

U.S.–Mexico Border Information

For U.S. and Canadian Residents Traveling to Mexico

Border crossing requirements: Travelers are required to present proper travel documents for travel to Mexico and to return to the United States.

Air travel: U.S. and Canadian citizens traveling between the United States and Mexico by air are required to show a valid passport.

Land or sea travel: A passport or passport card, or other U.S. official ID (not including a state-issued driver's license), is required to enter Mexico by land or sea. U.S. citizens returning to the United States from Mexico by land or sea are required to present proper travel documents according to the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. Approved documents include a passport or passport card, Enhanced Driver's License, or Trusted Traveler program card. Please refer to the U.S. Department of State's website travel.state.gov. Canadian citizens should refer to the Canada Border Services Agency website cbsa-asfc.gc.ca for requirements to re-enter Canada.

Children: Minors must be accompanied by parents, or have a notarized letter of consent from one or both absent parents giving permission to go on the trip, as well as proof of parent/child relationship, such as a birth certificate or court document.

Automobile Insurance:

Yes: Full coverage, including property damage and public liability, from a reliable Mexican insurance company. AAA offices in border states (including Nevada and Utah) can provide Mexican automobile insurance to members.

No: U.S. automobile insurance is not valid in Mexico.

Tourist Permits: When traveling to Mexico as a tourist, you must obtain an FMT tourist permit. You must show proof of citizenship (a valid passport, birth certificate and photo ID, or voter's card and photo ID) to obtain a permit.

Permits issued at:

- Mexican consulates in the United States and Canada
- Immigration offices at official points of entry

You must have a valid tourist permit if you:

- Remain within the border zone, the area within 20 to 30 kilometers (12 miles) of the U.S. border, for more than 72 hours **or**
- Travel beyond the border zone

Cost for a tourist permit is approximately \$20 (U.S.) which must be paid at a Mexican bank (see list on back of tourist permit form) or through the bank window at the border. You are required to show the "Fee Paid" stamp on your tourist permit when leaving Mexico. Recommendation: obtain your tourist permit before leaving the United States and pay the fee at the border.

If traveling by air, the permit is distributed on the flight and the fee is included in the airline ticket price. If arriving by cruise ship, the fee is collected when disembarking or is included in the cruise fare if the stay is longer than 72 hours.

Exemptions

- Visitors traveling by sea staying less than 72 hours who remain in the seaport.
- Visitors traveling by land to destinations within the 20- to 30-kilometer (12-mile) border zone, and staying less than 72 hours.
- Visitors traveling by land beyond the border zone, staying less than 72 hours, and limiting their visit to the following destinations/tourist corridors: Tijuana to Ensenada, B.C.; Sonoyta to Puerto Peñasco, Son.; Ciudad Juárez to Paquime, Chih.; Piedras Negras to Santa Rosa, Coah.; and Reynosa to Presa Cuchillo, N.L.
- Business travelers with a business visa; students (as defined by Mexican immigration laws) with a student visa (contact Mexican consulate for business/student visa information).

Permit Validity

- The permit is valid for up to 180 days
- A multiple-entry permit allows unlimited visits into and out of Mexico within the 180-day period
- In Baja California a tourist permit is good for a maximum of 180 days per year and 30 days per visit
- Permits must be surrendered to Mexican immigration officials at the border prior to the expiration date; failure to do so may result in subsequently being refused entry into Mexico and/or incurring a substantial fine
- A tourist permit not used within 90 days of issue becomes void
- Visitors should carry their tourist permit with them at all times while in Mexico
- If a permit is lost, obtain a duplicate from local immigration officials
- Visitors must be out of the country by the end of the validity period, or be subject to a fine
- If you choose to remain in Mexico beyond the validity period, an extension must be requested from immigration authorities prior to the expiration date

Vehicle travel beyond the 20- to 30-kilometer border zone requires:

- Federal temporary vehicle importation permit
- Promise to return vehicle form

These two documents are not required in B.C. unless the vehicle is put on a ferry bound for the mainland. They also are not required for travel to the following destinations in the state of Sonora: Rocky Point (Puerto Peñasco), Guaymas, San Carlos, Bahía Kino and other locations west of Mex. 15, as well as cities along Mex. 15 (Magdalena, Santa Ana, Hermosillo).

An Only Sonora permit is acceptable if driving within Sonora east of Mex. 15 as well as south of Empalme (about 350 miles south of the U.S. border). The permit can be obtained at Banjercito offices in Agua Prieta (opposite Douglas, Ariz.), Cananea (on Mex. 2 southwest of Agua Prieta) and Empalme (on Mex. 15 at Km marker 98, just south of the Guaymas bypass).

To obtain these documents at an official point of entry (immigration checkpoint), the vehicle owner must have:

- A valid (unexpired) tourist permit
- A valid international major credit card
- Current vehicle license/registration receipt (the original and 2 copies)

Information on the application for temporary vehicle importation must match the information on the promise to return vehicle form; the same requirements apply to both.

An administrative fee plus tax must be paid at the official point of entry (mainland border crossing or ferry crossing from Baja California to the mainland) to receive a temporary importation permit windshield sticker.

Yes: Use major credit card (American Express, MasterCard or VISA), which must be in the vehicle driver's name and issued by a U.S. or Canadian bank or lending institution. Vehicle owners without a major credit card may post a bond (\$200 to \$400 based on vehicle value) with a Mexican bonding firm (Afianzadora) at the point of entry.

No: Cash, checks, money orders or credit cards issued by a Mexican bank are not accepted.

More About Temporary Importation Permits

- Generally issued for 180 days, the same length as the tourist permit
- Only 1 permit will be issued per person, for 1 motorized vehicle at a time
- Carry permit with you – do not leave it in the vehicle
- Return permit, promise to return vehicle form and windshield sticker to Mexican customs officials at the Banjercito office at the border before or on the expiration date shown on the promise to return vehicle form, or be subject to a fine
- If permit or promise to return vehicle form is lost or stolen, Mexican customs offices can issue replacement documentation provided you obtain a certified document attesting to the loss from your homeland (U.S. or Canada) embassy or consulate
- If you are found in Mexico beyond the authorized time or without proper documentation, your car will be immediately confiscated

Pets: U.S. visitors may bring a dog, cat, birds and some other pets into Mexico with government approval. A pet health certificate signed not more than 15 days before the animal enters Mexico and a pet vaccination certificate showing that the animal has been treated for rabies, hepatitis, pip and leptospirosis are required at the border for each pet. A pet permit fee will be charged at the time of entry.

For U.S. and Canadian Residents Leaving Mexico

When Leaving the Country:

- Temporary vehicle importation permits, promise to return vehicle forms and windshield stickers must be returned to Mexican immigration and customs officials at the border (or at an interior inspection point)
- Those entering Mexico with a motor vehicle must leave the country with the vehicle
- At stations along the highways, Mexican agricultural officials will inspect vehicles traveling north to the U.S. border
- Officials will inspect all fruits, vegetables, houseplants and other plant matter

Yes: You must have an export certificate to take cultural artifacts or property items (e.g., pre-Columbian monumental and architectural sculpture or murals, clay figurines, original paintings or other works of art excluding handicrafts) out of the country.

No: You may not take valuable religious or archeological relics out of the country.

Returning to the United States:

- U.S. citizens returning from Mexico by land or sea are required to present proper travel documents according to the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

Please refer to the U.S. Department of State's website travel.state.gov for the most current information on these requirements. Canadian citizens should refer to the Canadian Border Services Agency website www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca for requirements to re-enter Canada.

U.S. Exemptions:

- You may bring back duty-free articles not exceeding \$800 in retail value from a stay abroad of at least 48 hours
- The exemption is allowed once every 30 days
- A family (related persons living in the same household) may combine its exemptions (a family of 6 is entitled to \$1,600 worth of goods duty-free on 1 declaration, even if the articles claimed by 1 member exceed that individual's \$800 amount)
- Duty must be paid on all items in excess of the exemption amount
- Payment of duty is required upon arrival
- Gifts taken across the U.S./Mexico border are considered to be for personal use and are included in the \$800 exemption
- Articles purchased and left for alterations or other reasons do not qualify for the \$800 exemption when shipped at a later date
- The \$800 exemption may include no more than 1 liter of alcoholic beverages and no more than 200 cigarettes and 100 cigars

Restricted or Prohibited Articles: To prevent the introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases into the United States, the agricultural quarantine bans the importation of certain fruits, vegetables, plants, livestock, poultry and meats. All food products brought into the United States must be declared. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also prohibits the importation of any kind of pet obtained in Mexico. Visit the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service at www.aphis.usda.gov or U.S. Customs at www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyvg/ for more information.

Yes: One foreign-made article carrying a protected U.S. trademark (e.g., camera, binoculars, musical instrument, jewelry or watch) may usually be brought into the United States under your personal exemption, provided it's for your private use and not sold within 1 year of importation. Some perfumes are limited to 1 bottle and others are prohibited. If you intend to purchase perfume, inquire about trademark restrictions beforehand.

No: Articles considered detrimental to the general welfare of the United States are prohibited entry: narcotics and dangerous drugs, drug paraphernalia, obscene articles and publications, seditious or treasonable matter, lottery tickets, hazardous items (fireworks, dangerous toys, toxic or poisonous substances) and switchblade knives. Any goods originating in embargoed countries, including the following, are prohibited: Western Balkans, Burma, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Syria and Zimbabwe. Please note embargoes are not limited to these countries.

If you plan to return to the United States with any purchased articles made of fur, any animal skin other than cowhide leather, whalebone or any product manufactured wholly or in part from any type of wildlife, contact: Office of Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., MS-LE-3000, Arlington, VA 22203, (703) 358-1949 for regulations, or visit www.fws.gov/le.

Alcoholic Beverages: Both federal and state laws govern the importation of alcoholic beverages. When regulations conflict state laws supersede, so it's important to know the import limits of your state of residence and the state of entry.

U.S. residents 21 years of age or older may bring into the United States 1 liter of alcohol duty-free once every 30 days. However, if you arrive in a state that permits a lesser amount than what you have legally brought into the United States, state law prevails.

Gifts

- Gifts in packages with a total retail value not exceeding \$100 may be sent to friends or relatives in the United States free of U.S. customs duty or tax, provided no recipient receives more than 1 gift shipment per day
- Gifts may be sent to more than 1 person in the same package if they are individually wrapped and labeled with each recipient's name
- Perfumes valued at more than \$5 retail, tobacco products or alcoholic beverages may not be included in gift packages
- Clearly mark on the package the designation "Unsolicited Gift," the donor's name and the contents' retail value

Duties

- A flat rate duty of 3 percent is applied to the first \$1,000 (fair retail value) worth of merchandise in excess of the \$800 customs exemption
- Sales receipt functions as proof of value
- Family members residing in 1 household and traveling together may group articles for application of the flat-duty rate
- Flat-duty rate may be taken once every 30 days
- Articles must accompany you to the U.S. border

Canadian Exemptions

- Citizens who have been outside Canada at least 48 hours may bring back duty- and tax-free goods not exceeding \$400 (CAN) in retail value. The exemption can be claimed any number of times a year.
- Citizens who have been outside Canada 7 days or more may bring back duty- and tax-free goods not exceeding \$750 (CAN) in retail value. The \$750 exemption can be claimed regardless of any \$400 exemption taken on a previous trip and requires a written declaration. The 2 exemptions may not be combined.
- Citizens may claim duty- and tax-free entry for articles (excluding tobacco products or alcoholic beverages) not exceeding \$50 (CAN) in retail value when returning from a trip abroad of at least 24 hours. Items brought into Canada under a personal exemption must be for personal or household use, souvenirs or gifts.

Canadian Limitations (on either \$400 or \$750 exemption): 50 cigars, 200 cigarettes, 200 tobacco sticks and 200 grams (6.4 ounces) of tobacco, and 40 ounces (1.1 liters) of liquor or 53 imperial ounces of wine or 300 ounces (8.5 liters) of beer or ale (equivalent to 24 12-ounce bottles/cans). All exemptions are individual and may not be combined with that of another person to cover an article valued at more than the maximum exemption. You may be asked to prove the length of your visit outside Canada. Keep dated sales receipts for goods or services as they constitute valid proof.

- All declared goods associated with the \$400 personal exemption must accompany the purchaser to the Canadian border.
- Declared goods associated with the \$750 personal exemption may follow the purchaser by mail.

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