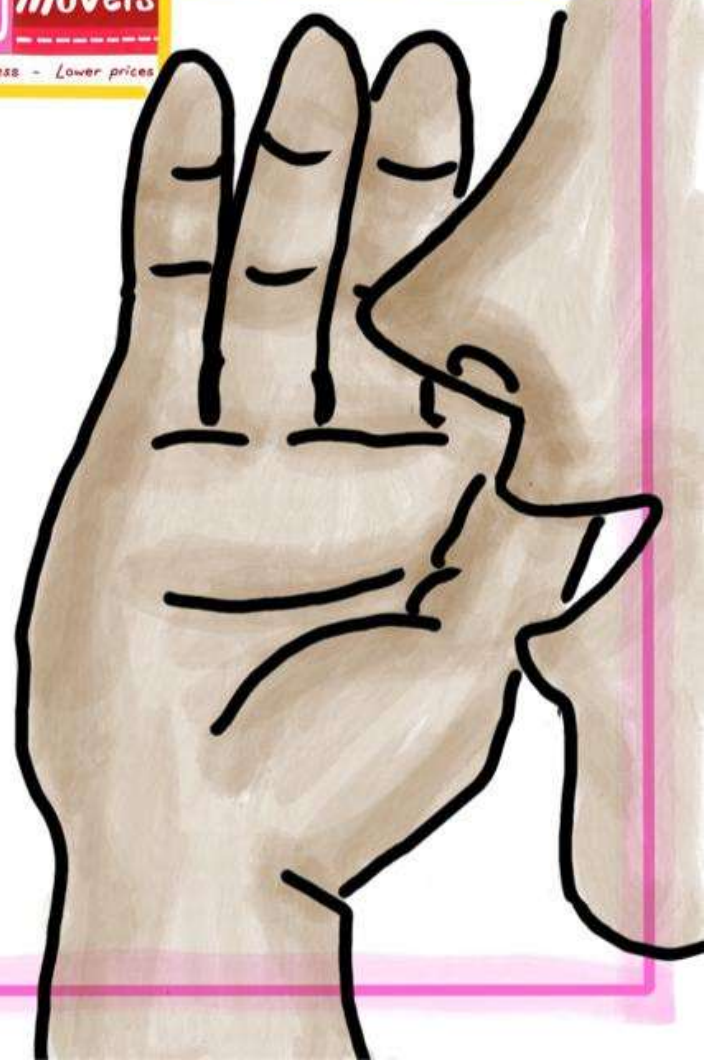


Things Nobody Told You About Moving To Mexico

❖ A Checklist, In Order ❖



Things nobody told you about moving to Mexico...

What Paperwork You Will Need, In Order, for Moving to Mexico

[To view this booklet as a webpage (easier to read on a phone), click [here](#).]

Moving to Mexico is not that difficult, but there are lots and lots of little details and quite a few of these details need to be done in order, because if you miss a detail or do even one of these details out of order, the consequences can be pretty severe.

At [Best Mexico Movers](#), we hear from people all the time who were never told what they needed to do and in what order they needed to do it, or who were told incorrectly. Many of them asked us to create this short checklist, which is why we did it.

The Timing of Your Visa or Passport and How this Impacts Moving Your Household Goods to Mexico

If you are going to use a legitimate mover to move your precious household goods to Mexico, your mover will use a customs broker and that customs broker will use the [menaje de casa](#), which is the method by which the Mexican government allows Mexican citizens and certain foreigners who qualify to import their used household goods to Mexico one time, tax free.



Who Qualifies to Use the *Menaje de Casa*



In order to use the *menaje de casa*, you will need either to be 1) a Mexican citizen with a valid Mexican passport; or 2) a foreigner (for example, a citizen of the US or Canada) who has a Mexican residency visa, typically, a temporal or a permanente.

If You are a Mexican Citizen

If you are a Mexican citizen who wants to use the *menaje de casa*, make sure that your Mexican passport is valid and not expired. (While some Mexican consulates will accept your INE card, most will not.). If you are a Mexican citizen, you will need to go to the Mexican consulate outside of Mexico closest to where you are starting your household goods move in order to get your *menaje de casa* inventory certified. In order to do that, you will need to show your valid, unexpired Mexican



passport. Therefore, if you don't have a valid, unexpired Mexican passport and want to import your household goods via the *menaje de casa*, you'll have to get one. It's best to start early, because it can take a long time to get all the paperwork together that's required, and to get an appointment.



To Do: If you're a Mexican citizen who wants to use the Menaje de Casa, make sure that your passport is valid and not expired.



Warning: It can take a really long time to get your passport up to date and there is no downside to doing it now, so start early.

If You are Not a Mexican Citizen

If you are a foreigner (typically, an American or a Canadian) who wants to use the *menaje de casa*, you'll need to visit a consulate outside of Mexico to [get your residency visa started](#). Sometimes, it can be extremely difficult to even get an appointment at the local consulate, so start early. In some circumstances, some consulates that are not near to where you start your move will give you an appointment to get your residency visa started.



To Do: If you are not a Mexican citizen, make an appointment at your local consulate so they can explain to you the requirements to get your residency visa.



Warning: If you want to move your household goods using the *menaje de casa*, you may not be able to do so if you get your visa too early. (See below.)

Getting Your Residency Visa

The consulate will ask for proof that you qualify for a residency visa. This proof is usually about how much money you have in the bank, and /or how much you get as a pension that does not end unless you do, such as through Social Security. If you are using the amount of money in the bank to satisfy a requirement, the consulate will usually want to see that the money was there for six months to a year.



Verify the Validity of Your Documents

Many times, the consulate will ask you to prove that your documents are valid, perhaps by having a bank sign them or by you getting your documents apostilled. Just like with getting the appointment, this can take a really long time, so start early.



To do:

To Do: Make sure you have enough money in the bank in your name for at least a year to satisfy the Mexican consulate's requirements.



Warning:

Warning: If you don't qualify based on your money in the bank, you'll need to show pension income.

Check Your Passport Expiration Date

If the consulate accepts your application, they will ask you for your valid, unexpired passport from your country of origin (usually, the US or Canada, but it could be from anywhere) that has at least six months to go before it expires, and they will put a sticker on your passport. If you don't have a valid, unexpired passport from your country of origin or if your passport is due to expire, you will have to do that first, and that could take some time.



To do:

To Do: If you don't have a passport from your country of origin, get one. If you do have a passport, make sure your passport is valid and has at least six months to a year to go before it expires. If it close, get a new passport.



Warning:

Warning: Getting a new passport can take a lot of time, so plan in advance.

Make Sure the Sticker in Your Passport Will be Enough

Most (but not all) legitimate movers will accept the sticker in your passport to import your used household goods via the *menaje de casa*, but not all of them, so it's best to ask. Some of them will require that you actually get the plastic card (what Mexicans will call your "*canje*") before they will move you on the *menaje de casa*.



To do:

To Do: If you have a mover in mind, ask if they need your plastic card (also known as the "*canje*") or if they will accept the sticker in your passport as sufficient proof that you qualify to import your used household goods via the *menaje de casa*.



Warning:

Warning: While most movers will accept your sticker, not all of them will. It's best to find out.

Enter into Mexico Within Six Months

Once you get the sticker in your passport, you have six months in order to make your first official entry into Mexico, to begin the second part of the immigration process. Could you make

your first entry before six months? Yes, and most people do. Could you make your first entry after six months? No. If you wait more than six months to make your first official entry into Mexico, you'll have to start over.



To Do: Get your visa sticker six months or less from when you plan to enter Mexico to complete the visa process.



Warning: Don't get your visa sticker if you are not planning to enter Mexico within six months to complete the process of getting your visa in Mexico.

What to do at the First Port of Entry



When you make your first official entry into Mexico after getting your sticker, you'll generally do so by driving in, or by flying in. In either case, you must immediately present yourself to the immigration official at that port of entry, show them your sticker, and ask to be put into the system.

If you are not put into the system at the first point of entry, you will need to return to that point of entry later and do what you should have done to begin with. (Sometimes, this can mean

driving all the way back to Laredo, if that's where you first crossed into Mexico.)

Will the immigration official you encounter at the border or at the airport remind you to get put into the system? Unfortunately, it is very unlikely that they will even notice. Therefore, it is your responsibility to tell the immigration official to put you into the system. If you don't, and for example, you entered Mexico via your car through Laredo and you figure it out that you were not put into the system after arriving in Ajijic, Jalisco, you'll have to drive or fly all the way back to Laredo.



To Do: When you have your sticker, do not leave your first point of entry until the immigration official has put you into their system.



Warning: If you don't do this, you will need to return to your original point of entry.

How Long You Can Wait to get Your *Menaje de Casa* Inventory Certified

After you get your sticker, how long do you have to move your used household goods?

That depends.

The vast majority of legitimate movers will tell you that the only way they will import your household goods to Mexico if you get your *menaje de casa* inventory certified at the consulate closest to where your move originates, and the vast majority of consulates will not certify your *menaje de casa* inventory if your visa sticker or plastic card is more than six months old. (If your visa is more than six months old and you still want to use the *menaje de casa*, please [contact us](#). There is a very good chance we can help.)



To Do: Plan on moving your used household goods within six months of getting your sticker, or if your visa is more than six months old, find a mover like [Best Mexico Movers](#) that may be able to help you even if your visa is more than six months old.



Warning: In many circumstances, if your visa is more than six months old and the consulate will not certify your inventory, most movers (but not all) will not allow you to use the *menaje de casa*.

Register with Immigration within 30 Days

Back to immigration. After you're put into the system at the first port of entry, you have 30 days in which to present yourself at the immigration office (INM) where you'll be living in Mexico. What happens if you don't present yourself within 30 days? You've voided your visa process and will have to start over.



To Do: Present yourself to the local INM office in Mexico where you will be living within 30 days of you entering Mexico with your visa sticker.



Warning: If you don't, you will void your visa and have to start over.

Don't Leave Mexico Without your *Canje* (Plastic Residency Card)

After you officially enter into Mexico the first time with your sticker, you are not allowed to leave Mexico until the process is complete and you have your plastic visa card, called the *canje*. If you leave Mexico before then, you will have voided the process and will need to start over. Therefore, if you plan on entering Mexico and leaving again quickly, don't begin the process of getting your residency visa; just enter on a tourist visa.





To do:

To Do: After you officially enter Mexico with your sticker, make sure you can stay in Mexico long enough to get your *canje*.



Warning:

Warning: If you leave Mexico without getting your *canje*, you will have voided the visa process and need to start over.



After going through the process, if everything goes well, the people at the immigration office in Mexico will present you with your plastic residency visa card, also called a *canje*. After you have this, you are an official, legal resident of Mexico, and do not need to carry your foreign passport with you. *Felicidades!*

On to the topic of driving a foreign-plated car in Mexico.

Driving a Foreign-Plated Car in Mexico

You can drive your foreign-plated car in Mexico, but there are rules to follow. (Typically, this would be a US- or Canadian-plated car).

If you want to drive your foreign-plated car in Mexico, you can, but only if you have visitor visa or a temporal residency visa. Permanente card holders and Mexican nationals cannot drive their foreign-plated car in Mexico.



To do:

To Do: If you plan on driving your foreign-plated car in Mexico and to be in Mexico more than six months, get a temporal visa, not a permanente visa.



Warning:

Warning: If you plan on driving your foreign-plated car in any place in Mexico other than right next to the border, don't allow the Mexican consulate to give you a permanente visa, because permanente visa holders cannot get a TIP (explained below).

Getting your Temporary Import Permit ("TIP")

In order to legally drive your foreign-plated car in Mexico, you will need to get a Temporary Import Permit ("TIP"). You get your TIP at Banjercito, either [on-line](#), directly after the border into Mexico, or at a Banjercito office in the US.

If you would prefer to get your TIP after you enter Mexico, you will need to go to the first Banjercito office located directly after the border and definitely do not drive out of the Free Zone without getting your TIP.

Could the Banjercito office ask for some paperwork or have some other problem with your application at the border? It happens all the time. And then what would you do, especially if you are on a deadline? (This is another example of why it's never a good idea to schedule too tightly in Mexico, and it is always a good idea to have a Plan B or to even reduce the possibility of a problem altogether by getting things done early. What could you get done early? Go to the Banjercito website or to a Banjercito office near your home to get your TIP before you cross the border.)



 **To do:** **To Do:** Get your Temporary Import Permit online or in person.

 **Warning:** **Warning:** If you wait until you cross the border to apply for your TIP and there is an issue (which happens frequently), you will not be able to drive that car in Mexico until the issue is resolved.

How to Prove that Your Car Can be in Mexico

In order to get your TIP, your car cannot be financed or leased, or if it is, you would need an official letter from the finance or leasing company allowing you to take your car to Mexico. What is an “official letter”? Whatever Banjercito says it is. That’s why you want to start this process early. Your car must also be in your name and legally registered, with no expired registrations.

 **To do:** **To Do:** If you plan on getting a TIP, it is best to pay off your car ahead of time, be the only person on the title, and make sure all registrations are up to date.

 **Warning:** **Warning:** If you can’t get the paperwork needed quickly enough, you may need to leave your foreign-plated car at home or just wait outside of Mexico until you get the paperwork you need, which can be a long time.

When Does Your TIP Expire?

Your TIP will be logically attached to your visa and will expire when your visa expires. Can you get a TIP on a tourist visa? Yes. If you get a TIP on your tourist visa, will it expire in six months?

Yes. Is this what you want? Probably not. Therefore, get your TIP only after you get at least your sticker in your passport with your temporary visa.



To Do: Get your TIP only after you get your temporary visa sticker.



Warning: if you attach your TIP to your tourist visa, you will need to drive your car out of Mexico before the tourist visa expires, which is in less than six months.

Car Insurance in Mexico

If you drive a car in Mexico, you should have car insurance. If you are planning on living in Mexico, you should contact an insurance agent in Mexico and get the insurance you can get as a legal resident.



How Mexican Car Insurance is Different



The car insurance you get in Mexico generally works the opposite of how it works in the US. In the US, if you have car insurance and you want to drive your friend's car in the US, generally, you'll be covered. In Mexico, it does not work that way. In Mexico, it is the car that is insured, as opposed to the driver. The main consequence of this for you is if you cancel your US car insurance and then come back to the US and drive your friend's car, you won't be insured, which is a really bad idea (driving without insurance in the US). The solution is to maintain car insurance in the US on the US-

plated car you're driving in Mexico (in which case, when you're in the US, in most cases you will be covered if you drive your friend's car) or get non-owner car insurance. Talk with your agents in both the US and in Mexico to make sure you understand what your insurance covers, what it does not cover, and in which geographic location you're covered.



To Do: Get Mexican insurance on your foreign-plated (US or Canadian) car in Mexico and if you plan on driving that car or any other in the US or Canada (including rental cars), you will need US or Canadian insurance.



Warning: Never drive without insurance, either in Mexico, the US, or in Canada, so make sure you have it. Don't assume.

More Free Guides

If you're researching moving your household goods to Mexico, here's some additional, free info for you:

- Thinking about putting your household goods into storage before moving? Be sure to read [this article](#) first!
- Concerned about the cost of moving to Mexico? [Learn your moving cost options and how to save money.](#)
- And our original booklet: [What you need to know to move your household goods to Mexico.](#)

