



Fiesta Mexicana

General Information About Mexico

October 2013

Hello to all adventurous aviators!

Our flying tour to Mexico is scheduled for February 16th through 26th, 2014. We'll enjoy spectacular scenery, Mexican colonial history, and sanctuaries for wintering gray whales and Monarch butterflies.

This document serves to review some of the guidelines and helpful hints regarding travel to Mexico, as well as the aviation aspects of this international tour. *Please read this document in its entirety before registering for the tour.*

Safety

We thought we'd address this issue first. If this is a serious concern, you can stop reading now. All travel involves risk (as does staying home!) and travel to Mexico is no exception. The US State Department has issued Travel Warnings for several areas in Mexico due to drug-related violence and crime that is reported in the border region and in areas along major trafficking routes. We will be visiting the Mexican states of Baja California Sur, Nayarit, and Michoacán; we have picked these destinations carefully to minimize the potential for dangerous situations. All Mexican airports used on this trip are towered, which translates to greater security and a military presence. We will be travelling during the day to and from major tourist destinations, where violence is rare. Furthermore, violent attacks have decreased significantly in the last two years. There is, however, always a risk that we could encounter an unsafe situation. If you are not comfortable with this risk, you should not participate in this tour. You can read the full US Travel Warning for Mexico on [their web site](#).

Personal Documentation

Bring a valid passport! All US citizens traveling outside the United States are required to present a valid passport to enter and depart from the United States. Please check the expiration date of your passport, and [apply online now](#) if you don't have one, or need a new one.

Language

English is spoken widely throughout Mexico, particularly at the well-touristed hotels where you will be staying. You could survive on English-only at the airports, but having bilingual guides will certainly help streamline the paperwork process at each of the international airports along the tour route.

Shopping

There will be vendors selling Mexican handicrafts — carved ironwood sculptures, blankets, silver jewelry, gemstone masks, etc. You can also browse some of the smaller commercial shops in the towns and villages for clothing, fabric and shoes.

Avoid any problems with US Customs when we return by declaring all of your purchases in Mexico. There is an \$800 exemption for gifts and personal articles you've purchased in Mexico; anything over that amount will be taxed. Each person is permitted one liter of alcoholic beverage. Make sure you have a prescription for any medication you may have purchased abroad.

US Customs prohibits so many fruits, vegetables and meat products that you may as well not bring any back.

Do not attempt to bring back guns of any kind; even ammunition is prohibited. You are allowed to bring back any fish you caught in Mexico, although we doubt you'll have time for that!

Health Issues

Currently, no vaccinations are required, but you may want to review the [CDC recommendations for travel to Mexico](#).

If you wear prescription glasses, sunglasses or contacts, you might consider bringing an extra pair along. Bring sunscreen, lipscreen, bug repellent and any prescription medications. Additional considerations might be Immodium, Cipro antibiotic or Pepto Bismo tablets. One doctor who specializes in travel medicine says: "Chewing 2 Pepto Bismo tablets, 4 times per day, gives up to 65% protection from travelers' diarrhea."

Also, take a minute to read the following article, "On the Run":

Tips for Coping with Travelers' Most Common Malady

More than half of travelers battle the occasional unpleasant gut-wrenching known as traveler's diarrhea, making it the most common affliction on the road, according to Dr. Eric L. Weiss, director of travel medicine at Stanford University. "Traveler's diarrhea is probably not going to kill you," Weiss says. "But if you're on a bus for eight hours with three goats, five chickens, and a handful of other passengers, you may wish that it did." While the old adage—boil it, peel it, cook it, or forget it—still applies to prevention, staying healthy is often the luck of the draw. If bacteria strikes, Weiss recommends two treatments no first-aid kit should be without: an antibiotic like ciprofloxacin or rifaximin (a new drug that minimizes side effects by fighting stomach bacteria only) and an antimotility agent like Imodium AD, affectionately referred to by travel docs as a "cork." Weiss's favorite prevention tip: Drink carbonated water ("con gas"). The carbonation lowers the pH, giving water an acidic edge to help kill bacteria. This argument also applies to other bubbly drinks—like local beer.

Our personal observations have led us to ponder whether psychology comes into play here. It seems that those people who were most worried about Montezuma's Revenge were the ones most likely to be afflicted! Our personal regimen simply includes common sense and a daily cerveza – just to be on the safe side. ☺

Water

Bottled water is available for purchase almost everywhere, and the hotels will stock your room daily with a complimentary but limited supply. Often, pilots will bring in their own supply and just keep it in the plane. As a general rule, any ice or water served in a restaurant has been made with purified water. Remember to use bottled water for brushing your teeth!

Voltage

Mexico operates on 110 volts/60 cycles, the same as the US and Canada. The outlets are identical to ours, although many are only "two-pronged."

Clothing

Consider bringing all the standard travel stuff: wide-brimmed hat, comfortable walking shoes, windbreaker, layers, swimming suit, and any clothing for special activities you may have planned.

The daytime highs should be in 60's (°F) in Sierra Vista and in the 70's for the rest of the trip. There are swimming pools at many of the hotels.

Money

Credit cards are generally accepted at all hotels and "tourist" stores. Please call your credit card company before leaving home to inform them you are traveling to Mexico. A few people have reported having their cards "frozen" when a charge is attempted from overseas. Calling back to the US may prove difficult, depending where we are, so informing your credit card company in advance will help you avoid this potential problem. As for currency, you could probably make this entire trip on US dollars alone without difficulty, however we always advise having a good supply of both dollars and pesos, in a variety of denominations. This keeps your options open and minimizes the potential for unfavorable exchanges.

You can exchange money and traveler's checks at the hotel front desk, banks, or money change houses – "*Casas de Cambio.*" ATMs are available in the cities where we will be landing, and often provide the best exchange rate. You simply use your bank card as you would at any ATM, choose an amount, and the machine will distribute money in pesos. The exchange is handled with the transaction and your bank statement will reflect the amount exchanged in dollars. The current exchange rate is about 13 pesos per dollar.

Telephones

Calling the US from Mexico is relatively easy from a phone booth, especially if you have a calling card. Other services offer similar, but less prevalent options. You also should be able to make arrangements to make phone calls from the hotels.

Cell phone service is good in Mexico, although we haven't verified the service in each of our individual destinations for this tour. Your cell phone will probably work, although it may be expensive to make or receive a call. Also, many cell phone plans limit your ability to use your phone overseas (voice and/or data); if you'd like to use your cell phone there, we suggest you contact your carrier for details before we leave the US.

Miscellaneous/Optional Items

- Camera, memory cards or film, and batteries
- Your favorite water bottle for refilling along the way
- Hand towelettes or antibacterial cleanser
- Fold-up bag for purchases
- Binoculars
- Personal snacks (granola bars, nuts, etc.)
- Washcloth (some Mexican hotels do not provide them)

Mandatory Items

- Your sense of humor
- Your sense of adventure
- Your ability to be flexible - this is Mexico, after all!



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Mexico Flight Information

General

Please plan to arrive at Sierra Vista Municipal Airport, Arizona (KFHU) by early afternoon on Sunday, February 16, 2014. Sierra Vista, a Class D airport, is located on the Phoenix sectional in south-central Arizona. It is co-located with Fort Huachuca/Libby Army Air Field, and surrounded by restricted areas 2303A, B, & C, making it seemingly difficult to fly in and out. It is not really that hard, especially on weekends, so if you just coordinate with ATC, getting in there is pretty easy. There is only one FBO, operated by the City of Sierra Vista, located in the northeast corner of the airfield. Please have your aircraft fueled upon arrival to avoid any departure delays on Monday morning. Also, please bring tie-down anchors, ropes, and a tow bar for your aircraft.

Parkwest Air Tours will provide the necessary Mexican charts and flight information for this tour. We don't provide US charts, as most of you have transitioned to electronic charts for flight in the US. If you don't have electronic charts, you will need the Phoenix and Brownsville Sectionals for this tour, along with the Southwest and South Central A/FDs.

A GPS receiver is required for this trip! If your plane isn't equipped with one, we can arrange for you to rent a portable GPS for use during the tour. We will be posting the GPS coordinates for the trip on our web site by early 2014 so you may begin the task of programming the routes. We can assist your programming of a Garmin x96 series portable GPS by using the MapSource software to download the waypoints and routes from our computer directly to your GPS. We can do this in Sierra Vista before we depart for Mexico.

You will be required to pay for aircraft fuel, tie-down fees, Mexican aircraft insurance, and all miscellaneous aircraft registration fees, landing fees, and other taxes imposed by Mexican aviation authorities. As of our most recent trip, tie-down, taxes, licensing, and miscellaneous Mexican fees for a trip of this type were around \$150 for a Cessna 210. Fuel should be estimated based on the fuel burn of your aircraft; current cost of avgas and jet fuel in Mexico is about the same as in the US, between US\$5.00 and US\$7.00 per gallon. Mexican aircraft insurance must also be obtained before the tour. For a high-performance single-engine aircraft, plan on paying about \$100 for the ten days that it will be required.

PLEASE NOTE: Some aircraft fees in Mexico must be paid for in cash (dollars or pesos), however credit card usage is becoming more common. We have been able to pay for fuel with credit cards at most Mexican airports, although sometimes there is an additional fee to do so (a few percent.)

Mexico has recently extended its requirements for a 406 MHz ELTs until June 30, 2015 with several exceptions: turbo-prop aircraft, turbine (jet) aircraft, piston aircraft with a MTOW of 12,500 pounds or greater. Also, all helicopters must have a 406 ELT and in addition, must also have a portable 406 ELT attached to a life jacket or raft. What that means is that if you fly a piston airplane that weighs

less than 12,500 pounds, you can hold off putting in a 406 ELT for this trip. That being said, perhaps it is time to start thinking about installing a 406 ELT. We installed ours in the 210 three years ago; it is comforting to know that if we have a problem, NOAA will get the signal, know who we are, and have the coordinates for where to send help.

Flying in Mexico

Flying in Mexico is really no different than flying in the United States. The Mexican officials do, however, have some strict requirements regarding aircraft, pilots, and their passengers when crossing from the US to Mexico. The US officials have similar requirements when crossing back in to the United States. Flying to and from Mexico involves crossing the Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ); therefore we must comply with the appropriate Federal Aviation Regulations. Any aircraft penetrating the ADIZ must display 12-inch-high nationality and registration marks on the airplane (These can be temporary, e.g. tape, but be sure the N numbers are a full 12 inches high and 2 inches wide and the color contrasts.)

This tour includes two flights over the Sea of Cortez which will be beyond gliding distance to shore. While not required, life rafts and/or personal flotation equipment for each occupant of your aircraft should be considered.

As mentioned, each pilot and passenger will need a passport; everyone will also get a tourist visa upon landing in Loreto. This will cost about \$30 per person.

Airports

We plan to use airports at Loreto, Tepic, Uruapán, and Morelia in Mexico. They are all towered, international airports with long, paved runways, fuel services and 24-hour military presence.

Aircraft Security

The question of aircraft security comes up often. We have picked our airports in Mexico carefully, with a high regard for security on the field. We do, however, recommend reasonable theft deterrents, such as propeller locks and/or throttle locks, and a good dose of common sense. Use your window and aircraft covers, if you have them, and remove any portable electronics such as handheld GPS units. As with automobiles, anything that makes your aircraft look less desirable to a potential thief is advisable.

Documentation Requirements

We will assist everyone in obtaining the appropriate forms and documents in order to enter Mexico and return to the United States. We will also guide you in filing the appropriate flight plans and communicating with the appropriate agencies prior to crossing the border.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) requires private aircraft pilots arriving or departing the United States to transmit passenger manifest information for everyone onboard their aircraft. This must be done electronically via the Electronic Advance Passenger Information System (eAPIS) administered via the internet. CBP has developed a tutorial on the use of eAPIS which is available at <http://apps.cbp.gov/eAPIS-pa/> Once you have completed the tutorial you can register to use eAPIS at <https://eapis.cbp.dhs.gov/> The use of this system is mandatory for this trip.

You can purchase the U.S. Customs decal for your aircraft by registering at <https://dtops.cbp.dhs.gov/>

The FCC Licenses for both the pilot and aircraft can be obtained online on [their web site](#). This is a somewhat daunting process with the FCC; it seems that the FCC's web site was the template for the

government's new health insurance exchange, so, in short, it doesn't work very well! We've worked our way through it, so if you would like us to obtain these for you, we'd be happy to.

Please start a binder to keep track of all of your documentation. This will help ensure that you have complied with all documentation requirements, and also keeps everything handy for you when filling out Mexican paperwork. We recommend you place the following documentation in your travel binder:

For each person:

- Passport page showing passport number

For the pilot:

- Pilot certificate
- Current medical
- Last flight review endorsement
- Radiotelephone Operator Permit
- eAPIS registration information

For the aircraft:

- Aircraft Registration
- Standard Aircraft Airworthiness Certificate
- Aircraft Radio Station License
- Aircraft Operating Limitations (This is just your POH – we want to make sure you have it in the plane. Please make a copy of the front cover for your binder.)
- Weight and balance information
- Mexican third-party liability insurance certificate
- Letter of Authorization from the owner, if you are borrowing or renting the aircraft
- Customs User Fee Decal

Parkwest Air Tours would like to maintain a master binder with copies of your important documents to serve as your backup and also to help facilitate advance processing at each airport in Mexico. While it is not required, we are requesting you send us legible copies of your:

- Passports
- Mexican aircraft insurance policy
- Pilot certificate
- Aircraft registration

If you would like us to obtain the radio station license, radio operator's license, Mexican insurance, and/or Custom's decal for you, **please fill out the form on the last page of this document and email it back to us by January 1st**. Also, a sample "Letter of Authorization" is attached on the next page. Again, if your aircraft is not registered to you personally (and you alone), you will need a letter like this. While not required, it looks more "official" if it is notarized.

Give us a call if you have any questions. Otherwise, we'll look forward to getting copies of your documentation from you, and we'll see you in Sierra Vista!

SAMPLE AIRCRAFT AUTHORIZATION LETTER

Ivory Services, LLC
800 Heritage Way
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506

January 1, 2014

RE: Cessna Centurion, Reg. No. N761GY

To Whom It May Concern:

This authorizes Collin R. Fay to fly aircraft N761GY, a 1977 Cessna T-210, in Mexico between the dates of January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014.

Signed,

Collin R. Fay, Member

State of COLORADO)
) ss.
County of MESA)

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged, subscribed and sworn to me this _____ day of January, 2014.

(SEAL)

Notary Public
My commission expires:

Information for Radio Licenses, Mexican Insurance, & Customs Sticker

Please indicate the documents that you would like us to obtain for you and/or your aircraft:

- Radio Station License (\$110)
- Mexican Liability Insurance (price is aircraft dependent)
- Radio Operator's License (\$60)
- Customs User Fee Decal (\$27.50)

Note: Prices subject to change, at the whim of the US Government!

Please fill out the following and e-mail this page back to us **by January 1st**.

Pilot's Name: _____

Address _____

Home Phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Fax: _____ Cell phone: _____

Date of birth: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Pilot Certificate (circle one): Private Commercial ATP Number: _____



Aircraft: Make: _____ Model: _____ Registration No.: _____

Registered to: _____

Address: _____

Owner's Representative: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Maximum Gross Weight (lbs): _____ Serial Number: _____

Engine Manufacturer & Horsepower: _____



Credit Card Info: (circle one) Visa Master Card

Credit Card Number _____

Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Name on Card: _____

Billing Address (if different from above): _____
