

# Is Mexico Safe For Travel?

I'm sure many of you have either heard or seen reports of all the dangers happening in Mexico. The shootings on a public beach, the spiked drinks at the resorts, the muggings and I'm sure it's scared you into NOT wanting to go to Mexico for a vacation. Let's look at the bigger picture and not what the media presents.

Name a large city the size of Cancun, where there isn't crime and where bad things don't happen? When you think about crime, every major city in the world has crime, but most are not magnified by the media. Thanks to articles from the media, red flags are being sent up about travel to Mexico because it's becoming "too dangerous". Don't get me wrong, bad things have happened to people while you're on vacation, and I'm not trying to minimize what happened to them. The things that have happened are horrible, and I wouldn't wish that on anyone, but unfortunately, it can happen anywhere you go.

When you're traveling to Mexico or another foreign country you need to remember just that, you're in another FOREIGN country. You're not in the United States, and the rules, laws and the people are not necessarily the same.

For example, would you go downtown by yourself at midnight to some clubs in a foreign city, and not worry about your own protection and safety? Would you decline a cab because they wanted 400 pesos to take you back to your resort, but would agree to a cab that you flag down that would charge 200 pesos with a guy already sitting in the backseat? Unfortunately, one person did, and is sounding off on the internet about what happened to him. Again, I'm sorry this happened to him, but a little common sense would have gone a long way.

Things like:

- Why travel alone in a foreign city at midnight to a club?
- Why wouldn't you take the "going rate" for a cab to take you back to your resort when it's closing time at the bars?
- Why would you get into a cab with someone else already in it?
- Simple common sense could have helped prevent a sad and scary situation.



When people travel to Mexico, they want to drink, have a good time and enjoy themselves. There is nothing wrong with that. You're on vacation. You want to relax, unwind, party a bit and forget about "regular life" for a while. But you also need to remember, it's a lot warmer in Mexico most of the time, and the alcohol affects you differently than it does in the States. You don't realize how much you're drinking until it could be too late in some cases. Alcohol will help dehydrate you in the sun, so if you're not drinking any water or hydrating yourself, you could get dehydrated very quickly. Make sure you have a "buddy system" to watch out for each other. Don't accept drinks that you didn't request, and don't accept drinks from strangers. The same rules and common sense apply when you're on vacation, just as it would if you were back in your hometown.

Mexico is full of wonderful destinations and beaches to go and enjoy a few adult beverages. Have fun, soak up the sun, relax and take a swim, use common sense. Stay at higher end "name brand" resorts. Use only contracted transfer companies, and professional services. Use Funjet Vacations, Delta Vacations, Southwest Vacations, United Vacations, Travel Impressions and Apple Vacations as your preferred vendors. Use a travel professional. Vendors spend months determining who is worthy of signing contracts for services in many destinations including Mexico, so why not use them? Trust the professionals, not some "cheap rate" you find online that is "too good to be true", it probably is!

Remember Warren Buffet's line, "Price is what you pay, but value is what you get."

I personally have been to Mexico numerous times and have felt safe every time I have gone. Yes, bad things CAN happen to people, and unfortunately, some bad things have happened, but take a look at the numbers.

According to Fox News, in 2016, over 35 million tourists visited Mexico. People arriving via air was up 10.7% from 2015.” Thirty-five million people! That’s a lot of people and only a few reports of instances in Mexico.

“Additional research conducted by the tourism board suggests a bright future for the exploding destination, with 94 percent of visitors indicating that their visit “exceeded their expectations” and 86 percent saying that they would “like to come back again” in the next six months.”

In the first three months of 2017 (most recent numbers), Mexico welcomed 9.3 million visitors. That’s a LOT of people visiting Mexico with only a few issues about safety being recorded. Mexico can’t afford to have an issue with security, as tourism is their main source of income, and if visitors stop coming, their economy would be damaged a great deal.

At the moment of this writing, a colleague of mine has sent his wife to Mexico to have a “Girls week” with her friends. No men allowed. He didn’t think twice about letting her go, because he feels very safe with where they are going, what they will be doing and knows how to handle herself at the resort. She makes sure she doesn’t let people know she isn’t there with a significant other, makes sure to lock the room at night with the deadbolts on the door and doesn’t accept drinks from strangers. And of course, is having a great time. (These pictures are courtesy of her)



When a man decided he wanted to do some harm in Las Vegas, he open fired on a concert out in the middle of the strip from the Mandalay Bay and a lot of people were hurt and killed. It was a tragedy that

occurred, but did that stop people from wanting to visit Las Vegas? No. Did the media start to scream about the safety of people walking the Las Vegas strip? No. So why the scare for Mexico?

An article written by Jo Piazza, Special to CNBC wrote last month, sums up a lot of what you can expect in Mexico. Here are some excerpts of that article.

“On March 8, ahead of spring break season, the U.S. State Department issued a security alert for the popular resort spot Playa del Carmen after the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City received a security threat against the town.

The alert, which was later downgraded to include on five neighborhoods, came less than a month after an explosion on a tourist ferry in Playa del Carmen injured 24 people, including five Americans. And in December the U.S. Office of Inspector General opened an inquiry to investigate possibly tainted booze at all-inclusive resorts in Mexican resort towns like Playa Del Carmen and Cancun.

It's all left travelers wondering if it is safe to travel to the country.

Experts say yes.



"The vast majority of destinations that tourists and travelers visit are safe," says Zachary Rabinor, the President and CEO of Journey Mexico, a travel company with three offices in Mexico. "Like in the rest of the world, unsafe areas have more to do with local petty crime or if visitors engage in unsafe activities or visit unsafe establishments."

Currently, as a country, Mexico's threat level, according to the State Department, is a level two. That means tourists should "be aware of heightened risks to safety and security." For context, the Bahamas are also rated a level two (due to crime like burglaries and robberies)."

On a side note- Britain, France, Germany and the Philippines are also considered Level 2. A Level 3 would be Cuba, and a Level 4 would be North Korea. But as a rough guide, America's per capita murder rate of 4.88 per 100,000 people puts it between Cuba at 4.72 ("reconsider travel") and Somalia at 5.56 ("do not travel"). - with a report from Agence France-Presse

"Five states in Mexico have a level four rating — Colima, Guerrero (where Acapulco is located), Michoacan, Sinaloa (where Mazatlan is located) and Tamaulipas (part of which borders Texas) — the same ranking as war zones like Afghanistan and Iraq. The State Department recommends that Americans should not travel to those locations due to "widespread violent crime."

But as long as you're not traveling to one of these areas, "there is no reason to do more than to be aware of the warnings and to exercise the normal degree of caution that should be done while traveling anywhere," says Christopher Wilson, the deputy director of the Mexico Institute at the Wilson Center.

"Don't drink the tap water, have a cab called for you instead of flagging one down on the street," recommends Wilson.

Additionally, leave a detailed itinerary with family and friends that includes contact information for hotels and guides, says Rabinor. Also avoid wearing flashy or expensive jewelry that would make you stand out among a crowd."



Mexico is a beautiful and safe country to go visit. I've been to Cancun, Riviera Maya and Los Cabos. I've visited Chichen Itza and gone ATVing on the beaches. It's a wonderful experience and one that I recommend to anyone who wants to go and have a good time. Relax, have a few adult beverages, share with family and friends, but use normal caution when traveling. That is sound advice for anywhere in the world you want to travel. Just remember to pack lots of sunscreen!

For more on world travel warnings, check out <https://www.state.gov/travel/>

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