NATIONAL PROFILE

MEXICO

+Exchange programmes+

“Together for a better world”

UNIENDO VOLUNTADES: Long term programme

SUMANDO VOLUNTADES: Short-term programme
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¡Bienvenido a México!

At the Fundacion we are eager to show you our country, our culture, our people. We want you to think about Mexico not as a place of guerrilla warfare, horses, macho men, tequila or corruption, but as a country with a lot of cultural and geographical variety and heritage.

Mexico is a very hospitable country, and the people will welcome you as if you were a fellow Mexican, rather than as a tourist. They will offer you their house, food and lifestyle. Come to Mexico and you will discover that even Mexicans don’t have enough time to know everything about their country. There will always be something new to discover. Everyone who comes to Mexico leaves wanting to come back. That is why Mexicans often say "There's only one Mexico".

General information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official Name:</th>
<th>Estados Unidos Mexicanos</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital:</td>
<td>México City (Ciudad de México)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population:</td>
<td>113,724,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Language</td>
<td>Spanish Plus more than 50 native languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion:</td>
<td>Roman Catholic (80%) Other (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area:</td>
<td>1,969,375 km²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Currency:</td>
<td>Peso (Mexican)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current President:</td>
<td>Enrique Peña Nieto (2012- ), PRI (centre-right party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Important Cities:</td>
<td>México City - 25 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guadalajara - 6.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monterrey - 4 million</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Puebla - 2 million</td>
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But …where in the world is MEXICO?

It is located in the continent of North America.

Mexico covers:
1,943,945 square kilometers of land and
20,430 square kilometers of water.

Making it the 14th largest nation in the world with a total area of 1,964,375 square kilometers.

Mexico shares land borders with 3 countries: United States Of America, Guatemala, Belize.

What about Puebla?

Puebla is the fourth biggest city in Mexico in the state with the same name. Puebla is close to Mexico City and it was founded by the Spanish since they wanted a city between Mexico City and the important harbor in Veracruz. This city is famous for its beautiful colonial city center. The architecture in Puebla was awarded it World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The food is also a significant part of its legacy. Everybody in Mexico knows about Mole Poblano, a famous dish with a clouded origin.

Puebla has around 2 million citizens and is considered to be a calm, safe and friendly place with a lot of interesting things in the surroundings. From the city you can also see the famous volcano Popocatepetl as it is imbedded Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt. For new visitors to Puebla the high altitude might be a bit tough at the beginning. If you are bringing your jogging shoes you are in for a sweat since Puebla is located 2300 meters above sea level.
Climate

The climate varies from tropical climate to desert climate. Mexico has four time zones! In Puebla, it can get a bit cold, especially at nights and early mornings. A jacket and long trousers are advised since the high altitude makes the temperature drop. The temperatures vary between around 21-28 degrees Celsius during the day to around 7-12 degrees at night.

Electrical plug:

Electrical sockets in Mexico are the same as those found in the United States and Canada. \textbf{110-120 Volts}

Money

Our currency is the Mexican Peso and we recommend that you exchange your money in your home country or on arrival at Mexico City Airport. You can always withdraw money in Puebla. We have plenty of banks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchange (June 2018):</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dollar</td>
<td>20.44 MXN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Euro</td>
<td>24.18 MXN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health and Safety

To make your stay a bit easier and fun we have pointed out some things that might be good to know about health and safety.

- Puebla is a safe city but as in all cities in the world you might want to avoid areas you are not familiar with outside the city center at night. Try to not go out alone at night.
- There is no particular vaccine required to come to Mexico.
- Try to avoid food from the streets and don’t drink the tap water.
Most Mexican food is spicy (hot). If you ask somebody ‘Is it spicy?’ the usual answer will be ‘No’, which actually means ‘Not to me’. The best you can do is to ask for food without chili: ‘Sin chile’, until you get used to eating it.

- Smoking indoors at public places and restaurants is forbidden by law in Mexico.
- Transport during the day is usually made by bus and even though the system might seem difficult at first there are buses almost everywhere between 6 in the morning and around 10.30 at night. When it gets dark you should go with a taxi instead which is quite cheap.

What to bring?

There are not so many things you need to bring. But a few things should be included when you pack your bags.

- Clothes for warm weather since the days might be warm.
- Clothes for cold weather since the nights get very cool.
- Sunblock
- Comfortable shoes

Mexican Culture

Family is one of the most important elements in Mexican society. Especially outside the cities, families are typically large and Mexicans are very conscious of their responsibilities to immediate family members and extended family such as cousins and even close friends.

Hosting parties at their homes plays a large part of Mexican life and making visitors feel comfortable is a large part of the values and customs of the country.

Family units are usually large and are still often shaped by the “traditional” gender roles and extensive family involvement from external members who assist one another in day to day life.

There is a strong connection among family members. Parents are treated with a high degree of respect, as is the family in general and there may be constant struggle,
especially as children grow, between individual wants and needs and the wants and needs of the family.

**Food**

Mexican cuisine varies widely between regions, as each town has its own culinary traditions, according to "Mexico For You," a publication of the Mexican Cultural Institute of Washington, D.C. Tortillas and other food made from corn are common everywhere, though, as are pepper, tomatoes and beans. Rice is also a staple, according to History.com. Many foods that originated in Mexico are popular worldwide, including avocados, chocolate and pumpkins.

Mexico is known for its tequila, which is made from agave cactus that is well suited to the climate of central Mexico. Fizzy drinks are also popular in Mexico, as the country has a well-developed beverage industry.

**FUNDACIÓN ALIANZAS ROSALICO A.C.**

**Who are we?**

FUNDACION ALIANZAS ROSALICO A.C. is a non-profit organization, founded on 20 September 2011. It is recognized by all authorities in Mexico and has a written constitution.

**Main goals:**

1. To restore environmental balance by promoting the culture of recycling
2. To promote social development through the private sector
3. To encourage worldwide volunteerism
4. To support and promote education
5. To fight ignorance through education: sex education, peace education, training and work, support and encouragement of entrepreneurs and reading workshops
6. To teach people to work

**Mission:**
- To be an organization that supports vulnerable groups of people through innovative programs, helping them to eradicate poverty and to improve their quality of life

**Vision:**
- To be a model non-profit organization, recognized for the social impact of its programmes for vulnerable people

We run two different Exchange programmes: Uniendo Voluntades (long-term from 6-12 months) and Sumando Voluntades (Short-term: from 2-16 weeks).

This programmes have been running since 2012. These programmes allow the Foundation to do the following:
- 1. To provide scholarships for Mexicans in vulnerable situations to encourage social work and cultural exchange.
- 2. To receive international volunteers in Mexico to share our culture and work in formal and non-formal education.
- 3. To work with programmes related to the “Capacity Building trainings”.

**Foundation’s structure**
Volunteer profile

We are more than happy to welcome anyone who is motivated to be a volunteer but also we require the following minimum requirements in order to join the programmes:

Candidate profile:

- 18-30 years old (For short-term programmes we are open to receiving older people).
- Willingness to share your culture and values
- Tolerance towards other cultures and ways of thinking
- Adaptable
- Enthusiastic and proactive
- You do NOT have to know the language before you arrive
- You do NOT have to have any prior work or voluntary experience

Requirements before arrival:

- You must attend an information meeting about our programmes
- You must attend an interview with the Foundation’s programme coordinator
- You must sign a contract of participation
- You must cover the costs of participation
- You must hand in all relevant documents
- It is NOT necessary to know the language in advance unless specified by the Project

Host accommodation

Mostly accommodation is provided by a Mexican host family OR on the premises of the project depending on the volunteer’s preference and availability at the Project.

Exchangees should not expect to be treated as special guests, but as another member of the family with the same rights and restrictions. We cannot guarantee a private bedroom, or that there will be a phone in the house; or that you will have all of the services that you have in your country. For example, many Mexicans wash their clothes by
hand and hang them on a line to dry; and often there is hot water only at certain hours. These factors result from the social and economic problems of Mexico, and we are sure that you will understand and adapt to this. Do not expect to live under the same circumstances in which you live in your home country.

Here you will eat: Breakfast + Lunch + Dinner

*You also will be able to cook in case you want a special meal or if you want to cook for your host family.*

**Host projects**

During your exchange year you will participate in Mexican society and voluntary work. Your working hours will depend on your programme and also your assignment. You will be responsible for showing up on time and for working your scheduled hours.

Voluntary work is an opportunity to get to know a different side of Mexico. You will make friends and meet people that, otherwise, you would not get a chance to meet.

**FACTS TO CONSIDER IN YOUR HOST PROJECT:**

- Your project will take up a minimum of 20 hours and a maximum of 40 hours per week.
- You will have one week of holidays at the end of the programme.
- There are various projects available including: working with disabled people, pensioners, marginalised people, human rights, schools, orphanages, street children, critically ill people, environmental projects, etc.
- Each project has a description of the activities and responsibilities that will be carried out by the volunteer. (please read Social Projects 2019).
- All volunteers will have a contact person and a mentor who they can rely on for the duration of the programme.
### Pocket Money + Local transportation

For Uniendo Voluntades Programme and EVS programmes, pocket money and transportation money will be paid every month in cash.

For those coming with the German Programme you will get your pocket money through your sending organization.

Transportation money will be paid only if you work the minimum of time required: four hours a day, five days a week. Transportation money will be only be given to those who do not live in their project.

### Visa Requirements

**Volunteers who are staying for up to 12 months:**

You will need to start the VISA process in your country (please note that the process and requirements are different in each country, you will need to contact the Mexican Embassy in advance).

**WE WILL SEND YOU:**

An invitation letter that certifies that the volunteer has the professional or academic training for carrying out the activities she/he will be doing in Mexico and supporting them during the whole exchange in Mexico.

It is important that you get the Visa before entering Mexico.

When you are at the Mexican airport, you must present your visa at the immigration desk. They will stamp it and give you 30 days to exchange it for a permit that covers the entire length of your exchange.
Once you have arrived in Puebla, your contact person will go with you and help you to acquire the permit.

**DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED TO PRESENT IN MEXICO ARE:**
The documents needed to acquire the permit in Mexico are:
- Original passport
- Original VISA
- A full copy of your passport (including blank pages)
- Photos which meet the specification set out by the immigration department (you will get these details later on)
- Formato Basico, you will get this at the Immigration Office (we will help you fill it out)
- Payment

**COSTS**
TOTAL: 3,130 MXN (Approx. 185 Euros)

**Volunteers who are staying for up to 6 months:**

You will have to enter Mexico as a **TOURIST**.

When you arrive at the immigration desk in the airport, they will ask you why you are here. You should say that you are coming as a tourist for 6 months. They will glue a white piece of paper in your passport, this is the tourist visa. Keep it in a safe place. Make sure that the permit you get is for 180 days. **This tourist visa is free.**

**Contact**

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