

National Profile Mexico

SIIJUVE ICYE MEXICO | 2025-2026



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Welcome to Mexico

Bienvenido!

SIIJUVE A.C. we are eager to show you our country, our culture, our people.... We want you to see the real Mexico, a land of immense cultural and natural diversity. A country with many needs, but also with a lot to offer to anyone willing to open their mind and heart to it. Mexico is a very friendly country, and our people will welcome you as if you were a fellow Mexican, rather than a tourist.

They will offer you their house, food, and lifestyle. Mexicans will tell you that not even us have enough time to know everything about our own country because there is always something new to discover. That is why Mexicans often say "There's no country like Mexico". If you want to see Mexico through the eyes of its people and not the global media, we invite you to participate in one of our projects!



The Country

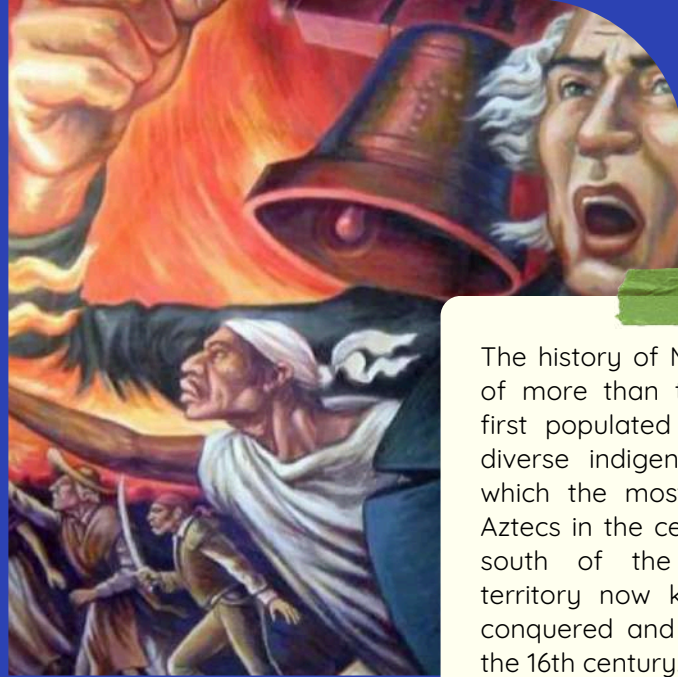
Mexico can be best described as a mixture of different cultures and races.

Mexico is home to sixty-eight native languages, with the main ones Nahuatl and Maya, twenty ethnic groups, and sixty-eight ethnolinguistic groups.

Diversity can be seen not only in the people and languages we speak, but in the flavors of our dishes, the diversity of our traditions, our natural environment, and our contrasting architecture. In Mexico, we celebrate indigenous rituals, like the Day of the Dead, in Catholic cemeteries. We have beautiful Spanish churches next to pre-hispanic cities and modern buildings. In Mexico, you will discover that everything is possible!

History

Tenochtitlan, first capital of Mexican civilization...



The history of Mexico covers a period of more than three millennia. It was first populated 13,000 years ago by diverse indigenous civilizations, from which the most prominent were the Aztecs in the center and Mayas in the south of the country. Later, the territory now known as Mexico was conquered and colonized by Spain in the 16th century.

After three centuries of colonialism, Mexicans were able to achieve their independence in 1810. A brief period of monarchy (1821–23), called the First Mexican Empire, was followed by the founding of the Republic of Mexico, established under a federal constitution in 1824. Slavery and legal racial categories were eliminated, abolishing the system of castes in the country. Independence didn't mean peace for the Mexicans, who still fought several foreign invasions through the years as The Mexican–American War started in 1846 and ended two years later with Mexico ceding almost half of its territory via the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to the United States.



The Mexican Revolution began in 1910 and lasted until 1917. It was a response to popular discontent against the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, after which Mexico's industry and infrastructure were modernized by a strong, stable but autocratic central government, since then people in charge is looking for better improvements in public safety, public health, railways, mining, industry, foreign trade, and national finances. Mexico was ruled by one party until 2000, when Vicente Fox, the candidate of the opposition party, won the presidential elections. Actually Mexico's president is Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo since October 1st, 2024, being the first woman in the history of the country to hold the office.

SIIJUVE A.C. - ICYE MEXICO

SERVICIO INTERNACIONAL PARA EL INTERCAMBIO JUVENIL A.C.

Servicio Internacional para el intercambio juvenil A.C. (SIIJUVE A.C.) is a non-profit organization, legally established in Mexico in January 1987 with the primary objective of promoting intercultural understanding and youth with global skills and values through international volunteer and training programs. On the national level, SIIJUVE consists of voluntary collaborators and a National Office. These volunteers are divided into Regional Committees, responsible for meeting the objectives of the association. This year our organization is celebrating 38 years of being funded.



SIIJUVE brings together representatives of the regional committees in General Assemblies where the general policies and strategies of the organization are defined, the previous programs are evaluated and new ones are established. On the other hand, the National Office is located in the city of Puebla and it is responsible for implementing the programs.

Culture (food, festivals and traditions)

A country of diversity

Its festivities are colorful parties that know not cultural boundaries. Below you will find some of the most representative holidays in Mexico.

1. Día De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Día De Los Muertos is a holiday celebrated on November 1st and 2nd, while other areas begin late October. Celebrated to honor those deceased and to celebrate life, there are parades, dancing, altars, etc to commemorate.



2. Las Posadas (Christmas Parties)

A Posada is a celebration held in December to remember the hardships that Mary and Joseph had looking for accommodation in Bethlehem when Mary was pregnant of Jesus. During the celebration we recreate Mary and Joseph's experience through songs. A Posada is also a time to break piñatas, have traditional food, and share with our family, friends, neighbors, and others.



3. Independence day

On September 15th, Mexico is all green, red and white! Independence day is celebrated with a lot of traditional food, fireworks, and the recreation of the shout that started the independence fight (popularly known as "el grito").



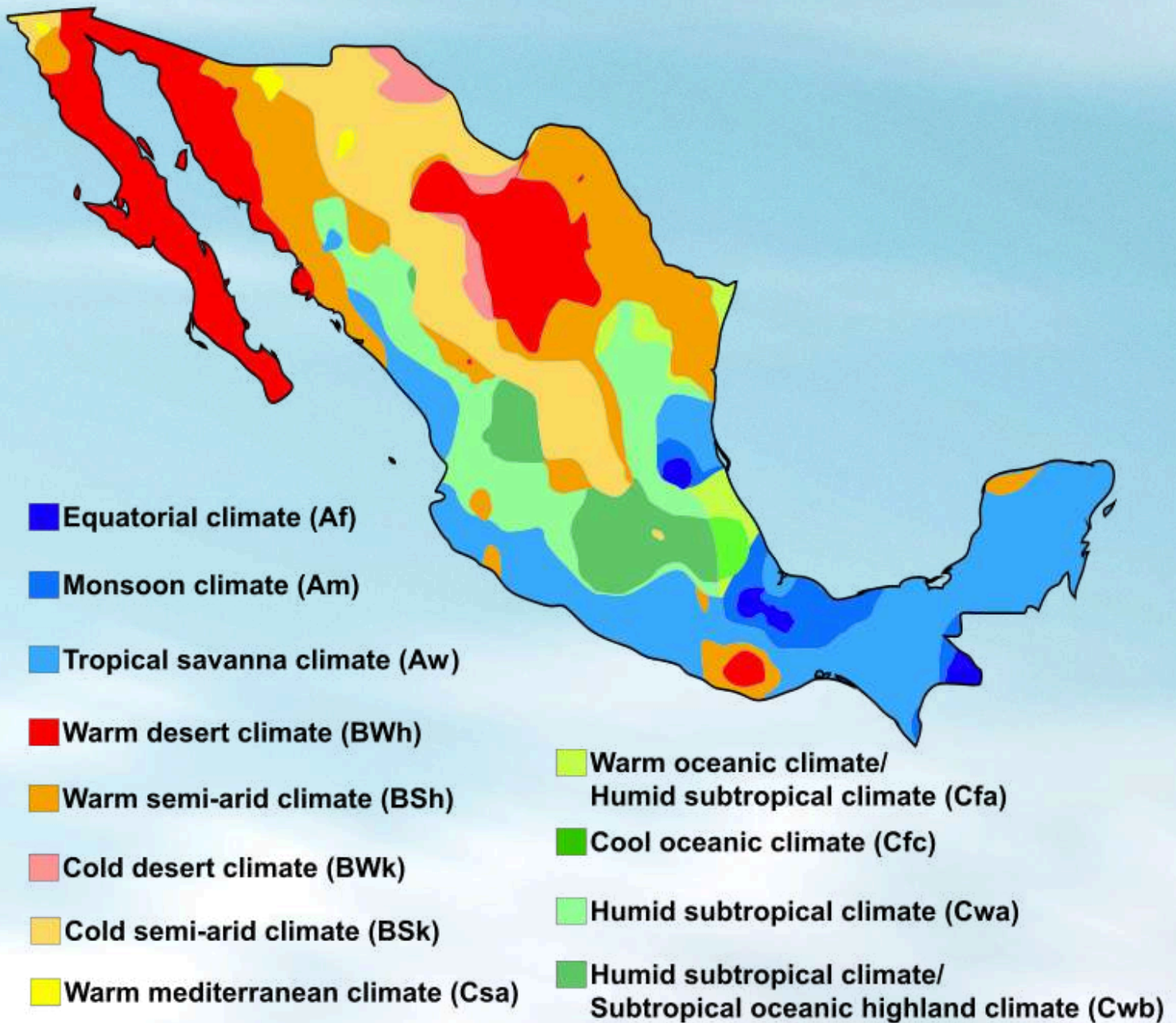
Cuisine



The most popular Mexican dish in the world is the taco, but Mexican cuisine is varied as it comes. Enchiladas, mole, tamales, sopes, chiles en nogada, chilaquiles... are just some of the foods that you will find in Mexico. Traditionally, the main Mexican ingredients consisted of maize, beans, meat, tomatoes, coriander, onion, chili peppers, avocados and various herbs native to Mexico. Because in Mexico nothing is ever plain, we always accompany our food with water flavored with a variety of fruit juices, or soda. Other traditional beverages are horchata (rice and vanilla flavored water), jamaica (hibiscus tea), cafe de olla (coffee with cinnamon and brown sugar), cinnamon-flavored hot chocolate, among others. Alcoholic beverages original from Mexico include mezcal, pulque, and tequila.



Map of Climate Clasification



The only common characteristic of weather in Mexico is the heavy rain from May to September in central and southern Mexico. Besides the former, weather will change depending on the region you are living in, the Mexican coasts that border the Pacific Ocean and the Mexican Gulf have a very hot and humid climate. If you arrive in these areas, you have to be ready to sweat a lot, even when just standing, this region is also prone to hurricanes and tropical storms during the summer. The north of Mexico is mainly desert. It has hot and dry weather with lower temperatures during the nights and the winter. The most extreme case is the state of Chihuahua, which can reach some of the lowest (minus 30 degrees) and highest (50 degrees) temperatures in Mexico. The centre-north part of Mexico has more typical weather, with less rain. Temperatures here can go from 15 to 25 degrees in a regular day.

Natural landscapes

Beautiful Places

Mexico has deserts in the north, forests in the center, jungles in the south, beautiful beaches in the Caribbean and the California gulf. We have 5 percent of Mangroves in the world, the third-largest monolith, a canyon which is larger and in some places deeper than the great Canyon in the USA, a Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, and much more!



What to see in Mexico?

As Mexico is such a beautiful and diverse country with so much to offer, you will never be short of things to do. Whether you want to stick to the lush jungle backdrop of the humid Yucatán Peninsula, make your way to the beautiful beaches of Baja California, check out some natural wonders in Oaxaca or enjoy the big variety of culture and architecture in the cities, you can find it all in Mexico.

Also will find all kind of museums , animal reserves,markets,malls.

There is always a new place to know.

Tequila, Jalisco

Tequila may be known outside of Mexico as an alcoholic drink, but in Mexico, it is a national symbol and a Magic Town in the State of Jalisco. Connected to the beautiful city of Guadalajara by train, Tequila is a colorful town where you can visit many “haciendas tequileras” (tequila factories) and agave fields.



Teotihuacan

Teotihuacan is an ancient Mesoamerican city located 30 miles (50 km) northeast of modern-day Mexico City. The city, which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987, was settled as early as 400 B.C. and became the most powerful and influential city in the region by 400 A.D. By the time the Aztecs found the city in the 1400s and named it Teotihuacan (meaning “the place where the gods were created”), the city had been abandoned for centuries. Nowadays, is a majestic place totally worth to visit and fulfill your body and soul with its magical energy.



Chichen Itzá, Yucatán



Chichén Itzá is one of the seven wonders of the modern world and one of the greatest Mayan archaeological sites in the country. Besides, it is located near the beautiful beaches of Yucatan.



Cañón del Sumidero, Chiapas



Is a deep natural canyon located just north of the city of Chiapa de Corzo in the state of Chiapas. The canyon and national park is the second most important tourist site in Chiapas, drawing mostly Mexican visitors who see the canyon from boats which embark on the river from Chiapa de Corzo.



Xinantécatl, Toluca



Nevado de Toluca, although still referred to as Xinantécatl (Naked Man), is a Mexican volcano located in the State of Mexico, in the Toluca Valley. It is one of the spaces where people enjoy a unique and unforgettable experience. In addition to being a geoform of unparalleled beauty, it is the perfect setting for family activities, especially during the Christmas season.



Catedral Metropolitana, Puebla

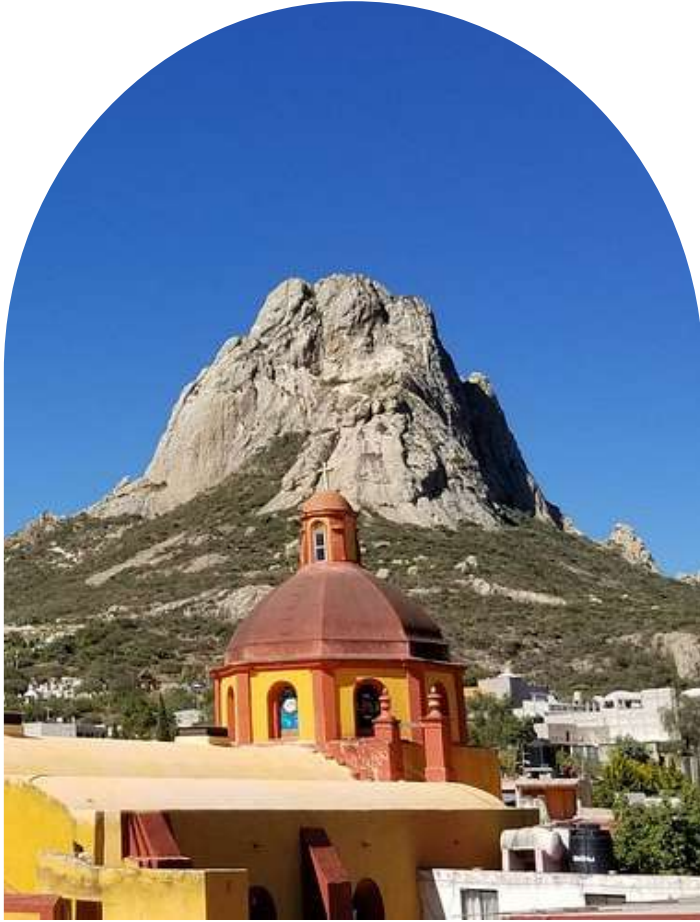


It is one of the most important properties in the historic center, declared a World Heritage Site.

Over the centuries it has been enriched in works of painting, sculpture, goldsmithing and carpentry of great artistic quality, as well as its decorations.



Peña de Bernal, Querétaro



La Peña de Bernal is a rock formation product of an extinct volcano, it is considered the third largest monolith in the world and is considered to have an existence of more than 8.7 million years.

Due to the type of stone and the possibilities it offers, the Peña de Bernal is a national and international attraction for rock climbing practitioners.



Religion

More than 80 percent of the Mexican population is Catholic. While the tendency is a reduction of Catholics in the country, this process is much slower than in other Latin American countries. We are a mestizo culture that has combined ancestral and colonial traditions for many years.

Many Mexicans see Catholicism as part of their identity, passed on through the family and nation-like cultural heritage. However, Mexico is a secular country and has allowed freedom of religion since the mid-19th century.



Projects

SIIJUVE's projects are carefully selected and frequently monitored to assure the best experience for our volunteers. The projects are public, non-governmental and some religious institutions that work in one or some of the following areas: children/adolescents with difficult backgrounds or in street conditions, animal welfare, ecology, elders, community development, education, etc. Our projects are located in the following cities and towns of Mexico: Tuxtla Gutierrez-Chiapas, San Cristobal de las Casas- Chiapas, Puebla City, Toluca State-Mexico, CDMX(Mexico City), Queretaro, Guadalajara-Jalisco-Ocotlan. We are constantly forming new alliances with projects in Mexico in order to fit the interests and abilities of our incoming volunteers and to enhance collaboration within Mexico's civil society. In Mexico, we live a situation of economic inequality, low support from the government, among others. That makes collaboration the key to the survival of social projects in the country.

Acommodation

Living in **MEXICO**



During the exchange program in Mexico, volunteers stay mainly in a host family, few projects have dorms. The selection of the accommodation is based among others on the availability of host families and the volunteers' preferences. Each host family and project is different and it is important to make an effort to understand and follow their rules, which might be very different from what you are used to, but that's part of the fun and the intercultural learning process!! We leave you some particularities of Mexican families: Mexican families appreciate clean rooms, and your host family or project mentor like it when you let them know where you are going, with whom, and how/when you are coming back home. Mexican families can be more protective than in your home country. Remember that they are just worried about your safety!



Testimonies

From Emilia- Finland



In 2023 I chose Mexico as my voluntary country because I wanted to learn Spanish, and I was very interested about Latin America and the culture there. I spent 10 months in Puebla and I lived in a host family. My project was in a kindergarten and nursery school and I was helping teachers to perform classes and took care of the kids and prepared for the celebrations for example for Christmas.

Mexicans love to celebrate different holidays and they are a big part of their culture. I also chose Mexico because of the festives, like El Día de los Muertos which is a big celebration in Mexico.

I loved the school I was working in and there I learned most of my Spanish and the staff helped me a lot to adjust in there. I became very close with the kids and they became very important for me.

I enjoyed my time in Puebla, it was a great city, it had a lot of things to do, museums of Mexico's history, monuments, the food and the climate was perfect, in the winter it's not too cold at least for someone who comes from Northern Europe.

On my spare time I took salsa, bachata and cumbia classes which was amazing opportunity to get to know different people and learn to dance because on the celebrations Mexicans love to dance.

I also traveled inside the country and it was very easy too and cheap. For example I went to Grutas de Tolantongo, Cabo, Puerto Escondido and the most famous one, Cancun. The nature in Mexico is something extraordinary, the most beautiful scenery and crystal blue water. In my time there I really learned to be independent and sometimes I traveled alone and sometimes with friends.

Mexicans are very welcoming and my host family helped me to find friends and to adjust in to the life there. I wouldn't change a thing in my journey, even though I had tougher times there, it made me independent, confident and stronger.

Mexico was the best choice I made, the food, the culture, the people were extremely amazing. I learned to speak Spanish, made something meaningful, I got new friends, saw the world and it changed my perspective of life for good. It really was once in a lifetime experience.

Testimonies

From Felix- Germany



My everyday life at "Pro Niños" is very varied.

From Monday to Thursday I work in a street team and on Fridays I'm in a house for teenagers.

In my job on the street, we look for children and do all kinds of activities with them. We play a lot of games (e.g. Uno or Jenga) but sometimes we just have simple conversations so that they can build up trust in us and the aim is to get them into daycare.



For this we are traveling all over the city so we collect a lot of steps ;) I play soccer, basketball etc. with the teenagers. But sometimes we just chill out and I help where I'm needed. In the morning and at lunchtime we eat together :)

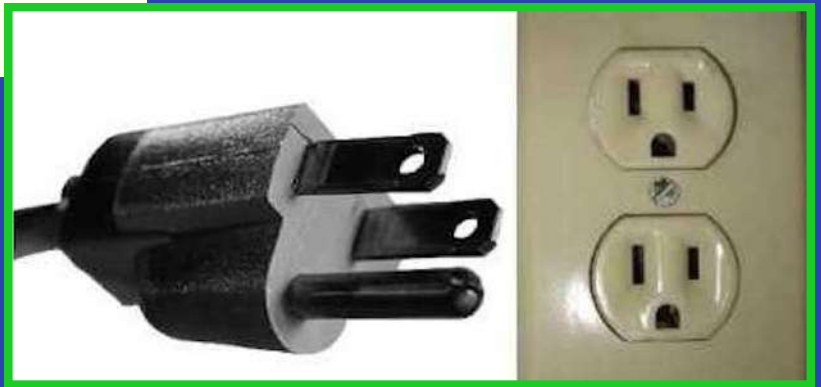


Currently, Felix continues his volunteer work in Mexico until it ends in August 2025.

Useful Information

Plug type and electric supply

The voltage in Mexico is 110 V 60 HZ, just like in the USA and Canada. Be aware that in old places, energy may cycle more slowly and ruin your electrical devices. Also, Mexico uses American plugs with two flat parallel pins. If your country uses different voltage or plugs, bring an adapter with you. If you forget, don't worry!!, adapters can be easily found in electronics stores and supermarkets.



Useful words and sentences in Spanish

Hola	Hello
¿Cómo estás?	How are you?
Me llamo...	My name is...
¿Dónde está...?	Where is...?
¿Dónde está el baño?	Where is the bathroom?
Perdón	Sorry
Gracias	Thank You
Por favor	Please
¿Me podría ayudar?	Could you help me?
Adiós	Bye
¡Ayuda!	Help!
Tengo sed	I'm thirsty
No entiendo	I don't understand
Me gusta	I like it
No me gusta	I don't like it
¿Puedes repetirlo ?	Can you repeat it



Expenses

Pocket Money

ICYE volunteers have the right to monthly pocket money. SIIJUVE provides around 55 euros per month. The program also includes food, accommodation, transportation house-project-house, etc., but it doesn't pay for other expenses like personal traveling, clothes, personal entertainment, etc. We leave you with the cost of living in Mexico, so you get an idea of what you will be able to buy. We remind you that the costs might differ according to the city and type of places you go to. Take into account that all cities and regions can have a different life level.



Common living costs

- Bus ticket..... 9-12 MXN
- Taxi.....50 to 200MXN
- Gym.....500 MXN per month
- Movie ticket.....80-100 MXN
- Regular restaurant.....100-200 MXN
- McDonald's.....80-150 MXN
- Coke.....20-40 MXN
- Water bottle.....10-15 MXN
- Capuchino.....80-100 MXN
- Local beer in a bar.....40 to 60 MXN
- Cigarettes (20).....55-70 MXN
- Bus Tour.....160-250 MXN



Important Information



HEALTH INSURANCE

All ICYE exchanges count with Dr. Walters Health Insurance for their stay in Mexico. We request volunteers to pay for the doctor themselves, to later get reimbursed by the insurance. Nevertheless, in case of an emergency, SIIJUVE will pay the doctor first, and ask you to request a reimbursement from the insurance later.



VISA REGULATION

Volunteers staying in Mexico for over 6 months will need a Temporary Resident Visa. The process will start in your home country, where you will need to take the required documents to the closest Mexican Embassy with at least two months of anticipation. We will provide you with an invitation letter to come to Mexico, For volunteers that will stay less than 180 days, you don't need a pre-approved visa, just need to bring with you some documents to enter Mexico.

In both cases, we and your sending organization will help you with all the information and documentation.



CAMPS

SIIJUVE provides an initial and final camp to the volunteers, plus a mid-term camps for those staying a year. The preparation camp is to welcome new volunteers and show them how their life in Mexico will be; a middle-term camp is done to monitor advancements; a final camp is prepared to evaluate the whole experience and closing the cycle. The camps mostly take place in rural areas of Mexico. During the camps, we perform evaluation activities, presentations, and others according to the objectives of each one. Besides, we have integration moments, like bonfires, tours, etc. SIIJUVE provides transportation, food, accommodation, materials, and others.



PICK - UP

Long-term programs

- Mexico City Benito Juarez Airport

STeP's programs

The arrival will be at the closest airport to the city where they will stay and it will be their project.

- CDMX
- Guadalajara
- Tuxtla

AGE LIMITS

We accept candidates from 18-35 years old.

Nevertheless, we are flexible in accepting upper range of ages, just ask first!

REQUIREMENTS TO ENTER MEXICO

THE MIGRATION PROCESS FOR VOLUNTEERS THAT WILL STAY LESS THAN 180 DAYS (STEP'S PROGRAM AND 6 MONTHS LONG-TERM PROGRAM)

You do not require a visa to travel to Mexico if your stay will be less than 180 days.

In the migration review filter, the staff of the National Institute of Migration will request:

1. Passport or current identity and travel document that is valid under international law. The passport must be valid for at least six months later than the moment you intend to leave Mexico.
2. The migration officer will tell you that you can download the migration form (FMM) on the Migration Web site and will show you a QR for it, we know which website is and we will download it for you and share it with you later.
3. Please bring your flight itinerary for the returnee flight and ask for a permit that covers that period.

The migration authority may request the foreign person to verify the reason for their trip, through any of the following documents:

1. Air ticket with sure dates of entry and exit of the country.
2. The migration officer will probably ask you two things:
 - a. **What are doing in Mexico?** Please answer that you are in the country as a tourist. (if you say that you are a volunteer they may be confused and they will ask you for a visa issue in your country, even when is not necessary, so to avoid misunderstandings please say you will stay as a tourist)
 - b. **How long are you staying?** Please answer the exact amount of days according to your flight ticket.

After this process, the migration officer will put a stamp and write a date on your passport, be sure to ask for the correct period of days and check that the stamp and date they put on your passport are the same date as your return flight.



REQUIREMENTS TO ENTER MEXICO

REQUIREMENTS TO ENTER MEXICO FOR A STAY OF MORE THAN 6 MONTHS.

You will need a visa stamp, which you will get in your country from the Mexico Embassy, we and your sending organization will help you to prepare documents and make the process with enough time before coming to Mexico.

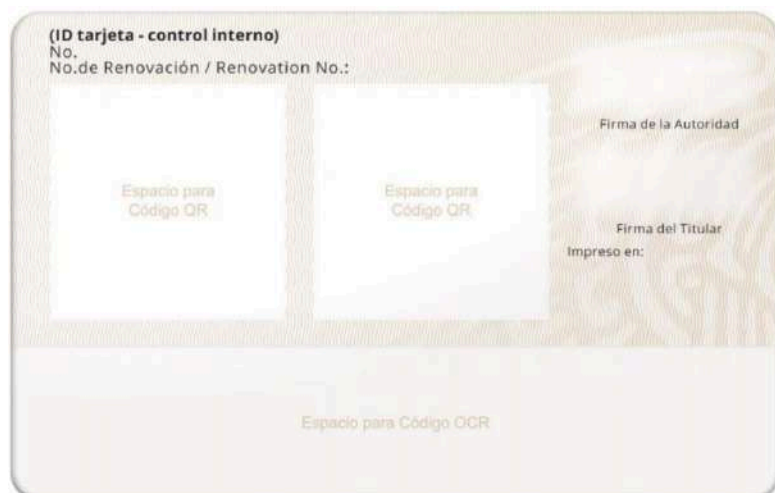
You will enter Mexico showing your Visa Stamp on your passport. At the migration desk, an officer will ask you why and how long you will be in Mexico, please say **“Por un año para hacer un voluntariado” (For a year to make a volunteering program)**.

They will put a stamp on your passport with a date 30 days ahead of your entry, don't worry about it, we will help you to change it for a temporary resident permit card that will last your volunteer year.

The migration officer will tell you that you can download the migration form (FMM) on the Migration website and they will show you a QR for it, we know which website it is and we download it for you and share it with you later and help you to fulfill all the documentation that you will need to change your visa for a residence permit card on the On-Arrival camp.

Once you arrive in your city one of our Sijuve team collaborators will go with you to make the process at your local migration office, this has a cost of **5,328 MXN (around 280 euros)** and you can pay it in cash or card, be sure to have available this amount to make the process as soon as possible.

After this, you will have a card that allows you to stay in the country for 12 months, and you can use it as an official identification in Mexico.





Contract of Participation



In order to have a better experience, it will be useful for us all to have an agreement of understanding. Please read the following points carefully. Please send it back before you come to Mexico.

- 1: I have read the SIIJUVE A.C. National Profile thoroughly.
- 2: I will accept the host placement and volunteer work that SIIJUVE chooses for me in accordance with my application form and other information.
- 3: I understand that during my exchange year, my holidays are:
 - For ICYE 12 months Programme: twenty-four days plus official holidays. You must get approval from your project at least two weeks before traveling and fill out a vacation form.
 - For ICYE 6 months Programme: twelve days plus official holidays. You must get approval from your project at least two weeks before traveling and fill out a vacation form.
 - And I will plan my vacations on the dates the project will close for the holiday season or the scholar calendar.
- 4: I will adapt to the lifestyle and culture of my host country.
- 5: I will attend the Spanish course provided by SIIJUVE and make my best effort to learn the language during the program.
- 6: I will stay on the same project during the time my program lasts.
- 7: I will participate in the monthly meetings organized by my regional committee.
- 8: I will act as a volunteer, not a tourist.
- 9: I will not consume, buy, sell, or use any drug.
- 10: I will obey Mexican laws during my exchange year.
- 11: I will not participate in any political activities.
- 12: I will follow the rules of my host family and make an effort to adapt to them, understanding that I am the one who is introduced to our daily life.
- 14: I agree to keep my room clean and neat and to make a fair contribution to the cleanliness of the “communal areas” of my host family and/or host project.
- 15: I agree to maintain personal cleanliness and hygiene according to the norms in my host country and according to my host family’s habits and traditions.

16: I will not have a work permit, so I will not have a paid job during the exchange year. The chances to earn your own pocket money are limited.

17: I will attend my social work, and if I do not work for at least four hours per day, five days per week, I will only receive half of my pocket money and transportation help.

18: I will attend all SIIJUVE camps (on arrival, middle evaluation, and final)

19: I will not compare my experience with those of other volunteers. I understand that each experience is unique and depends on me, SIIJUVE, the project, the family, etc.

20: I will let my project and contact person know when I miss work due to health issues or vacation.

21 : When I had been sick for more than 4 days I will visit a doctor looking for some recommendations and I will justify my absence with a medical prescription.

22 : I will prioritize my health and wellbeing in order to not allowed the illness become a serioushealth situation.

23: I will accept these rules and the way my host committee works.

24: I understand that I am responsible for my integrity, security, health, and wellness, so I do not put myself or others in danger (follow security tips, among others)

25: I will accept the decisions SIIJUVE A.C. makes if I don't respect this agreement, such as receiving a warning letter, or the expulsion from the program.

Note: Remember that your insurance does not cover car accidents if you are driving.

NAME:

COUNTRY: _____

DATE(dd/mm/yyyy) ____/____/_____

SIGNATURE _____

Contact Information

for further inquiries

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www.siijuve.org

**Welcome to
Mexico**

**Bienvenido a
México**

**We are waiting
for you!**

MEXICO
siijuve
une culturas

