

Central America Unit: Mexico Geography Notes

1. Origins of Modern Day Mexico

- a. Before 1521- **Aztecs** controlled **Mexico** region
- b. 1519 - **Conquistadors** arrive in Mexico
- c. 1521 - Aztec Capital falls **Spanish**
- d. 1521 - 1810- Mexico becomes the Largest **Spanish colony** in the World
- e. 1810 - **Father Miguel Hidalgo** Declares Mexican Independence
- f. 1821 - Mexico is officially recognized as an **independent nation**

2. Boundaries of Mexico

- a. Mexico is bound to the north by the **US**
- b. Bound to south and west by the **Pacific Ocean**
- c. Bound to the east by the **Gulf of Mexico**
- d. Bound by the southeast by Belize, Guatemala and the Caribbean Sea

3. Physical Geography

- a. Geography Regions: **Central Plateau, Pacific Lowlands, Gulf Coast plains, Yucatan Peninsula, Southern Highland, Chiapas Highlands, Baja California Peninsula.**

4. Physical Features

- a. Terrain- rugged mountains; low coastal plains; high plateaus; desert
- b. The Grande de Santiago and the Lerma rivers together form the largest and most important **river system**
- c. The Rio Bravo (known as the **Rio Grande** in the US) is the border between the US and Mexico and provide water for **irrigation** for both countries
- d. Lowest point is Laguna Salada at - **32 Feet**
- e. Highest point is Pico de Orizaba at **18,491 feet** (3rd highest peak in North America)
- f. Almost **6,000** miles of coastline

5. Natural Hazards

- a. Mexico is located on top of **3 tectonic plates** causing it to experience a high degree of seismic activity
- b. Tsunamis- located along the **pacific** coast
- c. Volcanoes & Earthquakes- located in the center and south
- d. Hurricanes- located in the **Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean coasts.**

6. 2017 Mexico City Earthquake: *Write 3 Facts from the Video*

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

7. Language

- a. Because **Spain** had the most control over Mexico, Spanish became the dominant language of the country
- b. **80%** speak both Spanish and another indigenous language

8. Government

- a. **Enrique Peña Nieto** was elected President in 2012
- b. Member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party

9. Mexico Government and the US Government; Both nations:

- a. Are **federal** republics (national AND local governments)
- b. Have universal suffrage **18 and older** (Voting rights)
- c. Have **3** branches of government
- d. Have a 2-house legislature
- e. Have a **Supreme** Court

10. Population and Urbanization

- a. Mexicans are moving to cities for **economic opportunities**
- b. Jobs pay more than in **rural** areas
- c. **21 million** people live in and around Mexico City

11. Economy

- a. 2 main challenges facing Mexico:
 - i. **Close a gap between rich & poor people**
 - ii. **Develop a modern industrial economy**
- b. Large industry based on its **oil** reserves – Gulf of Mexico
- c. **Manufacturing** along the border with the U.S.
- d. **Maquiladoras** - a factory in Mexico run by a foreign company and exporting its products to the country of that company.
- e. Products made here include electronic equipment, clothing, & furniture

12. NAFTA

- a. Member of the **North American Free Trade Agreement** with the U.S. and Canada
- b. Created a zone of cooperation on **trade & economic** issues
- c. Being replace/updated in **2018**

13. Tourism

- a. In 2016 Mexico reached a record revenue of **13.324 billion** dollars due to international tourism
- b. **11.44** million international tourists visited Mexico in 2016

14. Agriculture and Resources

- a. Birthplace of **Corn**
- b. Also grow: Avocados, Lime/Lemons, Papaya, chilis/peppers
- c. Mexico is ranked 5th globally in **oil production**
- d. Mexico also produces **silver**.

15. Life today in Mexico

- a. Emigration
 - i. Shares 2,000-mile border with U.S.
 - ii. Many workers leave Mexico in search of work
- b. A **remittance** is a transfer of money by a foreign worker to an individual in their home country.
 - i. Remittances contribute **\$18 billion to the Mexican economy**.

16. Religion

- a. **Roman Catholic** religion dominates Mexico
- b. Mexico is currently
 - i. **89%** Roman Catholic
 - ii. **6%** Protestant
 - iii. **5%** Other