

Immigration

There are 3 different types of visas for Mexico, and they are explained below:

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FM-T Visas An FM-T is a tourist visa for people traveling to Mexico. They can be valid for 30, 60, 90 or 180 days.

You will need the following: Proof of citizenship. This can be either a passport or a certified copy of your birth certificate accompanied by a photo ID. A passport is the document of preference. Be prepared to fill out the information requested, which includes your place of birth, your destination, and the reason for your visit.

You can obtain a blank FM-T form at any Mexican Consulate, at the travel agency issuing your plane ticket, at the airline counter, or even on the plane while en route. If you come across the border by car or bus, you can obtain one at the border office or at the bus station immigration office.

You will not be allowed in the country without it, and since you will have to turn it in when you leave the country, be sure to keep it absolutely safe. Should it be stolen, report it immediately to the nearest Mexican Immigration office, and be prepared to show proof of citizenship as well as your airline ticket, if you came by plane.

A tourist visa is just a permit to enter the country as a visitor. While you are in Mexico you cannot work, and the amount of personal belongings you can bring with you is limited. If you plan on being in Mexico longer than the time allotted, you may consider applying for a different type of visa, listed below.

FM-3 Visas If you have decided to stay longer than the 6 months allowed on your FM-T (tourist visa) you can upgrade to an FM-3, or FM-2 status. An FM-3 is a one-year permit to reside in Mexico, and must be renewed each year. You are still a non-immigrant. If you have been hired by a company to work and live in Mexico, they will assist you in application of your FM3. If you have not applied for an FM-3 at a Mexican Consulate office in the US, you may do so in some larger cities in Mexico.

You will need the following:

A letter in Spanish addressed to the immigration authorities, which states your full name, current address, a request to change from tourist status to FM-3, and that you have annexed all pertinent paperwork. (the immigration officer will most likely give you the letter already written, for you to copy)

Your current original tourist visa (not a copy)

2 copies of your entire passport (even blank pages)

An original certified copy of your marriage certificate, if you are married

Black and white passport size photos (4x4 cm) - 3 right profile and 4 front, no jewelry or glasses, hair off the forehead.

Proof of income. This figure changes from time to time, and is based on Mexico's minimum wage, and fluctuates with the exchange rate. At this writing, you will need to show an income of approximately \$1,000 U.S. for the head of household, and \$500 for each dependent. You will need bank statements, and you may need them to be translated into Spanish and certified to be correct. You could also use statements from Social Security, your pension plan, etc. All that is required is proof that the minimum income is deposited in any financial institution, anywhere with credibility, be it in the US, Europe, or offshore institution. Even a stock brokerage account, showing the requisite income, has proved sufficient, both in obtaining an original FM-3, both within Mexico, at the local immigration office, and at an overseas Mexican Consulate.

The monthly income requirements are reduced by 50% if you own and reside in your Mexican home. If this is the case, be sure to include a notarized copy of either the deed (escritura) or trust.

Once you have all of the above mentioned items, make 3 copies of each, and submit your package. Normally, immigration will stamp the original documents, plus 2 sets of the copies with the date it was received. They keep the originals and one set of copies. The second set is for your files. The third set is to have, in case things get misplaced!

You will be asked to return in a week to 10 days to pick up your completed FM3. You will then take the paperwork given to you to the nearest bank and pay the fee (perhaps around \$100 per FM3)

Remember:

If you obtained your FM-3 through a Mexican Consulate in your country, you must register within 45 days of your arriving in Mexico, with the local immigration office.

Your FM-3 must be renewed annually for a period of 5 years. After 5 years you may apply for permanent residency, if you desire.

Your FM-3 allows you to bring your car and household goods into Mexico. As long as your FM-3 is valid, so is your car legal within Mexico.

Traveling with children:

If you are traveling with children, you need their birth certificates or passports. If both parents are not traveling with the child, a notarized letter of permission from the absent parents or notarized guardianship papers will be necessary. Each child needs an FM-T tourist permission for immigration.

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