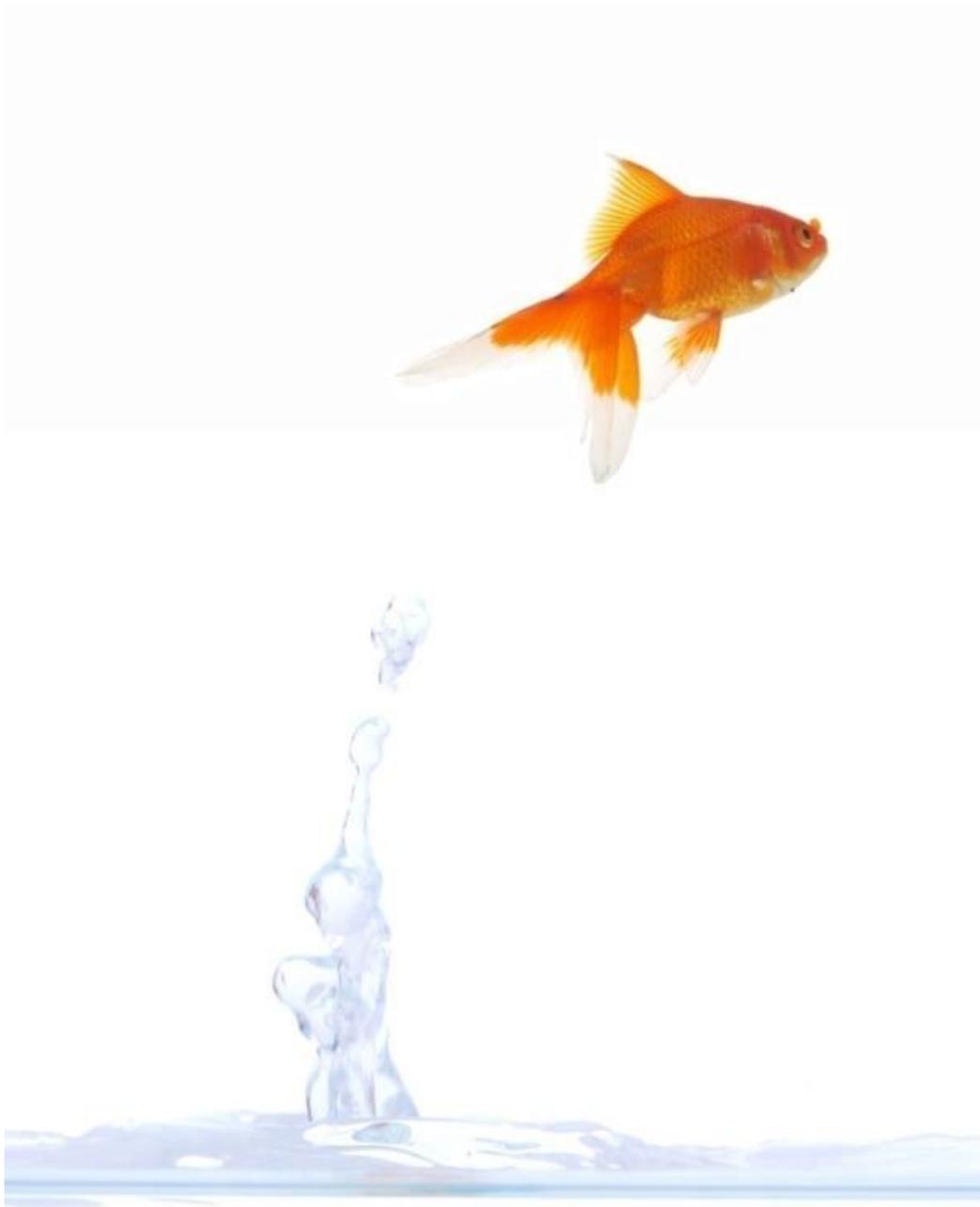


Mexico Immigration Guide 2018



WRITTEN BY ÁLVARO MOLINA AND ADRIANA CRUZ

Mexico Immigration Guide

2018

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Mexico Immigration Guide

FULLY REVISED AND UPDATED FOR 2018

Immigration to Mexico

Sample Pages

Introduction to the Mexican Immigration System

The agency in the Mexican government responsible for issuing visas is called the *Instituto Nacional de Migración* (National Institute of Immigration), a division of the *Secretaría de Gobernación* (Secretary of the Government). The INM is responsible for accepting and/or rejecting visa applications from foreigners who wish to live in Mexico. Another agency, the *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores* (Secretary of Exterior Relations or SRE, also called the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), is responsible for monitoring immigrants within its borders. The SRE is also responsible for many other areas of life in Mexico, including issuing Mexican passports, naturalization of foreigners, international extraditions, monitoring foreign investments in Mexico, monitoring Human Rights and Democracy and issues relating to Mexicans outside of the borders, among others.

Throughout this guide, we will refer to “foreigners” as meaning non-Mexicans who are living full or part-time as residents of Mexico. In Mexican legal nomenclature and governmental publications, “foreigners” are referred to as *extranjeros*.

All foreigners will interact with one or both of these agencies in the process of getting legal permission to travel to Mexico, to reside in Mexico for any length of time or to become a Mexican citizen.

The purpose of this guide is to carefully spell out the various ways that a foreigner can legally reside in Mexico, and how to attain the appropriate permissions.

Beginning the Process

Types of visas

There are six ways for a foreign national to come to and stay in Mexico.

Foreigners, as visitors, may come into Mexico for a maximum period of 180 days. While most visitors can easily apply for a visitor visa, citizens from certain countries will need to request the **Entry Permit** (*permiso de internación*) before arriving at the border (see Attachment B).

The different types of visitor visas are:

Visitor visa without permission to engage in lucrative activities

This visa will be granted to those who can prove one of the following:

- They have enough economic resources to pay for their stay while in Mexico
- They are frequent travelers with reasons to return to their home country
- They are a researcher, scientist, humanitarian, artist, sportsman, journalist of national or international prestige, or prominent person
- They are a spouse, concubine or equivalent, son, daughter, father, mother or sibling of a Mexican, a temporary or permanent resident, and are not trying to establish themselves permanently in Mexico (in the case of siblings, it only applies if the applicant is under the age of 18 years old and is not married and is under the sibling's legal representation).
- They are a spouse, concubine or equivalent, son, daughter, father, mother or sibling of a person occupying a diplomatic or consular position in Mexico (in the case of siblings, it only applies if the applicant is under the age of 18 years old and is not married and is under the sibling's legal representation).
- They are a supervisor of a foreign company with branches in Mexico or executive staff in branches or commercial offices of Mexican companies abroad
- They have an invitation from an organization or public/private institution to participate in non-lucrative activities in Mexico
- They are the driver of cargo transportation that needs to enter Mexico with the sole purpose of loading and unloading merchandise

“Canje” Process

The “*canje*” process is the one by which a foreigner who holds a **Mexican visa (stamp)** in his passport, granted at a Mexican Consulate, applies at the INM in Mexico for a **resident card**.

The procedure is composed of two steps:

1. At a Mexican consulate (mentioned in the above section)

- Applying for the visa
- Interview
- Printing the visa in the applicant’s passport

Once the applicant enters Mexico, he/she has 30 days to do the following (IMPORTANT: the exchange procedure must be started within 30 days, not to necessarily have the card issued within those 30 days):

2. At the INM Office in Mexico

These are the documents to provide at the Immigration Institute:

- Online form, which is available in this link: <https://www.inm.gob.mx/tramites/publico/estancia.html>. This form must have the the applicant’s signature. In the case of minors, the person signing must be the parents or guardians.
- Letter in Spanish requesting the “*canje*” (exchange) of the visa (see Appendix C for an example template).
- Original and copy of the applicant’s passport.
- Original and copy of the visa provided at the Consulate.
- Immigration Form FMM (provided at the port of entry). **Make sure the Immigration officer sees your visa from the Consulate so that he marks the box “canje” and writes 30 days, instead of 180 days of the regular FMM.** This is very important in order for your process to run smoothly at the Immigration office.
- “*Formato básico*” (basic form). This form is provided at the INM or online at http://www.inm.gob.mx/complementos/FORMATO/Formato_Basico.pdf
- Some INM offices may also request a proof of address, being this a recent utility bill of electrical, water or telephone service. This bill won’t

About the Authors

Álvaro Molina

Alvaro completed his legal studies at the Law Faculty of the Marist University of Merida in 2015, which included a half-year stay at the University of Lincoln in England as an exchange student. Having worked part-time as an intern from as early as his second year of law school in the offices of “Puerto y Pino, Abogados”, he developed valuable skills and experience in the fields of Notary Law, Corporate Law, Immigration Law and Intellectual Property Law. Previous to his legal career, he supported his mother in the set-up and development of a successful chain of retail dancewear stores that now counts with five different locations, two of them in the United States. A self-taught English speaker, Alvaro is always eager to help clients navigate the Mexican legal system, especially for international clients, who might not be familiar with its often-over-regulated nature.

Adriana Cruz

After receiving her B.A. in International Business from the University of Mayab, Adriana began her professional activities in project management and public relations with the garment industry. That experience gave her the basis for her next position as project manager for the formation of a business association between Yucatecan, American and Italian companies. There she learned to take advantage of and appreciate cultural diversity while managing a complex project. She also developed an excellent understanding of a wide range of business activities conducted in English and Italian, as well as her native Spanish. Adriana has also worked for the Yucatan State Government where she managed the business promotion program for the State of Yucatan, helping to establish diverse expatriate businesses in Yucatan, relocating executives, smoothing institutional relationships and navigating the logistics for these and other diverse projects.

Adriana is a key member of the YES team. She serves as the main interface to foreign clients, managing and coordinating their projects, managing their properties, producing on-time legal and accounting documents, arranging visas, monitoring projects and more.

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