

Crossing the Border Information

All information is subject to change and is meant as a guide only! Last updated 12/9/2015

Entering Mexico

The Mexican government web site that should have the latest current information in Spanish can be found at www.senasica.gob.mx and the English version is at www.senasica.gob.mx/?Idioma=2.

Border Hours

Open 6am - Midnight.

Normally there is little to no wait times going into Mexico, but coming back to the USA can get busy. Keep in mind seasonal, holiday, and/or spring break traffic can bump crossing waits into several hours. To get the latest border wait times to please visit:

<http://traffic.calit2.net/border/border-crossing-wait-times.php> or

<https://bwt.cbp.gov/?com=1&pas=1&ped=1&plist=2602> to get the latest border wait times.

Vehicle Entry Inspections

When you cross into Mexico, there is a green-light, red-light system in place for random searches, it will activate when your car pulls through the lane.

- Green Light: Drive right on through (unless you have a truck or van or a large car and they think you may have quantities of taxable items, they may tell you to pull over anyway)
- Red Light: Pull your vehicle over to the parking spaces in the center for inspection of your vehicle's contents

Vehicle registration paperwork

Always carry it with you or you may be turned back at the border or Mexican Customs can confiscate them. This includes quads, motorcycles, dune buggies, etc. The car's title is not necessary but a copy isn't a bad idea. The more proof of ownership the better.

Auto Insurance

If you plan to go to Mexico, get Mexico insurance before you go. It is required and your US policy will not be accepted by Mexican authorities in the event of an accident. Every vehicle must have Mexican auto insurance, of which a copy should always remain with the vehicle as well as another away from your car. We suggest you research plans that offer the best coverage for the best price. There are websites that will do a comparison for you, such as www.motormexico.com, www.mexinsurance.com or www.mexpro.com.

Customs officers

Depending on the custom inspector you happen to get, you might be also subject their own personal interruption of the official rules. They might ask questions such as where are you going or what are you going to be doing? They may pass you through, or do a quick visual search

of your vehicle's passenger areas, and or trunk, etc. If you're in an RV, towing recreational vehicles, or just have a big car, expect to get pulled over, the bigger the car, the more interesting it is, so they'll want to take a look, but again it just depends on the officer.

Importing Items

Buy what you can in Sonoyta or Puerto Peñasco.

You are allowed to bring in \$50.00 USD per person worth of new merchandise (this does not include your personal items such as clothing, toiletries, etc.) If you have new merchandise in excess of \$50 per person you will need to declare your items and pay the taxes before crossing into Mexico. When declaring items you may import up to \$1,000 USD of new merchandise per vehicle. If your merchandise totals more than \$1,000 USD per vehicle, you will need the assistance of a customs broker. Customs Brokers are located on the Mexican side of the border. Park on the U.S. side and walk across to one of their offices.

To declare items you are bringing into Mexico, turn left as you cross the border, just beyond the chain link fence. Park in the designated spot and go into the Aduana Building in the middle of the two lanes. See [Crossing the Border](#) for more information on declaring merchandise.

What is Allowed

- 2 cartons of cigarettes or 100 cigars
- 3 liters (about 3 quarts) of wine or Alcohol including beer per person (21 or older).
Medicine for personal use (with your prescription).
- Meats other than beef are allowed (In original unopened packages, as purchased from the store in quantities for personal consumption.)

Pets (Dogs & Cats Only)

Bring a valid U.S. Veterinarian Health Certificate Form & Rabies Certificate not more than 6 months old. Most border checks aren't going to give you a hard time about it but should they, and they have the right to do so, they can hold/quarantine your pet which is both traumatic and expensive. Pets in Mexico Resource:

<http://www.peoplesguide.com/mexico/pets/pets-in-mexico.shtml>

Firearms & Drugs

Firearms, illegal drugs and ammunition are NOT allowed into Mexico. Hunters may bring their firearm with the proper paperwork/clearance. Possession carries a penalty of 5 to 30 years in prison

Returning Back to the United States

U.S. Customs Service (Arizona) 520-387-6005.

Passport application and information: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english.html>

Border Hours

Closed midnight to 6am. Normally there is little to no wait times going into Mexico, but coming back to the USA can get busy. Keep in mind seasonal, holiday, and/or spring break traffic can bump crossing waits into several (or many) hours. Good idea is to go to <http://traffic.calit2.net/border/border-crossing-wait-times.php> and get the [Latest Border Wait Times](#).

Citizenship

Be sure all occupants in your vehicle can prove U.S. Citizenship, or legal entry into the U.S. Passports are now required. A US driver's license is NOT proof of citizenship. You should carry a U.S. passport, a birth certificate, or a voter's registration card as well as a photo ID, such as your driver's license just to be safe. Please review [passport requirements](#).

Re-entry

When you re-enter, you will be asked questions regarding what you did while in Mexico and often your length of stay. In addition you may be asked about what you purchased. Declare everything you are bringing back from Mexico and have receipts for any high dollar item.

Authorities have the right to search your vehicle. Don't give them a hard time. Again, if you're driving a high profile vehicle such as a van or an RV or a truck or an SUV, you are more likely to be searched.

Liquor and smokes

You are allowed to enter free of duty any purchases with a combined value of up to \$400 per 30 day time period (Must be 21 years old):

- 3 liters of wine or hard liquor
- 200 cigarettes, or 100 cigars (but not from Cuba), or 3 pounds of smoking tobacco

Prescriptions

As a rule, you have to have a U.S. prescription for any prescription drugs you pick up in Mexico, even though you probably won't have to use said prescription to buy the drugs. Certain limitations on quantity (usually a 3 month supply) may also apply.

Even though the rules and legislation on the prescription drug situation is changing pretty frequently, U.S. Customs agents are aware of the 'good' and the 'bad' drugs out there, and will strictly enforce the current law. As they say, 'US Customs reserves the right to use its judgment in allowing the transport of prescription drugs.'

The [U.S. Customs website](#) has more up-to-date details.

Illegal Items/ Contraband

- Desert/Marine Wildlife or Plants
- Freon-12
- Coral/Whale skeleton parts
- Plants
- Fruits/Vegetables
- Pork products
- Eggs/Potatoes
- Avocados (with seeds/pits) or mangos
- Pork/Ham
- Birds
- Fireworks
- Firearms - Weapons

Border Patrol Stops

Even after you've made it back through the US/Mexico border, it is not unusual to hit a US Border Patrol stop a few miles later. Different agencies, same goal, although the stop further in is usually more targeted towards illegal immigrants and narcotics/drug detection. It is common to see dogs at these stops and you may be asked to provide proof of citizenship(again) and/or pull over for a quick look around the vehicle. The location and times of these stops vary, but be prepared to go through the drill even after you're back on US soil.

Driving to Mexico Links

- [New 2014 Mexico Liability Laws](#)
- [Vehicle Importation Requirements](#)
- [Keep US/Canadian License & Registration Current](#)
- [Border Crossing Tips](#)
- [Mexico Maps](#)
- [Tips for Emergencies](#)
- [Border Crossings](#)
- [Border Crossing Wait Times](#)
- [How to Handle Traffic Incident in Baja](#)
- [Gas Prices in Mexico](#)
- [Dollar to Peso Conversion](#)
- [Claims Instructions](#)