebla (Puebla state): Expect disruption on 28 October during demonstration by transport workers

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Protest/Rally, Road disruption

**Situation:**

Expect disruption on **28 October** in Puebla (Puebla state) during a demonstration by transport workers calling for a fare increase. Participants will gather from **07.30** (local time) at [Cumulo de Virgo Avenue](#) before marching along [Via Atlixcayotl](#). Additional gatherings are likely to take place along major roadways and near government offices. While the event should pass off peacefully, it is likely to disrupt nearby traffic.

**Advice:**

- Expect disruption near the protest and plan journeys accordingly.
- If travelling near the demonstration, ensure routes are clear prior to setting out and allow additional time to complete journeys.
- Expect heightened security measures near the site of the protest and follow all official directives.
- Monitor our Mexico alerts for updates.

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 Notice

27 October 2024 at 08:57

Mexico City: Plan journeys on 30 October bypassing demonstration by teachers

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Protest/Rally, Strike, Road disruption

**Situation:**

Plan journeys in the capital Mexico City **on 30 October** bypassing a demonstration by teachers. Members of the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE) union are protesting over salary-related issues. Participants will gather **at 10.00** (local time) at [Angel of Independence](#) before marching to [Zocalo](#). A related 24-hour nationwide strike will be observed on the day. The demonstration is likely to be well-attended, and clashes between participants and the police are possible, posing incidental risks to bystanders.

**Advice:**

- Plan journeys bypassing the demonstration as a precaution and to minimise travel delays.
- If travelling near the gathering, ensure routes are clear prior to setting out and allow extra time to complete journeys.

- Expect heightened security around the rally and follow all official directives. Leave an area at the first sign of unrest.
- Monitor our Mexico alerts for updates.

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 Notice

24 October 2024 at 17:24

Guanajuato state: Exercise caution, expect heightened security amid increase in violence

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Violent crime, Explosion, Police/security operation

**Situation:**

Exercise caution and expect heightened security in Guanajuato state amid an increase in violent incidents. On 24 October, a car bomb exploded outside a police station in [Acambaro](#), injuring three police officers. The same day, a similar incident was reported in [Jerecuaro](#), where a car bomb damaged a police car and the Public Security Secretariat building. These events follow the capture of an alleged high-ranking boss of the Cartel Santa Rosa de Lima (CSRL). Associated violence is likely to continue in Guanajuato's industrial corridor and south-central areas **over the coming weeks.**

**Advice:**

- Exercise heightened caution at all times and expect an increased presence of the security forces, particularly in populated areas and along highways.
- Travel to HIGH-risk areas of Guanajuato should be for essential purposes only. This should be done while maintaining a low profile and concealing all valuables. Journeys and operations should be closely co-ordinated with trusted local contacts and resources and undertaken during daylight hours only.
- Criminals are often armed. If accosted by a criminal, assume they are armed and do not resist or antagonise them. If affected by a serious crime, contact the relevant diplomatic mission as well as your local support network.
- If it is safe to do so, leave an area immediately or shelter in a secure location if the security forces begin to gather or if a shoot-out begins.
- Monitor our Mexico alerts for updates.

**More Detail:**

Since the beginning of October, at least 19 people have been killed in targeted incidents, including criminal operatives and close relatives of the state and local authorities.

A motive for the 24 October attacks has not yet been confirmed. However, the arrest of an alleged CSRL leader known as Don Pedro has seemingly triggered an increase in violent events earlier in the month. On 2 October, armed criminals broke into a rehabilitation facility and killed five people and abducted the owner and the manager, both women.

This signals a trend of recurrent violence and attacks on state police personnel, stemming from a protracted conflict between criminal organisations and an attempt to curtail security operations.

The main groups operating in Guanajuato are the CSRL and the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG), and they have been reportedly engaged in a protracted turf war for several years. Additionally, the authorities indicate a recent increase in operations of the Sinaloa Cartel in the state.

Locations of particular concern in the state are Atotonilco, Celaya, Leon, Salamanca, Silao, Federal Highway 45D running from the border with Queretaro state to Irapuato (Guanajuato), and the Leon-Salamanca highway.

Although foreign nationals are rarely targeted in violence related to organised crime, bystanders face incidental risks. Shoot-outs between criminals and the security forces can occur in public spaces and on main roads, causing disruption in their vicinity.

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 Notice

23 October 2024 at 20:03

Urban centres: Expect protests, associated disruption in coming days related to judicial reform (Revised)

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Protest/Rally, Strike, Road disruption

**Situation:**

Expect protests and associated disruption in urban centres **over the coming days** related to a judicial reform approved in September. Federal Judicial Branch workers initially decided on 12 October to resume work, but they have since announced that the strike will continue indefinitely. Protests denouncing the legislation, as well as a strike by judicial workers, have been ongoing since 19 August. Scuffles between the security forces and protesters are possible during such gatherings, posing incidental risks to bystanders. Plan journeys accordingly.

**Advice:**

- Avoid all such protests as they may turn unruly. Liaise with local contacts for information on any related protests in your area and plan journeys accordingly.
- If travelling near a demonstration, reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and allow additional time for journeys.
- Expect heightened security near protests and follow all official directives.

- Monitor our Mexico alerts for updates.

### More Detail:

On 21 October, a demonstration on [Avenida Juarez](#) in Oaxaca (Oaxaca state) reportedly caused significant traffic disruption in the vicinity.

A related protest was also held in the capital Mexico City on 20 October. Participants marched from the [Angel of Independence](#) to the [Senate of the Republic](#) building, demanding President Claudia Sheinbaum and the senate comply with federal judge Nancy Juarez's order to provisionally remove the reform from the official diary of the federation and the Mexican Constitution.

On 1 October, another protest was held at the [Monumento a la Revolucion](#), coinciding with Sheinbaum's swearing-in ceremony as the country's president.

Unruly protests occurred in Mexico City after the controversial reform legislation was passed on 11 September. Potential flashpoints for further demonstrations include state Congress buildings countrywide, as well as the [Senate](#) (upper house of parliament) and the latter's [former headquarters](#) in the capital.

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### Notice

23 October 2024 at 17:57

Tabasco state: Exercise caution, expect heightened security amid increase in violence

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Violent crime, Police/security operation

### **Situation:**

Exercise caution and expect heightened security **over the coming weeks** in Tabasco state and its capital Villahermosa amid an increase in violence. Since the beginning of October, armed criminals have carried out multiple arson attacks and roadblocks in Villahermosa and its environs. These incidents have followed rotation in the leadership of the Tabasco police, while highlighting the persistent threat posed by violent crime in the state.

### **Advice:**

- Exercise heightened caution at all times and expect an increased presence of security forces, particularly in populated areas and along highways. Travel to HIGH-risk areas, including most of Tabasco, should be for essential purposes only. Travel to MEDIUM-risk Villahermosa can continue, but with heightened vigilance. Precautions should be exercised at all times.
- Maintain a low profile and conceal all valuables while in public. Journeys and operations should be closely co-ordinated with trusted local contacts and resources, and undertaken during daylight hours only.

- Expect a heightened security force presence in affected areas and follow all official directives. If the security forces begin to gather or if a shoot-out begins, leave an area immediately or shelter in a secure location if it is safe to do so.
- Both federal security forces and organised criminal groups may erect checkpoints to block passage in and out of towns and municipalities. They have opened fire on vehicles that failed to stop at checkpoints. When approaching a checkpoint set up by the federal forces or suspected criminal groups, follow their directives and do not resist or antagonise them. If you are a victim of a serious crime, contact your local diplomatic mission and support network.
- Monitor our Mexico alerts for updates.

### More Detail:

The recent episodes of criminal unrest tend to occur in short-lived bursts. This violence stems from a protracted conflict between criminal organisations and attempts to curtail security operations. In addition, the recent designation of general Víctor Hugo Chávez Martínez as the state secretary of security in Tabasco has seemingly triggered a restructuring of the criminal landscape. Sources suggest that rotation in key positions of government, especially in law enforcement, often triggers surges in violence in Mexico.

The main groups operating in Tabasco are the New Generation Jalisco Cartel (CJNG) and “La Barredora”. Currently the potential for further deterioration in the security environment is compounded by the fragmentation of the local ‘La Barredora’. Such fragmentation into several splinter cells leads to fights against each other for territorial and operational control in the state.

Although the surge in violence has been concentrated in Villahermosa and its environs, high levels of violence have also been reported in other urban centres such as [Cárdenas](#), [Comalcalco Huimanguillo](#), and [Reforma](#).

Foreign nationals are rarely targeted in violence related to organised crime. However, bystanders can face incidental risks. Arson attacks and tyre punctures can occur or be set up in public spaces and on main roads, causing significant disruption in the vicinities. Moreover, clashes among criminal groups and with security forces can occur along highways or in public venues as well.

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### Notice

15 October 2024 at 14:18

Ongoing dengue outbreak, avoid mosquito bites

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Dengue fever

**Situation:**

There is an ongoing dengue outbreak affecting most states. Dengue is a viral disease spread through mosquito bites. It can cause a range of symptoms. Fever, headache and a rash are common. Sometimes, dengue is severe and can have fatal complications. Those who are infants, pregnant or have had dengue before are most likely to get a severe infection. The main way to prevent dengue is by avoiding mosquito bites. Dengue vaccines are approved in some countries. Discuss with your healthcare provider if they are recommended for your situation.

**Advice:**

Prevent mosquito bites:

- Wear clothes that cover most of your body (long sleeves, long pants, socks).
- Use an insect repellent with one of these active ingredients:
  - DEET
  - Picaridin
  - PMD
  - IR3535
- Check that windows are covered with screens or fly-wire.
- Use "knock-down" insect spray to kill mosquitoes in your room.
- Choose air-conditioned accommodation, if possible.
- Have a travel health consult. Discuss your personal risk of dengue, and ways to prevent it including vaccination.

**More Detail:**

Dengue infections detected this year are more than double those reported in 2023. Infections have been detected in most states, with Guerrero, Jalisco, Morelos, Nuevo Leon and Veracruz being the most affected. So far this year, Tlaxcala has not reported any cases. There is no risk of dengue in Mexico City.

All four dengue virus types are circulating simultaneously in the country, increasing the risk of re-infection and severe dengue.

**What is dengue?**

Dengue is a virus. People can get it if they are bitten by mosquitoes carrying the virus. These insects are common in urban areas and bite during the day. An infected pregnant person can spread dengue to a foetus during pregnancy or birth.

Symptoms of dengue can range from mild to severe. The disease is sometimes called 'break-bone' fever because of the muscle, bone and joint pain it can cause. Other symptoms are high fever, headache or pain behind the eyes. A rash often follows these symptoms. Dengue can be dangerous during pregnancy because it can cause pre-term birth, low birth weight and foetal distress.

Sometimes, people with dengue may develop a more serious version of the disease called 'severe dengue'. (This form used to be called 'dengue haemorrhagic fever' or DHF.) Infants, pregnant people and those who have had dengue in the past are more likely to get severe dengue. Sometimes people with severe dengue die due to bleeding complications and shock.

There is no medicine to cure dengue. Treatments focus on keeping a person as comfortable as possible as their body recovers. This usually takes a week or two but can be longer.

The main way to prevent the disease is to avoid mosquito bites.

There are two types of dengue vaccines which are available in some countries.

Dengvaxia is generally only used in people with proven previous dengue infection. It may increase the risk of severe dengue in those who have not previously had dengue.

Qdenga vaccine can be considered for people without a history of previous dengue infection.

**For more information:**

- Download the Dengue Infographic [[PDF, 2mb](#)].
- See the International SOS Location Guide on Mexico.
- Contact any International SOS Assistance Centre.

**Assessment:**

Dengue is a year-round risk in Mexico, although transmission typically peaks between June and November.

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 **Advisory**

09 August 2024 at 16:49

Risk ratings changed for multiple areas following review of security environment

**Location:** Mexico

**Category:** Crime statistics, Violent crime, Petty crime, Police/security operation, Kidnap, Civil unrest

**Situation:**

We have changed our risk ratings for multiple areas of Mexico after conducting a thorough review of the security environment. The risk ratings for most of Chiapas state, Tabasco state and part of Sonora state have been raised from MEDIUM to HIGH. Portions of Baja California, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Mexico, Puebla and Veracruz states have also been lowered from HIGH to MEDIUM. Lastly, portions of Baja California Sur state have been lowered from MEDIUM to LOW. Operations within and travel to Mexico should be undertaken following an itinerary- and profile-specific review, accounting for prevailing threats and appropriate mitigation measures.

**Advice:**

- Operations and travel within HIGH-risk regions of Mexico should be for essential purposes only and closely co-ordinated with trusted local contacts and/or security support.

- Review security postures, business-continuity plans and exposure levels in HIGH-risk regions of Mexico. Ensure protocols are updated to account for risks associated with high levels of violent crime.
- While violence related to organised crime typically does not target travellers or unaffiliated civilians, there is a risk of being caught in the crossfire. Maintain a heightened level of awareness at all times. If you are caught in the vicinity of a shoot-out, immediately relocate to a secure location from which to stand fast and contact your support network. Do not try to film the altercation.
- Crime poses a significant risk in Mexico, and criminals are often armed. If accosted, avoid doing anything to resist or antagonise the assailant. If you are involved in a serious crime, contact your local embassy or consulate, as well as your local support network.
- Monitor our Mexico alerts and review our country page for further information.

### More Detail:

Our review involved a comprehensive analysis of data from various sources, including the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (SESNSP), the National Institute for Statistics and Geography (INEGI), the National Citizens' Observatory (ONC) and the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project ([ACLED](#)). International SOS's Latin America-focused security centre, located in the capital Mexico City, as well as both internal contacts and external partners throughout the country were also integral to the process.

Our proprietary risk-rating methodology factors in assessments of hostile threats, infrastructure, instability, governance and natural hazards. In the context of the security environment in Mexico, key factors considered in our risk-rating changes were insecurity borne out of violence between organised crime groups and challenges in accessing emergency support. Ambient levels of violent and petty crime, unrest and institutional corruption were also considered.

The risk-rating changes from MEDIUM to HIGH are outlined below:

- **Chiapas state:** The entire state, except its capital Tuxtla Gutierrez.
- **Sonora state:** Nogales municipality.
- **Tabasco state:** The entire state, except Centro municipality, containing the capital Villahermosa.

The risk-rating changes from HIGH to MEDIUM are outlined below:

- **Baja California state:** The municipalities of Ensenada and San Quintin.
- **Guanajuato state:** Areas north of Leon, Guanajuato, Dolores Hidalgo and San Miguel de Allende municipalities.
- **Jalisco state:** Areas south-west of San Diego de Alejandria, San Juan de los Lagos, Teocaltiche and Union de San Antonio municipalities.
- **Puebla state:** The corridor stretching from Amozoc to the border with Veracruz state along Federal Highway 185.

- **Mexico state:** Most of the state, including its capital Toluca, but excluding areas east of Villa del Carbon; north-east of Temoaya, Oztolotepec and Xonacatlan; north-west of Atizapan de Zaragoza, and Naucalpan de Juarez towards the borders with Mexico City and Hidalgo state; west of Temascalapa, Teotihuacan, Acolman, Atenco and Texcoco towards the borders with Mexico City and Hidalgo state; south of Texcoco; north of Juchitepec, Temamatla, Cocotitlan, and Tlalmanalco towards the borders with Mexico City and Puebla state; and south-west of Ixtapan del Oro, Valle de Bravo, Temascaltepec, Zinacantepec, Villa Guerrero, and Ixtapan de la Sal towards the borders with Guerrero and Michoacan states.
- **Sinaloa state:** The municipalities of Ahome and Mazatlan.
- **Veracruz state:** Most of the state, including its capital Xalapa and the port city of Veracruz, but excluding areas north-west of Papantla municipality towards the borders with Hidalgo, Puebla, San Luis Potosi and Tamaulipas states; south-east of Boca del Rio and Piedras Negra; south of Hueyacan de Ocampo and Soteapan; west of Soconusco; and north-west of Santiago Tuxtla Hueyapan, and San Juan Evangelista towards the border with Oaxaca state.

The risk-rating changes from MEDIUM to LOW are outlined below:

- **Baja California Sur state:** Its capital La Paz and Los Cabos municipality.

#### **Assessment:**

While competition over drug markets remains a major driver of violence, organised crime venturing into other rackets, including extortion, kidnapping, fuel theft and the extraction of natural resources, have also become important variables. That said, exposure risks for unaffiliated bystanders, especially foreign travellers, are mostly incidental and can be greatly mitigated through careful journey-management planning and avoidance of more problematic areas.

#### *Areas moved from MEDIUM to HIGH*

The expansion of a diverse array of armed groups in Chiapas has led to a significant deterioration of the security environment, particularly in rural and remote areas of the state. Criminal networks, such as the Sinaloa Cartel and the New Generation Jalisco Cartel, compete over drug- and migrant-trafficking routes while vigilante groups proliferate to counter their advances across the state. On top of rising violent crime, persistent political and socio-economic grievances in Chiapas – Mexico's poorest state – have bolstered the potential for outbreaks of social unrest in the short-to-medium term. The heightened security force presence in the state capital Tuxtla Gutierrez has managed to contain the violence impacting other, especially rural, areas of Chiapas.

Tabasco has witnessed a sharp increase in violent crime following the purported rupture of informal protection agreements between criminal groups and local authorities. Per official statistics, the homicide rate in Tabasco rose from 10.1 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2023 to 30.7 in the first four months of 2024. Key drivers of this surge include turf wars over drug- and human-trafficking routes. Competition over access to oil and gas pipelines, which are tapped by criminal groups seeking to resell the fuel illegally, has also played an important role. While petty and street crime is common and sometimes violent, the state capital Villahermosa remains a relatively safe zone within Tabasco.

The security environment continues to deteriorate in areas of Sonora. Criminal groups continue to fight over drug- and migrant-trafficking routes in municipalities along the border with the US, including Nogales. The security environment in Sonora's capital Hermosillo remains relatively benign compared to the rest of the state.

#### *Areas moved from HIGH to MEDIUM*

Although consistently ranked as one of the most violent states, the security environment in Baja California varies considerably. Violent crime is largely concentrated in the border cities of Mexicali, Tecate and Tijuana, the last of which accounts for the bulk of homicides in the state. The security environment in municipalities to the south, including Ensenada, is comparatively more benign.

The security environment in areas of Guanajuato, Jalisco, Mexico, Puebla, Sinaloa and Veracruz has also experienced improvements.

The overwhelmingly rural and touristic areas of central-northern Guanajuato are more benign compared to areas along and south of Guanajuato's so-called 'Industrial Belt', which includes the cities of Celaya, Irapuato, Leon and Salamanca. The main hotspots of violence in Jalisco remain the northern Los Altos sub-region as well as areas bordering Colima, Michoacan and Zacatecas.

Mexico state poses contrasting levels of risk compounded by high levels of socio-economic inequality. Petty and street crime is the most salient risk in most of the state, including its capital Toluca and the wealthier municipalities of the Mexico City metropolitan area, such as Atizapan, Huixquilucan and Naucalpan. Disadvantaged zones of the Mexico City metropolitan area, however, experience higher rates of violent, often gang-related crime. This is especially the case in municipalities north and east of the capital, including Chalco, Chimalhuacan, Ciudad, Ecatepec, Nezahualcoyotl and Tlalnepantla. Additionally, areas of south-western Mexico in the vicinity of Guerrero and Michoacan face violence and occasional social unrest linked to organised crime.

Puebla continues to experience high rates of vehicle and cargo theft along Federal Highway 150, which links central Mexico to the port city of Veracruz. While an organised crime presence exists, the risks these groups pose to travellers are largely incidental, and the security environment is relatively stable across the state.

Homicide rates in Sinaloa have experienced a sustained drop over the past years. The improvements are most notable in the municipalities of Ahome and Mazatlan, where violent crime is unlikely to impact most business travellers. Episodes of unrest associated with the detention of Sinaloa Cartel leaders are also less likely to significantly impact Ahome and Mazatlan compared to the state capital Culiacan. The security environment in most of Veracruz has significantly improved in recent years. Petty and street crime are the risks most likely to impact travellers in most major urban centres across the state, including Coatzacoalcos, Cordoba, Minatitlan, Orizaba, Veracruz and its capital Xalapa. However, northern areas of Veracruz, including Poza Rica and Tuxpan, as well as the Papaloapan Basin in the south-central area of the state, remain hotspots of violent crime.

Travellers in MEDIUM-risk areas of Mexico are very unlikely to be directly targeted in violence related to organised crime. However, they should exercise caution when venturing to rural areas and outlying neighbourhoods of urban centres.

*Areas moved from MEDIUM to LOW*

Baja California Sur has seen a very significant drop in violence associated with organised crime over the past years. Non-violent petty and street crime is the most prevalent risk for most profiles. The overall security environment in the state capital La Paz and Los Cabos municipality is generally benign, though travellers should stay clear of known crime hotspots outside the upscale, touristic sectors.

# Destination Guide for Mexico



## Before You Travel

### Destination Guide Content

## Visa Requirements

### IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

#### British

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

#### Australian

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

#### Canadian

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

#### USA

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

## Visas

Nationals of countries mentioned [here](#) and those referred to in the chart above do not require visas for stays of up to 180 days as tourists, in transit or for business. Additionally, all foreign nationals, regardless of their nationality, do not require a visa if they have a valid visa issued by any of the following countries: Canada, Japan, US, UK or any of the countries comprising the Schengen Area or if they have a valid permanent resident card from Canada, Chile, Colombia, Japan, Peru, US, UK or any of the countries comprising the Schengen Area. People of other nationalities are required to obtain visas prior to arrival in the country. Business travellers are required to present a letter from the host company or organisation.

All foreign nationals, except those flying in and out of Cancun (CUN), Cozumel (CZM), Los Cabos (SJD), Puerto Vallarta (PVR), Mexico City (MEX) and those with stays that are less than 72 hours within border areas, are required to fill a free tourist card which is an entry immigration form (Forma Migratoria Multiple) at the port of entry ([in advance](#)) or [online](#), no more than 30 days before arrival. The card must be shown upon departure. If lost, this tourist card can be replaced. You may need to pay a fine depending on the immigration authorities. The tourist card is issued for maximum of 180 days at the discretion of the passport control official. Applicants for tourist cards should have a valid passport, the address of your accommodation in Mexico, and the arrival flight information.

Business travellers who plan to stay longer can apply for an extension of their Tourist Card or for a temporary visa (FM3) after arriving in Mexico. It takes 24 hours to process the extension. Business travellers are advised to carry photocopies of their passports and other documentation at all times.

## Procedures

Passport control at airports is normally swift and straightforward. Many (but by no means all) officials understand simple English. At customs, arriving business travellers must press a button on what looks like a traffic light. If the green light lights up, you may proceed and if the red light lights up, you must have your bags checked by an official. Laptop computers should be declared as being an 'instrumento de trabajo' (equipment for work purposes).

Passengers arriving on international flights, especially from Colombia, the Caribbean and Central America, may be searched for drugs. In Cancun, US Drug Enforcement Administration agents are present at all times, providing information to the Mexican police.

## Entry/Exit Requirements

### Entry/Exit requirements

Immigration may require foreign nationals to show evidence of funds to finance their stay and/or an onward or return ticket. Passports for certain nationals should be valid for at least six months after the date of entry; people should confirm this requirement with the nearest Mexican embassy/consulate prior to travel. Tourist Cards must be kept during the entire length of stay as they will have to be presented and stamped on leaving. Individuals are required to declare on arrival amounts equivalent to or more than US\$10,000, including traveller's cheques and money orders.

## Cultural Tips

### CULTURAL ISSUES AND ETIQUETTE

#### General Tips

- Conversations with Mexicans, as with most Latin Americans, take place at a much closer physical distance than Westerners may be accustomed to at home. Stepping back from your counterpart may be regarded as unfriendly.
- Exercise situational awareness and prudence when discussing issues related to organised crime, especially in HIGH-risk locations of Mexico. Avoid engaging the topic on social media platforms.
- Use caution when photographing airports, police or military locations, oil installments, harbours or bridges, as they are considered security-related areas.
- There are some legal restrictions relevant to LGBTQ+ individuals but these are not enforced or adhered to in the legal system. Societal attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community are sometimes intolerant but violence is only occasionally directed towards its members.

## Getting There

### METHOD OF ARRIVAL

More than 20 Mexican cities have international airports, though the principal point of entry is Benito Juárez International Airport ([MEX](#)) in the capital Mexico City. Other international airports include Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla Guadalajara Airport ([GDL](#)) in Guadalajara (Jalisco state), Mariano Escobedo Airport ([MTY](#)) in Monterrey (Nuevo León state), Tijuana Airport ([TIJ](#)) in Baja California state, Cancun Airport ([CUN](#)) in Quintana Roo state, and Los Cabos Airport (SJD), which serves both San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas in Baja California Sur state. Flights can be disrupted during the hurricane season between May and November. Flooding and mudslides are common during this period and may affect access routes to the airport.

International airports satisfy only minimum security standards. Business travellers do not face any significant security risks, though opportunistic crime, such as pickpocketing and bag-snatching, is common in and around airports. Foreign nationals should be on guard and keep luggage in sight at all times, especially at Benito Juárez airport, where the terminal can get crowded. It is also advisable to exercise caution when using banking and currency-exchange facilities within airport premises due to the possibility of being watched and followed by criminals.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's [website](#) for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

### **By land**

Road travel is possible from the US, Guatemala and Belize; however, business travellers should be aware that there are significant crime risks in US and north-east Guatemala border areas and are advised to take necessary mitigating measures. Foreign nationals should check with a Mexican consulate for rules on taking a vehicle inside Mexico, as these may change periodically. Business travellers should also ensure that their vehicle is in good condition and has sufficient fuel to reach the nearest urban centre, as there are not always petrol stations or mechanics at border crossings. A temporary vehicle import permit is required to take a vehicle beyond Baja California, the city of Guaymas (Sonora state) and the frontier zone of 10-20 miles (20-30km) along the rest of the US border and 40 miles (70km) from the Belizean and Guatemalan borders.

### **Procedures**

Passport control at airports is normally swift and straightforward. Many (but by no means all) officials understand simple English. At customs, arriving business travellers must press a button on what looks like a traffic light. If the green light lights up, you may proceed and if the red light lights up, you must have your bags checked by an official. Laptop computers should be declared as being an 'instrumento de trabajo' (equipment for work purposes).

Passengers arriving on international flights, especially from Colombia, the Caribbean and Central America, may be searched for drugs. In Cancun, US Drug Enforcement Administration agents are present at all times, providing information to the Mexican police.

## Getting Around

### BY AIR

Major urban and industrial centres have international and domestic airports. Internal flights have become increasingly affordable due to the introduction of several low-cost carriers. The risks of overland travel and the long distances between urban areas means that air travel is often the quickest and safest option. Airport security standards are not high, except when anti-narcotics operations are in progress. Privately chartered aircraft should clear itineraries in advance with the appropriate authorities to limit the possibility of being intercepted by anti-narcotics or border patrols. AeroMéxico, the national carrier, operates flights between all major cities. Other major airlines in Mexico include Volaris, Interjet, TAR Aerolines and VivaAerobus.

Passengers arriving at night to Benito Juárez International Airport (MEX) in Mexico City should take precautions, as taxis have been targeted on the highway connecting the airport with the city.

### BY ROAD

Main roads and highways, especially 'cuota' (toll) roads, are in good condition, though drivers should be alert to potholes. Traffic drives on the right side of the road and driving practices are poor; traffic and road regulations are frequently violated. In rural areas, livestock and heavy pedestrian movement on roads, as well as insufficient street lighting and signage, make driving conditions hazardous. Business travellers should not self-drive and should pre-arrange the hire of a private vehicle and experienced local driver through their hotel or host company; they should not undertake road travel outside urban centres after dark. If self-driving, foreign nationals should ensure appropriate security preparations are made, the vehicle is properly equipped and journeys are undertaken during daylight hours whenever possible. Most of the large international car-hire companies operate in major cities and tourist centres across Mexico. An international driver's permit is not required. A US driver's licence is applicable.

Business travellers are reminded of crime risks such as robbery, carjacking and kidnapping on roads. Car hold-ups occasionally occur in urban areas, particularly at traffic lights or in slow-moving traffic; foreign nationals are advised to always keep doors locked and car windows rolled up. Car theft is also common, and motorists should use guarded car parks, rather than parking on the street.

Highway crime is a serious concern across the country both on toll and non-toll roads; physical - and sometimes sexual - assault has also been reported during some robberies. Thieves regularly attempt to stop cars at bogus police roadblocks or threaten drivers to make them leave their vehicles. A common tactic is to con a driver into stopping by the side of the road by indicating that there is something wrong with their car; another is the use of a vehicle with fake police lights on top to force a car to stop.

Criminals also use hijacked vehicles to set up roadblocks (narcobloqueos) to prevent the security forces from reaching the scene of an ongoing crime, potentially disrupting road journeys and increasing the risk to business travellers. Such blockades occur frequently throughout HIGH-risk regions, especially in the context of ongoing security operations or clashes between rival criminal groups. Travel to areas of heightened risk should be only limited to business in daylight hours only. If an armed robbery takes place, business travellers should not attempt to resist. In an effort to organised criminal groups, federal police and military personnel have been deployed throughout the country. As such, foreign nationals may face delays due to government checkpoints on roads and highways.

Motorists should ensure that they have adequate, preferably Mexican, insurance cover to avoid severe penalties in the event of an accident. US liability coverage does not apply on Mexican territory; travellers should secure the minimum coverage before crossing the border from the US. If the driver is found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of an accident, or without a valid driver's licence, the vehicle insurance is considered invalid.

## **BY TAXI**

Taxis are a suitable means of transport in most urban areas. However, business travellers are advised against hailing them on the street. Business travellers should arrange for transport through their hotel or company. Car-share services such as Uber are also a suitable means of transport for business travellers. The cashless transaction with the driver and the ability to see driver and car details prior to departure add layers of security to the ride, which should be verified by the foreign nationals prior to entering the vehicle. Extra caution should be exercised at night, as informal taxis disguised as official taxis have targeted riders for express kidnappings outside bars and clubs in upscale neighbourhoods.

## **BY TRAIN**

The passenger rail system is largely defunct, except for a handful of tourist services, such as the Tequila Express from Guadalajara and the Copper Canyon train, also called as [El Chepe](#), in Chihuahua.

## **BY OTHER MEANS**

Business travellers should avoid buses because they are poorly maintained, overcrowded, and potentially dangerous due to the risk posed by petty crime and armed robberies. If travelling by bus, choose bus companies that offer first-class service; avoid road travel for long distances. In resort locations such as Cozumel (Quintana Roo state), ferries operate between tourist destinations. These ferries are generally safe; however, caution should be exercised due to the high concentration of tourists.

## **Business Women**

### **BUSINESSWOMEN**

Violence against women is a major concern in urban and rural Mexico. Sexual harassment is widespread and can affect businesswomen of all profiles. Other forms of gendered violence are more likely to affect local workforce, though foreign nationals should exercise precautions due to their prevalence.

The risk of assault affects independent, low-budget tourists more than business travellers or those travelling as part of an organised tour. Recent protests and a national women's strike have tried to call attention to the issue of violence against women following a surge in femicides in the country in 2019-20.

The risk is greatest in isolated rural areas countrywide, where a lacking or corrupt security force presence means that criminals can often act with impunity. Several attacks in recent years have taken place on quiet or deserted beaches, even at upscale resorts. The risk while travelling in these areas can be reduced by keeping to main roads in private cars or premier class buses and avoiding walking alone after dark.

The risks posed by gendered violence tend to increase in HIGH-risk areas. Organised criminal groups have been known to abduct women for human trafficking. Female business travellers should be extremely vigilant and should only move about accompanied in HIGH-risk areas, especially in border cities such as Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua state), Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, Reynosa (all Tamaulipas state), and Tijuana (Baja California state).

## Working Week

### WORKING WEEK

- Working week: Monday- Friday
- Office hours: 09.00-20.00; 14.00-16.00 lunch break.
- Banking hours: 09.00-17.00 Monday to Friday and until 13.00 on Saturdays.

## Language & Money

### LANGUAGE

Spanish is the national language, but English is widely used in business circles. Hotel staff are likely to speak English, particularly in the US border region, large cities and popular tourist resorts. Indigenous languages are also used, but primarily in rural areas of southern states such as Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca and in the Yucatan peninsula.

## **MONEY**

The official currency is the Mexican peso (MXN). Workforce should try to carry cash in denominations no larger than the 500 MXN note, as shops and restaurants will often refuse to accept larger notes; acquiring small change can be difficult. Smaller notes are usually required for taxis and minor purchases.

Although some large transactions (such as property prices or major contracts) may be priced in US dollars, most commercial establishments only accept pesos. Traveller's cheques in US dollars, pounds or euros are accepted by most banks. ATMs are widely available and many accept North American and European cards, while most business-class shops and restaurants are happy to accept internationally recognised credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express. A surcharge may be levied if paying by credit card. Theft and credit/debit card skimming is a concern. People should regularly check their credit card statements. Workforce should only use ATMs located inside banks and other commercial establishments for security reasons.

## **Tipping**

### **TIPPING**

Tipping is expected if a service charge has not already been added to the bill. The US custom of tipping 15-20% is practised at international resorts, including those in Acapulco, Cancun, Los Cabos, Puerto Vallarta and Tulum.

## **Geography & Weather**

### **GEOGRAPHY**

Mexico is bordered by the US to the north, Belize and Guatemala to the south, the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The heavily monitored border with the US is 1,951 miles (3,141km) in length. The rugged eastern and western Sierra Madre Mountains play an important role in defining much of the topography of the interior. The country is administratively divided into 32 states, including the capital Mexico City.

### **CLIMATE**

#### **Climate overview**

- The climate varies according to region, latitude and altitude.

- Coastal regions are hot and humid throughout the year.
- In tropical areas in the south, there are significant levels of rainfall between June and September.
- Monitor the [National Meteorological Service](#) website for weather updates.

### **Cyclonic activity**

- Mexico is prone to hurricanes on both its Pacific and Atlantic coasts between May and November, peaking in August and September.
- Flash floods and mudslides are common during the hurricane season, especially in mountainous, coastal and low-lying areas.
- Such floods can result in damage to infrastructure, displacement of populations, casualties and travel disruption.

### **Earthquakes**

- Mexico lies in a seismically active zone.
- Significant earthquakes have occurred throughout the country, including in the Federal District and states bordering the Pacific Ocean.
- In September 2022, a -magnitude 7.6 earthquake struck western Mexico, resulting in widespread infrastructural damage and casualties.
- The Mexican Seismic Alert System (SASMEX) is a network of seismic monitors concentrated in states bordering the Pacific Ocean.
- SASMEX issues early warning alerts for earthquakes. It can provide up to 60 seconds of warning for selected cities (Acapulco, Chilpancingo, Colima, Guadalajara, Mexico City, Morelia, Oaxaca, Puebla and Toluca).
- Monitor the [Seismic Instrumentation and Registration Centre](#) website for earthquake alerts.

### **Volcanic activity**

- There are several active volcanoes in Mexico.
- Two of the most notable volcanoes are Popocatepetl (Mexico, Morelos, Puebla states) and Volcan de Colima (Colima, Jalisco states).
- Ash clouds due to increased activity at the Popocatepetl volcano in January-March 2024 caused flight disruption.
- Monitor the [National Centre for the Prevention of Disasters](#) website for alerts on volcanic activity.

## **International Dialing & Power**

## **DIALLING CODES**

Country Code 52

IDD Prefix (International Direct Dialling) 00

NDD Prefix (National Direct Dialling) 01

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The mobile network coverage is adequate. Mobile providers usually offer roaming services for the country. The airmail postal service is adequate, but slow for business purposes. Surface mail takes between one and three weeks to reach the US and between three and six weeks to reach Europe. A faster option is to use courier services: DHL, UPS and Federal Express have offices in most cities.

### **Information Security**

The country's growing economy and relatively lacking cybersecurity infrastructure have made it an attractive target for criminals. Banks and financial institutions are most commonly targeted, but not exclusively. Business travellers are most susceptible to lower-level schemes such as 'card skimming' through point-of-sale malware. ATMs are at times modified to steal information from the inserted bank card. Virtual extortion also remains a significant concern. Cyber espionage is mostly carried out by state actors seeking to access government information. However, corporate espionage is also a rising concern.

### **Advice**

#### *Before travel*

- Only bring devices that you require for travel. Ensure any such device is updated with the latest software versions and relevant security patches are installed.
- Make a pre-travel backup of any information and store it at home.
- Consult with your organisation's IT and security departments for any company-specific requirements and procedures.

#### *During travel*

- Remain vigilant and observe for any obvious signs of tampering when using point-of-sale systems that are external or unmonitored such as at a fuel station or street-facing ATM.

- Avoid using public Wi-Fi networks at airports or transport hubs. These networks are always insecure and, in some instances, created and controlled by cybercriminal groups. Instead, a virtual private network (VPN) service may be used to increase mobile security.
- Commercial 'charging stations' at airports can be used to extract data from your device or to upload malware to it. Avoid such public stations and use your personal charging equipment.

#### *Upon return*

- Consider changing account, device and administrator passwords upon returning home, especially if you have reason to believe that your device was tampered with or exposed during travel.
- Vigilantly monitor your financial statements and accounts during and after travel. If your financial information was compromised, it can take several weeks before fraudulent purchases are attempted.

## **ELECTRICITY**

These are the most common plug types used:

## **Calendar**

### **Holidays & Security Dates**

#### **2024**

**02 Nov** All Souls Day

**12 Dec** Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Governments and banks only.

**25 Dec** Christmas Day

In some countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

#### **2025**

**01 Jan** New Year's Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

**05 Feb** Constitution Day

If this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

**21 Mar** Birth anniversary of Benito Pablo Juarez

A federal holiday to commemorate the birthday of deceased President Benito Pablo Juarez, celebrated for resisting foreign interventions. The day off may not fall on his birthday every year.

**13 Apr - 20 Apr** Holy Week

This includes the Christian holy days of Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

**05 May** Cinco de Mayo

Government and banks only nationwide; everything in Puebla state.

**10 May** Mothers Day

Unofficial, though some businesses may close for half the day.

**16 Sep** Independence Day

# Destination Guide for Mexico



## Medical

### Destination Guide Content

## Medical Care

### Variable

Standard of Health Care

#### **Let International SOS assist you.**

International SOS will assist you to find appropriate emergency, inpatient or outpatient care, will provide language assistance, may be able to pay your medical expenses and will assist with evacuation when required.

#### **Inpatient care**

In the larger cities, selected private hospitals provide a high level of care.

Many doctors and nurses have trained at centres of medical excellence and speak English as well as Spanish.

Public hospitals and facilities are not recommended, they may have shortages of medication and equipment and long waiting times.

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Fire service, police 911

Ambulance services are not recommended. Contact International SOS for help with your medical situation. [Contact us](#)

### Hospitals & Clinics

#### **Centro Medico ABC - Observatorio**

Category: Hospital

Address: Calle Sur 136 No.116, Mexico City

Phone: [52 5552308000](tel:525552308000)  
Emails: [mesadeayudaobs@abchospital.com](mailto:mesadeayudaobs@abchospital.com),  
[cmbarradasp@abchospital.com](mailto:cmbarradasp@abchospital.com)

### **Centro Medico ABC - Santa Fe**

Category: Hospital  
Address: Carlos Graef Fernandez No. 154, Mexico City  
Phones: [52 5511031600](tel:525511031600),  
[52 5511031700](tel:525511031700)  
Emails: [admision\\_sf@abchospital.com](mailto:admision_sf@abchospital.com),  
[mesadeayudasfe@abchospital.com](mailto:mesadeayudasfe@abchospital.com)

### **Hospital Alta Especialidad - Christus Muguerza**

Category: Hospital  
Address: Avenida Miguel Hildago y Costilla No.2525, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon  
Phones: [52 8183993477](tel:528183993477),  
[52 8183993400](tel:528183993400)  
Email: [tu\\_amigo\\_muguerza@christusmuguerza.com.mx](mailto:tu_amigo_muguerza@christusmuguerza.com.mx)

### **Hospital Angeles - Pedregal**

Category: Hospital  
Address: Camino a Santa Teresa 1055, Mexico City, Estado de Mexico  
Phone: [52 5554495500](tel:525554495500)  
Email: [admision.cspd@saludangeles.mx](mailto:admision.cspd@saludangeles.mx)

### **Hospital Angeles del Carmen**

Category: Hospital  
Address: Tarascos 3435, Guadalajara, Jalisco  
Phones: [52 3338130042](tel:523338130042),  
[52 3338131224](tel:523338131224)  
Email: [seguros.hac@saludangeles.com](mailto:seguros.hac@saludangeles.com)

### **Hospital Angeles Valle Oriente**

Category: Hospital  
Address: 180 Avenida Frida Khalo, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon  
Phone: [52 8183687777](tel:528183687777)

### **Hospital Conchita - Christus Muguerza**

Category: Hospital

Address: 15 de Mayo 1822,, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon

Phones: [52 8183993400](tel:528183993400),

[52 8181228122](tel:528181228122),

[52 8181228104](tel:528181228104)

Email: [tu\\_amigo\\_muguerza@christusmuguerza.com.mx](mailto:tu_amigo_muguerza@christusmuguerza.com.mx)

### **Hospital Espanol**

Category: Hospital

Address: Ejercito Nacional 613, Mexico City, Estado de Mexico

Phones: [52 5552559655](tel:525552559655),

[52 5552559645](tel:525552559645),

[52 5552559600](tel:525552559600)

Emails: [contacto@hespanol.com](mailto:contacto@hespanol.com),

[urgencias.upd@hespanol.com](mailto:urgencias.upd@hespanol.com)

### **Hospital Puerta de Hierro Andares**

Category: Hospital

Address: 150 Avenue Empresarios, Guadalajara, Jalisco

Phone: [52 3338482100](tel:523338482100)

Email: [contacto@cmpdh.mx](mailto:contacto@cmpdh.mx)

### **Hospital San Javier**

Category: Hospital

Address: Avenida Pablo Casals No. 640, Guadalajara, Jalisco

Phone: [52 3336690222](tel:523336690222)

Email: [segins@hospitalsanjavier.com](mailto:segins@hospitalsanjavier.com)

### **Hospital Zambrano Hellion-Tec Salud**

Category: Hospital

Address: Avenida Batallon de San Patricio 112, San Pedro Garza Garcia, Nuevo Leon

Phones: [52 8188880000](tel:528188880000),

[52 8188880911](tel:528188880911)

Email: [atencion.seguros@servicios.tecsalud.mx](mailto:atencion.seguros@servicios.tecsalud.mx)

### **Star Medica Roma**

Category: Hospital

Address: San Luis de Potosi No 143, Mexico City, Estado de Mexico

Phones: [52 5510844723](tel:525510844723),

52 5510844743,

52 5510844747

Emails: [colvera.cto@starmedica.com](mailto:colvera.cto@starmedica.com),  
[jadmision.cto@starmedica.com](mailto:jadmision.cto@starmedica.com)

## Vaccinations

### COVID-19

Vaccination is recommended for all travellers.

### Hepatitis A

Recommended for all travellers and international assignees, especially groups at higher risk including:

- long-term and frequent visitors.
- adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations or stay in areas with poor sanitation.
- gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (see [US CDC](#)).
- people who use illicit drugs.
- those with liver disease.

### Hepatitis B

Recommended for most travellers and international assignees, especially:

- For long-term or frequent visitors, and health-care workers.
- For adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations.
- If possibility of new sexual partner, needle sharing, acupuncture, dental work, body piercing or tattooing during visit.

Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travelers, regardless of destination.

### Typhoid fever

Recommended for all travellers and international assignees.

## Routine Vaccinations

### Influenza

#### Influenza occurs in:

- Temperate southern hemisphere: April to September.
- Temperate northern hemisphere: November to March.
- Tropics: year-round.

**Annual vaccination is recommended. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe disease.** People who are at higher risk for severe disease include:

- People over the age of 65.
- People with underlying health conditions.
- Pregnant women.

### Measles-Mumps-Rubella

Vaccinations against measles, mumps and rubella are routine in childhood, and are usually available as a combined vaccine "MMR". See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)  
All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need to be vaccinated.

### Polio

Vaccination against polio is routine in childhood in many countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)  
All adults should ensure they are immune to the disease before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or a *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

### Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis

Vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis are routine in childhood.

See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

## Varicella

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccinations are included in the routine childhood immunization schedule of some countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to varicella before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional.

## Malaria

### Risk in some areas

Malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes that usually bite from dusk to dawn. Symptoms can develop as early as seven days or as late as several months after exposure. Early malaria symptoms are flu-like and can include fever, sweats/chills, head and body aches, and generally feeling tired and unwell. People also sometimes feel nauseous and vomit or have diarrhoea.

Untreated, malaria can cause serious complications like anaemia, seizures, mental confusion, kidney failure and coma. It can be fatal.

Follow the ABCDEs to minimise malarial risk:

**A:** Awareness - Be **Aware** of the risk, the symptoms and malaria prevention.

**B:** Bite Prevention - Avoid being **Bitten** by mosquitoes, especially between dusk and dawn.

**C:** Chemoprophylaxis - If prescribed for you, use **Chemoprophylaxis** (antimalarial medication) to prevent infection and if infected reduce the risk of severe malaria.

**D:** Diagnosis - Immediately seek **Diagnosis** and treatment if a fever develops one week or more after being in a malarial area (up to one year after departure).

**E:** Emergency - Carry an **Emergency** Standby Treatment (EST) kit if available and recommended (this is the kit which contains malaria treatment).

Risk of malaria is present throughout the year in some parts of Mexico, particularly in rural areas of Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua and Sinaloa.

These states continue to report active transmission.

Locally-acquired cases were identified in Oaxaca and Tabasco in 2022. Nayarit, Quintana Roo and Sonora remain areas with residual transmission though no locally-acquired cases have been reported in recent years.

Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Mexico City, Coahuila, Colima, Durango, State of Mexico, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacan, Morelos, Nuevo Leon, Puebla, Queretaro, San Luis Potosi, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Yucatan and Zacatecas have not reported any cases of malaria in the last 10 years.

There is no malaria along the United States-Mexico border.

Prevention:

- mosquito bite avoidance
- medication: consult your travel health doctor for an individual recommendation. Some authorities recommend preventive medication if visiting the risk areas



## Yellow Fever

### Health Threats

#### Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.

#### Rabies vaccination

Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present. It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

#### If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:

- Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need *post-exposure vaccination*, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

Although the risk from dogs was declared eliminated in 2019, several human cases of rabies have been documented since, particularly from bats and cats. The risk is present in many areas, including Cancun, Quintana Roo.

#### American Trypanosomiasis (Chagas disease)

Also known as Chagas disease, American Trypanosomiasis is transmitted by a blood-sucking bug, the triatomine (also known as the "kissing bug"). An infected bug deposits faeces on the victim's skin, often at night. Infection occurs when the faeces or urine are rubbed into a bite, an open cut, the eyes or mouth. Chagas disease can also be transmitted in other ways, including through blood or organ donation from infected donors, and contaminated food and drinks.

The initial stages of the infection may go unnoticed or only be mild. Local swelling may appear at the site of infection, and some people get a characteristic purplish swelling around the lids of one eye. Other symptoms include fever, body aches and headaches, diarrhoea, vomiting, breathing difficulty and swollen lymph nodes. Chronic infections may involve the heart, gastrointestinal system or brain, and can be fatal. No vaccine is available. Treatment with anti-parasitic medicines is most effective soon after infection. Prevent infection by avoiding insect bites and choosing safe food and water. Choose well-constructed facilities to sleep indoors and use a bed net.

Risk is present country-wide in rural areas, with infections reported every year. The highest rates of infection occur in the states of Chiapas, Morelos, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Veracruz and Yucatan between March and August.

## **Chikungunya**

People can get chikungunya if they are bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus. About four to seven days later, the infected person develops a sudden fever and severe joint pain. Pain is especially common in the knees, ankles, small joints (especially in hands and feet) and any previously injured area. Other common symptoms are a rash and headache.

There is no specific cure for the disease. Recovery takes several weeks. The best way to prevent chikungunya is to prevent mosquito bites. Wear long sleeves and long pants and use insect repellents to prevent mosquito bites. A vaccine named IXCHIQ is approved in the United States and Canada for people 18 years and older at increased risk of infection.

The first locally transmitted chikungunya cases were detected in 2014. The disease is present throughout the country except in Aguascalientes, Baja California, Mexico City, Queretaro, Tlaxcala and Zacatecas. Locations above 2,300 m (7,500) are generally considered safe.

## **Dengue fever**

Dengue, or "break-bone" fever, is a viral disease of the tropics and sub-tropics. It is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes that bite during the daytime and are found in and around human habitation. Transmission from mother to child is possible during pregnancy or birth. Symptoms include high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain, nausea and vomiting. A rash often follows. The acute illness can last up to ten days, but complete recovery can take two to four weeks.

Occasionally, a potentially fatal form of dengue called severe dengue (previously known as dengue hemorrhagic fever or DHF) occurs. Severe dengue is more likely in infants and pregnant people, as well as for people who have been infected in the past and are infected again with a different strain of dengue. When a pregnant person is infected there is a risk of pre-term birth, low birth weight and foetal distress. About 2 to 3 out of 100 severe dengue cases are likely to be fatal.

Prevention is through avoiding mosquito bites. There are two commercially available dengue vaccines approved in a few countries. Dengvaxia is generally only used in people with previous dengue infection while Qdenga can be considered for people without a history of dengue infection.

Risk of dengue is higher along the coastal Pacific and Atlantic areas but present in most areas located below altitudes of 1,200 meters. There is no risk in the high altitude areas of central Mexico, including Mexico City.

The dengue vaccine Dengvaxia is available through private medical providers and only recommended for individuals between 9 and 45 years of age who have had dengue infection previously.

## **Leishmaniasis**

Leishmaniasis is a disease caused by a parasite that can infect humans, dogs, rodents and other small animals. It is transmitted by sandflies that bite mainly between dusk and dawn and can occur in both rural and urban environments. Sandflies breed quickly in unsanitary conditions, and the spread of the disease is exacerbated by war, chronic food shortages and urbanisation activities like deforestation and building of dams and irrigation systems, changes in temperature, heavy rainfall and population movement. The disease can manifest in one of the three forms, cutaneous (is the most common form and causes skin ulcers), mucocutaneous (is a rare form which affects the inner parts of the nose and mouth) or visceral (which is the more severe form and can lead to death). There is no vaccine or drug to prevent leishmaniasis.

## Prevention

The only way to avoid leishmaniasis is to prevent sandfly bites.

- Minimise outdoor activities from dusk to dawn- this is when sand flies are most active.
- Use protective clothing and insect repellent.
- Consider using an insecticide-treated bed net with *fine mesh* if there are sandflies in your living quarters. The standard bed nets used to prevent malaria are not effective, as sandflies are about one-third the size of mosquitoes and can fly through the malaria nets.
- Note that sandflies are small and do not make noise while flying. This makes it difficult to determine whether they are in your environment. Their bites cause mild symptoms and might not be noticed.

Leishmaniasis is considered endemic in the Yucatan peninsula with most cases detected in the states of Campeche and Quintana Roo; transmission occurs between November and March. In recent years, cases have been detected more frequently in Chiapas, Tabasco and Yucatan.

The cutaneous form of the disease represents 99% of cases reported annually. The majority of cases are associated with agricultural and forestry activities in the jungle and forest areas of the peninsula. Recent environmental changes such as deforestation and urbanisation have contributed to an increase in cases detected.

## Zika virus

Zika fever is a viral disease, mostly transmitted to people by mosquito bites, but also from one person to another through sexual contact. Symptoms can be mild and include fever, rash, muscle and joint pains, red eyes (conjunctivitis). However, infection during pregnancy can cause severe complications, including miscarriage and permanent birth defects (congenital Zika syndrome). No specific treatment or vaccine is available. Prevent infection through mosquito bite avoidance. Prevent sexual transmission through condom use or abstinence.

The first locally-transmitted cases were reported in November 2015, and the country experienced a large outbreak with thousands of cases in 2016-2017. Birth defects related to Zika infection in pregnant people have been documented. Cases continue to be reported and zika transmission is ongoing in many states. The mosquitoes which transmit Zika are not likely to be found above 2,000 metres (6,561 feet) above sea level.

## **COVID-19**

COVID-19 is predominantly a respiratory illness, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Transmission is from person to person via contaminated respiratory droplets. People are infected when these droplets are inhaled or land directly on the mouth/nose/eyes, or indirectly when transferred by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the mouth/nose/eyes.

Most people will develop a mild to moderate illness only which lasts up to two weeks, or have no symptoms. Symptoms vary greatly. Common symptoms include fever, cough and sore throat. Sometimes there is a loss of or change in the sense of smell or taste. The illness can progress to being severe and can be fatal. Older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk of severe disease and death. Antiviral treatment is available and is particularly important for people at higher risk of severe illness.

Some people may continue to have symptoms that last for weeks or months after the initial infection has gone.

Prevention is through vaccination, hand hygiene, and physical distancing. Wearing a mask, and ensuring adequate ventilation in enclosed spaces can reduce the risk of infection.

The first imported cases were reported on 28 February 2020.

## **Air Pollution**

Poor air quality, also known as "haze", "smog" and "air pollution", can negatively impact one's health. Some groups are especially vulnerable to problems caused by polluted air. These include children, the elderly and anyone with underlying chronic health problems such as heart disease, emphysema, bronchitis or asthma.

The chemicals in polluted air can affect the lungs resulting in wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath and even pain. Polluted air can also irritate the eyes and nose, and may interfere with immune system function. Long-term exposure can result in reduced lung function, particularly in children. It can also lead to lung cancer.

Limiting exposure to polluted air is the best way to prevent health problems. When air quality is poor, it may be advisable to avoid outdoor physical activities. While indoors, keep doors and windows closed, and use an air conditioner on 'recirculate' if possible. If the air quality is frequently problematic, consider using an air cleaner. During particularly bad periods, you may want to wear a mask while outside. Ask your healthcare provider before using a mask, especially if you have underlying health conditions. See the International SOS [Air Pollution website](#) - use your membership number to log in.

Air pollution exceeds the World Health Organization's guidelines. Vehicular emissions, burning, mining and petroleum industries mainly add to pollution levels. Seasonal variations exist, with poor air quality prevailing during the dry season (March and April) and during the rainy season (between May and October). Air pollution is monitored in several locations by [National Institute Ecology and Climate Change](#) and in Mexico City by [Mexico City Atmospheric Monitoring System](#).

## **Altitude**

Altitude illness is a potentially fatal condition that can affect people who normally live at a low altitude and travel to higher altitudes. It can occur from elevations of 1,500 meters onwards but is more common at elevations above 2,500 meters (8,000 feet).

People most at risk are those who have experienced altitude illness before, people who have heart or lung problems and people under the age of 50. There are three different types of altitude illness: Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). AMS is the most common and mild form of altitude illness. HACE and HAPE are more severe. HACE is a medical emergency and if not treated and managed quickly, can result in coma and death. Management of altitude illnesses involves immediate descent and oxygen treatment. Most people who are affected, even those who develop HACE or HAPE, recover completely if moved to a lower elevation. There are medicines that can be administered by trained medical professionals.

Anyone travelling to high altitudes, especially higher than 2,500 meters, should be aware of and recognise the symptoms of altitude illness. See your travel health professional before departure, for individual advice on preventive measures, especially if you have ever suffered altitude sickness in the past, or if you have an underlying medical condition.

With an average elevation of 1,111m (3,645ft), much of Mexico is considered to be at high elevation and significant portions of the interior are extremely elevated (>2,500m / 8,202ft). In addition to the capital Mexico City (2,240m / 7,349ft), large population centres with a risk of altitude sickness include: Puebla de Zaragoza (2,147m / 7,044ft), Nezahualcóyotl (2,220m / 7,283ft), Tlalnepantla de Baz (2,238m / 7,343 ft), Ecatepec de Morelos (2,250m / 7,382ft), Cuautitlán Izcalli (2,260m / 7,415ft), Chimalhuacán (2,400m / 7,874ft), Atizapán de Zaragoza (2,400m / 7,874ft), Toluca de Lerdo (2,663m / 8,737ft).

### **Cutaneous Larva Migrans**

Cutaneous Larva Migrans (CLM) is a skin infection caused by parasites known as hookworms. Animals such as dogs and cats host these parasites and shed the parasite eggs in their faeces. The eggs then hatch into larvae.

Transmission occurs through direct skin contact with contaminated sand or soil. The larva penetrates the outermost layers of the skin. A pricking or itching sensation may be experienced when the larva penetrates the skin. Within a few hours, a rash can develop at the entry point. As the larva moves, creeping tracks or snake-like reddish tracks will develop. Severe itching and mild swelling may also occur. CLM usually resolves itself without any treatment. Some anti-parasitic medications may be used to shorten the duration of infection.

There is no medication to prevent the infection. Avoid walking barefoot at the beach and avoid direct skin contact with infected sand or soil. Use a clean towel or mat to sit or lie on the sand.

## **Volcano**

There are several types of volcanic eruptions and some pose a major threat to health. One such eruption is volcanic ash fall. Ash is made of fine particles of rock and minerals and is gritty and abrasive. It can carry for many kilometres through the air. Approaching ash clouds resemble ordinary weather clouds, and are sometimes accompanied by lightning or thunder. They bring a sulfur smell into the air.

When the ash finally falls, it settles in a dust-like covering. The "dust", however, is hard and abrasive. It does not dissolve in water, and it conducts electricity. It becomes more conductive when wet. Heavy ash falls can cause roofs to collapse and can lead to high levels of respirable ash in the air people breathe.

Most commonly, people get a runny nose and sore throat, sometimes with a dry cough. Because the ash is gritty, it can cause skin and eye irritation. People should minimize exposure to ash, those with chronic bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and other respiratory conditions should be especially vigilant since their symptoms can worsen.

Several volcanoes are present in Mexico and the following have a history of recent and/or recurrent eruptions: Colima and Popocatepetl. The Mexican [Centre for the Prevention of Disasters](#) (CENAPRED) monitors and alerts on volcanic activity (in Spanish).

## **Hepatitis A**

Hepatitis A is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation. The virus is present in the faeces of an infected person. It spreads through contaminated food and water and is common in areas with poor sanitation. Person-to-person spread also occurs, when the virus is inadvertently transferred into the mouth, including during sexual activity. People at higher risk of infection include men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease.

Not everyone gets symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four weeks or more after infection and can last for weeks or months. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/discomfort, jaundice (yellow colour of the skin and eyes), dark urine, clay-coloured stool, joint pain and itching. Many infected people suffer only a mild illness. Most cases recover fully after four or more weeks. However, for some, the disease can be severe, and occasionally is fatal. There is no specific treatment and cases are managed through supportive therapy. Prevention is through vaccination, attention to hygiene, and access to safe food and water.

### **Travellers diarrhoea**

Travellers' diarrhoea is the most common travel-related illness. It usually occurs within the first week away from home. It is spread through contaminated food and water.

Prevention is through choosing safe food and water, and paying attention to hygiene. Select food that is thoroughly cooked while fresh and served hot. Avoid undercooked or raw meat, fish or shellfish. Avoid salad and raw vegetables unless you can wash them with clean (treated) water and you peel them yourself.

Unless you are certain that the tap water is drinkable - choose bottled water and beverages, avoid ice.

Travellers staying outside of first-class hotels and tourist resorts are at high risk for travellers' diarrhoea and other intestinal illnesses.

### **Typhoid fever**

Typhoid fever is a serious infection caused by *Salmonella typhi* bacteria. People are infected through ingesting contaminated food or water. Choosing safe food and water and vaccination reduces the risk of developing the disease.

Symptoms usually begin one to three weeks after exposure. Although typhoid fever is often called a diarrhoeal disease, some patients do not have diarrhoea. Persistent, high fever is typical. Other early symptoms are flu-like: body aches and pains, weakness, loss of appetite and a continuous dull headache. A rash with pink spots may appear on the chest and abdomen of some patients. In severe cases, perforation of the bowel can cause severe bleeding or infection in the abdomen, which can be fatal.

Typhoid is treated with antibiotics. However there is a growing problem of antibiotic resistance. "Extensively drug-resistant" (XDR) typhoid is present in some locations and does not respond to many of the antibiotics which are usually used against typhoid, making preventive measures even more important.

Thousands of cases are reported every year. The disease is present throughout the country but higher number of cases have occurred in Chiapas, Coahuila, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Tabasco, Veracruz and Zacatecas.

### **HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and STIs**

HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).

- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:

- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes are sterile and not shared between patients.
- Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
- Be aware of your risk when assisting anyone with an injury. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

## **Food & Water**

**Drink bottled water. Care with food.**

## Food Risk

Food-borne illness is common. To reduce your risk:

- Food served in larger hotels and well-known restaurants should be safe.
- Busier restaurants may be safer as they are more likely to serve freshly cooked food.
- Always choose food that has been freshly cooked and is served hot.
- Avoid food that has been stored warm – such as in a “bain marie.”
- Avoid raw foods, shellfish, pre-peeled fruit and salad.
- Fruit that you wash and peel yourself is safe.
- Avoid street vendors and market food because the standard of hygiene may be low and food may not be fresh.
- Cases of multidrug-resistant *Salmonella* have been linked to the consumption of beef, beef products (dried beef or beef jerky) and fresh cheese (including queso fresco and Oaxaca).
- Cases of *Cyclospora* infection (with gastrointestinal symptoms) have been reported in travellers returning from Mexico.

## Water and Beverages

Tap water is unsafe.

- Drink only bottled or boiled water or carbonated drinks.
- Avoid ice, as it may have been made from unsafe water.

# Destination Guide for Mexico



## Security

### Destination Guide Content

## Personal Security

### STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Travel to HIGH travel risk areas should be for essential purposes and should be arranged in close liaison with local contacts. Workforce should carefully plan all aspects of their itinerary and be confident in their accommodation, transport, communication and security arrangements prior to travel. Measures include travelling with a private, low-profile vehicle and trusted driver and undertaking movement in daylight hours only. Journey plans should allow sufficient time for delays, such as a breakdown. Given the difficulties associated with arranging secure accommodation in US border areas, avoid overnight stays and arrange lodging in the US where possible.
- Crime poses a significant risk in Mexico and criminals are often armed; take stringent security precautions at all times. If accosted by a criminal, assume that the assailant is armed and do nothing to resist or antagonise them.
- Keep a low profile and avoid displaying valuables in public, as victims are often specifically targeted based on appearance, as well as on perceived vulnerability and/or lack of awareness.
- Short-term 'express' kidnapping poses a risk to business travellers. Foreign nationals should maintain a low profile while in the country. Longer-term international assignees should avoid establishing routines and vary the timings and routes of journeys.
- Avoid providing personal information to anyone outside of your trusted group; do not volunteer information to strangers. Refrain from posting personal and travel information on social media and networking sites.
- Virtual kidnapping is a crime where-in a target typically receives a call and is threatened and extorted for payment using deception and personal information. It is recommended to ignore calls and messages from unknown numbers if possible. In the event of receiving such a call, it is advised to hang up and contact the International SOS Assistance Centre.

- Physical theft of credit cards is a concern. Avoid withdrawing money from ATMs on the street and instead opt for those located in bank branches.
- Occasional politically motivated unrest is a possibility. Avoid all demonstrations as a precaution.
- Do not travel on foot after dark, or in unfamiliar or peripheral districts.
- Driving standards are variable. Do not self-drive, but pre-arrange hire of a private vehicle and experienced local driver through your hotel or host company. Keep windows up and doors locked at all times, and do not undertake road travel outside urban centres after dark.
- Protesters, community self-defence groups, and organised criminal groups may erect roadblocks to block passage into and out of towns and municipalities. Do not attempt to cross any roadblocks, as this may provoke a hostile reaction. Vigilantes and organised criminal groups have fired at vehicles that fail to stop at roadblocks.
- Transportation booked through the hotel or company or a rideshare app is suitable in most urban areas. Never hail a taxi from the street.
- In the event of a security emergency, it is advisable to reach out the Assistance Centre for support.
- Vigilantly monitor your financial statements and accounts during and after travel. If your financial information was compromised, it can take several weeks before fraudulent purchases are attempted.
- Certain business travellers, including employees of media and non-governmental organisations, may wish to take additional precautions to safeguard personal electronics and communications.
- Be aware of your surroundings and take precautions against unwanted attention. Drink spiking is a concern, especially in resort areas.

## Crime

### Occurs in many areas, sometimes violent

#### CRIME

*Opportunistic crime/petty theft*

Street crimes such as pickpocketing and mugging pose a significant risk to business travellers, particularly in urban areas. Crowded squares, transport terminals, the metro and buses are favoured targets for pickpockets and bag-snatchers, who often work in teams. Criminals may stake out airports, hotel lobbies and restaurants to grab bags or phones from distracted patrons. Robbers particularly target foreign nationals who appear to be rich, lost and/or drunk, as well as unaccompanied. Businesswomen tend to face a higher level of risk from crime due to perceived vulnerability. There have been reports of bar patrons being drugged and subsequently robbed; business travellers should order drinks at the bar, where their preparation can be observed, and then not leave them unattended. There have also been occasional reports of the use of substandard or tainted alcohol by some bars, including in more upscale resorts. If possible, foreign nationals should request a brand name or higher quality alcohol while ordering a drink, and only accept food and drinks from staff members in official venue uniforms.

#### *Sexual assault*

Sexual assault is a persistent threat in both urban and rural areas throughout Mexico. Most incidences of sexual assault occur after dark or in the early morning hours. While business travellers can be targeted regardless of gender, businesswomen tend to face a higher level of risk. Foreign nationals should avoid traveling alone and seek alternative transport rather than crowded buses or subways, at all times.

#### *Fraud*

Business travellers should be aware of the risk of card-skimming. Foreign nationals should be careful when withdrawing money from ATMs and check if any suspicious devices are attached to the machine. Criminals also target users of ATMs; Mobile workforce should only use ATMs during normal business hours and at indoor commercial establishments, rather than machines that are accessible from the street. Both legitimate and imposter police officers have scammed tourists by extorting payments through the imposition of false fines or soliciting bribes.

#### *Road banditry*

The Army and National Guard units patrol highways across the country to prevent carjacking, robbery and kidnapping. Bandits and criminal groups pose a danger to business travellers on isolated highways, particularly at night and, most often, in rural areas. Illegal checkpoints are common in HIGH-risk areas, particularly in Guanajuato, Guerrero, Michoacan, Tamaulipas, and Zacatecas states. Vehicle thieves primarily target dark-coloured trucks and sports utility vehicles (SUVs). More sophisticated criminals may divert trucks to steal cargo; cargo robbery is most common in highways in Mexico, Puebla, Michoacan and Tamaulipas states. Armed criminals occasionally hold up buses, trucks, taxi passengers and private cars, and incidents can lead to short-term abductions. Foreign and local nationals have been killed or injured for resisting armed criminals and/or failing to make a stop at their checkpoints on roads.

Overland travel can be dangerous due to crime and the potential of accidents. It is advised to only undertake travel in a private vehicle with a trusted local driver during daylight hours using toll highways whenever possible. Self-driving is not advisable unless very familiar with the country.

#### *Violence related to organised crime*

Frequent clashes between rival criminal factions, or between these groups and the security forces, have led to escalating violence across multiple states. The historic hot spots of drug-related violence are the northern border states (Baja California, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, Sonora and Tamaulipas), as well as the states along the Pacific coast (Colima, Sinaloa, Jalisco, Guerrero and Michoacán). In recent years, the north-central states of Guanajuato and Zacatecas have also become hot spots of violence related to organised crime.

Major cities such as Celaya, Ciudad Juárez, Ciudad Obregón, Culiacan, Fresnillo, Irapuato, Leon, Matamoros, Tijuana, Reynosa and Zacatecas experience frequent shoot-outs and violent crime associated with organised crime groups. Although such clashes usually do not affect business travellers directly, they pose significant incidental risks to anyone in the vicinity. Armed criminals have been known to hijack the vehicles of passers-by to block highways and city streets amid ongoing security operations.

#### *Piracy*

In recent years, maritime piracy has been a growing issue that primarily involves criminal groups boarding and robbing platforms and vessels supporting the oil industry. The areas off the coast of Campeche and Tabasco states have been most affected by such criminal activities. To a lesser extent, fishing boats, yachts and tourist boats are also targeted for theft. Assailants are usually armed, tend to operate in groups of small motor boats after dark, and have occasionally posed as fishermen to approach boats. They are often members of organised criminal groups and seek to rob personal belongings, communication and navigation instruments, wiring and other equipment.

People operating vessels and equipment should maintain heightened vigilance if operating in the region and consider additional layers of security. Those undertaking tourist travel are recommended to exercise precautions and minimise exposure to areas of the Gulf of Mexico surrounding HIGH travel risk states such as Veracruz.

## **Terrorism**

### **Minimal risk to foreigners**

#### **TERRORISM**

The risk of international terrorism is low and is unlikely to affect business travellers. There is a persistent, low risk that Islamic extremists belonging to or inspired by a transnational organisation might attempt to enter the US via Mexico, or perpetrate an attack targeting US or European interests in the country. However, the threat is mitigated by the significant security presence in border cities and absence of communities that could be vulnerable to radicalisation, and there is no known evidence to suggest that Islamist extremists are seeking to expand their activity or presence in Mexico.

There is also a low but latent risk from small militant groups that are based in the southern states, specifically Chiapas. While there have not been any recent reports of notable activity by such groups, they have not officially disarmed or committed to any formal peace accord. These organisations have previously targeted domestic infrastructure in an attempt to promote their political views, but do not usually attack foreign businesses.

## Kidnapping

### KIDNAPPING

Although the number of kidnappings has been falling steadily since 2019 according to official statistic, abduction remains a risk. The majority of victims are local nationals, taken for the purpose of extorting a ransom payment, or to coerce someone else to take a certain action. Foreign nationals have been targeted, with a few cases being fatal. In March 2023, four American citizens were abducted in Matamoros (Tamaulipas state) after their vehicle was attacked. Business travellers and international assignees should take specific precautions, including varying daily routines, and refrain from sharing itinerary and accommodation details with acquaintances or strangers, or from discussing business or financial affairs in public spaces. Kidnappings most commonly occur outside of the victim's home or office. According to authorities, the states with the highest number of kidnappings are Mexico State, Veracruz and Chihuahua.

Express kidnapping poses a higher risk to foreign nationals than kidnap-for-ransom, particularly in major urban centres, including the capital Mexico City, Guadalajara (Jalisco state) and Monterrey (Nuevo Leon state). In this type of attack, thieves co-operate with, or pose as, taxi drivers, coercing their passenger to either withdraw cash from ATMs, pay through a point-of-sale terminal, or transfer the money through a bank application.

Express kidnappers are known to operate in upmarket locations, especially near banks and expensive restaurants, and to select victims whose appearance suggests that they are wealthy. Cases of express kidnapping have involved hotel, bar, and restaurant staff at times.

In order to minimise the risk of express kidnapping, it is advisable to use pre-arranged transportation (via a secure provider or the hotel) or rideshare apps with adequate verification of the driver's identity. Never hail a taxi from the street.

Virtual kidnap-for-ransom is a growing trend, especially at hotels. In these schemes, scammers attempt to extort ransom payments from the victims, trying to manipulate them into believing that they are under organised crime surveillance and may be harmed if they do not comply with the scammer's demands. Alternatively, the scammers may try to convince the victim that a loved one or co-worker is in imminent danger.

Virtual kidnappers may leverage hotel staff to target their victims using guests' private information. The criminals, who often claim to work for a 'cartel', contact their victim by phone or chat, pressuring them into isolating themselves in a room or changing their accommodation under the threat of violence. Often, the virtual kidnappers will claim the victim's hotel is being surveilled by gunmen, supposedly ready to attack if their demands are not met. They will then push for a ransom payment from the victim or their associates to ensure their safety. The perpetrators are generally small-time criminals – often inmates – without ties to the large organisations they claim to represent, and do not have the capabilities to physically kidnap the victim or otherwise carry on their threats.

To reduce the risk of this type of extortion, mobile workforce should maintain a low profile and not answer unknown numbers, if possible, as well as ignore messages from unknown contacts. Workforce should also ensure hotels have a clear and rigorous data and privacy protection policy. They should also avoid providing more personal information than strictly necessary for booking or checking in at the front desk. In the event of receiving such a call, business travellers are advised to immediately hang up and dial an [International SOS Assistance Centre](#).

## Social Unrest

### **SOCIAL UNREST**

Large-scale protests and demonstrations over a variety of grievances occur frequently in urban centres, especially in the capital Mexico City. The states of Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacan, and Oaxaca in particular experience persistent unrest by indigenous communities, teachers' unions, and other social actors, who have been known to carry out roadblocks on key highways. Protests can be either peaceful or involve clashes with the police. The Mexican constitution prohibits foreign nationals from participating in political activities.

Protests over corruption, controversial public policies and reforms are frequent in Mexico. Perceived government inaction over insecurity – especially in regard to widespread gendered violence – has also triggered frequent protests by feminist groups in recent years.

The odds of civil unrest and political violence are heightened in the months ahead and after elections at all levels. Protests by groups who are dissatisfied with election results can lead to localised violence for months after voting. Political violence is more acute in the states of Chiapas, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacan, Oaxaca, and Veracruz. However, local political disputes are unlikely to affect business travellers and workforce directly, provided that they avoid street gatherings.

'Celebratory gunfire' is not uncommon in rural areas and peripheral neighbourhoods of urban centres during major holidays and public festivals such as New Year celebrations (31 December-1 January) and Independence Day (15 September).

## Conflict

### **CONFLICT**

Mexico is not involved in any conflict with any foreign powers or neighbours; however, military and police units continue to wage armed conflict and operations against drug cartels in the northern border region of Mexico, as well as other states with high levels of organised criminal activity.