



Quest Program MEXICO



Mexico is an exciting country of ancestral archeological monuments, exquisite traditional foods, beautifully preserved colonial architecture and beaches with crystalline turquoise water. From the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea, deserts

and tropical forests, this country offers the visitor a surprising world.

Mexico is characterized by an extraordinary diversity in topography and climate and is crossed by two major mountain chains, the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental. The high central plateau between these two mountains ranges historically funneled most of the human population toward the center of this region. Mexico features volcanic peaks, snowcapped mountains, tropical rains

forests, and internationally famous beaches. Mexico City is an enormous metropolitan area and dominates the rest of the country's culture, economy and politics. Nearly one fifth of the nation's population lives in the immediate vicinity of the capital. Mexico and the United States share a border that is 3,100 km long, much of which is formed by the Rio Grande, a major river known as the Rio Bravo in Mexico. This international border is the longest in the world between an economically developing country and one with a highly developed, industrialized economy.

The people of Mexico reflect the country's rich history. The Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire in the early 16th century soon led to widespread intermarriage and racial mixing between Spaniards and Native Americans. As late as the early 19th century, Native Americans accounted for nearly two-thirds of the population in the region. During that century, however, the racial composition of the country began to change from one that featured distinct European (Spanish) and indigenous populations, to one made up largely of Mestizos – people of mixed Spanish and native American descent. Mestizos now account for about 60 % of Mexicans.

Mexico has a rich heritage in art and architecture and is recognized internationally for the contributions of its 20th century mural artists, who created murals that reflected not only Mexico's history, but also its

Estadísticas de Mexico

Area: 761,606 square miles
Population: 111 million
Capital: Mexico City
Language: Spanish
Government: Federal Republic

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current social issues. Mexico's blend of indigenous and European influences has affected many of its traditions and much of its culture. This ethnic heritage has contributed to the development of notable musical styles, folk art, and cuisine, all of which are also now found throughout the United States. Mexican cuisine is known for its intense and varied flavors, colorful decoration, and variety of spices. Most of today's Mexican food is based on pre-Hispanic traditions, including the Aztecs and Maya, combined with culinary trends introduced by Spanish colonists.

The conquistadores eventually combined their imported diet of rice, beef, pork, chicken, wine, garlic and onions with the native pre-Columbian food, including maize, tomato, vanilla, avocado, papaya, pineapple, chili pepper, beans, squash, limes, sweet potato, peanuts and turkey. The most internationally recognized dishes include chocolate, tacos, quesadillas, enchiladas, burritos, tamales and mole among others.

School Life

The school year in Mexico starts in August and finishes in June. There are short holiday periods in the fall, at Christmas and Easter. At the end of the school year there is a summer break of six weeks. School generally starts around 8 am and classes end between 1-2 pm. On some days there might be afternoon classes as well. School in Mexico is taken seriously, meaning that students are expected to arrive on time, be prepared with all homework completed, and attend all classes every day unless they are sick. There are no school uniforms and no dress code in Mexican high schools. Students generally wear casual clothes to school. The student should ask their teachers and classmates about extracurricular activities offered in school. Sports, art and clubs offer a wonderful opportunity to be around young Mexicans in a relaxed atmosphere.

Host Family Life

Most Mexican families own their own home and usually both parents work outside the home. Families usually consist of four or five members. Families are warm and caring and will make sure the student feels welcomed in their home. Respect towards each other, especially towards parents and elderly, is very important. The student must not forget this part of the Mexican culture and respect the host parents, their house and their rules. Teenagers are attached to their families and follow the rules that are set in their house. In Mexico most families are Catholic and have much respect for religion and also towards others. Students will not be forced to practice their religion, but should be respectful of the family's beliefs. Mexican families usually eat three times a day. Breakfast is eaten between 7 and 9 am, lunch between 1 and 3 pm and dinner in the evening between 8 and 10 pm. Dinner is a time to come together and talk about the day's activities.

Program Extras

It is very important to us that the students get a chance to enjoy the beauty of Mexico. Trips are organized for the students during the school breaks and they will receive more details after arrival.

In November - December there is a trip to the beautiful Mexican beaches and in January there is a trip called "the Route of the Gods." This trip includes the pyramids of Teotihuacan, city of Oaxaca, Montealbán, Mitla, Tule's Tree, Chiapas, Sumidero's canyon, San Cristóbal of Las Casas, Palenque, Chichen Itza, Uxmal, Cancún, Islas Mujeres, Tulum, Tuxtla's region and the ecological reservation of Nanciyaga.