

Material Culture

The Mexican culture is perhaps one of the most fascinating cultures in the current world. The mixture of native legends, artistic expressions and Spanish culture make the Mexican culture quite unique. Mexico has an extensive culinary culture with a wide variety of food dishes. Corn is consumed in all possible forms: as a cooked or roasted corncob, porridge as a tortilla, a thin, round "pancake." When tortillas are filled with meat or other ingredients they are called tacos or quesadillas, which are especially popular in central Mexico. Much of the sophistication of Mexican meals come from over one hundred different types of chiles, from the big and sweet chile to a small and extremely hot chile.

Mexicans generally have a light breakfast of coffee and/or fruit before the day starts. Halfway through the morning, people might eat a warm tortilla snack or a bread roll. The biggest and most important meal of the day between two and four in the afternoon, called, "la comida" and consists of three or four courses: soup, rice or pasta, meat or chicken with tortillas, and refried beans, and dessert. Dinner is between eight and ten at night and mostly sweet rolls, coffee, and milk. Mexicans usually eat outdoors. Mexicans drink huge quantities of soft drinks and beer. Although the national liquor is tequila, which is produced from the maguey cactus, Mexicans prefer rum with cola during weddings and other celebrations, or fiestas.

Mexican people living in big cities trend to wear clothes like big colored t-shirts, sneakers, and jeans. When we get into smaller towns, we can see modern clothes with a "native" feeling, which is shown mainly by the colors chosen. People who live in those towns have a preference for earth-like colors, like brown or dark red, although it is not uncommon to find bright greens and yellows in their clothing colors either. Traditional Mexican clothing combines native and European elements. The fibers of choice among the Mexicans are cotton, wool, and silk. In the past, Mexican clothing was dyed with natural components found in local plants, but soon newer and better ones were brought to Mexico from Europe. As for Mexican clothing used on celebrations, we can find a different costume for almost every special day of the year. National festivities are celebrated with typical clothes and accessories such as the "Mexican Sombrero Hat." Traditional Mexican clothing can be found in many varieties and distinguished by gender, social status, and ethnic group. Clothing for men is mostly "European-like", which means that the trousers and the shirt are European garments, and possibly the only native addition to the men's wardrobe is a large blanket cape, called "Sarape". Men often wear Mexican boots too. Typical women clothing includes a skirt, a closed shoulder cape, and a "rebozo" (a shawl).

Everyone interested in Mexican culture knows about the main expression; music. Mexican music has gone from the sound of drums of a Mayan or Aztec ceremony to the modern music of Mexican rap. Far from replacing music style with another, Mexican music incorporates previous rhythms and styles into new ones. Although recently almost every young Mexican music artist chooses more modern styles, like Mexican gangster rap. The most widely known thing of the Mexican music history is The Mariachi. A Mariachi ensemble is considered to be a folk orchestra, including: trumpets and violins as the melody group, and guitars, harp, guitar, and vihuelas as the harmony group. Among the Mexican music played by Mariachis there are famous tunes like "La Bamba", and "La Cucaracha". Mariachis is almost a requirement at national celebrations and public parties and "fiestas", which often feature two or three different bands that play different kinds of Mexican music. There also much dancing at the "fiestas". The Mexicans enjoy every "fiesta" by making masks, wearing costumes, playing instruments and dancing. Every holiday of Mexico is unique, and everyone who is visiting will be fascinated by them.

Dancing in Mexico at celebrations usually includes costumes, otherwise it is normal to be in regular clothing. The Mexican hat dance is the most popular dance in Mexico and can be performed by two people, by a group or just by a single dancer. The dances steps are pretty much the same when dancing with a partner or in a group, but they can change dramatically if dancing alone.

Mexico has a very rich culture. People separate themselves from the rest not only in things like music and dancing, but also in art. Mexican blown glass is an excellent example of the skills of Mexican craftsmen: glass pieces are made one by one by an artist who blows through a long, thin pipe with hot, liquid glass on an edge and make a glass bubble to later cut and mold with the hands. Mexican clothes and costumes are very important pieces of Mexican craftsmanship too. Created for parades and popular Mexican “fiestas”, typical Mexican clothes and famous costumes are great exponents of the great Mexican art. From paintings to sculpture, and carved wood to fine hand-made glass animals, Mexican art shows the deepness of each Mexican's individual roots.

Most cities in Mexico in the colonial times were planned around a plaza which held three close institutions: the cathedral, the cabildo or administrative center, which may be part of a wing of a governor's palace. Many cities in Mexico retain their colonial town plan, cobblestone streets and beautiful colonial architecture. Mexico has more sites on the UNESCO World Heritage list than any other country in the Americas, many of them boasting some of the richest Spanish Colonial architecture. Some of the most famous cities in Mexico built in the Colonial style are Puebla, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, and Morelia. The Historic centre of Mexico city is focused on the main plaza in Mexico City, the largest plaza in Latin America and second largest in the world after Russia's red square. The center of Mexico City contains 9,000 buildings, 1,550 of which have been declared of historical importance. The plaza represents a mixture of architectural styles from the 16th century to the present.

Fifteen years after the end of the Mexican Revolution in 1917, government was endorsed for federal housing, educational, and health care building programs. During the post-Revolutionary period, idealization of the symbolized attempts to reach into the past and retrieve what had been lost in the Mexican Revolution. Many schools have left their imprint on a large number of works in which Mexican stylistic elements have been combined with European and North American techniques.

Nonmaterial Culture

Roman Catholicism is the main religion in Mexico. After the conquest by the Spanish, Mexico's living people, readily accepted Catholic beliefs and practices, but they did so on the basis of their pre-Hispanic religious beliefs. The Virgin of Guadalupe, for example, was associated with the pagan goddess Tonantzin. As a result, Mexican folk Catholicism is frequently described as syncretic. Catholic beliefs change the life of ordinary Mexicans. Because the Catholic Church has been a very powerful institution in Mexican history, its relationship with the state has been tense and sometimes hostile. In recent decades, Protestant missionaries have been partially active in southern Mexico and among the urban poor. Catholic priests conduct regular masses and officiate over events Mexicans consider crucial, such as: birth, weddings and death. Religiously, socially and culturally diverse, Mexican people are always ready to demonstrate their good will by offering their help to whoever may need it.

Mexico's main language is Spanish. Although, up to 100 Native American languages are still spoken in Mexico, but no single alternative language is left in Mexico. Eighty percent of those Mexicans who speak another language also speak Spanish. The most popular of the Native American languages is Nahuatl. It is the primary language of more than a million Mexicans and is spoken by nearly one-fourth of all Native Americans in the country. This is followed by Maya, used by 14 percent of Native Americans and spoken by about seven percent of Native Americans. No other specific language is spoken by more than five percent of Mexico's Native Americans.

Mexico, “Estados Unidos Mexicanos” is a federal republic under a centralized government. Governmental powers are divided between executive, legislative, and judicial branches, but in political practice the executive, that is, the presidency, has had strong control over the legislative branch. Only in recent years has the legislative branch had power to increase because of the strengthening of the multiparty system. The president is elected by popular vote for a six-year period and is the chief of state and head of government. The president appoints the cabinet members. The legislative branch is a

bicameral National Congress which consist of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Chamber of Deputies has five hundred members, elected for three-year terms; the Senate has 128 members, elected for six-year terms. In the judicial branch the Supreme Court of Justice is the highest tribunal.

The federation is made up of thirty-one states and the capital. Each state has a governor, who serves a six-year term, and a unicameral legislature. Both are elected by popular vote. The Federal District also has an Assembly of Representatives. The local administrative level is the municipality, which is governed by a popularly elected mayor and a municipal council for three-year terms. Suffrage is universal and mandatory (not enforced) for those over the age of eighteen.

Mexico's population still contains many Indian groups. Depending on the definition used, the total number of Indians varied from 6.7 million to 10 million in 1995. The most significant groups are the Nahuas, Otomís, Mayas, Zapotecas, Mixtecos, Tzeltales, and Tzotziles.

For Mexican, the family is at the top of the priority list and are a big deal. The extended family is as important as the small family and helps provides a sense of stability. Mexicans consider it their duty to help family members. Family members can help find employment or finance a house or other large purchases. Most Mexican families are very traditional, with the father as the head decision maker. Mothers are greatly honored but their role may be seen as secondary to that of their husband.

Mexicans respect authority and look to those above them for guidance and decision-making. Rank is important, and those above you in must always be treated with respect. This makes it important to know which person is in charge, and leads to an authoritarian approach to decision-making and solving problems. Mexicans are very aware of how an individual fits into each hierarchy depending on family, friends or business. It would be very disrespectful if someone broke the chain of hierarchy. But maybe the most important characteristic of the Mexican people is their festive spirit. It's hard to believe that people who have suffered so much throughout history have such a great celebration mood. Every single holiday, National, religious or local, has its celebration. The most famous of those celebrations are the Fiesta de Cinco de Mayo, the Novena or nine days before Christmas and the celebration of Independence Day. Most holidays and festivities include great celebrations and "fiestas."

The most important historical holidays of Mexico are:

February 5th: Day of the Constitution.
February 24th: Day of the National Flag.
March 18th: Day of Petroleum Expropriation (nationalization of the Petroleum Industry)
March 21st: Birth of Don Benito Juárez.
May 1st: Labor Day.
May 5th: the famous "Cinco the Mayo", anniversary of the Battle of Puebla.
September 1st: Day of the Presidential State of the Union address.
September 13th: Anniversary of the death of the Young Heroes of Chapultepec.
September 15th: The Cry for Independence
September 16th: Independence Day.
October 12th: Columbus Day
November 20th: Anniversary of the Mexican Revolution.

Religious holidays of Mexico are celebrated on many days. Some of the most important are:

March 8th: Ash Wednesday ("Miércoles de Ceniza"), preceded by 4 days of Carnival.
April 23rd: Easter Sunday.
May 15th: Saint Isidro the farmer (blessing of the animals)
June 3rd: Corpus Christi
June 11th: Pentecost
June 24th: Saint John the Baptist.
August 15th: Assumption of the Virgin Mary
October 7th: Our Lady of the Sacred Rosary.
November 1st: Day of "Todos los santos" (day of all the saints)

November 2nd: Day of the dead.

December 24th: Christmas Eve, preceded by 9 days of pre-christmas Mexican festivities.

At least three great civilizations, the Mayas, the Olmecs, and the Toltecs, preceded the wealthy Aztec empire, conquered from 1519-1521 by the Spanish, under Hernando Cortés. Spain ruled Mexico under New Spain for the next 300 years until Sept. 16, 1810, when the Mexicans first revolted. The process of organizing Mexico wasn't an easy task. It took years of wars to achieve peace. They won independence in 1821. From 1821 to 1877, there were two emperors, dictators, and enough presidents and provisional executives to make a new government on the average of every nine months. Mexico lost Texas to the U.S. in 1836 and were defeated in the war with the U.S. in 1848. Mexico also lost the area that is now California, Nevada, and Utah, and most of Arizona and New Mexico, parts of Wyoming and Colorado under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In 1855, the Indian patriot Benito Juárez began a series of reforms, which owned a lot of property. The years after the fall of the dictator Porfirio Díaz (1911) were marked by bloody political military strife and trouble with the U.S., culminating in the U.S. expedition into northern Mexico into unsuccessful pursuit of the revolutionary Pancho Villa. Since a brief civil war in 1920, Mexico has enjoyed a period of gradual agricultural, political, and social reforms. Relations with the U.S. were disturbed in 1938 when all foreign oil wells were expropriated, but a compensation agreement was reached in 1941. Following World War II, the government emphasized economic growth. During the mid-1970s, under the leadership of President Portillo, Mexico became a major petroleum producer. By the end of Portillo's term, however, Mexico had accumulated a huge external debt because of the government's unrestrained borrowing on the strength of its petroleum revenues. The collapse of oil prices in 1986 cut Mexico's export earnings. In 1994, Mexico joined Canada and the United States in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), with the plan to phase out all tariffs over a 15-year period, and in 1996, it became a founding member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In 1995, the U.S. agreed to prevent the collapse of Mexico's private banks. In return, the U.S. won virtual veto power over a lot of Mexico's economic policy. In 1997, in the freest elections of Mexico's history, the PRI lost control of the lower legislative house and the option of having a mayor of Mexico City in a stunning upset. To increase democracy, President Ernesto Zedillo said in 1999 that he would break precedent and not personally choose the next PRI presidential nominee. Several months later, Mexico held its first presidential primary. In 2004, a two-year investigation into the "dirty war," which Mexico's government waged against its opponents in the 1960s and 1970s, led to later drop against former president Luis Echeverría for an ordered shooting of student protesters in 1971.

Tools and Skills

The OECD Economic Survey 2007 states that Mexico has made considerable progress in terms of integrating with the whole economy. Through development in policy making, the country has achieved macroeconomic stability. The Mexican government has changed several initiatives and reforms to strengthen its industrial and financial aspects. As a result, there has been more avenues to facilitate foreign direct investment and foreign goods and services in the Mexican technology industry.

Numerous trade barriers in Mexico have been discussed but the true potential of Mexico's technology industry is an established fact. That is why Mexico continues to be one of the preferred trade destinations for US companies. Those in the technology industry can use some favorable factors to help their businesses grow: proximity, similar time zones, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) membership. Business opportunities are available in different regions of Mexico. Cities like Monterrey, Guadalajara, Mexico City, and the US-Mexico border are all experiencing major growth. If one were to invest in the technology industry a return would definitely be possible.

The Mexican government, in its pursuit to attract more US investors to its technology industry, organizes trade fairs and business fairs. They also invite US business to create trade relations between the two nations. There are great business opportunities in Mexico's technology industry. Mexico

continues to build technology industry business relations with the US as its natural trade partner because of the close relations and border location. With the signing off strategic trade agreements, a trade partnership between US and Mexico is possible. The effort keep crime away from the Mexican border has emerged as another major breakthrough in achieving this goal. In the next couple year high trade and technology will ultimately reach an all time high if things stay moving at the same rate.

The primary science and technology system is the National Council for Science and Technology, a public body created in 1970 composed of researchers, scientists, academics, and government officials. They formulate, study, evaluate, and execute national science and technology policies. In 1989, the Consultative Council on Sciences was created to advise directly the President of Mexico on science and technology. In 1993, Mexico's totals 8,595 scientists and engineers and 2,477 technicians were involved in research and development.

Cultural Change

Mexico is becoming a more developed country, with many other countries around the world. The culture is advancing and changing from traditional methods with the inventions of new technologies and the globalization as a nation. New technologies and ideas are changing Mexico standards of production and living.

Mexico's land transportation network is one of the most extensive in Latin America with 357,000 kilometers of paved roads, including more than 11,000 kilometers of four-lane paved roads. Mexico's ports have experienced a boom in investment and traffic following a 1993 law that privatized the port system. Mexico's ports moved in 2006. Many international airlines serve Mexico, with direct or connecting flights from most major cities in the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and Latin America. Most Mexican regional capitals and resorts have direct air services to Mexico City or the United States. In 2005, the Government of Mexico agreed to sell Mexicana and Aeromexico, of the two main national airlines, to a private investor. Airports are semi-privatized with the government still the majority holder, but with each regional airport group maintaining operational techniques.

The telecommunications system is dominated by Telmex, the former state-owned company. Several companies compete in the sector with limited success. The teledensity rate in Mexico (19%) is below average in Latin America. Wireless penetration is much higher, with over 65 million wireless subscribers in early 2008, although 31 million of the customers use prepaid cards, and many use their phones to receive calls only. Mexico's satellite service sector was opened to competition, including limited foreign direct investment, in 2001.

Mexico has 76 seaports and 10 river ports. The four major seaports concentrating around 60% of the merchandise traffic are Altamira and Veracruz in the Gulf of Mexico, and Manzanillo and Lázaro Cárdenas in the Pacific Ocean.

The US Census Bureau estimated in 1990, that 13,496,000 people of Mexico ancestry were living in the US, up from 8,740,000 in 1980. The US has since banned unnecessary border crossings, and the 1986 Immigration Act imposes stiff penalties on employers who hire illegal aliens. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of illegal crossings still take place annually.

As of 1999, Mexico was host to some 2,500 urban refugees, who had remained from the Central American conflict of the 1980s. Also, the largest community of US citizens living outside the US, estimated at 200,000, is found in Mexico. Mexico has also been receiving higher numbers of asylum-seekers from outside the U.S.

The country of Mexico is a great place to study the effects of globalization because of poverty, the U.S. border and many reasons. Many people in Mexico are going better do to globalization because many countries have helped with their poverty lines and they are doing better in the parts of the country where globalization has become more a part of with globalization.

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