2014
Guide to Living in
Mexico City
Traveling to Mexico

The following documentation is required for visitors to enter Mexico:
- Photo ID (Driver’s license)
- Visa (if required)
- Passport
- Tourist card. This document is perforated into two parts and is authorization on the part of the Mexican government to visit Mexico, issued without cost. Typically, airlines make this form available at flight check-in. Tourist cards are good for up to 180 days.

Remember:
Don’t lose the blue copy (the one with the official seal) of the tourist card you receive when clearing passport control. This will be returned to the authorities when you leave the country. Make a note of your tourist card’s number and keep it in a safe place. Don’t damage your card—you’ll need to hand it over when you leave the country.

- Be aware that with the signing of the NAFTA agreement, the Mexican government requires business travelers request a document called an F.M.N. in lieu of the regular tourist card. The F.M.N. can be acquired in any Mexican consulate free of charge.

Visas: They are required of residents from particular countries.
- Are acquired in Mexican consulates and embassies.
- Are valid for 90 days.
- May be renewed if necessary.

United States and Canadian visitors do not need a visa. However, proof of citizenship is required (a valid passport, an expired passport no more than five years old, or a birth certificate).

Tourist cards are valid for up to 180 days and can be acquired from airlines or at the border upon the presentation of proof of citizenship.

Getting to Mexico City:
The Mexico City International Airport (AICM) (www.aicm.com.mx) handles more than 25 million passengers annually.
The airport is located about thirty minutes east of the downtown Historic Center, and is accessible by Metro as well as via the Circuito Interior ring road.

Important Note: It is recommended that you request car/taxi service from inside the airport and not “hail” a cab yourself.

Center for U.S and Mexican Law
100 Law Center, TU2 Room 201
Houston, Texas 77204-6060
Office: 713-463-2126
Stephen Zamora:
szamora@central.uh.edu
Ignacio Pinto Leon:
jpintol2@central.uh.edu
Brisa Gossett:
bgossett@central.uh.edu
Lodging

The summer 2012 interns recommend using the website AirBnB - [https://www.airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) - and mentioned that it is easier to find housing for groups rather than individuals. The locations that had 3-4 bedrooms were very safe and nice (gym, security, etc.). It is recommended that you begin discussing roommate arrangements as soon as possible and come up with a strategy that can accommodate all those who want to live with roommates.

**Important Note:** Remember to ask your contact person at the host institution for their opinions on your housing final choices, before signing any contract. Local knowledge is invaluable.

---

**Intern Recommended Neighborhoods for Apartment Searches:**

1. Centro Historico/ Reforma/ Bellas Artes - where the SRE is located.

2. Condesa/Roma - where lots of students live, so will possibly have the most options of affordable (but nice) housing most popular with students. Also, very fun area to go out in for bars and restaurants. More toward Pemex, but is kind of between the SRE and Pemex. Here is a 2 bedroom apartment that might work: [https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/187030](https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/187030)

3. Polanco - closest (livable/safe) neighborhood to Pemex. Upscale shopping, restaurants and housing. May be predominately expensive buildings.

4. Coyoacan - for the Hydrocarbon Commission - farther away from the center but very cool neighborhood that will be fun to live in. Here is a 3 bedroom apartment that might work: [https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/833856](https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/833856)
Transportation

Mexico City offers many types of transportation. Familiarize yourself with the area neighboring your workplace and lodging. Ask co-workers or neighbors what modes of transportation are better suited for your location and needs.

_Important Note_: Bring a map of Mexico DF with you or buy one quickly when you get there and always know your destination before walking out the door – avoid looking like a tourist.

Electric Transport System (Light Rail):
The city’s electric transport system (Sistema de Transporte Eléctrico) is another alternative provided by the municipal government to reduce carbon emissions. The system currently encompasses 15 trolleybus and light rail lines; the latter is considered the best way to get to Xochimilco from the city center.

Car Rental:
Various car rental companies, many of them international chains, can be found at bus terminals, the airport and major tourist zones (such as the Paseo de la Reforma, the Historic City Center, Polanco and the Zona Rosa). It’s advisable to review the rental contract’s terms and drive carefully.

Metro (Subway):
Unlike some other subway systems around the world, a ticket allows passengers to transfer from one line to another and get to numerous destinations without having to buy another. Without a doubt it is the best, quickest and safest way to get around town, though if you’re looking for the most comfortable ride, avoid traveling at rush hour, i.e., from 7 to 9 am, 3 to 4 pm, and 7 to 8 pm.

_Important Note_: The subway is safe but you should be very cautious if you are by yourself – you should never be alone at night.

_Important Note_: Pemex location and Subway: There are not many subway stops in the Pemex area, so the subway will likely not be an option to travel to work. There did not seem to be a Subway option available for going from the Centro Historico to the Pemex tower, but definitely investigate based on where you live.
Transportation

Public Transportation (Microbus/ Combis/ Peseros):

The city’s privately-run public transportation network consists of small buses known as microbuses or combis or quite often peseros (a name they were given in the mid-20th-century) whose minimum cost is around $2.50 MN. They currently serve the entire city but figuring them out can be complicated and is not always the most comfortable way to go. If you’re not used to getting around in big cities, it may be best to avoid using them.

*Important Note:* Some Microbuses offer unofficial services; these can be identified with a cardboard signs in the front window. Always ask around for stops before boarding.

Metro Bus (Camion):

This modern public transportation system offers an alternative for the city’s transit problems, though currently there is only one line, running across the city from north to south along Avenida Insurgentes, which is, by the way, the longest avenue in the world. The fare is paid using an electronic card purchased for $11.50 MN, which includes the card’s refundable deposit value of $8 MN plus one fare.

Bus System (Camion):

The buses that make up the so-called passenger transport network (Red de Transporte de Pasajeros or RTP) cover numerous city routes, are comfortable and safe, and cost around $2 MN per trip. Covering a service area extending more than 3500 km and principally linking residential areas with Metro stations, the RTP provides service 365 days-a-year, from 4 am to 10:30 pm, along 88 different routes.
Transportation

Taxis:
The most representative of these is the VW bug, called a vocho in Mexico City slang. It’s important before boarding that you verify the vehicle’s license plates start with an L or an S; otherwise, don’t get in. The surest thing to do is to call an authorized taxi stand (sitio autorizado) because the drivers that work for them know the city quite well and will get you where you’re going more quickly. Beyond these services, there are tourist taxis (taxis turísticos) at the airport and certain hotels.

Important Note: Be careful with taxis, the safest option is to use the "sitios autorizados" indicated with yellow tents. These cab drivers are registered and can provide you with a card with their telephone number if you like their service - you can call them to pick you up from anywhere.

Intern Recommended Neighborhoods for Sightseeing Activities:
♦ San Angel - has the Bazar del Sabado.
♦ Sante Fe - outside city center - lots of upscale shopping .
♦ Coyoacan - Frida Kahlo’s house.
♦ Xochimilco - known as "Mexico's Venice" - it’s a lake that was the center of the Aztec city. You rent “trajineras” (giant, colorful gondolas) by the hour and can buy food, drinks, and songs from mariachis.
♦ Chapultepec Park - big park in the city, zoo, and beautiful castle.
♦ Estadio Azteca for a Futbol game - especially as the World Cup is getting closer, the Mexico team might have a few qualifying matches.
♦ El Cardenal - classic/famous restaurant, especially for breakfast .
♦ Mexico City does have those double-decker bus tours (TuriBus). Buying a one-day pass could be a good way to get acquainted with the city and the different neighborhoods.
♦ There are lots of concert and music venues.
Transportation

Bus Lines (Autobus): Outside of Mexico City
Mexico City is connected by earth through 6 expressways (Querétaro, Pachuca, Cuernavaca, Puebla, Toluca, Texcoco) and also freeways. Besides, it counts with 4 bus stations (Observatorio-West, TAPO-East, North-Cien Metros, and South-Taxqueña), in which bus lines provide with service to all destinations of the country.

*Autotransportes de Oriente (ADO) www.ticketbus.com.mx - Goes South
*Estrella Blanca www.estrellablanca.com.mx - Central Area and North
*Estrella de Oro www.autobus.com.mx - Central Area and North, pricier
*Pullman de Morelos www.pullman.com.mx - Central Area
*ETN www.etn.com.mx - Goes North
Important Information

Embassy Location:

The U.S. Embassy is located in Mexico City at:
Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc

Telephone from the United States: 011-52-55-5080-2000
Telephone within Mexico City: 5080-2000
Telephone long distance within Mexico 01-55-5080-2000.

You may contact the Embassy by e-mail (acsmxicocity@state.gov) or visit the Embassywebsite(http://mexico.usembassy.gov/).

Important Note: Keep your passport and other important documents in your home and not your person. You can carry a copy of your passport on your person as a proof of identity.

Medical Facilities:

Some pharmacies have a doctors on call, so you can wait to see them before you buy medicine.

Pemex and SRE both have medical facilities in them, so if you get sick you can tell someone at work and they will take you to see a doctor there.

Important Note: Hospitals in Mexico do not accept U.S. domestic health insurance or Medicare/Medicaid and will expect payment via cash, credit, debit card, or bank transfer.
Communications

Mobile Phones:
Have a cell phone so you can communicate with your employers and with the other students. You can buy cheap temporary cell phones or sim cards once you get top Mexico.
The two major cell phone companies are TelCel (owned by Carlos Slim) and Movistar.

Internet:
There are numerous Internet-access providers—though they all use the Telmex network. Since computer equipment is still beyond many families’ means, public services are popular and abundant in Mexico City. You can find them in larger office-supply and stationery stores and above all in Internet cafés or “ciber-cafés,” where rates are quite reasonable.

Emergency numbers:
Mexico City Police and Emergency Services: 060
Police Detectives: 061
Red Cross: 065
Fire Department: 068
Locatel (emergencies, missing persons, information): 5658-1111
Human Rights Commission: 5229-5600
Tourist-Aid Police: 5250-8221
Federal Highway Police: 5677-2227
Emergencies (cellular telephones only): 911

Exchange Rates:
For access to the Yahoo! Finance calculator follow the following link:
http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter/#from=USD:to=MXN:amt=1

Important Note: Always verify the latest exchange rate information before changing money. It is recommended that you exchange money at the airport. Avoid exchange locations in the city. Carry small denominations only and only carry the funds you will need to the day.
Important Tips

Dress Code:
Make sure you verify with your employer what the dress code for your business environment is like.

Identifications:
You may choose to take your state issued ID and school ID in addition to your passport. Many companies require a form of ID to get a visitor pass.

Markets:
Ask neighbors what the closest market is to your lodging area. Many markets (Mercado) pop up through the city on specific days of the week/month. Take advantage of the fresh produce available to you—making sure you always wash it before consumption.

Water:
You are encouraged to buy bottled water and avoid tap water while in Mexico City. Ask around to know what the best source of bottled water is for your area. Many Mexico residents buy large water jugs and replace them at a convenience store or with a vendor.

Climate:
The climate is temperate in winter, hot and dry in April and May.

The rainy season begins in May and ends around October, consisting generally of sunny mornings followed by cloudy, rainy afternoons.

Mornings and nights can be cold, especially in winter, with an average temperature of 16 degrees C (61 degrees F).