

## Mexico

Country name	Mexico
State title	United Mexican States
Name of citizen	Mexican
Official language (de facto)	Spanish ( <i>spa</i> <sup>1</sup> )
Country name in official language	México
State title in official language	Estados Unidos Mexicanos
Script	Roman script
Romanization System	Not required, see <i>Languages</i>
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	(MX/MEX)
Capital (Conventional name)	Mexico City
Capital in official language	Ciudad de México <sup>2</sup>
Population/Area <sup>3</sup>	126 million <sup>4</sup> / 1,964,375 km <sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

Mexico is located in the southernmost part of North America, bordered by the United States of America to the north and Belize and Guatemala to the south. Mexico has coastline on the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Gulf of Mexico to the east, and the Caribbean Sea to the southeast.

During the colonial era (1521–1821) Mexico was known as New Spain. It achieved independence from Spain in 1821 and is now a Federal Republic. The name Mexico comes from the pre-Colombian name for the area around Mexico City, which was the former Aztec capital Tenochtitlan.

### Geographical names policy and sources

PCGN policy for geographical names in Mexico is to use official sources from the country, retaining any special letters and diacritical marks. Geographical names on official Mexican sources will be written according to Spanish orthography.

The *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* (INEGI) serves as Mexico's geographical names authority<sup>5</sup>. An online database of geographical names is available at:

<https://www.inegi.org.mx/app/geo2/cng/>.

<sup>1</sup> ISO 639 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

<sup>2</sup> Previously known as El Distrito Federal, or DF. Since 2013, the city has used the abbreviation CDMX (Ciudad de México).

<sup>3</sup> CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mexico/#geography>

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.www.inegi.org.mx/default.html>

<sup>5</sup> [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/uneggn/naa/documents/Authorities\\_list\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/uneggn/naa/documents/Authorities_list_July_2021.pdf)

INEGI also maintains the [Norma Técnica de Nombres Geográficos Continentales e Insulares de México](#), a reference document that serves as a technical standard for the compilation and standardization of geographical names of Mexico. The *Archivo histórico de localidades*<sup>6</sup> displays historical and variant names of populated places and can also be a helpful resource for geographical names.

Some Mexican states and populated places may have both short and long forms of their names, e.g. Estado de Michoacán de Ocampo/Estado de Michoacán; San Francisco de Campeche/Campeche. Both forms are official and either can be used. The long form can be used if more specificity is required.

## Languages

The Constitution of Mexico does not declare an official language, however Spanish (ISO 693-3: *spa*) serves as the *de facto* official language of Mexico. Additionally, numerous Indigenous languages are spoken in Mexico, over 60 of which are recognized by the Mexican government as national languages.

The first Law of the Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples (*spa: Ley General de Derechos Lingüísticos de los Pueblos Indígenas*) came into effect in March 2003, officially protecting Indigenous languages, and recognising them as part of the national cultural and linguistic heritage. Updated versions of the law have been published with the most recent being October 2023<sup>7</sup>.

Many of Mexico's toponyms have their origins in the country's Indigenous languages. These names have usually been written according to Spanish orthography.

Some of the most widely-spoken Indigenous languages (those estimated to have 500,000 or more speakers) can be found in the table below. For a comprehensive list, please consult [https://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/hipertexto/todas\\_lenguas.htm](https://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/hipertexto/todas_lenguas.htm).

### Indigenous Languages of Mexico

Language	Language Classification	ISO 693-3 Language code	Estimated number of speakers	States where language is spoken
Náhuatl	Uto-Aztecan	nhi	1,651,958	Puebla, Veracruz, Hidalgo, San Luis Potosí, Guerrero, México (state), Tlaxcala, Morelos and Oaxaca
Maya	Mayan	yua	774,755	Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Yucatán
Tzeltal (Tzeltal)	Mayan	tzl	589,144	Chiapas
Tsotsil (Tzotzil)	Mayan	tzo	550,274	Chiapas, Oaxaca, Veracruz

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.inegi.org.mx/app/geo2/ahl/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/LGDLPI.pdf>

**Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings<sup>8</sup>):**

In addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script, the following characters are found in geographical names of Mexico:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Á	00C1	á	00E1
É	00C9	é	00E9
Í	00CD	í	00ED
Ñ	00D1	ñ	00F1
Ó	00D3	ó	00F3
Ú	00DA	ú	00FA
Ü	00DC	ü	00FC

**Map of Mexico**



*Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.*

<sup>8</sup> See [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)

# TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

## Administrative structure

At the first-order administrative division (ADM1) level, Mexico is divided into 31 states (spa: estado) and 1 federal entity (spa: entidad federal)<sup>9</sup>. Each state is officially called ‘the Free and Sovereign State of...’ (spa: Estado Libre y Soberano de...), but this is usually shortened to ‘Estado de...’.

State (ADM1)	Long form name, including generics	ISO 3166-2 subdivision code	State website	Administrative Seat (PPLA)	Location of PPLA
<b>Aguascalientes</b>	Estado de Aguascalientes	MX-AGU	<a href="https://www.aguascalientes.gob.mx/">https://www.aguascalientes.gob.mx/</a>	Aguascalientes	21° 52' 56" N 102° 16' 57" W
<b>Baja California</b>	Estado de Baja California	MX-BCN	<a href="https://www.bajacalifornia.gob.mx/">https://www.bajacalifornia.gob.mx/</a>	Mexicali	32° 39' 00" N 115° 27' 40" W
<b>Baja California Sur</b>	Estado de Baja California Sur	MX-BCS	<a href="https://www.bcs.gob.mx/">https://www.bcs.gob.mx/</a>	La Paz	24° 08' 40" N 110° 18' 02" W
<b>Campeche</b>	Estado de Campeche	MX-CAM	<a href="https://campeche.gob.mx/">https://campeche.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Campeche Long name: San Francisco de Campeche	19° 50' 38" N 90° 31' 32" W
<b>Chiapas</b>	Estado de Chiapas	MX-CHP	<a href="https://www.chiapas.gob.mx/">https://www.chiapas.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Tuxtla Long name: Tuxtla Gutiérrez	19° 19' 09" N 98° 11' 59" W
<b>Chihuahua</b>	Estado de Chihuahua	MX-CHH	<a href="https://www.chihuahua.gob.mx/">https://www.chihuahua.gob.mx/</a>	Chihuahua	28° 38' 00" N 106° 05' 00" W
<b>Ciudad de México<sup>10</sup></b>	-	MX-CMX	<a href="https://www.cdmx.gob.mx/">https://www.cdmx.gob.mx/</a>	Conventional name: Mexico City Spanish name: Ciudad de México	
<b>Coahuila</b>	Estado de Coahuila de Zaragoza	MX-COA	<a href="https://coahuila.gob.mx/">https://coahuila.gob.mx/</a>	Saltillo	25° 25' 24" N 101° 00' 19" W
<b>Colima</b>	Estado de Colima	MX-COL	<a href="https://www.col.gob.mx/">https://www.col.gob.mx/</a>	Colima	19° 15' 00" N 103° 43' 38" W

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:code:3166:MX>

<sup>10</sup> Formerly known as Distrito Federal or México D.F. The abbreviation CDMX is also used to refer to Ciudad de México.

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State (ADM1)	Long form name, including generics	ISO 3166-2 subdivision code	State website	Administrative Seat (PPLA)	Location of PPLA
<b>Durango</b>	Estado de Durango	MX-DUR	<a href="https://www.durango.gob.mx/">https://www.durango.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Durango Long name: Victoria de Durango	24° 01' 10" N 104° 39' 38" W
<b>Guanajuato</b>	Estado de Guanajuato	MX-GUA	<a href="https://www.guanajuato.gob.mx/">https://www.guanajuato.gob.mx/</a>	Guanajuato	21° 01' 06" N 101° 15' 25" W
<b>Guerrero</b>	Estado de Guerrero	MX-GRO	<a href="https://www.guerrero.gob.mx/">https://www.guerrero.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Chilpancingo Long name: Chilpancingo de los Bravo	17° 33' 02" N 99° 30' 21" W
<b>Hidalgo</b>	Estado de Hidalgo	MX-HID	<a href="https://www.hidalgo.gob.mx/">https://www.hidalgo.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Pachuca Long name: Pachuca de Soto	20° 07' 03" N 98° 44' 34" W
<b>Jalisco</b>	Estado de Jalisco	MX-JAL	<a href="https://www.jalisco.gob.mx/">https://www.jalisco.gob.mx/</a>	Guadalajara	20° 40' 01" N 103° 23' 31" W
<b>Michoacán</b>	Estado de Michoacán de Ocampo	MX-MIC	<a href="https://michoacan.gob.mx/">https://michoacan.gob.mx/</a>	Morelia	19° 42' 10" N 101° 11' 36" W
<b>Morelos</b>	Estado de Morelos	MX-MOR	<a href="https://morelos.gob.mx/">https://morelos.gob.mx/</a>	Cuernavaca	18° 56' 01" N 99° 13' 43" W
<b>México</b>	Estado de México	MX-MEX	<a href="https://edomex.gob.mx/">https://edomex.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Toluca Long name: Toluca de Lerdo	19° 17' 14" N 99° 38' 42" W
<b>Nayarit</b>	Estado de Nayarit	MX-NAY	<a href="https://www.nayarit.gob.mx/">https://www.nayarit.gob.mx/</a>	Tepic	21° 30' 34" N 104° 53' 44" W
<b>Nuevo León</b>	Estado de Nuevo León	MX-NLE	<a href="https://www.nl.gob.mx/">https://www.nl.gob.mx/</a>	Monterrey	25° 40' 30" N 100° 19' 06" W
<b>Oaxaca</b>	Estado de Oaxaca	MX-OAX	<a href="https://www.oaxaca.gob.mx/">https://www.oaxaca.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Oaxaca Long name: Oaxaca de Juárez	17° 03' 56" N 96° 43' 25" W
<b>Puebla</b>	Estado de Puebla	MX-PUE	<a href="https://www.puebla.gob.mx/">https://www.puebla.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Puebla Long name: Heróica Puebla de Zaragoza	19° 02' 17" N 98° 12' 12" W

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State (ADM1)	Long form name, including generics	ISO 3166-2 subdivision code	State website	Administrative Seat (PPLA)	Location of PPLA
<b>Querétaro</b>	Estado de Querétaro de Arteaga	MX-QUE	<a href="https://www.queretaro.gob.mx/en/">https://www.queretaro.gob.mx/en/</a>	Santiago de Querétaro	20° 36' 00" N 100° 23' 59" W
<b>Quintana Roo</b>	Estado de Quintana Roo	MX-ROO	<a href="https://qroo.gob.mx/">https://qroo.gob.mx/</a>	Chetumal	18° 30' 51" N 88° 18' 14" W
<b>San Luis Potosí</b>	Estado de San Luis Potosí	MX-SLP	<a href="https://slp.gob.mx/">https://slp.gob.mx/</a>	San Luis Potosí	22° 08' 59" N 100° 58' 45" W
<b>Sinaloa</b>	Estado de Sinaloa	MX-SIN	<a href="https://sinaloa.gob.mx/">https://sinaloa.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Culiacán Long name: Culiacán Rosales	24° 47' 25" N 107° 23' 16" W
<b>Sonora</b>	Estado de Sonora	MX-SON	<a href="https://www.sonora.gob.mx/">https://www.sonora.gob.mx/</a>	Hermosillo	29° 06' 09" N 110° 58' 38" W
<b>Tabasco</b>	Estado de Tabasco	MX-TAB	<a href="https://tabasco.gob.mx/">https://tabasco.gob.mx/</a>	Villahermosa	17° 59' 13" N 92° 55' 49" W
<b>Tamaulipas</b>	Estado de Tamaulipas	MX-TAM	<a href="https://www.tamaulipas.gob.mx/">https://www.tamaulipas.gob.mx/</a>	Ciudad Victoria	23° 44' 30" N 99° 08' 46" W
<b>Tlaxcala</b>	Estado de Tlaxcala	MX-TLA	<a href="https://www.tlaxcala.gob.mx/">https://www.tlaxcala.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Tlaxcala Long name: Tlaxcala de Xicohténcatl	19° 19' 09" N 98° 11' 59" W
<b>Veracruz</b>	Estado de Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave	MX-VER	<a href="https://www.veracruz.gob.mx/">https://www.veracruz.gob.mx/</a>	Short name: Xalapa Long name: Xalapa-Enríquez	19° 32' 38" N 96° 55' 18" W
<b>Yucatán</b>	Estado de Yucatán	MX-YUC	<a href="https://www.yucatan.gob.mx/estado/">https://www.yucatan.gob.mx/estado/</a>	Mérida	20° 58' 31" N 89° 37' 01" W
<b>Zacatecas</b>	Estado de Zacatecas	MX-ZAC	<a href="https://www.zacatecas.gob.mx/">https://www.zacatecas.gob.mx/</a>	Zacatecas	22° 46' 08" N 102° 34' 18" W

**Border Crossings**

There are over 50 official border crossings between Mexico and the United States of America, several of which are bridges across a river. Details on these crossings can be found here: <https://portales.sre.gob.mx/mex-eua/images/stories/PDF/GpoBilateraldePtesyCruces.pdf>.

Mexico also shares border crossing points with Belize and Guatemala. A list of formal crossing points between Mexico and Belize can be found here: <https://www.gob.mx/sre/acciones-y-programas/cruces-formales-mexico-belice>, and Mexico-Guatemala crossing points are listed here: <https://www.gob.mx/sre/acciones-y-programas/cruces-fronterizos-entre-mexico-y-guatemala>.

**Other Significant Locations**

PCGN Recommended Name	Conventional Name	Alternative Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Altiplano Mexicano	Mexican Plateau	Central Mexican Plateau, Central Plateau, Altiplanicie Mexicana, Gran Altiplanicie Mexicana, Gran Meseta Mexicana, Mesa Central, Meseta de México, Plateau of Mexico	24°00'00"N 102°00'00"W	Plateau
Chichén Itzá	Chichen Itza	-	20°40'00"N 88°34'00"W	Ancient site
Ciudad Juarez	-	-	22°18'58"N 104°10'52"W	Populated place
Golfo de California	Gulf of California	Sea of Cortés (Mar de Cortés), Sea of Cortez, Vermilion Sea (Mar Vermejo)	28°00'00"N 112°00'00"W	Gulf
Gulf of Mexico	Gulf of Mexico	Golfo de México, Gulf of America	25°00'00"N 90°00'00"W	Gulf
Península de Yucatán	Yucatan Peninsula	Yucatan	19°30'00"N 89°00'00"W	Peninsula
Pico de Orizaba/Citlaltépetl	-	-	19°01'50"N 97°16'06"W	Volcano
Popocatépetl	-	-	19°01'25"N 98°37'21"W	Volcano
Río Grande (US); Río Bravo del Norte (MX)	Río Grande	Río Bravo	25°57'22"N 97°08'43"W	River
Sierra Madre Occidental	-	Sierra Madre Western Sierra Madre	25°00'00"N 105°00'00"W	Mountains
Sierra Madre Oriental	-	Eastern Sierra Madre	22°00'00"N 99°30'00"W	Mountains
Cancún	-	-	21°10'20"N 86°49'46"W	Populated place
Tijuana	-	-	32°23'55"N 116°47'37"W	Populated place
Teotihuacán	-	-	19°41'33"N 98°34'38"W	Ancient site

## Useful references

- BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-18095241>
  - BGN Mexico Country Policy: [https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSSearch/GNSDocs/policies/Mexico\\_Country\\_Policy\\_webversion\\_Latest.pdf](https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSSearch/GNSDocs/policies/Mexico_Country_Policy_webversion_Latest.pdf)
  - CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mexico/>
  - Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/mexico>
  - International Organization for Standardization (ISO): [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)
  - ISO Online Browsing Platform: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui>
  - Languages: [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com) / [www.omniglot.com](http://www.omniglot.com)
  - Mexican government website: <https://www.gob.mx/>
  - Mexico National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) <https://www.inegi.org.mx/>
  - PCGN Country Names list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names>
  - US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) Geographic Names Server: <https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GeographicNamesSearch/>
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Compiled by PCGN with contributions from BGN  
[www.gov.uk/pcgn](http://www.gov.uk/pcgn)  
March 2025