

MEXICO RISK ASSESSMENT



City & Country

MEXICO, Mexico City / Guadalajara

Prepared by

Sussex Abroad Office

Before you go -

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provides travel advice by country. It covers safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements, health and natural disasters along with a host of other useful information. We strongly recommend that students read the section related to their destination prior to departure and before undertaking any trip to another part of the county/region. The [Mexico City Command and Control Centre](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/) (Centro de Atención a Emergencias y Protección Ciudadana de la Ciudad de México) has information and advice on safety in Mexico City.

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/>

VISA REGULATIONS

Please check regulations relating to visas on London's Mexican Embassy website:

<http://embamex.sre.gob.mx/reinounido/>

Tourists are not allowed to undertake voluntary (including human rights) work, or activity, or any form of paid employment. If you wish to carry out this type of work you must get the correct visa from the Mexican Embassy before you travel.

It is no longer possible to switch immigration status in-country. You can't enter Mexico on a tourist visa and then change it for a work visa, for example. You must apply at the Mexican Consulate of your normal place of residence in plenty of time before you are due to travel.

Passport visa regulations:

Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay.

Travelling to Mexico via the US

If you're travelling to Mexico via the US, even if you're only transiting, check the US entry requirements with the [US Embassy in London](#). If you don't have the correct authorisation you will not be allowed to travel to or transit through the US.

Further information can be found on the FCO's [US Travel Advice](#).

Travelling around Mexico and to other countries

We understand that students may wish to travel around as part of their study abroad experience. Before embarking on a journey to a new part of the country, or to another country, students should ensure they have informed themselves adequately by reading the information on the UK government's FCO travel advice pages. Travellers should take the usual precautions when travelling to a new place, and make sure that friends and family have information on their travel plans at all times.

Additionally, the host university will offer students a security briefing when they arrive at the university. It is mandatory for all students to attend this session. Colleagues at the host university will be able to offer advice on travelling to other parts of the country and any additional precautions which may need to be taken.

TERRORISM

Although there's no recent history of terrorism in Mexico, attacks can't be ruled out.

There's a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. You should be vigilant at this time.

Find out more about the [global threat from terrorism](#), how to minimise your risk and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack.

Type	Nature of the Hazard	Procedures to Minimise Risk
VIOLENCE	Drug-related violence in Mexico has increased over recent years. The violence is concentrated in specific areas, and some regions are almost completely spared.	Make sure you research your destination thoroughly. Outbursts of politically-motivated violence can occur across the country, with a

		recent increase in the states of Guerrero and Mexico City.
	<p>North and West</p> <p>Many fatalities are suspected gang members killed in turf wars between the different organisations that compete for control of trafficking routes into the US. Drug-related violence is a particular problem in the northern states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa and Durango. Armed clashes between security forces and drug groups can occur at any time without warning. You should take extreme care outside tourist areas in all of these states.</p> <p>You should take precautions in the state of Baja California, including Tijuana. There has been a rise in drug-related crime in Baja California Sur, including Los Cabos. You should take extra care when travelling to these areas.</p> <p>You should take care when travelling to Ciudad Juarez or other cities in Northern States. Travel during daylight hours when possible, inform relatives or friends of your travel plans and use reputable hotels only.</p>	<p>ALL travel to border regions is considered HIGH risk and you are advised in the strongest terms not to travel to these areas. The British, Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against travel to certain other regions within Mexico. When planning any travel within Mexico, please pay attention to the advice on their website as well as local advice and host university guidance. Do not put yourself at unnecessary risk by travelling to unsafe areas.</p> <p>Visitors to the border region, in particular, should follow the advice of local authorities and are advised to be extra vigilant.</p> <p>You should seek advice from local contacts, avoid travel off the beaten track, stay abreast of media coverage of events in the areas, to or through which, you intend to travel, and ensure that trusted contacts are aware of your travel plans. Be aware of your surroundings at all times and of the risks of travelling to certain areas, and include security measures in all of your travel plans.</p>

	<p>East There have been reports of increased security incidents in the states of Tabasco and Veracruz. You should take extra care.</p> <p>West and South Illegal roadblocks have been reported more frequently, particularly in the states of Guerrero and Chiapas. If you're driving in these states, travel during daylight hours and use toll roads where possible, although you may still encounter disruptions. Drug-related violence is also a problem in Michoacán, Guerrero, Jalisco and Nayarit. See the main tourist destinations section below for further details.</p> <p>Main tourist destinations The Mexican government makes efforts to protect major tourist destinations like Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Cozumel, Los Cabos, Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta. These areas have mostly not seen the levels of drug-related violence and crime experienced elsewhere in Mexico. However, since 2017 there have been a number of reported shooting incidents and other incidents of violence in these areas, including in locations</p>	<p>While British nationals are unlikely to be specifically targeted, there is a risk of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Do not become involved with drugs of any kind. Penalties for drug offences are severe. Convictions carry very long sentences – up to 25 years. The police sometimes ask foreigners to show some form of identification. You should carry a photocopy of the relevant pages of your passport and leave the original in a safe place.</p>
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	<p>popular with tourists. There is currently an increased police presence in the Cancun area, including in the hotel zone. While tourists have not been the target of such incidents, anyone in the vicinity of an incident could be affected.</p> <p>On 21 February 2018, an explosive device detonated on a tourist ferry operating between Playa del Carmen and Cozumel, Quintana Roo. The explosion injured 20 people, including tourists. On 1 March, local authorities found an undetonated device on another ferry operating on the same route. The Mexican authorities are continuing to investigate the incident.</p> <p>If you're visiting any of these areas, you should monitor local advice, remain vigilant and follow the advice of the local authorities and your tour operator.</p> <p>There have been several instances of armed crime both within and outside tourist areas in Acapulco. If possible, travel by air if you're visiting a major tourist destination in Guerrero. Due to an increase in violent crime in recent months, you should be extra vigilant in Acapulco and surrounding areas.</p>	
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<p>CRIME</p>	<p>Crime and violence are serious problems in Mexico and the security situation can pose a risk for foreigners. Many Mexican and foreign businesses choose to hire private security.</p>	<p>You should research your destination thoroughly and only travel during daylight hours when possible. Monitor local media and inform trusted contacts of your travel plans.</p>
	<p>When driving, avoid isolated roads and use toll roads ('cuotas') whenever possible. Keep car doors locked and windows closed, especially at traffic lights. There have been a number of violent car-jackings and robberies along the Pacific Highway and you should be careful when travelling on this route. Those travelling in large camper vans or sports utility vehicles (SUVs) have been targeted in the past.</p>	<p>If you suspect you're being followed or watched, drive to a police station or other safe place.</p>
	<p>Passengers have been robbed and assaulted by unlicensed taxi drivers including in Mexico City.</p>	<p>In Mexico City, use the better regulated 'sitio' taxis from authorised cab ranks or ask your hotel concierge to order you a taxi. At airports, use only authorised pre-paid airport taxi services.</p>

	<p>Women travelling on their own should be particularly alert when travelling on public transport. There have been incidents of rape on urban buses ('micros') on routes in the south of Mexico City. Most attacks have occurred early in the morning or late at night. Several serious sexual offences have also occurred in tourist areas outside of Mexico City.</p>	<p>Take care even in areas close to hotels, and especially after dark.</p>
	<p>Street crime is a serious problem in major cities and tourist resort areas. Pick-pocketing is common on the Mexico City Metro. Dress down and avoid wearing expensive jewellery or watches.</p>	<p>Limit the amount of cash or credit/debit cards you carry with you. Keep a close watch on briefcases and luggage, even in apparently secure places like the lobby of your hotel.</p> <p>Take care when withdrawing money from ATMs or exchanging money at Bureau de Change. It's generally safer to use ATMs during daylight hours and inside shops or malls.</p>
	<p>Foreign visitors and residents may be targeted by scam artists. Be wary of strangers approaching you or contacting</p>	<p>If you or your relatives or friends are asked to transfer money to Mexico make</p>

	you by phone asking for personal information or financial help.	absolutely sure that it is not part of a scam and that you have properly checked with the person receiving the money that they are requesting it.
SWIMMING	Shark attacks are relatively rare in Mexico, but you should take care particularly when surfing.	Research the local area and follow the advice of the local authorities.
CROCODILES	Crocodiles are present in Mexico, most commonly in lagoons and coastal areas. Sightings have been reported near tourist areas, including Cancun and resorts on the Pacific coast. There are signs warning about crocodiles around many lagoons in these areas.	Respect the warnings and don't walk too close to the water. Tourists have been seriously injured in crocodile attacks in the past.
POLITICAL SITUATION	Mexico has an established multiparty democracy. Political demonstrations are common in Mexico City and can occur across the country. These can be tense and confrontational and could potentially turn violent. Onlookers can be quickly drawn in.	You should monitor local media and avoid all demonstrations. The Mexican constitution prohibits political activities by foreigners. Participation in demonstrations may result in detention and deportation. The Mexico City Command and Control Centre (Centro de Atención a Emergencias y Protección Ciudadana de

		la Ciudad de México) has information and advice on safety in Mexico City.
HEALTH	<p>In the last 3 years there has been an increase in reported cases of a food and water bug, cyclospora, affecting travellers returning from Mexico, particularly from the Riviera Maya region between the months of May and June. You should follow the advice of the National Travel Health Network and Centre.</p> <p>There have been cases of cholera in Quintana Roo.</p>	<p>You should follow the advice of the National Travel Health Network and Centre.</p> <p>Drink only boiled or bottled water and avoid ice in drinks.</p>
	<p>Cases of Chikungunya virus have been confirmed in Mexico. For more details about this outbreak, see the website of the National Health Network and Centre.</p>	<p>You should take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.</p>
DRUGS	<p>Penalties for drug offences are severe. Convictions carry sentences of up to 25 years.</p>	<p>Don't become involved with drugs of any kind.</p>

<p>NATURAL DISASTERS</p>	<p>The hurricane season in Mexico normally runs from June to November and can affect both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. Be aware that effects of tropical storms and hurricanes can span hundreds of miles from the centre of the storm, causing flooding, landslides and disruption to local services, including transport.</p>	<p>Monitor local and international weather updates from the US National Hurricane Center and check with the local authorities or your tour operator for any changes to your travel plans.</p> <p>See tropical cyclones page for information and advice about what to do if you're caught up in a storm.</p>
	<p>Most of Mexico is occasionally subject to earthquakes. Tremors occur regularly, particularly in the states of Oaxaca and Guerrero.</p> <p>The US Federal Emergency Management Agency has advice about what to do before, during and after an earthquake or tsunami as does the Mexican Ministry of Civil Protection (in Spanish).</p>	<p>If you're travelling in Mexico City you can download the 911 CDMX app, which warns you an earthquake will happen 60 seconds before the movement starts. Although these alarms are very useful, they can't detect every kind of earthquake there can be.</p>

	<p>The Popocatepetl and Colima volcanoes are active and closed to the public. There are danger zones around both volcanoes, the size of which can change depending on the current level of activity.</p>	<p>The latest information on the current status of the Colima volcano can be found on the website of the University of Colima's Volcano Observatory. For updates on the Popocatepetl volcano, visit the website of the Mexican Disaster Prevention Centre.</p>
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Please also note and be sensitive to the following:

- The Mexican Police have the authority to ask for proof of legal status in Mexico and, on occasion, have detained British nationals without documents. You should carry photocopies of the relevant pages of your passport and of the stamped 'Forma Migratoria Múltiple' (FMM) given to you on arrival in Mexico at all times. If you're a resident you may be asked to provide your residency card issued by the Mexican government.
- If you're travelling between states or near international borders, you may be stopped by Mexican immigration authorities for immigration checks. You'll need to be able to provide your passport and FMM slip. Copies are not accepted. If you're unable to produce these documents, you may be detained, held at an immigration holding centre, and ultimately deported.
- Homosexuality: civil unions between same sex partners are legal in Mexico City and Coahuila, but homosexuality is tolerated, rather than accepted. Public displays of affection between same sex couples may be frowned upon.