



Mexico

Ancient pyramids, colourful colonial towns, Caribbean beaches and one of the world's great kitchens.

AT A GLANCE

Facts to know

CAPITAL

Mexico City

POPULATION

About 134 million (National Population Council estimate for 2026)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

None is set by law. Spanish is used by almost everyone and by the government, and a 2003 law recognises Spanish and the Indigenous languages, such as Nahuatl and Yucatec Maya, as national languages

CURRENCY

Mexican peso (MXN)

AREA

About 1.96 million km²

GOVERNMENT

Federal presidential republic of 31 states and Mexico City (constitution of 1917)

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Pico de Orizaba (Citlaltépetl), 5,636 m, a dormant volcano and the highest peak in Mexico

LONGEST RIVER

The Rio Grande (Río Bravo del Norte), about 3,050 km, which forms much of the border with the United States

NEIGHBOURS

United States, Guatemala and Belize by land. Across the sea, Cuba lies about 200 km from the Yucatán Peninsula

DRIVES ON THE

Right

CALLING CODE

+52

A 45-minute trip to Mexico

Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 0 to 5 min | Welcome. Show the map page and find Mexico together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there? |
| 5 to 15 min | Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: 1200 BC: The Olmecs flourish on the Gulf Coast; 1862: Mexico wins the Battle of Puebla; 2024: Claudia Sheinbaum becomes the first woman president. |
| 15 to 25 min | At the table: talk about Tacos al pastor and Mole poblano. Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help. |
| 25 to 30 min | Say it like a local: practise "Buenos días" (Good morning, hello), "Buenas tardes" (Good afternoon), "Buenas noches" (Good evening, good night). Everyone says them together. |
| 30 to 40 min | Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at https://worldstroll.com/countries/mexico/group . No scores needed. |
| 40 to 45 min | Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page. |

You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

Mexico and its cities



- Mexico City (Mexico City (its own federal entity, like a state)): The Zócalo and the Metropolitan Cathedral, The National Museum of Anthropology, The canals of Xochimilco
- Guadalajara (Jalisco): Mariachi music, The Hospicio Cabañas, Birria, a spicy meat stew
- Monterrey (Nuevo León): Industry and business, The saddle-shaped mountain Cerro de la Silla, Grilled meat and cabrito (roast young goat)
- Tijuana (Baja California): The border with San Diego, Avenida Revolución, The birthplace of the Caesar salad
- Puebla (Puebla): Mole poblano and chiles en nogada, Talavera pottery and tiles, The Battle of Puebla of 5 May 1862
- Oaxaca (Oaxaca): The Guelaguetza dance festival, Mole and tlayudas, Mezcal and craft markets

- Mérida (Yucatán): Its large colonial centre, Yucatecan food such as cochinita pibil, Trips to Maya ruins and cenotes
- Valladolid (Yucatán): Being close to Chichén Itzá, Cenotes, natural swimming holes, Its colourful streets
- Cancún (Quintana Roo): White sand beaches and turquoise sea, The Hotel Zone, The gateway to the Riviera Maya
- Guanajuato (Guanajuato): Silver mines, The Cervantino arts festival, Streets that run underground
- San Miguel de Allende (Guanajuato): The pink Parroquia church, Art galleries and craft shops, Cobbled streets
- Veracruz (Veracruz): The fort of San Juan de Ulúa, Son music, the roots of the song 'La Bamba', Morning coffee in sidewalk cafés

A short history of Mexico

Mexico's story begins thousands of years before the Spanish arrived, with cities, pyramids and calendars built by the Olmecs, Maya, Zapotecs and Aztecs. After three centuries as the Spanish colony of New Spain, Mexico fought for independence, lost about half of its territory to the United States, survived a French invasion and a long revolution, and became the modern republic it is today.

1200 BC **The Olmecs flourish on the Gulf Coast**

By about 1200 BC the Olmecs, often called the 'mother culture' of Mesoamerica, were building ceremonial centres such as San Lorenzo in today's Veracruz. They are famous for giant stone heads, the largest about 3.4 m tall.

AD 615 **Pakal becomes king of Palenque**

In July 615, a boy of twelve called K'inich Janaab' Pakal became ruler of the Maya city of Palenque, in today's Chiapas. He reigned for 68 years, and his richly decorated tomb was found inside the Temple of the Inscriptions in 1952.

1325 **The Aztecs found Tenochtitlan**

According to tradition, the Mexica (Aztecs) founded their capital Tenochtitlan in 1325 on an island in Lake Texcoco, where they saw an eagle perched on a cactus. The city grew into one of the largest in the world, and Mexico City now stands on its ruins.

1519 **Hernán Cortés lands in Mexico**

In April 1519 the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés landed on the Gulf Coast and founded the town of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz. In November he entered Tenochtitlan and met the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II.

1521 **Tenochtitlan falls to the Spanish**

After a long siege, helped by thousands of Indigenous allies, above all the Tlaxcalans, Cortés captured Tenochtitlan on 13 August 1521. Spain built Mexico City on the ruins and ruled the colony of New Spain for three centuries.

1810

The Cry of Dolores

On 16 September 1810, the priest Miguel Hidalgo rang his church bell in the town of Dolores and called on the people to rise up against Spanish rule. Mexicans celebrate Independence Day on 16 September, and the president repeats the cry every year on the night before.

1821

Mexico wins independence

After eleven years of war, the Treaty of Córdoba was signed in August 1821, and on 27 September the Army of the Three Guarantees marched into Mexico City, ending Spanish rule.

1848

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

The Mexican-American War ended with this treaty in February 1848. Mexico gave up what is now California, Nevada, Utah and most of Arizona, along with parts of other US states. Counting Texas, which had broken away earlier, Mexico lost about half of the land it had claimed.

1862

Mexico wins the Battle of Puebla

On 5 May 1862 a smaller Mexican army defeated invading French troops outside the city of Puebla. The victory is remembered as Cinco de Mayo, which is celebrated more widely in the United States than in most of Mexico.

1867

Emperor Maximilian is executed

France had installed the Austrian archduke Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico in 1864. When the French withdrew, the forces of President Benito Juárez captured him, and he was executed at Querétaro on 19 June 1867.

1910

The Mexican Revolution begins

On 20 November 1910 Francisco Madero called for an uprising against the long rule of Porfirio Díaz. A decade of fighting followed, with leaders such as Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa, and around one million people died.

1917

A new constitution is signed

The constitution approved in Querétaro on 5 February 1917 laid the foundations for land reform, workers' rights and free, secular education. With many changes, it is still in force today.

1938

Mexico takes over its oil industry

On 18 March 1938, President Lázaro Cárdenas nationalised the oil owned by foreign companies and created the state company Pemex. The day is still remembered with pride.

1968

Mexico City hosts the Olympic Games

In October 1968 Mexico City held the first Olympic Games ever staged in Latin America and in a Spanish-speaking country. Just days before, soldiers had killed protesting students at Tlatelolco, a tragedy Mexicans still remember.

2000

Vicente Fox ends 71 years of one-party rule

In July 2000 Vicente Fox of the National Action Party won the presidency, the first time in 71 years that the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) lost a presidential election.

2024

Claudia Sheinbaum becomes the first woman president

On 1 October 2024 Claudia Sheinbaum, a scientist and former head of government of Mexico City, was sworn in as the first woman president of Mexico.

What people eat in Mexico

Mexican food is built on corn, beans and chillies, which were grown here thousands of years ago. Corn is soaked and cooked with lime (calcium hydroxide, not the fruit) to make masa, the dough for tortillas and tamales. Breakfast is often hearty, and the main meal of the day, la comida, is eaten in the early afternoon: it may start with a soup, then rice or pasta (called 'sopa seca', dry soup), then a main dish with tortillas, and finally a dessert. Supper in the evening is usually light. In 2010 UNESCO added traditional Mexican cuisine to its list of the world's intangible cultural heritage.

Tacos al pastor

Puebla and Mexico City, now eaten everywhere

Thin slices of marinated pork, cooked on a vertical spit called a trompo, shaved into small corn tortillas and topped with onion, coriander (cilantro), salsa and often a sliver of pineapple.

Mole poblano

Puebla

A dark, rich sauce made from several kinds of dried chillies, spices, nuts, seeds, bread and a little chocolate, served over turkey or chicken. It can take a whole day to make and is served at weddings and big family celebrations.

Chiles en nogada

Puebla

Large green poblano chillies stuffed with minced meat and fruit, covered with a creamy white walnut sauce and sprinkled with red pomegranate seeds. It is served at room temperature.

Cochinita pibil

Yucatán Peninsula

Pork marinated in bitter orange juice and achiote (annatto), which turns it a deep orange, then wrapped in banana leaves and slow-roasted, traditionally in a pit in the ground. It is served with tortillas and pink pickled onions.

Pozole

Central and western Mexico, such as Jalisco, Guerrero and Michoacán

A hearty soup of large, chewy hominy corn kernels cooked with pork or chicken. It comes white, green or red, and everyone adds their own toppings: shredded cabbage

or lettuce, radish, onion, oregano, chilli and lime.

Tamales

All of Mexico

Parcels of corn dough (masa) with a filling such as chicken in green salsa, pork in red salsa, cheese with chilli, or something sweet, wrapped in a corn husk or banana leaf and steamed. You unwrap them and eat only the inside.

Tlayuda

Oaxaca

A very large, thin, crisp tortilla spread with refried beans and pork lard, then topped with cabbage, avocado, stringy Oaxaca cheese and grilled meat. It is grilled over charcoal, sometimes folded in half.

Enchiladas

All of Mexico

Corn tortillas dipped in chilli sauce, rolled around a filling such as chicken or cheese, and topped with more sauce, cream, crumbly cheese and onion. The name means 'seasoned with chilli'.

Chilaquiles

All of Mexico, a favourite breakfast

Fried tortilla pieces simmered briefly in green or red salsa, then topped with cream, crumbly cheese, onion and often shredded chicken or a fried egg. It is a clever way to use up yesterday's tortillas.

Guacamole

Central and southern Mexico, from Aztec times

Ripe avocado mashed with lime juice, onion, chilli, coriander (cilantro) and salt, traditionally in a stone bowl called a molcajete. It is eaten with tortilla chips or served with tacos.

Pico de gallo (Salsa mexicana)

All of Mexico

A fresh, uncooked salsa of chopped tomato, white onion, green chilli, coriander (cilantro), lime juice and salt, served with tacos, eggs and grilled meat.

Esquites

Central Mexico, a street food

Corn kernels boiled with salt and the herb epazote, served in a cup with lime juice, mayonnaise, crumbly cheese and chilli powder. Street vendors sell them in the evening, next to elotes, whole corn cobs on a stick.

Bread of the dead (Pan de muerto)

All of Mexico

A soft, sweet round bun, often flavoured with orange blossom or anise, decorated with strips of dough shaped like bones and dusted with sugar. It is baked in the weeks before the Day of the Dead, on 1 and 2 November.

Cajeta

Celaya, Guanajuato

A thick, sweet caramel sauce made by slowly cooking goat's milk with sugar. It is spread on crêpes, poured over ice cream or eaten from a spoon, and cajeta from Celaya is the most famous.

Hibiscus water (Agua de jamaica)

All of Mexico

A cool, deep-red drink made by steeping dried hibiscus flowers in water and sweetening it. It is one of the most popular aguas frescas, the fresh drinks served in big glass jars at markets and taco stands.

Tequila

The town of Tequila and the highlands of Jalisco

A spirit distilled from the heart of the blue agave plant. By law it must be made from blue agave in a protected area centred on Jalisco. Its smoky cousin, mezcal, can be made from many kinds of agave and comes mostly from Oaxaca.

GOOD MANNERS

At the table

- The main meal, la comida, is eaten in the early afternoon and can last a long time. Supper in the evening is usually light.
- Tacos are eaten with your hands, never with a knife and fork. Tilt your head, not the taco, so the filling stays inside.
- When you pass people who are eating, or before you start, it is polite to say '¡Provecho!', which means 'enjoy your meal'.
- Taste salsas carefully before you pour them on: the green ones are not always the mild ones.
- Waiters do not bring the bill until you ask. Say 'La cuenta, por favor', or make a small writing sign in the air.
- A tip of about 10 to 15 percent is normal in restaurants. Check first that it has not already been added to the bill.

Chilaquiles

Fried tortilla pieces simmered briefly in green or red salsa, then topped with cream, crumbly cheese, onion and often shredded chicken or a fried egg. It is a clever way to use up yesterday's tortillas.

Ingredients

- 8 corn tortillas, cut into 6 triangles each (a day old is best)
- Vegetable oil for frying
- 400 ml green salsa made from tomatillos (from a jar, or homemade)
- 100 ml chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 eggs (optional)
- 4 tablespoons Mexican crema or sour cream
- 50 g crumbly fresh cheese made from pasteurised milk, such as queso fresco or feta (for pregnant women, older people or anyone with a weak immune system, use pasteurised feta)
- Half a white onion, thinly sliced
- 1 avocado, sliced, and a few coriander (cilantro) leaves

Method

1. Heat about 1 cm of oil in a frying pan and fry the tortilla triangles in batches until golden and crisp. Drain on kitchen paper and sprinkle with a little salt.
2. Pour off the oil. Heat the salsa and stock in the same pan until they bubble.
3. Add the tortilla chips and stir gently for 1 to 2 minutes, so they are coated but still a little crunchy.
4. If you like, fry the eggs in a separate pan. For pregnant women, young children, older people or anyone with a weak immune system, cook them until the yolks are firm.
5. Divide between plates, top with cream, cheese, onion, avocado and coriander, add the eggs and serve at once.

Guacamole

Ripe avocado mashed with lime juice, onion, chilli, coriander (cilantro) and salt, traditionally in a stone bowl called a molcajete. It is eaten with tortilla chips or served with tacos.

Ingredients

- 3 ripe avocados
- Juice of 1 lime
- Half a small white onion, finely chopped
- 1 green serrano or jalapeño chilli, seeds removed, finely chopped
- A small handful of coriander (cilantro), chopped
- 1 ripe tomato, seeds removed, chopped (optional)
- Salt

Method

1. Cut the avocados in half, remove the stones and scoop the flesh into a bowl.
2. Mash with a fork, leaving it a little chunky.
3. Stir in the lime juice, onion, chilli, coriander and tomato, and season with salt.
4. Taste and add more lime or salt if needed. Wash your hands well after handling chillies and do not touch your eyes.
5. Serve straight away with tortilla chips, as the avocado darkens after a while.

Pico de gallo

A fresh, uncooked salsa of chopped tomato, white onion, green chilli, coriander (cilantro), lime juice and salt, served with tacos, eggs and grilled meat.

Ingredients

- 4 ripe plum tomatoes, finely chopped
- Half a white onion, finely chopped
- 1 or 2 green serrano chillies, finely chopped (fewer for a milder salsa)
- A handful of coriander (cilantro), chopped
- Juice of 1 lime
- Salt

Method

1. Wash the tomatoes, chillies and coriander well, as they are eaten raw.
2. Put the tomatoes, onion, chillies and coriander in a bowl.
3. Add the lime juice and a good pinch of salt and mix well.
4. Leave for 10 minutes so the flavours blend, then taste and adjust. Eat the same day.

Esquites

Corn kernels boiled with salt and the herb epazote, served in a cup with lime juice, mayonnaise, crumbly cheese and chilli powder. Street vendors sell them in the evening, next to elotes, whole corn cobs on a stick.

Ingredients

- 4 corn cobs, kernels cut off (or 500 g frozen sweetcorn)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Half a small onion, finely chopped
- 1 green chilli, chopped (optional)
- A few epazote or coriander (cilantro) leaves
- 4 tablespoons shop-bought mayonnaise (made with pasteurised eggs, unlike homemade)
- 60 g crumbly cheese made from pasteurised milk, such as cotija or feta
- 2 limes, cut into wedges
- Chilli powder and salt

Method

1. Melt the butter in a saucepan and soften the onion and chilli for 3 minutes.
2. Add the corn, the epazote or coriander, a pinch of salt and enough water to just cover. Simmer for about 10 minutes, until the corn is tender.
3. Drain, keeping a few spoonfuls of the cooking liquid, and divide the corn between cups or small bowls.
4. Top each cup with a spoonful of mayonnaise, a squeeze of lime, the cheese and a sprinkle of chilli powder. Stir and eat with a spoon while warm.

Hibiscus water

A cool, deep-red drink made by steeping dried hibiscus flowers in water and sweetening it. It is one of the most popular aguas frescas, the fresh drinks served in big glass jars at markets and taco stands.

Ingredients

- 40 g dried hibiscus flowers (flor de jamaica)
- 1.5 litres water
- 80 to 120 g sugar, to taste
- Ice and lime slices to serve

Method

1. Rinse the dried flowers in a sieve.
2. Bring 500 ml of the water to the boil, add the flowers, take off the heat and leave to steep for 15 minutes.
3. Strain into a large jug, pressing the flowers to get all the colour. Stir in the sugar until it dissolves.
4. Add the remaining litre of cold water, taste and adjust the sweetness, and chill for at least an hour.
5. Serve over ice with a slice of lime.

Useful phrases

Buenos días

BWEH-nohs DEE-ahs · Good morning, hello

Buenas tardes

BWEH-nahs TAR-dehs · Good afternoon

Buenas noches

BWEH-nahs NOH-chehs · Good evening, good night

¿Cómo está?

KOH-moh es-TAH · How are you? (polite)

Mucho gusto

MOO-choh GOOS-toh · Nice to meet you

Por favor

por fah-VOR · Please

Muchas gracias

MOO-chahs GRAH-syahs · Thank you very much

Con permiso

kohn pehr-MEE-soh · Excuse me (may I pass?)

Disculpe

dees-KOOL-peh · Excuse me, sorry

¿Mande?

MAHN-deh · Pardon? Sorry, what did you say?

¿Habla inglés?

AH-blah een-GLEHS · Do you speak English?

No entiendo

noh en-TYEN-doh · I don't understand

¿Cuánto cuesta?

KWAHN-toh KWES-tah · How much is it?

¿Dónde está el baño?

DOHN-deh es-TAH el BAHN-yoh · Where is the toilet?

¿Pica?

PEE-kah · Is it spicy?

La cuenta, por favor

lah KWEN-tah por fah-VOR · The bill, please

¡Provecho!

proh-VEH-choh · Enjoy your meal

¡Salud!

sah-LOOD · Cheers! (literally 'health')

¡Qué padre!

keh PAH-dreh · How great! How cool!

Things you might not know

1. As of 2026, Mexico has the largest Spanish-speaking population in the world: almost all of its about 134 million people speak Spanish.
2. Corn (maize) was first domesticated by Indigenous peoples in southern Mexico about 9,000 years ago, from a wild grass called teosinte.
3. Mexico City is sinking. It stands on the soft clay of an old lake bed, and because so much water is pumped from underground, some areas have sunk as much as 9 m since the early 1900s.
4. The asteroid that wiped out the dinosaurs about 66 million years ago struck near today's Yucatán Peninsula. Its buried crater, Chicxulub, is about 200 km across.
5. The Great Pyramid of Cholula, near Puebla, is the largest pyramid in the world by volume, larger than the Great Pyramid of Giza, although it is much lower.
6. The Caesar salad is generally credited to Caesar Cardini, an Italian-born restaurateur, who is said to have created it at his restaurant in Tijuana in 1924, not in Italy or the United States.
7. The Chihuahua, the smallest recognised dog breed, is a Mexican breed. It shares its name with Chihuahua, the largest Mexican state by area.
8. Every winter, millions of migrating monarch butterflies gather in the high fir forests on the border of Michoacán and the State of Mexico, about 100 km northwest of Mexico City. Their reserve became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008.
9. The Mexican flag shows an eagle on a cactus eating a snake. It recalls the Aztec legend of the sign that told them where to build Tenochtitlan.
10. In 2008 UNESCO added the Day of the Dead to its list of the world's intangible cultural heritage. Families build altars with marigolds, photos and the favourite foods of their loved ones who have died.
11. Every station of the Mexico City Metro has its own small picture symbol, designed by Lance Wyman, who also designed the graphics for the 1968 Olympics.
12. As of 2026, Mexico has 36 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, more than any

other country in the Americas.

- 13.** Chocolate (cacao), vanilla, tomatoes, avocados and chillies were all grown and eaten in Mexico long before Europeans had heard of them. The word avocado comes from ahuacatl, its name in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs.

TALK ABOUT IT

Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Mexico, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Tacos al pastor or Mole poblano? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- Mexico City hosts the Olympic Games (1968). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Vicente Fox ends 71 years of one-party rule (2000). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen Chichén Itzá, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Mexico, which would it be and why?

QUIZ

How well do you know Mexico?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

1. Corn (maize) was first domesticated in what is now Mexico.

- A) True
- B) False

2. Tequila is distilled from which plant?

- A) Sugar cane
- B) Corn
- C) Prickly pear cactus
- D) Blue agave

3. Which insects gather in their millions every winter in the fir forests of Michoacán and the State of Mexico?

- A) Fireflies
- B) Locusts
- C) Monarch butterflies
- D) Honey bees

4. Which famous Aztec treasure can you see in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City?

- A) The Sun Stone
- B) The Terracotta Army
- C) The Rosetta Stone
- D) The Mask of Agamemnon

5. In Mexican shops, prices written with the dollar sign are usually in US dollars.

- A) True
- B) False

6. The tiny Chihuahua dog shares its name with what?

- A) A Maya city
- B) Mexico's highest volcano
- C) Mexico's largest state
- D) An Aztec emperor

7. Teotihuacan was built by the Aztecs.

- A) True
- B) False

8. In 2000, Vicente Fox won the presidential election, the first time in 71 years that the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) lost the presidency.

- A) True
- B) False

9. In Mexico, a 'camión' can be a truck, but what else does the word often mean?

- A) A boat
- B) A bus
- C) A bicycle
- D) An aeroplane

10. What are you asking if you point at a salsa and say '¿Pica?'

- A) Is it spicy?
- B) Is it sweet?
- C) Is it free?
- D) Is it fresh?

11. What does official travel advice recommend you drink in Mexico?

- A) Bottled or boiled water
- B) Unfiltered well water
- C) Tap water
- D) Water from public fountains

12. In Mexico, why do people often say '¿Mande?'

- A) To order food
- B) To say goodbye
- C) To say thank you
- D) To ask you to repeat what you said

Quiz answers

1. True

True. Indigenous peoples in southern Mexico domesticated maize from a wild grass called teosinte about 9,000 years ago.

2. D) Blue agave

By law, tequila is made from blue agave grown in a protected area centred on the state of Jalisco. Agave is a succulent, not a cactus.

3. C) Monarch butterflies

Millions of migrating monarch butterflies spend the winter in these forests. Their reserve became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008.

4. A) The Sun Stone

The Sun Stone, often called the Aztec calendar, is the museum's most famous piece. The Rosetta Stone is in London, the Terracotta Army in China and the Mask of Agamemnon in Athens.

5. False

False. The Mexican peso uses the same sign as the US dollar, so prices in Mexico are normally in pesos.

6. C) Mexico's largest state

The dog shares its name with Mexico's largest state, Chihuahua, in the north on the US border. Mexico's highest volcano is Pico de Orizaba.

7. False

False. Teotihuacan was built and abandoned centuries before the Aztecs. They found its ruins and gave it the Nahuatl name we use today.

8. True

True. Vicente Fox of the National Action Party won in July 2000, ending 71 years in which the PRI had won every presidential election.

9. B) A bus

In Mexico, camión is the everyday word for a bus as well as a truck. In Spain it only means a truck.

10. A) Is it spicy?

¿Pica? means 'Is it spicy?'. A very useful question in Mexico.

11. A) Bottled or boiled water

Travel advice says to drink only bottled or boiled water in Mexico and to be careful with ice in drinks.

12. D) To ask you to repeat what you said

People say ¿Mande? to ask you to repeat what you said: it is a very Mexican, polite way to say 'Pardon?'.

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