

Summary of the surprising report

My university semester at Iberoamericana University was also full of surprises. Indeed, many cultural differences influence the daily behaviour of Mexicans.

Firstly I was surprised by the incredible diversity of the population's origins. Indeed, some people are mainly from native populations that have been present in Mexico for 30,000 years. Others have European (mainly Spanish) origins due to the colonial period of the 1500s. The combination of these two cultures has given rise to the Mexican cultural richness of today. I loved Mexico's historical past. It is incredible the knowledge of mathematics and astrophysics that these populations had.

Concerning the meals, it took me a little time before you get the rhythm. Indeed in France we are used to make 4 to 5 meals a day. In Mexico the main meal is at 3pm, breakfast and dinner are very light. Moreover, whereas in France we usually spend a long time exchanging at the table, this is not the case in Mexico. Here we eat quickly as evidenced by the presence of many streetfoods and fastfoods.

As in many countries, the differences between the lifestyles of the richest and poorest people are very large. When some can buy very expensive cars, others cannot even afford to buy one. This inequality of opportunity is accepted but can be disturbing at first sight for a foreigner.

A big surprise for Mexican cuisine : it is not as spicy as I thought. I was able to discover and learn many traditional dishes thanks to my roommates. I am looking forward to returning to France to introduce some of them to my family and friends. She has pre-Hispanic and Spanish influences, but also African influences.

Concerning the transport it's quite chaotic but not as chaotic as India. Traffic is very important, public transport are not develop and no importance is given to pedestrians who cross just about anywhere. I will be careful not to cross the road anywhere when I return to France. Big experience for me with driving, enough to increase your reflexes ! There are no special rules except traffic lights and don't rely on gallantry. Like India, it is the first engaged that has priority, which gives rise to many accidents.

Compared to France, common areas such as restaurants are very noisy but more interactive. As with all services, the restaurant staff is very attentive to the customer's needs. On the one hand, what it is in culture but also by what tips are imposed and therefore the service must be equal to it (on average 12% of consumption).

Concerning security I must admit that this is the country where I was most on my guard even if my living area was secure. Kidnappings and rackets are very common in Mexico. Fortunately we received some instructions from the university.

Mexicans are nevertheless very welcoming and smiling people. They are ready to help you as soon as necessary. Nevertheless, they have great difficulty answering "No" or "I don't know" and sometimes lead you in the wrong direction.

The notion of time is also completely different. Punctuality does not exist in Mexico, even for a consumer. It sometimes takes several hours for my interlocutor to arrive. It is also difficult to be direct in our remarks, the Mexicans take it rather badly. During my first day I was surprised to see some mexicans students coming in class 30 minutes after the beginning of the class.

Regarding to the behaviour in class and the relationship with the teacher I was also surprised. In fact as told before you can come late in the class, leave the class without asking the teacher to get a coffee, wear a jogging suite in the university and also a cap in class. Something at can't at all imagine in France. The relation with the teacher is also quite different. The teacher is respected but his relationship with students is closer than the one we can have with professors in France. The students regularly hand shake or kiss the teacher.