

# Moving to Mexico: Your Relocation Guide



By Appointment To  
Her Majesty The Queen  
Removals and Storage Contractor Abels

# ABELS™

THE ART OF MOVING

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Memb No: A001



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TELEPHONE:	Country code (52) + Area code
STANDARD TIME:	GMT -6 Central Standard Time GMT -7 Mountain Time GMT -8 Pacific Time
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	110v AC 60Hz, US 2 pin plugs
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Inoculation against malaria, typhoid and polio is recommended
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Jan 1, Feb 1, 5, Mar 21, 24, 25 Good Friday, Easter Monday, May 1, Sept 16, Nov 2, 20, Dec 12, Dec 24/25
OFFICE HOURS:	Vary considerably, usually 08.00-15.00
BANK HOURS:	09.00-13.00 Monday – Friday, may open Saturday am
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	08 – Police/Ambulance and Emergency
UK EMBASSY:	Río Lerma 71 Col Cuauhtémoc 06500 México DF Tel: (52) (55) 1670 3200 Web: <a href="http://ukinmexico.fco.gov.uk/en/">http://ukinmexico.fco.gov.uk/en/</a>
TOURIST & TRAVEL INFORMATION:	The Mexican Tourist Board Calle Masaryk 172, 1111587 Mexico DF Tel: (5) 250 8555
MEXICAN EMBASSY IN LONDON:	16 St George Street Hanover Square London, W1S 1FD Tel: 02074 998 586 Fax: 02074 954 035 Web: <a href="http://mexico.embassyhomepage.com/">http://mexico.embassyhomepage.com/</a>
VISA SECTION:	Mexican Consulate 8 Halkin Street, London, SW1X 7DW Tel: 0207 201 0961 Fax: 02072 355 480



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## Moving to Mexico from the UK – Information and Advice: Abels Relocation Guide

### Customs

**To the best of our knowledge the following documentation is required to import household goods and personal effects into Mexico. It is advisable to submit all documentation prior to the commencement of your move to enable checking with authorities.**

### New Regulations for Sea Shipments

The Mexican government has recently updated part of the Import requirements for returning Mexican citizens. The new regulation states that a returning Mexican citizen may have their import documents (Visaed inventories) approved after a minimum of six months of living abroad.

Required Documents:

Temporary resident (Residente Temporal)

Permanent resident (Residente Permanente)

Items with less than six months of use are Dutiable (as customs consider them as new). There are some restrictions for paying duties on new items so in case shipper is planning to bring any new items, please let your agent in Mexico know previously to the packing of the shipment so they can check if there will be no problem at all. **Items coming by Air or Ocean cannot pay duties.**

In order to pay duties for new items, the ticket or invoice of the items will be required in order to calculate the amount of duties to be paid.

**Do not** pack used items in the original packaging because customs will see these as NEW items and this can cause problems and delays at customs.

A new requirement is, a **Zip Code is a must** and **must** be updated, this should be the one used from the Vised Inventories or Residents Credentials.

All shipments to or from overseas countries must indicate:

1. The TAX ID number for all parties shown on Carrier Bill of Lading as Shipper, Consignee and Notify.
2. Mexican Nationals must inform their RFC (Tax ID) number.
3. Generic RFC / TAX ID numbers should be applied only in the following cases:
  - Diplomatic and consulate goods should use: EMB930401KH4
  - For International Organisations should use: OIN930413N0
  - For foreigners should use: EXTR920301TS4
4. For those shippers or consignees or notified parties which resides in countries where there are no ID TAX (Fiscal identification register) such information will not be declared.
5. Tax ID information **MUST** be submitted no less than 24 hours prior to the vessel departure, failure to provide such information may result in refusal to load on to vessel.

### Household Goods

#### Returning Mexicans

Documents Required:

- Original visaed inventories by the Mexican consulate at the place of origin. All electrical appliances must include: make, model and serial number. **Vised Inventories are valid only for six months after issued date.**
- Mexican passport copy
- CURP and RFC (effective) copies
- **Only** for shipments coming from Lazaro Cardenas Port. “IFE credential” and “Proof of residence” copies.

Customs Brokers’ will require some other documents depending on Port of Entry and those will be:

- Authorisation letter to the customs broker
- Value form for customs
- Prohibited items
- Customs form for new articles: always check with agent in Mexico on required documents depending on Port of Entry so you can have the proper formats for each case.

#### Permanent Resident (Residente Permanente)

- Consularised inventory by Mexican Consulate at origin. The list must include make, model and serial number for all electric appliances. This document is valid for six months since issue date.
- Copy of Permanent Resident Card
- Copy of Passport

Customs brokers’ will require some other documents depending on Port of Entry and those will be:

- Compromise letter
- Liability letter
- Authorisation letter to the customs broker
- Value form for customs
- Prohibited items
- Customs form for new articles

Always check with Agent in Mexico on required documents depending on Port of Entry so you can have the proper formats for each case.

#### Temporary Residents Visa (Residente Temporal)

- Copy of the Ordinary Visa (First visa issued and stamped in the passport at the Mexican Consulate)
- Copy of FMM (entry form given by immigration when arriving in Mexico)
- Description of goods to be imported (Inventories) and address where you will be establishing your residency.
- Acknowledged in writing, that when your assignment is over or you change your residency out of Mexico, you will



export your shipment back with them. (Compromise letter / Liability Letter)

Customs broker will require some other documents depending on Port of Entry and those will be:

- Declaration form for new items (as those used for less than six months must pay duties, and this can only be via Laredo, other ports of entry will not allow you to pay duties)
- Authorisation letter to Customs broker (like a Power of Attorney)

Always check with Agent in Mexico on required documents depending on Port of Entry so you can have the proper formats for each case.

### Useful Information

According to the Mexican laws, in order to be able to import household goods and personal effects free of import duties, the following rules must be followed:

- The goods must have been used for at least six months and are not intended for resale
- All articles must be included in the inventory visaed by the Mexican Consulate. The Mexican government can expropriate any article not included in the inventory

The following articles are not considered household goods: Firearms, ammunition, liquors, wine, motorcycles, boats, cars and food. Drugs, medications, weapons (knives, swords etc) pornographic material, automobile accessories.

Some of them may require an import licence. Contact your agent for specific information.

Shipments consigned to Mexico City terminal are handled by steamship line companies own transportation system. Please contact your agent for them to take care of transportation to avoid unnecessary demurrage charges.

The Mexican citizen must have lived out of the country for over six months to import their Household goods free of duty. to import their Household goods free of duty.

### Important Notes:

Mexican Steamship Lines require a deposit of US\$1000 when the shipment is coming into a container.

As the Mexican ports, and Customs houses are saturated, the lift-vans and steel containers are placed in the open and must therefore be well protected against rain.

Do not ship household goods until all documentation is completed (the airport holds the shipment during 30 days and ports during 60 days only). If the documentation is not presented by that time, the Mexican Government confiscates the shipment. Inform your destination agent on time of the arrival of the shipment at the Customs House of port of entry in order for them to process with the import negotiations.

Due to legal regulations the agent does not accept C.O.D charges. (Only destination charges can come in a C.O.D basis). All shipments must come prepaid.

**Shipments must be sent to destination only with the green light from the destination agent, as they must be sure that their client has the proper and complete paperwork for Mexican Customs Clearance at Port of Entry.**

### Diplomats Removals

Documents required:

#### Foreigners with Diplomatic Status:

- The import permit, “the Diplomatic Franchise” has to be obtained by the corresponding Embassy in Mexico City or International Organisation, SRE, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Inventory list in Spanish, with an estimated value
- Photocopy of Diplomatic passport
- Origin and destination addresses

Customs broker will require some other documents depending on Port of Entry and those will be:

Authorisation letter to customs broker (like a Power of Attorney)

#### Mexicans Returning with Diplomatic Status:

Documents Required:

- “Diplomatic Franchise” has to be obtained by the corresponding International Organisation, from SRE / External Affairs authorities
- Visaed Inventory list in Spanish, even though they can return with a Diplomatic Status, they must get in contact with the Mexican Embassy or Consulate at origin, present their List in Spanish and they will be awarded an especial Visaed Inventory, and with that one they can proceed to obtain their Diplomatic Franchise at SRE / Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Photocopy of Diplomatic passport
- Origin and destination addresses

Customs Broker will require some other Documents depending on Port of Entry and those will be:

- Declaration form for new items (as those used for less than six months must pay duties, and this can only be via Laredo, other ports of entry will not allow you to pay duties)
- Authorisation letter to Customs broker (like a Power of Attorney)

Always check with the Agent in Mexico on required documents depending on Port of Entry so you can have the proper formats for each case.

Wines, liquors, canned food, tobacco must have a separated diplomatic franchise to be imported. This is not considered part of the household goods.

## Wedding Trousseaux

Documents required:

If included as part of household goods and effects are declared in the legalised list.

Allowed if with Household goods otherwise importation prohibited.

For specific cases, it is recommended to contact your destination agent.

## Inheritance

Permission is obtained from the Secretary of Commerce and Industrial Promotion (Secretaria de Comercio y Fomento Industrial) in the Federal District of Mexico (D.F).

Subject to tax payment.

## New Furniture and Household Goods

If included with removal goods, they must be included on the legalised inventory list and originals of all invoices must also be presented.

Subject to payment of duties and taxes.

Only possible for shipments through NVO, Laredo and Tamps, NOT Vera Cruz or Mexico City Airport.

## Household Appliances

If included as part of household goods, declared in the legalised list and in reasonable quantity.

Importation allowed if included in household goods otherwise importation prohibited.

## Electrical Appliances

Same as household appliances.

The brand, model and serial numbers of electrical appliances must be written on the legalised inventory list, sealed by the Mexican Consulate.

## Works of Art, Antiques

If included as part of household goods, declared in the legalised list and in reasonable quantity.

Importation allowed if included in household goods otherwise importation is prohibited.

## Precious Metal Objects

Importation prohibited as they are not considered as part of the household effects.

## Carpets

Importation is allowed if they are part of household goods and only in a small quantity, otherwise prohibited.

## Presents, Souvenirs

If part of household goods and are declared on the legalised list.

Subject to tax payment.

## Motor Vehicles Temporarily Imported

Documents required:

- Original Temporary Resident Visa
- Invoice of title property
- License of the car
- Driver's license
- International credit card
- Clients personal identification
- Letter of authorisation given to the agent, authorizing them to take care of the transportation of the car from port of entry to its final destination

Duty of US\$50 is payable by international credit card.

Shippers must be at port of entry to clear Customs and obtain the temporary import permit. After, the agent with a power of attorney can do transportation.

Customs will grant a permit for the period of validity of FM-3, which has to be renewed before expiration of FM-3.

Mexican citizens and Permanent Residents cannot import autos into Mexico.

## Motor Vehicles (Diplomats)

Diplomats can import their car with a franchise arranged by the Embassy to which they belong.

The agent can take care of car transmission with corresponding diplomatic franchise.

## Other Vehicles (bicycles, water vehicles)

Only bicycles being part of the household goods and declared on the legalised list are allowed.

The item must be used and only by one person.

## Machines, Appliances, Spare Parts

Importation prohibited, as they are not considered as part of the household effects.

## Wine and Alcohol

Importation prohibited.

If wines and liquors are found in the household goods, the clearance may be delayed and extra handling must be paid to take wines / liquors out or they will be confiscated.

## Food

We strongly recommend that shippers be advised not to ship any commercially prepared and purchased food product with your unaccompanied personal goods.

This includes: wines, spirits, beer, cider, spices, herbs, canned packed or wrapped foods, pet food, pastas, rice, food supplements, vitamins, fruit juices, carbonated / non carbonated drinks, milk, perishable foods, dry foods and any other item intended for human or animal consumption.



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If the shipper insists on shipping food items, the specified information below must be gathered and provided for each food item imported. If the information is not provided, the food items may face refusal of entry, requiring segregation / manipulation of the shipment under customs supervision at a bonded facility, at substantial additional cost. Costs could be in the thousands of dollars and can not be anticipated. These costs will be the responsibility of the client.

- Product brand name
- Product classification
- Country of production
- Country of packaging
- Type of product (canned, bottled, packaged)
- Quantity

Ask for **Abels form QF565** for completing.

### **Arms, Ammunition and Explosives**

Importation prohibited as they are not considered as part of the household effects.

### **Medicines, Drugs and Narcotics**

Importation prohibited unless medicines are included as part of the household goods and only if prescribed by a doctor.

### **Plants**

Importation prohibited.

### **Cats, Dogs and Other Animals**

Documents required:

- Copy of airway bill
- Sanitary bill of lading
- General certificate of health
- Vaccination certificate
- Copy of professional registration card of vets

Subject to payment of duties.

It is recommended to send documents and Airway bill in advance by fax, to avoid delays in releasing pets.

It is also recommended to arrange for arrival at the beginning of the week, to avoid pets being kept in Customs control over a weekend, when there is no one to feed them.

### **Fumigation of Imported and Exported Wooden Crates**

The Mexican Government will adopt ISPM-15 (International standards for Phytosanitary Measures Publication 15):

Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade (aka NIFM-15) to standardise the treatment of wood packing materials used for the transport of goods.

Shipments into or out of Mexico in wooden packaging, will have to have a Seal, which certifies that the shipment has

received the required treatment (HT = Heated Treatment (a minimum wood core temperature of 56°C for a minimum of 30 minutes) or Methyl Bromide Treatment (the minimum temperature should not be less than 10°C and the minimum exposure time should not fall below 16 hours).

The wood packing material must be marked in a visible location on each article, on at least two opposite sides of the article with a legible and permanent mark in black ink. Labels and adhesives are not allowed. The mark should be as follows:

The country code, producer number, treatment type and the inspection agency logo.

If a shipment arrives without this seal, it will be returned to the origin country at the shipper's / origin Agent's expense.

This does not apply to wood packing materials manufactured of:

- Raw wood of 6mm thickness or less
- Processed wood produced by glue, heat and pressure, or a combination thereof
- Plywood sheets and agglomerated sawdust sheet
- Oriented wooden fibre sheets
- Sawdust and wooden fibre

## **General Information on The United Mexican States**

### **Background**

The site of several advanced Amerindian civilizations – including the Olmec, Toltec, Teotihuacan, Zapotec, Maya, and Aztec – Mexico was conquered and colonized by Spain in the early 16th century. Administered as the Viceroyalty of New Spain for three centuries, it achieved independence early in the 19th century. Elections held in 2000 marked the first time since the 1910 Mexican Revolution that an opposition candidate – Vicente FOX of the National Action Party (PAN) – defeated the party in government, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). He was succeeded in 2006 by another PAN candidate Felipe CALDERON, but Enrique PENA NIETO regained the presidency for the PRI in 2012. The global financial crisis in late 2008 caused a massive economic downturn in Mexico the following year, although growth returned quickly in 2010. Ongoing economic and social concerns include low real wages, high underemployment, inequitable income distribution, and few advancement opportunities for the largely indigenous population in the impoverished southern states. Since 2007, Mexico's powerful drug-trafficking organisations have engaged in bloody feuding, resulting in tens of thousands of drug-related homicides.

### **Geography**

Mexico is the largest county in Central America, and extends south from the USA to Guatemala and Belize, and from the



Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. The greater part of the country is high plateau flanked by the western and eastern ranges of the Sierra Madre mountains. The principal low land is the Yucatan peninsula in the southeast.

Agriculture involves a quarter of the workforce, crops include grains, sugar cane, coffee, cotton and vegetables. Natural resources are petroleum, silver, copper, gold, lead zinc, natural gas and timber.

Mexico being one of the world's largest producers of oil from vast oil and gas reserves in the Gulf of Mexico. A large petrochemical industry, also manufacturer of: iron and steel, motor vehicles, textiles, chemicals, food and tobacco products.

### **Climate**

The climate varies with latitude and altitude, hot and humid in the lowlands, warm on the plateau and cool with cold winters in the mountains. The north is arid while the far south has heavy rainfall.

### **Population**

Is estimated at 121 million.

### **Economy**

Mexico's \$1.3 trillion economy has become increasingly oriented toward manufacturing in the 21 years since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) entered into force. Per capita income is roughly one-third that of the US; income distribution remains highly unequal. Mexico has become the United States' second-largest export market and third-largest source of imports. In 2014, two-way trade in goods and services exceeded \$550 billion. Mexico has free trade agreements with 46 countries, putting more than 90% of trade under free trade agreements. In 2012, Mexico formally joined the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations and formed the Pacific Alliance with Peru, Colombia and Chile. Mexico's current government, led by President Enrique PENA NIETO, emphasized economic reforms during its first two years in office, passing and implementing sweeping education, energy, financial, fiscal and telecommunications reform legislation, among others, with the long-term aim to improve competitiveness and economic growth across the Mexican economy. Although the economy is expected to experience stronger growth in 2015 as a result of increased investment and stronger demand for Mexican exports, growth is predicted to remain below potential for reasons of inefficiencies, with a large portion of the economy and workforce in the informal sector, and corruption. Over the medium-term, the economy is vulnerable to global economic pressures, such as lower external demand, rising interest rates, and low oil prices – approximately 30% of government revenue comes from the state-owned oil company, PEMEX. The increasing integration of supply chains, development of the energy sector, and government-to-government focus on trade facilitation will continue to make the North American region increasingly competitive and contribute to Mexican economic development and strength.

The current issues in the environment are scarcity of hazardous waste disposal facilities; rural to urban migration; natural fresh water resources are scarce and polluted in north, inaccessible and poor quality in the centre and extreme southeast; raw sewage and industrial effluents polluting rivers in urban areas; deforestation; widespread erosion; desertification; deteriorating agricultural lands; serious air and water pollution in the national capital and urban centers along US-Mexico border; land subsidence in Valley of Mexico caused by groundwater depletion.

Natural hazards are tsunamis along the Pacific coast, volcanoes and destructive earthquakes in center and south, and hurricanes on the Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean coasts.

A prolonged regional drought in the border region with the US has strained water sharing arrangements causing disputes.

### **Housing**

Good quality flats (apartments) and homes can be found in the suburbs and in the centre of Mexico City. Many flats and condominiums have swimming pools, as do detached homes. Most properties have double garages.

Most lease or Tenancy agreements are usually for 12 months, with an option to renew for two to four more years. Gas and water charges are usually included in the rent. Service charges are usually included in the rent. Service charges for flats are sometimes included and can be negotiated. There is an annual rent review. Rents for expatriates are usually payable in dollars. Landlords tend to prefer company leases. There is little difference between furnished and unfurnished rental levels. A diplomatic clause is easy to negotiate, with 60 days notice. Brokerage fees are typically one month's rent but there is no legal maximum. Few landlords allow pets. Deposits for furnished accommodations are normally 2-3 month's rent, for unfurnished, one month's rent.

If properties are furnished, you can expect full carpeting or parquet floors, curtains, fully equipped kitchen with stove, refrigerator, garbage disposal, water filters and, sometimes, a dishwasher. The standard of furnishing is medium to high quality.

Expatriates report that furniture, domestic appliances and household goods are available locally. Furniture and appliances can be rented, but most either bring their own furniture or buy locally.

### **Health and Hygiene**

Many newcomers find that they tire quickly as a result of the high altitude of Mexico City at 2300 meters, as it contains 30% less oxygen than at sea level. As a result, strenuous activities should be limited for the first few days after arrival. Small meals and limited alcohol intake will improve adaptation to the climate.



The altitude, combined with the pollution, renders Mexico City an almost impossible place for persons with asthma, cardiac or chronic lung problems to live in. There are also reports that the pollution in Mexico City and Guadalajara causes nose bleeds, which cease with fresh air. Those with a history of such disorder should consult their physician before departure. Many people complain of eye irritation, especially in winter, so those wearing contact lenses may suffer some discomfort.

Tap water is not safe to drink, but bottled and mineral water is available everywhere. Ice in drinks bought outside the home should be avoided. Water sterilizing tablets can be purchased at pharmacies, and travelers may also wish to take a portable water filter. Fruit should be peeled, and raw salads and vegetables should be avoided. All milk and dairy products should be pasteurized before consuming.

Those traveling in low-lying coastal areas should equip themselves with antihistamine and an insect repellent. All international airports in Mexico, Mexico City and Acapulco are free from malaria, but there is a risk in rural areas in the states of Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacan, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Sinola, Tabasco, Veracruz, and Yucatan throughout the year. Everyone should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites with the use of sensible clothing, screens, nets, and insect repellents.

Dungue Fever has appeared in Southern Mexico, there is no treatment, and mosquito bites must be avoided.

Amoebic dysentery and gastro-enteritis are widespread. One should eat only at reputable restaurants, never at taco stands and open-fronted snack bars and restaurants. "Imecal" is the local remedy for common diarrhea.

Rabies is endemic in Mexico and in neighboring countries. It is a lethal disease contracted from certain infected animals. An effective vaccine is available (Human Diploid vaccine) which produces only very mild side effects in adults. Anyone who has not been vaccinated against rabies and is bitten by any suspect animal must take immediate action. Children should be discouraged from petting strange animals.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The disease is sexually transmitted as well as by the use of unsterilised medical equipment and contaminated blood. The disease is widespread in many parts of the world and Mexico is ranked 13th globally. Expatriates should attempt to check whether local blood supplies have been adequately screened.

Hepatitis B contracted the same as AIDS (see above). Acute illness which can last for more than three months, and in the long-term, a high proportion of patients develop chronic liver disease which is often fatal. A physician will advise as to whether vaccination is necessary.

### Schools and Education

The children of expatriates can usually be placed in the school of their choice. Most boarding schools are run by religious order; day schools usually provide buses to transport children between home and school.

### Currency

The unit of currency is the Mexican peso. The following denominations are in circulation:

Notes 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 pesos.

Coins: 1, 5 and 10 pesos.

### Post and Communications

The use of registered post is advised, particularly when sending printed matter. International parcels must be examined by the Customs Office before posting, this can be done at the International Post Office, Calle Aldama 218, Colonia guerra (near Revolucion Metro, open until 1800, but only until 1400 for parcels).

Ordinary mail, both domestic and international, is slow. An immediate delivery service (entrega inmediata) within Mexico City usually takes at least 2-3 days. For reasonable rapid service, airmail is preferable. Air letters to the USA take about 6 days, and to Europe about 1-2 weeks.

Considerable delays are not unusual. Sea mail to Europe may take 6-12 weeks. Airmail from Europe takes 5-10 days for delivery.

There is no home delivery service. It is necessary to have a Post Office Box number (Apartado Postal).

If export duties are applicable on parcels being sent overseas, these must be paid at the Ministry of finance and the parcels must then be returned to the Post Office. Parcels arriving from overseas are subject to considerable delay at the airport and many items are "lost".

The Chamber of Commerce and Embassies in Mexico City can advise on courier services for urgent communications.

**Telegrams** – Both internal and international systems are maintained by Telegrafos Nacionales, under the Ministry of Communications and Transport. Telegrafos Nacionales and the Post Office are two separate organisations and telegrams must be handed in at office of Telegrafos Nacionales. The main office for international telegrams is at Balderas y Colon, Mexico DF. Rates for telegrams sent from the main office are as much as 30% higher than at other offices. Telegrams must be prepaid.

**Facsimile** – The larger international hotels in Mexico City and major centres have facsimile machines which are available for the use of hotel guests. Banks and large companies also have fax machines. Fax machines are available for the general public at most main post offices.

### Shopping

Shopping facilities are generally very good. Various joint ventures with US companies have enhanced the retail scene, while tariff cuts have led to a flood of imports. Overall, living costs are lower than in Europe and North America although imported luxuries are expensive.

Most of the fashionable shops in Mexico City are found in the Zona Rosa bounded by Paseo de la Reforma, Av





Chapultepec, Callo Florencia and Av Insurgentes Sur, where most streets are named after foreign cities. Avenida Madero is the “smart” shopping street, and there are also good shops on 5 de mayo, 16 de Septiembre, Insurgentes, Colonia Juraz, Called Niza, Hanburgo and Amberes.

The airport is a good shopping centre and, with the extension of ring roads around the city, supermarkets are being built which include branches of the leading department stores such as Sears.

Bargaining is acceptable in most markets and in the smaller shops.

### **Food and Drink**

There is a wide price gap between local and imported brands. Expatriates note that the quality of local food products is improving due to competition of imported goods. There are two main chains of supermarkets, the gigante / Superama and Cifra. There is also a chain of Supermercado Americanos which specialises in imported goods.

Expatriates should not drink pulque and other fermented local beverages (including tequila and mescal) because of the high risk of intestinal infection. Gordon’s and Gilbey’s Gins, Spanish “anis” and well known vermouths are produced in Mexico, and Bacardi rum is popular and cheap. Imported wines and spirits are available but very expensive. There are many brands of local cigarettes. Marlboro is produced locally.

### **Restaurants**

Because of the high altitude in Mexico City the main meal is usually eaten early in the afternoon between 14.00 and 15.00 hours following a light breakfast. A light evening meal is eaten generally between 19.00 and 20.00 hours or later.

Mexico has various elaborate regional cuisine. Favourite dishes include tamales, mole de guajalote (turkey in chocolate sauce), mole de pollo (chicken in chocolate sauce), tacos and enchiladas (meat and chicken rolled in tortillas then fried in oil). Frijolas (Mexican beans) appear in various dishes and Indian food is frequently found. A favorite fish dish is huachinango (red snapper) sautéed with pimientos and spices. Soups are quite popular and excellent. There are numerous restaurants in Mexico City offering a wide variety of cuisine at various prices.

### **Travel**

All travelers should beware of thieves and pickpockets, and women and girls should never travel alone. Men are separated from women and children in the early evening (17.00-21.00 hours) on some routes.

*Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Abels Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date Abels cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.*