

DESTINATION GUIDE • CORPORATE RELOCATION SERIES

MEXICO

Everything your assignees need for a smooth move to Mexico — work authorization, customs and household-goods shipping, housing, healthcare, schools, and settling-in essentials for North America's fastest-growing corporate destination.

WHY MEXICO NOW

The USMCA trade zone and the nearshoring wave have made Mexico a top destination for manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, and technology assignments.

Global employers are expanding in Mexico City, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Querétaro, and the Bajío corridor — and relocating talent to match.

This guide gives HR teams and transferees a single, practical reference for the entire move.

Welcome to Mexico

Arpin relocates corporate transferees to every major business hub in Mexico, with door-to-door service, customs guidance, and a dedicated Move Coordinator from day one.

North America's rising corporate powerhouse

Mexico is the second-largest economy in Latin America and the United States' top trading partner. With a population of roughly 130 million, deep manufacturing expertise, and free-trade access to dozens of markets through the USMCA and other agreements, it has become a strategic base for global companies — and one of the most common destinations for international assignments from the U.S. and Canada.

For transferees, the appeal goes well beyond business. Mexico offers a significantly lower cost of living than most U.S. metros, a celebrated food and arts culture, warm and welcoming communities, and everything from high-altitude capital living to Pacific and Caribbean coastlines — all within a short flight of home.

Fast facts

Capital	Mexico City (CDMX), metro pop. ~22 million
Language	Spanish (English common in business settings)
Currency	Mexican Peso (MXN)
Time zones	Four zones; most hubs on Central Time (no DST in most of the country)
Electricity	127V / 60Hz, Type A & B plugs — same as the U.S.
Dialing code	+52
Key business hubs	Mexico City, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Querétaro, Tijuana, Mérida

Immigration & Work Authorization

The employer starts the process

Work-based immigration to Mexico is employer-driven. The Mexican entity must be registered with the National Immigration Institute (INM) as a sponsoring employer and request authorization for the specific position before the assignee applies. Once INM approves, the transferee completes a visa interview at a Mexican consulate abroad.

Typical path for assignees

- **Temporary Resident Visa with work permission** — the standard route for assignments longer than 180 days. Initially granted for one year and renewable in-country for up to four years total.
- **Visitor with permission to work** — for short professional activities under 180 days; not suitable for ongoing local employment.
- **Permanent Resident** — generally reached after four years of temporary residence, through family ties, or via points-based criteria.

The 30-day exchange (canje)

After entering Mexico with the visa, assignees must visit an INM office **within 30 calendar days** to exchange it for a resident card — the credential needed for banking, leases, and customs benefits. Build this appointment into the arrival itinerary; the household-goods shipment timeline depends on it.

- **Family members** can usually apply as dependents at the same consulate appointment; dependent status does not itself confer the right to work.
- **Documents to prepare:** valid passports, apostilled birth and marriage certificates, employer letters, photos, and INM authorization number.

Immigration rules change frequently. Confirm current requirements with the Mexican consulate serving your jurisdiction and your company's immigration counsel before booking travel.

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Shipping Your Household Goods

Menaje de casa: your duty-free entitlement

Mexico allows new residents to import **used household goods and personal effects duty-free** under a certificate known as the menaje de casa. Temporary and permanent residents each receive this benefit once, and the shipment must generally arrive within the window defined by customs regulations after residency is granted — timing your ocean or road freight around the resident card is critical.

What the certificate requires

- A **detailed inventory in Spanish** listing items room by room; electronics and appliances typically need brand, model, and serial numbers.
- Items must be **used** (customarily six months or more); new goods in original packaging are dutiable and can delay the entire container.
- Certification through the **Mexican consulate** in the origin country, presented together with the resident card at clearance.

Commonly restricted or excluded

- Firearms, ammunition, and narcotics — strictly prohibited without special permits.
- Alcohol and tobacco beyond small personal allowances; perishables, plants, soil, and certain foodstuffs subject to agricultural inspection.
- Vehicles, boats, and trailers — **never** part of a menaje de casa; see the next page.

Arpin prepares your Spanish-language inventory, coordinates the consular certification, and manages customs clearance end-to-end — so your menaje de casa arrives without surprises.

Vehicles, Pets & Protecting Your Shipment

Bringing a vehicle: think twice

Foreign-plated cars may only circulate outside the border and free zones under a **Temporary Import Permit (TIP)** issued through Banjercito, tied to the owner's immigration status and secured by a refundable deposit. Temporary residents can hold a TIP for the length of their status; **permanent residents are not eligible** and must nationalize or remove the vehicle. Given import taxes, paperwork, and resale limitations, most corporate transferees sell at origin and buy or lease locally — Mexico has a mature dealer and leasing market in every hub city.

Relocating pets

- Dogs and cats from the U.S. and Canada enter under a streamlined process: a healthy-appearance inspection by SENASICA at the port of entry; carriers must be clean and parasite-free.
- Airlines set their own crate, weather-embargo, and breed rules — confirm these separately and early, especially for summer travel.
- Other species (birds, reptiles, exotics) require permits; start 60+ days out.

Insure the move

Select transit-protection coverage **before** loading day and declare a realistic replacement value on the bill of lading. High-value items — art, instruments, wine — should be itemized separately. Arpin's team will walk you through valuation options suited to an international ocean or overland move to Mexico.

Ask your Arpin Move Coordinator about Arpin TRAC real-time GPS shipment tracking and full transit-protection coverage options for your international shipment.

Where Assignees Live

Arpin coordinates delivery to any city in Mexico and can align your move-in date with lease start, school calendars, and your first day in the office.

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Five hubs drive most corporate moves

Mexico City (CDMX). Corporate HQs, finance, and multinationals. Expat favorites: Polanco, Lomas de Chapultepec, Condesa, Roma, and Santa Fe near the western business district. High altitude (7,350 ft) — allow a few days to acclimate.

Monterrey. Industrial and manufacturing capital of the north, two hours from the Texas border. San Pedro Garza García is the premier executive suburb with top international schools.

Guadalajara. Mexico's tech hub — 'the Silicon Valley of Mexico' — plus a large consumer-goods base. Look at Providencia, Puerta de Hierro, and Zapopan.

Querétaro & the Bajío. Aerospace, automotive, and logistics boom region with a colonial-city quality of life, strong safety reputation, and a fast-growing expat community.

Tijuana / Baja. Cross-border manufacturing and medical-device cluster; many executives commute binationally via the CBX bridge to San Diego.

Tip: traffic defines daily life in the biggest metros — choose the neighborhood after confirming the office location.

Housing & Rentals

Corporate clients: Arpin partners with destination-service providers for home-finding trips, lease negotiation, and settling-in support. Ask us to build it into your relocation package.

How renting works in Mexico

- **Leases run 12 months** as standard, in Spanish, with rents quoted in pesos (some premium landlords quote in USD). One month's deposit is typical.
- Landlords traditionally ask for a **fiador or aval** — a local guarantor who owns property. Newcomers without one can usually substitute a rental-bond policy (póliza jurídica), extra deposit, or employer letter.
- Many properties rent **unfurnished without appliances** — sometimes including light fixtures — so confirm inclusions before shipping or selling your own.
- Expect to provide passport, resident card, proof of income or employment, and sometimes a local bank reference.

Indicative monthly rents (unfurnished, 2026)

City / area	2-BR apartment, expat area	3-BR family home
Mexico City – Polanco / Lomas	MXN 35,000–70,000+	MXN 60,000–120,000+
Mexico City – Condesa / Roma	MXN 25,000–45,000	MXN 40,000–70,000
Monterrey – San Pedro	MXN 25,000–50,000	MXN 45,000–90,000
Guadalajara – Zapopan	MXN 20,000–40,000	MXN 35,000–65,000
Querétaro	MXN 15,000–30,000	MXN 25,000–50,000

Ranges are directional planning figures; premium buildings, security, and furnished units command more. Your destination consultant will provide current market comparables.

Healthcare for Assignees & Families

Ship prescription medication in original packaging with a doctor's letter, and carry a 90-day supply for the transition. Some U.S. prescriptions have different controlled-substance status in Mexico.

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A three-tier system

- **IMSS (social security):** employees on Mexican payroll are enrolled automatically by the employer; contributions fund public hospital and clinic access for the worker and dependents.
- **Private insurance:** the norm for corporate transferees. Employers typically provide gastos médicos mayores (major-medical) or an international plan accepted at private hospitals.
- **Out-of-pocket private care:** consultations and diagnostics cost a fraction of U.S. prices, which is why many expats pay routine care directly.

Quality where it matters

Mexico's leading private hospital groups — including internationally accredited networks in Mexico City, Monterrey, and Guadalajara — offer English-speaking specialists, modern facilities, and strong cardiology, oncology, and maternity programs. Hub cities also anchor a large medical and dental tourism industry, a signal of both quality and value.

Practical notes

- Emergency number is **911**, as in the U.S.; private ambulance memberships are inexpensive and popular with expat families.
- Pharmacies are everywhere and many have adjacent walk-in doctors' offices for minor issues at very low cost.
- At CDMX's altitude, dehydration and sun exposure hit harder — hydrate aggressively during the first weeks.

Money, Banking & Cost of Living

Setting up finances

- Open a local account after the **resident card** is issued; banks ask for passport, resident card, proof of address (utility bill), and often the RFC. Major banks include BBVA, Banorte, Santander, HSBC, and Citibanamex.
- Mexico is increasingly card-friendly in the hubs, but **cash still rules** at markets, taxis, tips, and small towns — keep pesos on hand.
- For transfers from home, low-cost FX services generally beat wire fees; confirm your employer's split-payroll or COLA arrangements before day one.

Taxes at a glance

Mexican tax residents are taxed on worldwide income at progressive rates up to 35%, with employer withholding through payroll. The U.S.–Mexico income tax treaty helps prevent double taxation, and U.S. citizens continue filing with the IRS from abroad. Corporate assignees should receive professional tax briefings at origin and destination — confirm this with HR.

What life costs

Most transferees find overall living costs **30–50% below** comparable U.S. metros. Groceries, dining, domestic help, and services are markedly cheaper; imported goods, international schools, and premium housing are the exceptions that narrow the gap. A couple can live comfortably in most hub cities on a fraction of a U.S. household budget — which is why cost-of-living allowances for Mexico are often modest.

Helpful IDs: the CURP (population registry code) comes with your resident card; the RFC (tax ID) is issued by the SAT and is needed for payroll, banking, and formal invoices.

Schools & Family Life

International school seats in Polanco, San Pedro, and Zapopan fill early. Begin applications as soon as the assignment is confirmed — ideally two school terms ahead.

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Strong international school options

Every major hub offers accredited American-curriculum, IB, British, German, and French schools, most with English-Spanish bilingual instruction. Mexico City has the deepest bench; Monterrey and Guadalajara each host respected American schools serving the executive community; Querétaro's international options have grown quickly with the nearshoring wave.

- The academic year generally runs **late August to early July**, aligned with the public calendar published by the education ministry (SEP).
- Expect entrance assessments, prior transcripts (apostilled and translated), and waitlists at flagship campuses; tuition at top international schools ranges roughly **USD 8,000–25,000 per year**.
- Bilingual private schools cost far less and immerse children in Spanish faster — a popular choice for longer assignments.

Settling in as a family

- Spanish basics transform daily life; enroll the whole family in classes early — hub cities have excellent instructors and language schools.
- Expat and newcomer associations, school parent networks, and sports clubs are the fastest routes to community.
- Family is the center of Mexican culture — children are welcome nearly everywhere, and colleagues will often include yours.

Daily Life & Getting Around

Transportation

Mexico City's Metro and Metrobús move millions daily at minimal cost, and ride-hailing apps (Uber, DiDi) are the default for expats in every hub — safe, cheap, and cashless. Driving is practical in Monterrey, Guadalajara, and Querétaro; U.S. licenses are honored initially, but obtain a local license once resident. Avoid CDMX rush hours (roughly 7–9 a.m. and 6–8 p.m.) whenever possible.

Safety, sensibly

Security varies sharply by region — the corporate hubs and expat neighborhoods in this guide have long track records hosting international families. Apply big-city common sense: use ride-hailing rather than street taxis, keep valuables low-profile, and follow your company's security briefings and travel policies for regional trips.

Climate

Most hub cities sit at altitude with **spring-like weather year-round** (roughly 50–80°F), a dry season from November to April, and afternoon rains from May to October. Monterrey runs hotter in summer; coastal cities are tropical. Pack layers — evenings are cool in the highlands even when days are warm.

Culture in the office

Relationships come first: expect warmth, personal conversation before business, and a more flexible sense of time in social settings — paired with real formality in titles and hierarchy at work.

*Local notes: currency MXN • plugs Type A/B at 127V (U.S. devices work without adapters)
• tipping ~10–15% • tap water is for washing, bottled or filtered water is for drinking.*

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Your Mexico Relocation Timeline

90+ DAYS OUT

- ✓ Confirm assignment terms, payroll, and tax briefing with HR
- ✓ Employer files INM work authorization for the role
- ✓ Apostille and translate vital documents
- ✓ Shortlist schools and submit applications
- ✓ Book Arpin's free virtual pre-move survey

60 DAYS OUT

- ✓ Attend consular visa appointment
- ✓ Decide vehicle strategy — sell, store, or import (TIP)
- ✓ Start pet paperwork and airline bookings
- ✓ Begin the Spanish-language household inventory with Arpin
- ✓ Plan a home-finding trip to the destination city

30 DAYS OUT

- ✓ Select transit protection and declared values
- ✓ Separate air shipment, sea shipment, and suitcase items
- ✓ Refill prescriptions; gather medical and school records
- ✓ Notify banks; set up international transfer service
- ✓ Confirm packing dates and temporary housing

ARRIVAL WEEK+

- ✓ Complete INM canje within 30 days for your resident card
- ✓ Sign lease; connect utilities and internet
- ✓ Open a bank account; request your RFC
- ✓ Clear customs on your menaje de casa with Arpin
- ✓ Track delivery via MoveCENTRAL and settle in

Regulations, allowances, and timelines change — your Arpin Move Coordinator and your company's immigration counsel will confirm current requirements for your move.

Ready to move your talent to Mexico?

For 126 years, Arpin International Group has moved families and corporate transferees across borders with door-to-door care. As a FIDI-certified mover and a preferred partner of Fortune 100 relocation programs, we handle the survey, packing, ocean and overland freight, Mexican customs clearance, delivery, and everything in between — with one dedicated Move Coordinator and real-time visibility through our MoveCENTRAL platform and ArpinTRAC GPS tracking.

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