

Mexico

Facts and Statistics

Location: Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, between Belize and the US and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Guatemala and the US

Capital: Mexico City

Climate: varies from tropical to desert

Population: 104,959,594 (July 2004 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish) 60%, Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian 30%, white 9%, other 1%

Religions: nominally Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 6%, other 5%

Government: federal republic

Language in Mexico

Spanish control of Mexico led to the dominance of Spanish, the official language. As many as 100 Native American languages are still spoken in Mexico, but no single alternative language prevails. Eighty percent of those Mexicans who speak an indigenous language also speak Spanish. The most important of the Native American languages is Nahuatl. It is the primary language of more than a million Mexicans and is spoken by nearly one-fourth of all Native Americans in the country. This is followed by Maya, used by 14 percent of Native Americans, and Mixteco and Zapoteco, each spoken by about seven percent of Native Americans. No other indigenous language is spoken by more than five percent of Mexico's Native Americans.

Why not learn some useful Spanish phrases?

Mexican Society & Culture

Mexican Family Values

- . The family is at the centre of the social structure.
- . Outside of the major cosmopolitan cities, families are still generally large.
- . The extended family is as important as the nuclear family since it provides a sense of stability.
- . Mexicans consider it their duty and responsibility to help family members. For example, they will help find employment or finance a house or other large purchase.
- . Most Mexican families are extremely traditional, with the father as the head, the authority figure and the decision-maker.
- . Mothers are greatly revered, but their role may be seen as secondary to that of their husband.

Hierarchical Society

- . Mexican society and business are highly stratified and vertically structured.
- . Mexicans emphasize hierarchical relationships.
- . People respect authority and look to those above them for guidance and decision-making.
- . Rank is important, and those above you in rank must always be treated with respect.
- . This makes it important to know which person is in charge, and leads to an authoritarian approach to decision-making and problem-solving.
- . Mexicans are very aware of how each individual fits into each hierarchy--be it family, friends or business.
- . It would be disrespectful to break the chain of hierarchy.

'Machismo'

- . Machismo literally means 'masculinity'.
- . There are different outward behaviors to display machismo.
- . For example, making remarks to women is a stereotypical sign of machismo and should not be seen as harassment.
- . Mexican males generally believe that nothing must be allowed to tarnish their image as a man.