

# Countries Of The World: Mexico

By National Geographic Kids, adapted by Newsela staff on 06.07.18

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Image 1: The pyramids of Guachimontones in Jalisco, Mexico. Mexico is a country filled with forests, deserts, beaches and plenty of history. Its culture is rooted in the ancient civilizations of the Aztecs and Mayans. Photo from: Getty Images/Sollina Images.

Mexico is a large country. It is in North America. This country has many different kinds of land. In the center of the country are high mountains and deep canyons. There are deserts in the north. In the south and east, there are rainforests.

Mexico has many mountains. They are full of metals such as silver and copper. These metals are very valuable.

In southeastern Mexico is the Yucatán Peninsula. It is a large stretch of land. It juts out into the Gulf of Mexico. This land was once part of the Maya civilization. It was an ancient culture.

## Nature

Mexico has many different plants and animals. Some live in the deserts. They know how to survive in the heat. Along the western coast, there are whales. They swim down from Alaska.

In eastern Mexico, there are rainforests. Many different plants grow here. Rare animals live here, too. One of them is the jaguar.

## People And Culture

Mexico has a rich history. For many years, native groups ruled the land. Later, the Spanish took over. Today, most Mexicans are mestizos. That means they have mixed ancestry. They are both native and Spanish.

Mexico has been home to many artists. Long ago, a group called the Maya lived here. They made amazing statues. They also made jewelry. Modern Mexican artists include great painters.

## Government And Economy

The government of Mexico has three branches, or parts. The president leads the executive branch. This president is elected by the people. Lawmakers make up the legislative branch. They are also voted in by the people. The third branch is the judicial branch. It is made up of state-level and country-level courts.

Mexico is a complicated country. It has great problems. But it also has great possibilities. The country has many natural resources. They include oil and silver. Sadly, many of the people are still very poor.

## History



The Olmecs were an ancient civilization. They lived in southeastern Mexico. They lived about 3,200 years ago. The Olmecs were later followed by other native groups. One was the Maya. The others were the Toltec and the Aztec peoples.

These ancient societies built huge cities. They created great works of art. They even studied the stars.

In the 1500s, the Spanish came to Mexico. This was about 500 years ago. The Spanish brought several diseases. They made the Aztec people sick. The Spanish also attacked and destroyed the Aztec capital. It was called Tenochtilán.

In 1810, a war started. The native people of Mexico wanted to rule themselves. It was the Mexican War of Independence. The war ended in 1821. The Spanish settlers lost. They no longer ruled over this land.

