



**CHOICE**HUMANITARIAN

# Mexico

# Appendix



# COUNTRY MAP



**Capital:** Mexico City / **Population:** 113+ million / **Area:** 761,606 sq. miles  
**Language:** Spanish, English / **Government:** Federal Republic  
**Neighboring Countries:** United States, Guatemala, Belize



**Areas of CHOICE Focus:** States of Mexico (Central Mexico); San Luis Potosí; Guanajuato; Zacatecas

**International Airports:**  
Querétaro: Querétaro Airport (QRO)  
León/Guanajuato: Del Bajío Airport (BJX)

Registered as a local NGO, CHOICE Humanitarian utilizes its proven model of self-development to empower and mobilize rural villages across central Mexico. Since beginning operations in 1990, CHOICE Mexico has impacted more than 30 villages, promoting positive change in the lives of over 23,000 Mexican natives.

Volunteers participating in CHOICE Expeditions will arrive/depart from Querétaro (Querétaro International Airport – QRO) or sometimes Guanajuato (Del Bajío International Airport – BJB) unless indicated otherwise. Expeditions take place in the rural villages of central Mexico with increasing elevations between 6500-8000 feet above sea level. Frequent expedition projects include the construction of village schoolhouses and water cisterns. You are invited to join CHOICE in building people, not just projects!

# **TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS**

## **PASSPORT**

A valid international passport is required for all volunteers traveling to Mexico. Your passport must be valid for at least **6 months BEYOND** the date of the international return airline ticket.

## **VISA**

A travel visa is not required for US citizens visiting Mexico. However, citizens of other countries might require a travel visa to enter Mexico. Please consult international embassies and/or consulates for further information.

**If traveling to other nations in transit to/from Mexico (including connections), you are responsible for researching the proper passport and visa requirements to avoid immigration problems and issues.**

## **TAXES**

In most cases, international airline tickets often include the arrival taxes and fees for Mexico (**approx \$20-\$25**). However, please consult with the airline and/or travel agent to be sure. These charges are subject to modification.

**Upon departure from Mexico, a required airport tax could be charged: approx \$20-\$30 (cash) per person depending on the airport. However, some international airline tickets often include these taxes, so please consult with the airline and/or travel agent to be sure. These charges are subject to modification.**

## **VACCINES & IMMUNIZATIONS**

There are no vaccination requirements for US citizens to enter Mexico according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. However, citizens of other countries might have distinct requirements and are therefore encouraged to consult international embassies and/or consulates for further information.

CHOICE recommends that all volunteers be up-to-date with routine vaccinations (MMR, DPT, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Typhoid). CHOICE suggests that each volunteer consult with an international travel clinic for professional medical advice regarding travel vaccines and immunizations. For the most benefit, please see a health-care provider at least 4-6 weeks prior to departure for vaccines to take full effect.

Although yellow fever is not a disease risk in Mexico, the local government requires travelers arriving from countries where yellow fever is present to have proof of yellow fever vaccination. Therefore, please consider your comprehensive travel plans when consulting a health-care provider for those vaccines required across multiple countries and destinations.

# **TRAVEL INFORMATION**

## **CURRENCY**

Mexican Peso (MXN)

1.00 US Dollar = 16.78 Pesos (2015)

## **ELECTRICITY**

110-120 volts AC (60 Hertz)

Plugs: standard 2-prong (same as United States)

## **WEATHER: ACAMBAY & QUERETARO REGION**

DRY SEASON: October – April (hot in the afternoons, cooler in the evenings)

*\*rain is occasional*

HIGH: 75°F – 80°F / LOW: 30°F – 35°F

RAINY SEASON: May – September (warm and humid in the afternoons, cooler in the evenings)

*\*rain is frequent*

HIGH: 75°F – 80°F / LOW: 45°F – 50°F

## **WEATHER: GUANAJUATO & IRAPUATO REGION**

DRY SEASON: October – April (hot in the afternoons, cooler in the evenings)

*\*rain is occasional*

HIGH: 80°F – 85°F / LOW: 50°F – 55°F

RAINY SEASON: May – September (hot and humid in the afternoons, cooler in the evenings)

*\*rain is frequent*

HIGH: 85°F – 90°F / LOW: 60°F – 65°F

## **FOOD**

During the expedition, CHOICE will provide 3 daily meals to all volunteers while in the village. The local diet consists of tortillas, beans, rice, and vegetables. Expedition participants can expect to eat standard American foods combined with local elements: cereals, breads, salads, soups, chicken, fruits, salsas, etc. CHOICE will also provide drinks such as milk, fruit juices, and soda pop. Participants are encouraged to bring personal food and snacks that will not be available in the villages (supplement bars, sweets, etc). Drinkable water will be provided in the village.

# **PACKING LIST**

This comprehensive packing list has been prepared as a convenience. The recommendations reflect the experience of CHOICE as well as recommendations from previous expedition participants. Please check with the Director of Expeditions at CHOICE Headquarters (801.474.1937) or the designated Expedition Leader for specific needs or concerns.

When reviewing this list, please **refer to the weather information provided above to coordinate which items to pack and take on a specific expedition (according to the month/season)**. CHOICE recommends that all volunteers check the weather forecast prior to departure to ensure appropriate packing. It is wise to think in **LAYERS** when preparing for a service trip abroad. **All volunteers are expected to bring a comfortable sleeping bag and foam pad (inflatable air mattresses optional)**.

CHOICE recommends that all volunteers pack as light as possible (since brief hikes might be required before entering and/or departing from the village). CHOICE also suggests duffle bags and camping backpacks as ideal packing equipment (instead of suitcases). **Please check with the airlines regarding luggage allowances and excess baggage fees. CHOICE will not be responsible for such fees.**

Participants have found that packing everything in large Ziploc-style bags makes it easier to find socks and shirts during the expedition, but also keeps clothes clean and odor-free. CHOICE suggests also bringing such a bag to store dirty clothes throughout the expedition.

\*One golden piece of advice: Leave behind a clean change of clothes at the hotel or keep a clean change of clothes inside a bag during the entire expedition. Why? So that there is a fresh outfit to wear when boarding the international flight home! You'll thank us later!

## **NECESSARY ITEMS**

- durable walking shoes (hiking boots or well-built tennis shoes)
- sandals or flip-flops (for use in shower and inside sleeping area)
- swimsuit (for use in shower)
- multiple pairs of socks (lightweight long socks protect ankles from insect bites)
- three (3) pair of work pants or knee-length shorts (casual, quick-dry – not jeans)
- four (4) or five (5) t-shirts or work shirts (casual, quick-dry – not sleeveless)
- sweatshirt and/or light jacket
- one (1) long-sleeve shirt for the evenings
- simple rain poncho
- underclothing (enough for entire trip without washing)
- pajamas appropriate for group sleeping
- hat or sun visor
- antibacterial wet wipe packets (80-100 per person) and/or antibacterial hand gel
- toothbrush/toothpaste
- deodorant
- pocket size packs of tissue
- water bottle (plastic or aluminum)
- inexpensive durable watch
- change of clothes that will be functional in the village (packed in carry-on luggage)
- travel pillow
- camera (plus extra battery and extra film/disk)
- extra prescription medicine (packed in carry-on luggage)
- sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher)
- lip balm
- minor blister/wound care (band-aids, moleskin, triple antibiotic cream etc.)
- pain reliever (ibuprofen, etc.)

- diarrhea medication (imodium, etc.)
- constipation medicine
- decongestant or allergy medication
- personal prescriptions
- mosquito repellent with at least 20% DEET
- chigger cream
- medium to warm sleeping bag (lightweight bag is easier to manage and pack)
- small inflatable mattress or foam pad
- headlamp with new batteries

- good work gloves
- jumbo and mid-size Ziploc bags (for dirty/wet clothes, garbage, organizing and packing)
- personal hygiene items: towel, washcloth, soap, shampoo, toilet paper, etc.
- day bag (to transport water, jacket, hat, gloves, camera, snacks to worksite)
- personal journal and pen
- CHOICE travel documents (sent via email)

### **RECOMMENDED ITEMS**

- sleep aids (ear plugs, etc.)
- book about Mexico (pocket guide)
- battery-operated pump with spare batteries (for optional air mattress)
- cold water soap to wash out clothes
- cultural sharing items (small musical instruments, photo albums, etc.)

- supplies and games for village activities (fingernail polish, materials for necklaces and bracelets, frisbees, soccer balls/ pumps, etc.)
- small multi-tool or pocket knife
- compact travel games or cards
- small calculator (to calculate currency exchanges)

### **OPTIONAL ITEMS**

- morning alarm
- bandana (used around head or neck)
- sunglasses
- travel sewing kit
- snacks, sweets, powder juices

- clothes pins or safety pins (for hanging clothes)
- compact indoor games or projects
- star guide book
- “Freshet” or “Go Girl” (this is a girl thing)

## **FIELD STAFF**



### **Juan Alducin - Director of Operations**

Juan has been with CHOICE since 1995, managing diverse programs and projects across central Mexico. Among his numerous accomplishments, he has introduced a successful income-generating livestock program throughout rural villages. Juan holds advanced degrees in Agriculture & Livestock and Project Management. His dear wife, Ana, dedicates her efforts to multiple women's programs and the coordination of expeditions.

### **Alejandro Martínez Santibañez – CHOICE Field Team**

Following an internship with CHOICE, Alejandro is now a certified veterinarian working full-time with the local field team. He is in charge of aquaponics and other important projects in the Irapuato-Salamanca region.

### **Claudia Villanueva – CHOICE Field Team**

Claudia is in charge of office operations for CHOICE Mexico, handling financials and other administrative duties. A native of Tamaula, she joined the CHOICE team in 2012.

### **Angelica María Saldaña – CHOICE Field Team**

A certified veterinarian, Angelica resides in Tecozautla and oversees CHOICE operations in the Querétaro region. An experienced member of the CHOICE team, she also assists with expeditions.

### **Mauricio de Jesús – CHOICE Field Team**

A native of Acambay, Mauricio is in charge of CHOICE activities in the Acambay-Aculco region. He splits his time as a high school teacher and part-time CHOICE employee.

# LANGUAGE

While serving on a CHOICE expedition to Mexico, some rural villagers might speak English. However, *español* is the predominant dialect of the Mexican communities.

(J = "h" sound / LL = "y" sound / H = silent / CH = "ch" sound)

ENGLISH	SPANISH
Hello - How Are You?	Hola. Como Estás?
I Am Fine	Estoy Bien
What's Up?	Que Tal?
How Is Your Family?	Como Está Tu Familia?
How Are Your Children?	Como Están Tus Hijos?
My Name Is <u>Joanne</u>	Mi Nombre Es Joanne
What Is Your Name?	Cual Es Tu Nombre?
Mother	Madre
Father	Padre
Brother	Hermano
Sister	Hermana
Children	Hijos/as, Niños/as
Grandmother	Abuela
Grandfather	Abuelo
Yes	Sí
No	No
Thank You	Gracias
You're Welcome	De Nada
Pardon Me (I'm Sorry)	Perdón, Lo Siento
I Don't Understand	No Entiendo
Good	Bien, Bueno
Pretty	Bonito/a
Water	Agua
Food	Comida
Good (Delicious)	Delicioso
Goodbye	Adiós
Good Morning	Buen Día
Good Evening	Buenas Tardes