

1 Mexico at a Glance



Chichén Itzá



Mexico at a Glance



The official name of Mexico is *Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (the United States of Mexico) and it is made up of 31 states and a federal district - México D.F. (kind of like Washington D.C.).

Mexico City - the capital - is one of largest cities in the world and is home to over 19 million people. Other major cities include Monterrey (think universities and art), Chihuahua (yup, it's where Chihuahua dogs originated), Veracruz (a big port city founded by Cortez) and Guadalajara (birthplace of Mariachi music).

The climate in Mexico ranges from the snowcapped mountains of Toluca to the sub-tropical Pacific coast to the temperate climate of Puebla, which sits at an altitude of 7,200 feet above sea level (that's high)!

Mexico borders the United States and Guatemala and is part of North America.

Most people in Mexico are *mestizos*. That means that their ancestry is mixed between European and Indigenous. *Mestizos* make up about 60% of the population. The next largest group is composed of fully Indigenous people, who could be Mayan, Huichol, Zapotec, Mixtec, Tarahumara or another Amerindian group. These people make up about 30% of the population. The third largest ethnic group in Mexico identifies as Caucasian (about 9%). Other groups make up the remaining 1% of Mexico's people.

4. Caucasian is the third largest ethnic group in Mexico. Is this what you expected? Why or why not?

5. Look at the percentage of Roman Catholics in Mexico. How does this statistic and the ones above compare to those in the United States? What is the largest religious group in the United States? What is the largest ethnic group in the United States? What are the second and third largest ethnic groups? Look up answers to these questions using the Internet and resources at your school library. Is the United States more similar to or different from the ethnicities of Mexico than you originally thought? Explain.