

Mexico



Introduction

Three times the size of the state of Texas, Mexico has a population of almost 88 million. The ethnic composition of the country is 60 percent mestizo (a mixture of Indian and European), 30 percent Amerindian, 9 percent white, and 1 percent other. Mexico is a federal republic. Spanish is the official language of Mexico, although over 100 Indian languages are also spoken. English is widely understood by educated people and in urban centers. There is no official religion, but almost 90 percent of Mexicans are Roman Catholic. Protestants account for around 5 percent.

Mexico is one of the United States' most important trade partners. It is the third largest exporter to the United States, and its international trade products include oil exports, tourism, and the products of its many assembly plants (called *maquiladoras*). Most of the labor force is employed in the agricultural sector.

Fun Fact

One must know a person before doing business with him or her, and the only way to know a person in Mexico is to know the family. Personal relationships are the key to business success. In order to make this connection intermediaries are used. It is critical, especially for a high ranking meeting, to use a person who is known to the Mexican businessman or woman you are meeting. This is your "business family" connection, the person who will introduce you. This person is the bridge that builds the trust necessary to do business in Mexico.

Mexicans are warm and gracious. They embrace the *manana* attitude, and do not embrace the time-is-money mentality of many other cultures. The old Mexican saying is that "North Americans live to work, but Mexicans work to live!" Respect their sense of time and traditions. If your natural tendency is to speak quickly or you have a forceful or sharp tone of voice, become aware of how you are coming across. Become sensitive to the pace and tone used in Mexico.

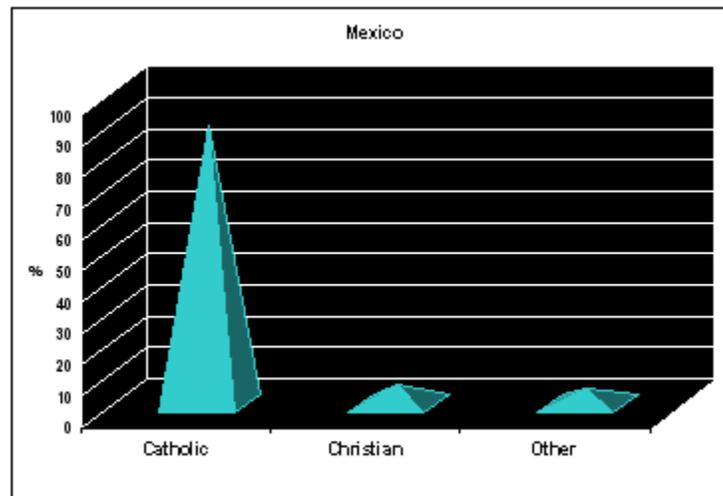
Otherwise you will destroy a relationship with your caustic tone and behavior. Also, it goes without saying that jokes about "Montezuma's revenge" are inappropriate.

Geert Hofstede Analysis Mexico

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The Geert Hofstede analysis for Mexico has high Uncertainty Avoidance ranking that represents a societal concern for the lack of stability and security. The culture also ranks high on the Power Distance and Masculinity dimensions indicating a male dominated authoritarian structure. The culture is collectivist with close ties between extended families and communities. This is particularly true in the more rural areas. [More Details](#)

Religion in Mexico



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Appearance

Men should wear a conservative dark suit and tie. Your wardrobe should include suits that have classic lines and tailoring in gray or navy, and white or light blue shirts. A white shirt is more formal and should be worn when the formality of the meeting dictates.

- Women should wear a dress or skirt and blouse. A classic suit may also be worn. Build a wardrobe using classic lines, classic skirt lengths, and basic classic colors - gray, navy, white, and ivory.
- Men may wear pants and a light shirt for casual. Plan a casual wardrobe using the classic colors, plus camel, and you will be casual, yet polished. Should you have the opportunity to wear a *guayabera*, the wonderful traditional lightweight shirt, you wear it over your pants. This design is very comfortable in warmer weather.
- Women may wear a blouse with pants or a skirt for casual. To present yourself as professional and polished, even in an informal setting, build your casual wardrobe using classic shades of gray, blue, camel, white and ivory.
- Jeans are generally not appropriate, and tight or low cut clothing is never appropriate.
- Standing with your hands on your hips suggests aggressiveness, and keeping your hands in your pockets is impolite.
- Mexicans may not make eye contact. This is a sign of respect and should not be taken as an affront.

Behavior

- Men shake hands upon meeting and leaving, and will wait for a woman to be the first to offer her hand.
- Women may shake hands with men and other women. Many times a woman may pat another woman's shoulder or forearm, or kiss on the cheek.
- Longtime friends may embrace, and after several meetings you may also be greeted with an embrace.
- Punctuality is not rigid because of the emphasis on personal obligations. The best time for appointments is between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., with late afternoon a second choice.
- Business lunches, rather than dinners are the traditional form of business entertaining and are usually prolonged affairs, beginning between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. and lasting three to four hours, with little time being devoted to actual business. Lunches are an essential part of business to establish a personal relationship.
- Working breakfasts are also popular, meeting at 8:00 or 8:30 at your hotel, and usually lasting two hours at the most.

- Conversations take place at a close physical distance. Stepping back may be regarded as unfriendly.
- Mexican men are warm and friendly, and make a lot of physical contact. They often touch shoulders or hold another's arm. To withdraw from this touch is considered insulting.
- Giving gifts to business executives is not required. Small items with a company logo (for an initial visit) are appreciated.
- Secretaries do appreciate gifts. If giving a valuable gift, such as perfume or a scarf, present it on a return visit. A man giving it to a female secretary should indicate the gift is from his wife.
- Gifts are not required for a dinner guest, but will be appreciated. Good choices are candy, flowers (sent ahead of time), or local crafts from home.
- When giving flowers: yellow – represent death, red – cast spells, and white – lift spells.
- Do not give gifts made of silver, as it is associated with trinkets sold to tourists.
- Women should not invite a male counterpart for a business dinner unless other associates or spouses attend. Also, Mexican men will graciously attempt to pay for a meal, even though you are hosting it. A professional way to host a meal is to dine or lunch at your hotel. Pre-arrange to have the meal added to your hotel bill.
- Tipping is appropriate for services provided. Wages are often so low that workers depend heavily on gratuities for their income.
- Pay for store purchases by placing money in the cashier's hand, rather than on the counter.

Communications

- Refrain from using first names until invited to do so.
- Titles are important and should be included on business cards. You may directly speak to someone by only using his or her title only, without including the last name.
- *Doctor* is a physician or Ph.D. *Profesor* is the title for a teacher. *Ingeniero* is an engineer. *Arquitecto* is an architect. *Abogado* is a lawyer.
- People without professional titles are addressed using Mr., Mrs., or Miss and his or her surname. *Senor* is Mr., *Senora* is Mrs., and *Senorita* is Miss

- Hispanics generally use two surnames. The first surname listed is from the father, and the second surname listed is from the mother. When speaking to someone use his or her father's surname.
- A married woman will add her husband's father's name to the end of her name, usually shown as *de (name)* when written. This woman would be formally addressed as *Senora de (name)*.
- In speaking to this same married woman less formally, you would simply say *Senora (name)*.
- Do not use red ink anytime you are writing someone's name.
- The traditional toast in Mexico is *Salud* (Sal-UUD).
- Mexican's use a "psst-psst" sound to catch another's attention in public. This is not considered rude.
- Mexicans refer to people from the United States as North Americans.
- Good conversational topics are Mexican culture, history, art, and museums.
- Never discuss the Mexican-American war, poverty, illegal aliens, or earthquakes.