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United We Stand

Welcome to the third edition of the Newsletter on Economic and Tourism Affairs of the Consulate General of Mexico in Phoenix. In just three months, we have begun to fulfill our goals: This newsletter has become a meeting point that is uniting the Arizona business community with the friends of Mexico. It also is a place where Arizona's political and business players can be heard by their counterparts in Mexico.

#ChooseMexico provides important information on the Mexican Government's current initiatives—such as its feminist foreign policy and its egalitarian approach to access to COVID-19 vaccines. Both initiatives show the progressive approach of the Mexican Government and its deep concern for its citizens.

#ArizonaThrives offers the perspectives of top Arizona leaders. In this issue, we are honored that U.S. Sen. **Mark Kelly**, one of the senators representing Arizona, has shared his thoughts on the key economic relationship between Arizona and Mexico. **Kim Grace Sabow**, president of the Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association, offers solid reasons why she is optimistic about the next tourism boom in the state. Finally, **Nico Cuevas**, a Sonoran and an Arizonan, shares his dream for a clean and green future that has materialized in Mesa through his company, Urbix.

In **#DiscoverMexico**, we continue to promote the vast cultural and gastronomic attractions of Mexico. In this issue, we highlight the wonders of the Mexican state of Jalisco and the cultural heritage of the *Pueblo Mágico* of Magdalena de Kino. Magdalena de Kino is located just 54 miles from Arizona's southern border and is the final resting place of the most revered and emblematic man of what is now known as the Arizona-Sonora megaregion: Franciscan Father **Eusebio Francisco Kino**. In addition, **Greg Custer**, an American expatriate, offers his real-world experiences about retiring in Mexico.

Enjoy!

Jorge Mendoza Yescas
Consul General of Mexico



Upcoming Events

ExpHotel
Tourism industry
June 15-17, Cancún

Expo Manufactura
Manufacturing
April 13-15, Monterrey and Virtual

IHC Summit
Industrial Human Capital
July 7-8, Querétaro City

FABTECH Mexico
Metalworking technology
June 8-10, Monterrey

Automotive Meetings
Business forum
July 7-9, Querétaro City



Did You Know...

- In 2020, Mexico's government debt-to-GDP (gross national product) was **53.43%**, which indicates a significantly healthier solvency compared to countries like Canada, Spain, Brazil and the United States?
- Mexico is the largest producer of **avocados**?
- Mexico was the **7th** most visited country in the world in 2018?
- Around **43%** of the population in Mexico is under 25 years old and the average age is 29 years?

New Record for Remittances



Photo by adfoto © Depositphotos.com

According to data from Banco de México, Mexico's central bank, the country received \$40.6 billion US in remittances in 2020. This is a new record

high, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

These financial results are much better than in other

countries, which have seen drops in remittances because of job losses or reductions in working hours due to the pandemic. For 2021, the outlook for remittances remains positive, framed by a better expectation of economic recovery in the U.S.

As a matter of fact, resources sent to the country by Mexicans living abroad totaled 3.66 billion US in December 2020, the second largest amount since records started being kept in 1995.

Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy

In January 2020, Mexico became the first country in Latin America to announce a Feminist Foreign Policy, which considers respect for all human rights and has a gender perspective. It aligns with the Mexican Government's commitment to gender equality and no discrimination.

The policy seeks to reduce and eliminate structural differences, gaps and gender inequalities to build a more fair and prosperous society. The Mexican Feminist Foreign Policy has several specific goals:

- to have an equal, intersectional feminist, secure and violence-free Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- to have a foreign policy that includes a feminist agenda that takes into account a gender perspective; and
- to emphasize that equality is evident.

This type of foreign policy was first adopted by Sweden in 2014, followed by Norway, France and Canada.



Mexico Seeks Equal Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine



As of March 18, Mexico had received 8,160,250 vaccines from five pharmaceutical companies: Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca, Sinovac and Sputnik. Additional to this Mexico has received the active ingredient for 12 millions vaccines.

In the coming weeks, the country is expecting an additional shipment of 1,160,000 doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine from India; 3 million doses of Sinovac's vaccine; the next shipments of Sputnik V; and the active ingredient to generate 3 million doses of CanSinoBio's vaccine. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador recently announced that all adults 60 years and older are expected to be vaccinated by the end of April.

In a recent session of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Mexico requested that the international community guarantee a fair, equitable and timely access to vaccines worldwide. Mexico's Foreign Secretary Marcelo Luis Ebrard Casaubon emphasized to the council the importance of the COVAX vaccination mechanism to speed up

vaccine distribution. To aid in this effort, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are working together to create a group of outstanding university researchers that will participate in the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a global partnership launched in 2017 to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.

The university will host a centralized laboratory to measure the immune response to COVID-19 induced by the vaccination in a large number of vaccine recipients. This project will give Mexico new capabilities and leadership in vaccine development and epidemic response.

NOTE: At press time, the U.S. government had committed to send 2.5 million doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine to Mexico. Details have yet to be finalized.



More Info:
[Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy](#)



More Info:
CEPI | cepi.net
UNAM | unam.mx

Last updated March 20, 2021

Logistics in Mexico

Infrastructure

The Mexican Government is committed to promote the development of its infrastructure, as well as to maintain and improve its current logistics network. Through the development of a quality infrastructure in strategic sectors, the government hopes to turn the country into a global logistics platform with high added value to increase Mexico's competitiveness, productivity and prosperity.

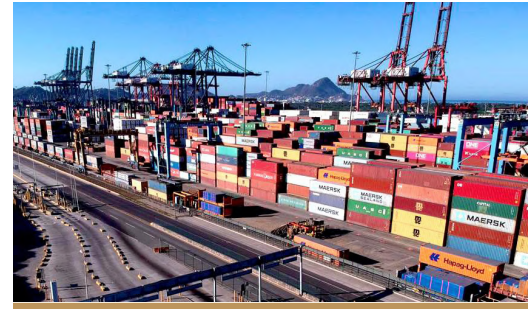
Here's a look at the progress being made in four key areas:

Air transportation: Mexico has built 76 airports—64 international and 12 national.

Railways: The country has developed more than 16,000 miles of railways. As a matter of fact, the Mexico City–Toluca commuter rail is the first high-speed train in Latin America. To date, 87% of the construction has been done and it is expected to transport 230,000 passengers daily by 2023.

Road Networks: Mexico has a network of more than 108,000 miles of paved roads.

Ports: The country has more than 6,800 miles of coastline, which provide strategic access to major commercial and consumption hubs worldwide. There are currently 121 port facilities in Mexico.



Competition and Cooperation at the Border

The Mexico–United States border is 1,954 land miles long (1,984 total miles), according to The International Boundary and Water Commission. Estimates show that this international border is crossed daily by approximately 1 million people.

The U.S.–Mexico border is an area of political, economic and social interaction where commercial activities predominate. The region is characterized by sister cities that participate in a long-term process of megaregion formation. The border region generates 23.5% of Mexico's gross domestic product (GDP), and the 10 states that make up the borderline of both countries (four U.S. states and six Mexican states) represent the fourth largest economy in the world.

The Mexico–Arizona border is just 372.5 miles of the total border. An example of good collaboration at the border is the Sonora–Arizona (Ari-Son) Megaregion. Both states have worked together to develop tourism promotion initiatives, sister city programs and joint inspection initiatives that benefit both countries.



More Info: [Infrastructure](#)

Port of Manzanillo

The Port of Manzanillo is located in the state of Colima, on the Pacific Ocean coast. The port handles more than 60% of Mexico's Pacific container traffic, making it the number one port in Mexico and the third in Latin America. In 2020, the volume of container cargo handled in the port of Manzanillo amounted to approximately 2.90 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). A TEU is a unit used to measure cargo capacity for container ships and container terminals.

Here are just a few of the features that make the Port of Manzanillo one of the most advanced ports in Latin America:

- It is the first clean port in Mexico, with all port terminals certified by Mexico's environmental authority, the Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA).
- It offers specialized terminals for sixth-generation container ships up to 1,200 feet in length with a capacity of 13,400 TEUs.
- It is a paperless port that offers digital and transparent processes for cargo traceability.



More Info:
[Port of Manzanillo](#)



More Info:
[Ari-Son Megaregion](#)

The Economies of Mexico and Arizona Are Closely Intertwined

BY MARK KELLY

As Arizona's U.S. senator, I understand the important relationship that our state has with Mexico. We are neighbors and have a shared sense of history and culture. Our economies benefit from one another: Mexico is Arizona's number one trade partner, and tourism from Mexico makes up the majority of all spending in Arizona by international visitors.

Arizona's border communities and their counterparts in Sonora depend on cross-border trade and travel. In Yuma, thousands of Mexican citizens cross the border every day to work in agriculture. In Nogales, folks travel to and from both the U.S. and Mexico to go shopping, and produce from Mexican farms is imported for distribution throughout the United States. In fact, more than 8.5 million people crossed through an Arizona-Mexico port of entry in 2019.

I know how difficult the pandemic has been on these border communities. Border closures and restrictions have affected the region's economy, and made what used to be routine much more difficult. Many businesses have suffered from a loss of customers and sales.

In the U.S. Senate, I am working to help Arizona's border businesses stay afloat and recover from this pandemic. I have introduced bipartisan legislation with Texas Sen. John Cornyn that would provide grants and low-interest loans for businesses within 25 miles of the border. That legislation would allow more border businesses to keep their doors open, keep their employees on the payroll and inject millions of dollars into border communities.

I am also working to secure the necessary federal investments to improve and upgrade our ports of entry. A total of \$29 billion worth of goods and services crossed through just one of Arizona's ports of entry in 2019. Upgrading these ports of entry will enable more individuals and cargo to cross securely. Arizona Sen. Krysten Sinema and I have already requested that President Joe Biden include funding for Arizona's San Luis Port of Entry modernization project, the construction of a new commercial port of entry and updates to the Raúl H.



Mark Kelly
US Senator
Arizona

Sen. Mark Kelly, the son of two police officers, attended public schools from elementary school through the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School. As a naval aviator, he served on the U.S.S. Midway aircraft carrier and flew 39 combat missions in Operation Desert Storm in 1990-1991. Sen. Kelly was later selected as an astronaut in 1996 in the same class as his twin brother, Scott. He flew his first of four missions into space in 2001 aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour and retired from the Navy and NASA after commanding the final flight of the Endeavour in 2011. Sen. Kelly was sworn into his U.S. Senate seat on Dec. 2, 2020, to finish the term of the late Sen. John McCain. He lives in Tucson with his wife, former U.S. Representative Gabby Giffords.



More Info:

www.kelly.senate.gov

Castro Port of Entry in Douglas, AZ, and the DeConcini Port of Entry in Nogales, AZ.

As we beat this virus, my priority is to continue strengthening our relationship with Mexico because our economies are closely intertwined and we share a critical relationship as neighbors.





Kim Grace Sabow President and CEO Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association

Kim Sabow is President and CEO of the Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association (AzLTA), where she leads the advocacy, communications, collaboration and education efforts for one of the state's leading industries. Prior to joining AzLTA, she served as Gov. Doug Ducey's Director of International Affairs and as Executive Director of the Arizona-Mexico Commission. In that capacity, Kim worked to advance Arizona's position in the global arena through enhanced international economic and protocol efforts as well as educational and community collaborations.



More Info:

**Arizona Lodging and
Tourism Assn.**
azlta.com

**[Federal Appropriations
Bill Expands Tourism
from Mexico](#)**

Arizona's Tourism Leaders Remain Optimistic

BY KIM GRACE SABOW

The bottom fell out of Arizona's tourism industry when the COVID-19 pandemic crippled the world a year ago. No one could have anticipated the challenges that presented themselves as travel and special events stopped overnight.

The pandemic has been the single greatest crisis the tourism industry has ever faced, wiping out 10 years of job growth. The sudden halt in travel last spring during Arizona's peak season has had a crushing effect on individuals and families as hotels and resorts were forced to lay off employees. In Arizona, we lost nearly 50% of all hospitality jobs during the height of the pandemic and more than \$1.3 billion in hotel revenue. This industry sector has been hit much harder than many others, having lost \$10 billion in visitor spending in the first six months of 2020 alone.

Even with these immense challenges, we remain optimistic because of the strong local and regional partnerships that help promote travel and tourism in Arizona.

Mexico is Arizona's top international market. Prior to the pandemic, Mexican visitors spent more than \$3 billion during 4 million overnight visits, a 5.2% increase over 2018. As COVID-19 cases decline and mass vaccination efforts increase, we must begin restoring international travel across the region. There are many efforts underway to position the region to regain market share when international travel increases.

Rebuilding consumer confidence is key. To establish a unified standard for safety and cleanliness in the wake of COVID-19, the Arizona Lodging and Tourism Assn. (AzLTA) has worked with the American Hotel and Lodging Association and its Safe Stay initiative, which builds upon various sanitation best practices and recommendations from national hospitality and public health experts and various hotel brands, to create the AZSAFE+CLEAN program. The program provides a set of protocols for hotels and resorts to ensure the safety of guests and employees. We want visitors to know that all of our properties are going above and beyond to create a clean and safe experience for everyone.

In addition, recent federal legislation championed by Arizona's congressional delegation will remove barriers for Mexican visitors to Arizona. The Southwest Tourism Expansion Act will allow Mexican citizens who carry a valid Border Crossing Card to travel statewide, instead of the previous 75-mile limitation. An estimated \$1 billion is expected in additional spending by tourists from Mexico. This new program will provide a much-needed lifeline to Arizona as we recover from the pandemic.

With continued sound policy initiatives, and ongoing regional collaboration, we look forward to welcoming our Mexican neighbors back to Arizona soon.

Urbix: Envisioning a clean and green future

BY NICO CUEVAS

It has been my great honor and privilege to shepherd Urbix, Inc. from inception to the multimillion-dollar company (and growing!) that it is today. I'd like to tell you a bit about that journey.

I was born and raised in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, and partly in Tucson, AZ. I am an engineering management graduate of the University of Arizona and did a year abroad in Germany at the Technical University of Munich. From there, I went on to become involved with several multinational companies. While working in the field with other University of Arizona alumni, I began to consider the concept for the company that has become Urbix.

Here was our proposition: We could see the future coming at us, and this glimpse into the future showed us a tomorrow that was both clean and green. Because I was hoping to be a father someday (a dream that

has since been realized), I wanted to help create a healthy world for my children to grow—and thrive. We knew that a clean future would involve batteries—and batteries needed graphite, which we had, for various reasons, a connection to. This connection goes back to Mexico—but that's a story for another day.

We contacted Dr. Palash Gangopadhyay, the person we felt was the leading advanced materials scientist in the world. He happened to work in the optics lab at the University of Arizona. We asked him to create a green method to take graphite and transform it into a material that would help power a lithium-ion battery. This work spring boarded on technology he had already developed and it was revolutionary. We honestly felt—as we



Nico Cuevas
CEO and Chairman
Urbix, Inc.

Nico Cuevas is the CEO and Chairman of Urbix, Inc., which he co-founded in 2014 in Mesa, AZ. The company has become a multimillion dollar venture and specializes in all aspects of the graphite value chain. Urbix's advanced technology includes cost and environmentally aware purification methods and significant intellectual property developments in a wide range of applications.



More Info:

urbixresources.com

still do—that it could change the world.

Since 2017, Dr. Gangopadhyay has been Urbix's chief technology officer. Working with him, we have built what is poised to become one of the world's most influential graphite refining companies.

At this point, we are well into our journey, but there are still many exciting miles to cover and milestones to log. Every day is a new adventure, but one thing is crystal clear: By the time we are done, we will indeed have helped to make our planet a cleaner, greener, healthier place.



Consul General of Mexico Jorge Mendoza Yescas (third from left above) visits the Urbix facilities in Mesa.

Mexico Living: An Exciting Reality for Millions of Expats

BY GREG CUSTER

Many Americans are exploring viable overseas living options for an array of adult-living scenarios. For decades, Mexico has been home to Americans seeking retirement peace of mind. And Mexico is America's largest trading partner and hosts more American visitors (and full-time residents) than any other country.

The main challenge? Where do you begin? Will Mexico meet your retirement needs? It depends several key factors: cost, climate, community dynamics, medical care and connectivity are all important factors to consider.

Mexico has a wide variety of adult living settings, infused with familiar and foreign assets and lifestyle options. Americans who have already made the move across the border are enjoying their new life in three main lifestyle categories:

1. **Independent Living** in rented or fully owned condos, apartments or homes;
2. **Assisted Living** in care facilities that provide 24/7 assistance and support, or independent living aided by in-home care providers; or
3. **Senior Care/Memory Care** Facilities, where high-quality

care management is offered at a significant savings compared to U.S. options. (NOTE: There currently are limited options in this category.)

QUALITY OF LIFE

The main reason adult Americans are so fond of Mexico for full-time living is simply the quality of life Mexico offers. People who move to Mexico today are more active, stay longer and venture beyond the touristy coastal resort settings to many of Mexico's most beautiful cities and towns.

MEGA-DIVERSITY

Mexico is among the world's five most biodiverse nations, which means it offers something for everyone. You might find sprawling deserts, islands, lush forests, sandy beaches, or snow-tipped volcanoes, high plateaus and mountain-rimmed basins in one of the four different time zones. Whether your retirement planning involves palm trees or pine trees, you certainly will find what you need in one of Mexico's 32 states.



Greg Custer
Resident of Mexico since 2015

Greg Custer has lived full-time in the state of Jalisco since 2015. He has worked in Mexico travel and tourism since the 1980s and holds a master's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in Latin American Studies.



More Info:

ChoosingMexico.com

CLIMATE, COMMUNITY, COSTCO!

Outdoor living year-round is only the beginning. In Mexico, you can easily connect with fellow expats from around the world by volunteering, starting a business or becoming a mentor. And Mexico is not only close to your former U.S. home, the country also shares many common western values, social beliefs, customs and tastes that have united our two nations for decades. And, if you still need a reason to move, consider that Mexico has 39 Costco warehouses throughout the country. What more do you need?

Mexico: Romance Is Always in the Air

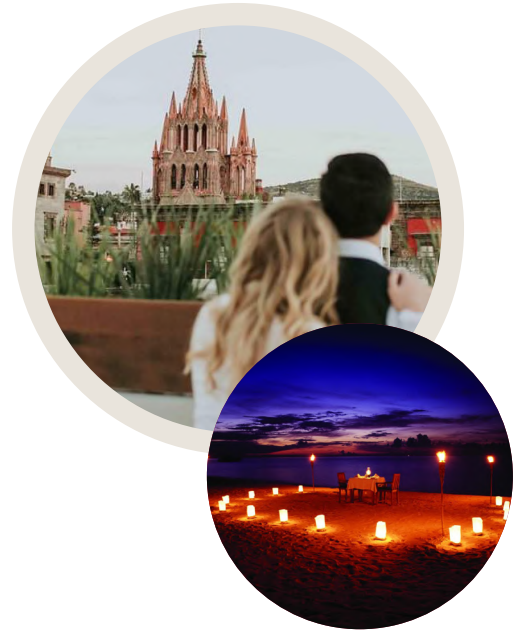
Mexico offers a great variety of romantic destinations for all kinds of occasions—weddings, honeymoons, anniversaries, vow renewals and family getaways.

Every year, couples flock to Mexico for destination weddings. According to The Destination Weddings blog, the best places to get married in Mexico are (in no particular order): Cancun and the Riviera Maya, Cabo San Lucas, Puerto Vallarta and the Riviera Nayarit, Cozumel, Isla Mujeres and Ensenada.

Mexico offers several different beaches for beautiful destination weddings, but couples also have the option to choose something a little different: either an adventure destination or one

of the many beautiful colonial cities. This specialized segment of tourism has been developed by the Ministry of Tourism of Mexico.

Romance travel is a strategic economic opportunity for Mexico because it helps to promote different local activities, and also helps to modernize the infrastructure, to balance sustainability and social inclusion, and to revalue cultural resources. —Information provides by the *International Association of Destination Wedding Professionals* (IADWP)



More Info:

IADWP | iadwp.com
Destination Weddings
destinationweddings.com

The Silver Screen

Morelia, located in the beautiful central Mexican state of Michoacán, welcomes national and international visitors every year to its International Film Festival, which is always held in late October.

Among the special guests who have previously

attended the festival are Alfonso Cuarón (who was the first Mexico-born filmmaker to win the Academy Award for Best Director for his film, *Gravity*, in 2014; and his 2018 film, *Roma*, was the first Mexican entry to win the Oscar for Best Foreign Film), Quentin Tarantino (renowned U.S. film director), Mexican Director

Guillermo del Toro (whose 2018 film *The Shape of Water*, won four Academy Awards: Best Director, Best Original Score, Best Production Design and Best Director), and Jennifer Lawrence (the highest-paid actress in the world in 2015 and 2016).

This film festival is organized by the Morelia International Film Festival (FICM), in collaboration with Cinépolis and local government agencies. The 2021 dates have not yet been announced.

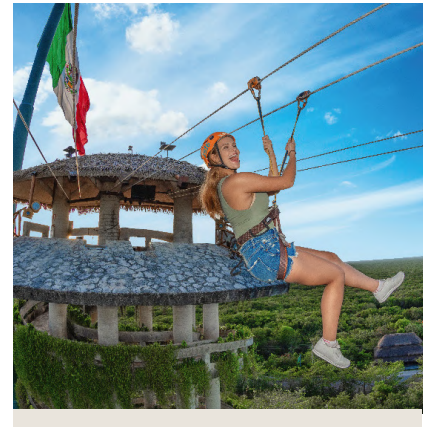


More Info:

moreliafilmfest.com/en/

There's Always Something New in the Yucatan Peninsula

Reminiscing about those dreamy days on your favorite Mexican Caribbean beach? You just might want to start packing your bags again.



If you've ever been to the glorious Mexican Caribbean, you've probably heard of Grupo Xcaret. This Mexican sustainable tourism group, which prides itself on doing things differently, operates the area's most iconic parks and tours, which include Xcaret, Xel-Há, Xplor, Xplor Fuego, Xenses, Xavage, Xoximilco, Xenotes and Xichen.

In December 2017, the tourism group opened its first hotel: Hotel Xcaret México in Playa del Carmen. Taking care of the environment and creating unique memories for visitors is a key priority. A perfect example is the group's extremely successful All-Fun Inclusive® concept, which gives hotel guests full access to all of their parks and tours as well as transportation options and much more.

Grupo Xcaret has a passion for innovation in their products and

this year will be no exception. As a guest, you will be surrounded by the spectacular nature beauty of Quintana Roo and the Yucatan Peninsula, be offered fun activities for the whole family and experience the local culture and unique gastronomy of the area.

HOTEL XCARET ARTE

In 2021, Grupo Xcaret will expand its hotel portfolio with a whole new concept: an "adults-only" experience with the Hotel Xcaret Arte.

The new hotel will open its doors July 1, 2021, offering 900 suites that celebrate Mexican art and culture. The six casas on-site will each commemorate a different art form. Guests will be a part of the artwork itself, participating hand in hand with local artists and craftsmen.

The hotel will also be a celebration of the local

culinary arts featuring a superb gastronomic collective that will include some of Mexico's most celebrated chefs.

Isn't it time to start planning your next getaway?

BE THE GUEST,
BE THE ARTIST.
DISCOVER IT NOW.



More Info:

Hotels | hotelxcaret.com

Parks | xcaret.com

Tijuana is Tasty

BY TIJUANA'S CONVENTION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

Tijuana, by Mexican standards, is a fairly young city. Founded July 11, 1889, the city is now part of the busiest border region in the world and in the Top 5 locations—population wise—in Mexico.

Tijuana is a city of migrants and that fact permeates its culture in different ways. One tasty way it does so is in Tijuana's culinary offerings: You can find burritos from Sonora, seafood from Sinaloa, birria from Jalisco, mole from Puebla and cuisines from all around the world. Tijuana and Baja California are particularly proud of their Baja Med cuisine, which takes the local seafood from the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortes and blends it with a Mediterranean and Oriental touch with the meats, poultry and vegetables from the Baja's valleys.

The late Anthony Bourdain, a well-known world traveler, gastronome, author and TV personality, was once being interviewed at an event in San Diego. When he was asked where he was having lunch, Bourdain had a simple answer: "No disrespect to San Diego, but I am crossing over to Tijuana."

There are reasons why Bourdain chose Tijuana for lunch and it is the same reason the city is now considered a foodie destination. Not only is there a wide choice of different cuisines to sample, the city is now home to the Culinary Arts School and the Instituto de Gastronomía de Baja California, both of which have graduated a wave of upcoming dedicated, creative and talented chefs.

Tijuana's location will also give you easy access to try the famous Puerto Nuevo style lobster in the town known as the Lobster Village, which is just 30 km (approximately 19 miles) south. Venture a little farther into the Baja and you can visit the wineries and restaurants of the Valle de Guadalupe, which is about 90 minutes south of Tijuana.

Take a little time to wander the Baja and you'll discover why discover Tijuana and Baja California have become such popular tourist destinations. Just be sure to arrive hungry.



COMITE DE TURISMO
Y CONVENCIONES
DE TIJUANA



More Info:

[Tijuana's Convention
and Tourism
Committee](#)

A Few Tasty Facts about Tijuana

- It was the birthplace of the **Caesar Salad** in 1924. Although it is credited to Caesar Cardini, other accounts give credit to Cardini's brother Alessandro and some even say it was one of Cardini's employees named Livio Santini who should get the credit.
- It holds the Guinness record for the world's largest **Caesar salad**. Canirac, the Tijuana Restaurateurs Chamber of Commerce, prepared the salad in Tijuana on Oct. 20, 2007, and it weighed 3.287 tons (7,246 lbs.).
- It is allegedly the birthplace of the **Margarita cocktail**. According to Carlos "Danny" Herrera, he created the drink in 1938 for Marjorie King, a former Ziegfeld dancer and regular at his restaurant, Rancho La Gloria, in Tijuana. King had said she was allergic to all alcoholic drinks except tequila, but didn't want to drink it straight. Other tales have it invented in Juarez in 1942 and popularized by bartender Albert Hernandez at the La Plaza restaurant in 1947 in La Jolla, CA.
- It is one of the leaders in **craft beer production** in Mexico, thanks to the wildly popular craft beer scene that started across the border in San Diego.

There's a Tequila for Every Palate

BY GABRIELA CAÑEDO SANDOVAL

Tequila is the alcoholic drink most identified with Mexico. It has a solid Denomination of Origin (DOT), which establishes the specifications required to produce, bottle, distribute and sell tequila as a product of a specific geographic area.



There are about 200 varieties of the agave plant, but the Mexican Official Norm (NOM006) dictates that only one can be used to make tequila: the Agave Tequilana Weber Blue variety.

An agave takes between five and eight years to reach maturity before it can be harvested by a jimador. The jimador removes the plant from the ground by cutting all the leaves to leave only the heart of the plant (the *piña*). A mature agave "pineapple" reaches an approximate weight of 30 kilos (66.14 lbs.).

The *piña* is then sent to the distillery for cooking, where its texture is softened and the sugars of the plant are hydrolyzed, giving way to the grinding and extraction of the agave juices, which will ferment and convert the sugars into alcohol. After fermentation, it is time for distillation. As a rule, the *piña* is distilled twice; after the second distillation, a tequila blanco that is approximately 55 percent alcohol is created. Each tequila producer decides whether to bottle the tequila blanco at that point or to let it rest in American or French white oak barrels for aging.

Tequila is available in five different classes for different tastes, palates and budgets:

- **Blanco** (Silver),
- **Joven** (Gold), a blend of Blanco with Reposado,
- **Reposado** (Aged) at least two months in barrels (but less than one year),
- **Añejo** (Extra Aged) at least 12 months in barrels, and
- **Extra Añejo** (Ultra Aged) at least 36 months.

There currently are 1,748 brands of tequila. Surprisingly, before 2018, Mexico had never established a special day to honor its special drink. The U.S. already had designated July 24 as its National Tequila Day.

In 2018, thanks to the effort of Luis Velasco, former president of the National Chamber of the Tequila Industry, the Mexican Senate finally approved a new National Tequila Day to be held yearly on the third Saturday of March. The first celebration was held on March 16, 2019. In 2021, it was held on March 20.

Most Mexicans prefer to drink tequila straight, but about 30%

drink it in cocktails, especially in a *Margarita* or a *Paloma*, which is a cocktail made with grapefruit soda, ice, salt and lemon. And now mixologists are introducing new, more elaborate cocktails to present tequila in a different way. At Universo Tequila, we offer visitors different experiences, either in person or online, to learn about the history and the distillation process, as well as the different classes, categories, pairings and forms of consumption.

Take a little time to explore the many varieties to find one that appeals to your palate—and your wallet. Even celebrities like George Clooney, Elon Musk, The Rock and the Kardashians have gotten into the tequila game.



More Info:

[12 Things to Know](#)

[Universo Tequila](#)

Magdalena de Kino, Sonora



This historic Mexican town, located just a few miles from the border with Arizona, dates back to 1687 when it was founded along with 24 other missions by

Jesuit Eusebio Francisco Kino, who came to evangelize the local natives and nomads of this region, originally naming the town as Santa María Magdalena de Buquivaba.

In the region, the memory of Father Kino is honored for his work as the founder of the original mission. For many years, his remains were searched for without success until they were found under the Plaza de Armas of this Magical Town. The Padre Kino Museum now exhibits objects from the natives of this region.

Magdalena de Kino is one of the missions that make up the historical and religious path known as Father Kino's Missions Trail that transcends borders.

The San Francisco Javier festivities are the largest annual event in Magdalena de Kino. They are celebrated from the last week of September until the day of San Francisco on October 4. Devotees walk 47 miles from the Arizona border to Magdalena, in gratitude to the saint for favors received during the year. A figure of Saint Francis at rest is the centerpiece of the festivities, where thousands of people line up to touch and kiss the figure.



More Info:

[Magdalena de Kino, Sonora](#)



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Treasures in Mexico: Jalisco, famous for the right reasons

The state of Jalisco has it all: nine designated pueblos mágicos (magical towns), amazing beaches and beautiful cities. Jalisco is also a gastronome's dream, offering a variety of delicious food, like the famous torta ahogada, and Mexico's most famous drink: tequila (see p.12). Visit the pueblo mágico of Tequila to learn about how this famous drink is made.

Here are just a few other reasons that make Jalisco a unique, bucket list destination:

Mariachi



Jalisco is the birthplace of mariachi music. Mariachi groups are composed of different musicians dressed in traditional outfits who play a variety of instruments, including violins, trumpets and guitars. Traditional mariachis play music from different Mexican regions, including corridos, which are romantic and heroic ballads.

Tortas Ahogadas



These tortas are not common tortas; they are filled with carnitas (pork meat), accompanied by beans, onions and lemon, and then dipped in red sauce. They are made with birote, a special crunchy, darkly baked sourdough bread from Guadalajara that does not fall apart when it is covered in the sauce.

Charrería



Charrería (Mexican rodeo) is Mexico's official national sport, designated by a presidential decree in 1933. It involves several characteristic elements: a rope, a well-trained horse and the spectacular outfit worn by the charro. This sport is recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Humanity Heritage in Mexico. Charros, the "original cowboys," have been a crucial part of U.S., Mexican and border cultures, as well as a guiding force for Mexican American identity and social movements.

A Little Bit of Everything

Every year at the end of August, the city of Guadalajara celebrates the world's largest mariachi and charrería festival: Encuentro Internacional del Mariachi y la Charrería. The festivities begin on the last Sunday of August with a parade along the main streets of Guadalajara and feature mariachi music and traditional dances. Teams from throughout Mexico also come to compete in the charrería for the winning trophy. The 2021 dates have not yet been announced.



More Info:

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