

Mexico: Culture, Tips and Facts



About Mexico

- Mexico has a rich and vibrant culture influenced by their roots in Europe and Aztec and Mayan civilizations. Similar to the United States, Mexico has varied landscapes, cultures and foods within the country.
- Although English is taught in public schools from a young age, and many in Mexico speak at least some English, it is very helpful to know a few basic Spanish phrases when traveling in Mexico. We urge you to use any Spanish you have, as this can encourage connection.
- The most prominent religion in Mexico is Catholicism.
- Mexico's public education ends at the equivalent of 9th grade in most circumstances and high school is a potentially unattainable option for the children we work with, due to its relatively high cost.
- Approximately 44% of people in Mexico live in poverty.

Find more city-specific information below.

Cultural and Travel Tips

- Relationships are important in Mexico. You may be greeted in a familiar way, possibly with a kiss on your right cheek and "Dios te bendiga" (God bless you.)
- Take time to form relationships. Look people in the eye and be prepared to spend time with them, even if you don't speak their language. Be flexible; it's more important to be relational than project-oriented.
- Safe, filtered drinking water is always available on campus and during work projects.
- Generally speaking, toilet paper isn't flushed in Mexico due to infrastructural differences. Please place used toilet paper in the provided trash cans next to the toilet.
- Electricity is the same as the U.S. and you may bring electronic device chargers with you to Mexico.
- U.S. dollars are accepted at Back2Back site markets. Bring small denominations of money (\$1's, \$5's, \$10's). You are unlikely to need money in pesos during your stay, but you can exchange it at the airport when you arrive if you think you will need some.

- Please be sensitive to the language you use when speaking - don't use the word "orphan" around children or caregivers.

About Monterrey, Mexico

- Monterrey is the capital city of the northeastern state of Nuevo Leon. It is located 150 miles south of the U.S. border and sits surrounded by the Sierra Madre Mountains.
- The weather in Monterrey is generally warm, though it does get chilly in November-February, so you will need layers if you stay during this time. During summer months, the average highs are around 95 degrees and lows are in the 70s. During the winter, the highs are in the low 70s and lows in the 50s.
- Monterrey is a large industrial city. Due to its location, many enjoy outdoor sports such as rock climbing.



About Mazatlan, Mexico

- Mazatlan is situated on the Mexican Pacific shoreline, in the state of Sinaloa. It's nickname is "La Perla del Pacifico," which means 'The Pacific Pearl'. It's a popular town for Americans and Canadians to vacation, and the biggest fishing port in Mexico.
- The temperature varies, but it is always pleasant with lows in the 50s and highs in the 70s during winter. The summer is very hot and humid, with lows in the 80s and highs in the 90s. The rainy season begins in May, with most of the rain in August.
- Attire in Mazatlan tends to be very relaxed.
- Mazatlan is a beach town full of rich history and famous for its Carnival (Mardi Gras).



About Cancun, Mexico

- Cancun is situated on the Yucatan Peninsula on the Caribbean Sea and located in the state of Quintana Roo. It is best known for its white sand beaches.
- The weather in Cancun is typically warm and sunny, with highs in the 80s and 90s all year round and lows from 65-80 degrees.
- There are many Mayan ruins nearby to visit, including Chichen Itza which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

