

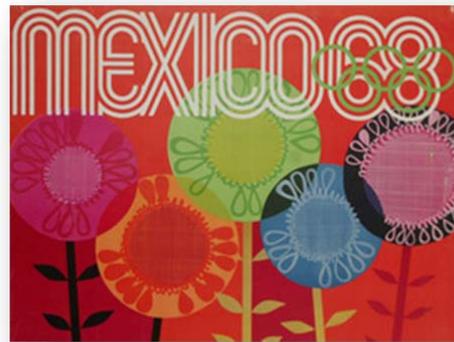


## Modern Mexico

During the XX century, Mexico went through many changes. While the peoples of Europe were suffering World War I, Mexico had its Revolution. The revolutionaries were successful and gradually introduced reforms which changed the whole system of government, and the new Constitution of 1917 was written.

Mexico has been a member of the **United Nations** (UN) since it was founded just after the Second World War, and has strongly supported nuclear disarmament. It is closely involved in the work of many international organizations, like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

**In 1968, Mexico hosted the Olympic Games.** Mexico has also twice hosted the football World Cup, first in 1970 and then in 1986.



## Mexico Today

**Today, Mexico is a mixture of a very modern country and a developing one.** There are 112 million of Mexicans, and four more are born every minute.

In most of the states, especially in the cities, there is the same level of technology and type of business as in Britain. In some cases, the contrast between cities and small towns is noticeable, especially in some rural and indigenous areas of the south. For example Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas. Here, modernization is taking place more slowly.



The government is working hard to reduce extreme poverty and to improve the well-being of all Mexicans, without sacrificing traditional customs.

## Mexico City

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The **capital of Mexico** is a very big city, with over 20 million inhabitants (twice as big as London!). It is situated 2,240 metres above sea level in the Valley of Mexico, and surrounded by a ring of mountains. Mexico City is on the site of the old Aztec capital Tenochtitlan, which used to be built on a lake.



Gradually most of the lake has been drained or filled in, and the space is being used for houses and buildings as the city grows. However, some small lakes remain, like **Xochimilco**, where you can travel the canals by boat, in some colorful boats called **trajineras**. Here you can see the *chinampa* system of agriculture created by the Aztecs. Other lakes are protected areas, like Lake **Texcoco**, where there is a wide variety of wildlife and birds, such as herons.



Mexico City is a meeting point of the three distinct periods in the country's history. In Mexico City today there is a mix of ancient, colonial and modern cultures. You can see the remains of old Aztec temples, Spanish churches and modern style buildings. In one of the city's squares all three of these exist side by side. This is called the **Plaza de las Tres Culturas**, the Square of Three Cultures.



There are lots of museums to visit too, like the ***Papalote Museo del Niño*** (the Children's Museum) which is also situated in Chapultepec Park. It has exhibits and information about science, communications, the human body, art and the world.

There are many things to see in Mexico City, including the ***Palacio de Bellas Artes*** (Palace of Fine Arts); the main square called *Zócalo*, where the National Palace and the Cathedral are: the *Torre Latinoamericana* (the Latin American Tower) which has one of the best views over Mexico City; and a very large central park called ***Chapultepec***, which has a funfair, lake, fountains, gardens and a zoo. Families like to walk around the park on Sundays.



The city has a modern metro system similar to the Underground in London, which takes people to work and around the town. At one of the stops, called *Pino Suárez* you can see part of an Aztec pyramid in the station below ground. There are also exhibitions, paintings and book fairs held in some of the larger stations.

### Children and Mexico's future



Since 1997, children between 6 and 17 years old participate in Special Consultations that are held for them in all the country. Children go to the polls and express their opinion about important issues, such as rights-for children, discrimination and what they would never like to have in our country.

In Mexico, ***the best interests of***

***the child*** are always taken into consideration when planning the Government's policies and deciding on any matter related to a child.

There are 226,000 schools for basic education in Mexico, and more than 25 million students between the ages of 6 and 12 attend these schools every day.

At school, children are taught different ways in which to preserve the natural environment, and the importance of protecting species of plants and animals. Children also learn about the diversity of their country, its rich culture, languages and historical legacy.

After school, Mexican children like to play with their friends, they also play soccer, videogames and watch cartoons on the TV.



Children love all kinds of candies, especially Mexican spicy candies which are made by mixing chilli and sugar. They also like lollipops covered in chili, tamarind candies, mazapan, and spicy or sweet and sour powders.