

# Mexico Starter Checklist & 90-Day Exit Plan Timeline



## QUICK START CHECKLIST



### Essential Documents (Start Immediately)

- ☐ **Passport** - Valid for at least 6 months beyond planned stay
- ☐ **Birth Certificate** - Get apostilled (allow 2-4 weeks)
- ☐ **Criminal Background Check** - FBI check with apostille (4-6 weeks)
- ☐ **Bank Statements** - Last 6 months showing minimum \$2,500-3,000/month
- ☐ **Proof of Income** - Employment letter, contracts, or pension statements
- ☐ **Marriage/Divorce Documents** - If applicable, apostilled
- ☐ **Driver's License** - Current, for Mexican license conversion
- ☐ **Medical Records** - Vaccinations, prescriptions, conditions



### Financial Preparation

- ☐ Open bank account with no foreign transaction fees
- ☐ Set up online banking and bill pay
- ☐ Get Charles Schwab or similar ATM fee reimbursement account
- ☐ Research Mexican banks (BBVA, Santander, Banorte)
- ☐ Set up Wise (TransferWise) account for transfers
- ☐ Calculate 6-month emergency fund in USD
- ☐ Budget for initial setup costs (\$3,000-5,000 minimum)
- ☐ Understand tax obligations (consider CPA consultation)



### Healthcare Setup

- ☐ Research Mexican health insurance options (IMSS, private)
- ☐ Get international health insurance for first 6 months
- ☐ Stock up on prescription medications (3-month supply)
- ☐ Get copies of all prescriptions with generic names
- ☐ Dental work completed in US
- ☐ Vision prescription updated
- ☐ Vaccination records compiled

## Technology & Remote Work

- ☐ Test work setup on VPN
  - ☐ Backup internet solutions researched (mobile hotspots)
  - ☐ Unlock phone for Mexican SIM card
  - ☐ Digital copies of all documents in cloud storage
  - ☐ Password manager setup for international access
  - ☐ Banking 2FA that works internationally
  - ☐ WhatsApp installed (essential in Mexico)
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# 90-DAY EXIT PLAN TIMELINE



## DAYS 90-61: FOUNDATION PHASE

### Week 1-2: Documentation

- ☐ Order apostilled birth certificate
- ☐ Start FBI background check process
- ☐ Schedule passport renewal if needed
- ☐ Begin gathering financial documents
- ☐ Contact HR about remote work letter

### Week 3-4: Research & Planning

- ☐ Choose 2-3 target cities in Mexico
- ☐ Join city-specific Facebook expat groups
- ☐ Research neighborhoods via Google Street View
- ☐ Study visa requirements (tourist vs temporary resident)
- ☐ Start basic Spanish lessons (Duolingo minimum)



## DAYS 60-31: PREPARATION PHASE

### Week 5-6: Financial Setup

- ☐ Open recommended US bank accounts
- ☐ Set up international money transfer accounts
- ☐ Create Mexico budget spreadsheet
- ☐ Get tax consultation for international income
- ☐ Cancel unnecessary US subscriptions

### Week 7-8: Logistics Planning

- ☐ Research Mexican phone plans (Telcel, AT&T Mexico)
- ☐ Look at short-term accommodation options (Airbnb)
- ☐ Plan reconnaissance trip if possible
- ☐ Start decluttering possessions
- ☐ Research pet import requirements if applicable

## **DAYS 30-15: ACTION PHASE**

### **Week 9-10: US Affairs**

- ☐ Give notice to landlord/list property
- ☐ Arrange mail forwarding service
- ☐ Update address for financial accounts
- ☐ Notify credit cards of international move
- ☐ Schedule goodbye gatherings
- ☐ Sell/donate unnecessary items

### **Week 11-12: Final Preparations**

- ☐ Book flights (one-way or flexible return)
- ☐ Reserve first month accommodation
- ☐ Purchase travel insurance
- ☐ Pack essentials (clothes for all weather)
- ☐ Buy any Mexico-hard-to-find items
- ☐ Create emergency contact list

## **DAYS 14-0: LAUNCH PHASE**

### **Final Two Weeks**

- ☐ Confirm all reservations
  - ☐ Final bank/financial checkups
  - ☐ Pick up any pending documents
  - ☐ Say goodbyes
  - ☐ Final packing
  - ☐ Review entry requirements
  - ☐ Print all documents (multiple copies)
  - ☐ Exchange some USD to pesos
  - ☐ Deep breath!
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## MEXICO ARRIVAL CHECKLIST (First Week)

### Day 1-3: Immediate Needs

- ☐ Get through immigration (save FMM tourist card!)
- ☐ Buy Mexican SIM card at airport
- ☐ Settle into accommodation
- ☐ Locate nearest OXXO, pharmacy, grocery store
- ☐ Test water situation (buy garrafón)
- ☐ Find decent wifi cafe backup

### Day 4-7: Settling In

- ☐ Open Mexican bank account (if possible)
- ☐ Register with US embassy/consulate
- ☐ Find a good taco stand (priority!)
- ☐ Explore neighborhood on foot
- ☐ Join local WhatsApp groups
- ☐ Schedule Spanish classes/exchange



## REALITY CHECK REMINDERS

### Things That Will Be Harder Than Expected:

- Opening a Mexican bank account without residency
- Getting anything done between 2-4 PM
- Understanding Mexican phone customer service
- Finding your specific comfort foods
- Dealing with noise levels
- Getting used to cash-based society

### Things That Will Be Easier Than Expected:

- Making friends (Mexicans are incredibly welcoming)
  - Finding good, cheap food
  - Getting medications at farmacia
  - Surviving on less than you thought
  - Adapting to the pace of life
  - Falling in love with the culture
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# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## Before Leaving US:

- Share itinerary with trusted friend/family
- Scan all documents to secure cloud
- Have emergency fund accessible multiple ways
- Know nearest US consulate location
- Have backup plan if things don't work out
- Keep 3-6 months US expenses available

## Important Numbers to Save:

- US Embassy Mexico: +52 55 5080 2000
- Tourist Help Line: 078
- Emergency: 911 (works in most Mexican cities)
- Your bank's international line
- International health insurance
- Trusted expat contact in target city



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## FINAL NOTES

### Remember:

- Every expat's journey is different
- Flexibility is more important than perfect planning
- Mexico rewards patience and good humor
- "No pasa nada" will become your mantra
- It's okay to feel overwhelmed
- You can always go back (but you probably won't want to)

**The Gringo's Motto:** *"Plan thoroughly, pack lightly, expect surprises, embrace chaos, and always say yes to the street tacos."*

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For updated resources and community support, visit [ColinMaretti.com](http://ColinMaretti.com)

**Disclaimer:** This checklist is for general guidance only. Visa requirements, regulations, and procedures change frequently. Always verify current requirements with official Mexican government sources and consult with immigration professionals for your specific situation.