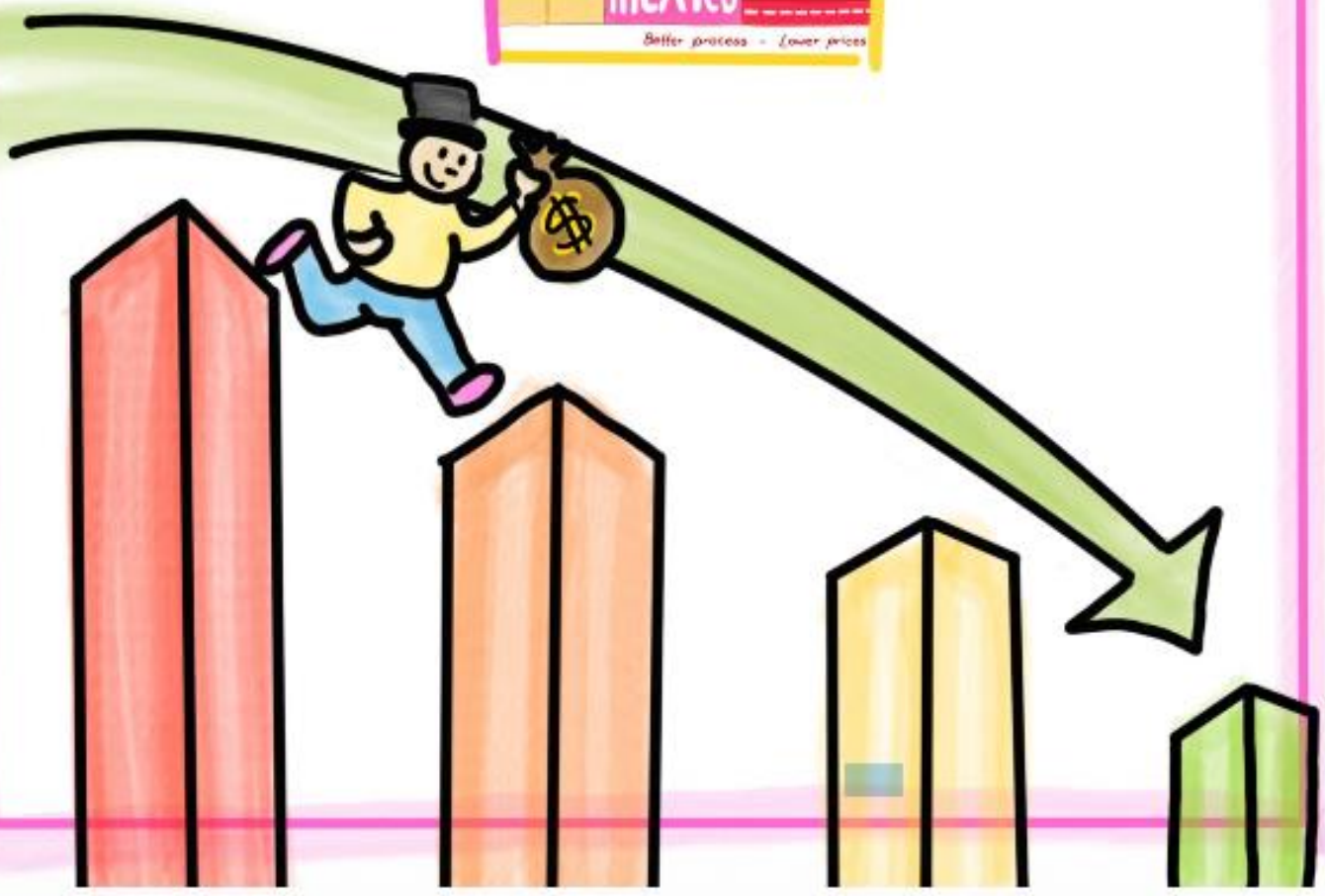
HOW TO LOWER THE CO$T TO MOVE YOUR HOUSEHOLD GOODS TO MEXICO



How to Lower the Cost of Moving Your Household Goods to or From Mexico

Written by Chuck Bolotin, Founder and CEO of Best Mexico Movers

Based on Best Mexico Movers' experience completing more than 1,000 household-goods moves to or from Mexico since 2018

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

Who This Guide is For

This guide is for you if you are planning to move your household goods to or from Mexico and want to understand the different ways to do it, how each approach differs, the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, and how you may be able to save money.

Moving your household goods to Mexico can be expensive.

Really expensive.

Understanding the different ways to do it—and what you are actually paying for—before you make decisions about what to bring and whom to hire can help you plan your move and avoid spending more than you need to.

What You'll Learn

There are several very different ways to get your household goods to or from Mexico, ranging from bringing almost nothing with you to hiring a traditional full-service international mover.

We divided these approaches into five options so you can better understand each one. We will begin with two that do not involve hiring a mover: bringing almost nothing and transporting a small amount yourself. After that, we will describe three very different ways of hiring someone to transport your household goods for you.

As we move from one option to the next, we'll explain what changes, why those changes are important to you, and how they could affect your move and its cost. For each option, we'll explain how that option works, what you are paying for, its advantages and disadvantages, and where you may be able to save money.

Please keep in mind that the differences between these options are not simply about how much work you are willing to do yourself. The options also differ in how the moving company operates, which services are included, who you can choose to work with, what protection you have if something goes wrong, and who coordinates your move from beginning to end.

Understanding these differences can help you choose the option that makes the most sense for you in your situation and find ways for you to save money without giving up something that is important to you.

Who We Are and What Qualifies Us to Write This Guide

Prior to starting Best Mexico Movers, I spent almost a year investigating the different ways people move their household goods across the border. After founding Best Mexico Movers in 2018, the staff and I have completed more than 1,000 household-goods moves to or from Mexico.

In the process of doing this, we have talked with many thousands of people considering moves to or from Mexico and over one thousand after their moves were completed. We have also worked with other moving companies that use some of the approaches described in this guide.

All of this has given us a close-up view of how these different approaches actually work, what they cost, and where the important differences are for you as the customer. We will use that experience throughout this guide to help you understand your choices.

Option 1: Sell or Donate Almost Everything and Move with What Fits in Two Suitcases

For some people, this choice makes the most sense. They do not mind—and may actually be happy—to be "unburdened" from almost all their material possessions. They may be perfectly comfortable selling or giving away most of what they own rather than paying to move it to or from Mexico.

If you are reading this article, however, you probably do care about at least some of your possessions, or at least the person you are moving with does.

When the People Moving to Mexico Disagree About How Much to Bring

We know from firsthand experience that having two people who are going to move together but who do not agree on how much to bring happens from time to time. One person does not really care that much, while the other one does. Then each person tries to convince the other why they are right. (Side note. When we are asked by anyone how much to take, we never give our opinion. Why? Because we do not know what value the person or persons asking place on their possessions, so we couldn't offer a good or appropriate answer for them. Read more about how much to take.)

While we don't offer relationship counseling (we're qualified only as movers, not therapists), we are able to report something we've heard many times in conversations with people long after their moves were complete: even if one person "wins" the argument about how much to bring, it is not unusual for the person who lost the argument to bring it up again later, as told here.

Considering If It Is Culturally Insensitive to Bring Your Possessions to Mexico

We have also heard the argument (usually on Facebook) that, because many people in Mexico have fewer material possessions than many people in the U.S. or Canada, anyone moving to Mexico should get rid of most of their possessions as a way of showing solidarity with the people who live in Mexico.

If your concern is that arriving in Mexico with household goods is somehow culturally inappropriate, you may be interested in our experience when moving Mexican nationals back to Mexico who have lived in the U.S., which we do in about 15% of our moves. In our experience, the moves of the Mexican nationals tend to be larger, not smaller, than our average move. In our experience, our clients who are Mexican nationals are at least as attached to their "stuff"—and often more so (especially comfortable furniture) —than the Americans and Canadians we move to Mexico.

That doesn't tell us what all Mexicans think about bringing their possessions to Mexico. It does tell us, however, that wanting to bring the things you value with you to Mexico is not unique to Americans and Canadians—the Mexicans we move want to bring their items as well.

Considering the Cost to Replace in Mexico

When comparing Option 1 with actually moving your household goods, don't look only at the cost of the move. Look at your **total cost**.

Of course, bringing almost nothing will reduce your moving cost dramatically. But if you later buy furniture, appliances, tools, electronics or other household goods you already owned but did not move with you, those replacement costs are part of the financial consequence of your decision as well.

Therefore, this option can be the cheapest way to move your household goods because you aren't really moving them at all—and still not be the least expensive choice overall.

Cost: Close to zero for moving of household goods, because you are essentially not moving household goods.

Advantages: After you get rid of your household goods, very easy to execute, and close to zero moving cost.

Disadvantages: If you get rid of almost all your possessions, your options for how to live in Mexico may be limited. For example, you may need to rent a furnished home as opposed to an unfurnished one or buy in Mexico whatever you need to use. In addition, if either you or the person you are moving with values your household goods, you may miss them for emotional reasons or practical reasons—think of that comfortable mattress or La-Z-Boy—or both.

How to Save Money with This Option: There isn't anything more to save. If you're bringing only what you can take with you as luggage, you've already eliminated most or all of the cost of transporting household goods.

Option 2: Move a Small Amount Yourself in Your Own Vehicle

This can be a viable low-cost option if you have only a relatively small amount of household goods to bring and they fit in your own non-commercial vehicle, such as a van, small pickup truck, or very small trailer.

Unlike Option 1, with Option 2, you are actually transporting some household goods. But you are still at the very small end of the spectrum. Option 2 is generally for someone who is willing to transport their household goods in their own vehicle and has more than can reasonably be brought as luggage, but not enough to justify hiring an international mover.

My Experience with This Option

I have personally brought my own household goods and other items into Mexico this way several times. I have also spoken with many other people who have done it, and I have suggested this option to prospective BMM clients when the amount they wanted to bring was small enough that hiring an international mover did not make economic sense.

When giving this advice, however, I always give the same caveat: My expertise in moving household goods to Mexico is centered on larger moves using the Menaje de Casa. I am not an expert in this method. If you are considering it, you should verify the current rules that apply to your vehicle, your circumstances, and exactly what you intend to bring. You should also be aware that different customs officials at the border will interpret the rules differently, so there is not one universal answer for how this could work.

Why This Can Cost So Much Less Than Hiring a Mover

When you transport your own household goods in your own vehicle, you are not operating as a "mover for hire." A mover for hire is someone who is being paid to transport someone else's household goods. In contrast, you are simply transporting your own possessions in your own vehicle.

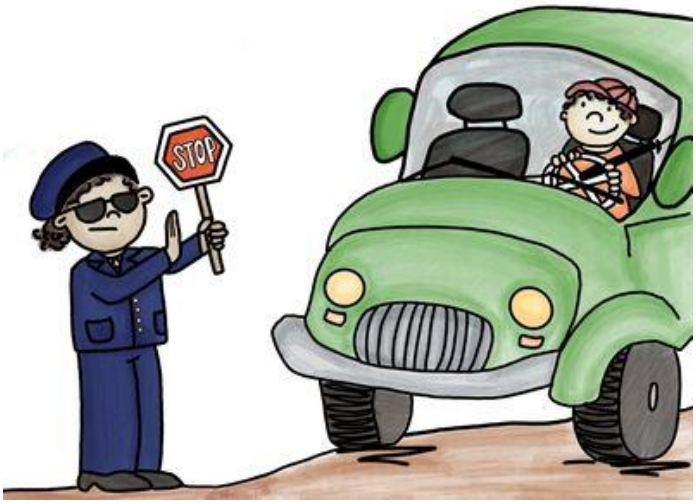
That distinction matters because a legitimate mover for hire must comply with the commercial transportation, regulatory, insurance, customs, and other requirements that apply to its particular operation. Many of those requirements do not apply when you transport your own possessions across the border in your own vehicle.

Complying with the requirements to act legally as a mover for hire costs money. That is one reason transporting a small amount yourself can cost so much less than hiring a legitimate international mover.

This does not mean that a mover for hire can simply ignore those requirements in order to offer a lower price. If a requirement applies to the mover's operation, complying with it is part of the cost of operating legally. We will discuss this distinction more in Option 3.

What You Still Have to Do at the Border

Not being a mover for hire does not mean that you can put anything you want into your vehicle and simply drive it across the border. You still have to comply with the customs rules that apply to you and to what you are bringing.



For moves to Mexico, Mexico's passenger rules allow an individual, within the limits and requirements of those rules, to bring qualifying goods with them and declare them directly to Mexican customs at the border without using the same commercial customs-broker process used for a larger household-goods move under the Menaje de Casa. If taxes are due under the applicable passenger procedure, they can be paid as part of that process.

For moves from Mexico to the U.S., the customs procedures are different. If you use this option for moving to the U.S., you should verify the current U.S. rules that apply to what you intend to bring.

This does not mean that anything that fits into your vehicle can automatically or legally be brought into Mexico or the U.S. There can be limits on value and restrictions on what can be imported. Verify the current requirements before you leave and if you're traveling to Mexico, know that the rules are not applied exactly in the same way in all cases by all customs officials at any border crossing.

Practical Limitations

The obvious limitation is that you have to transport the household goods yourself. You are limited by what will fit in your vehicle or trailer, you have to do the driving, and you have to deal with the border process yourself.

You also need a vehicle that you can legally drive in the countries through which you will be traveling and must comply with the applicable vehicle, licensing, insurance, and other requirements.

For a small shipment and someone comfortable doing those things, that may be perfectly reasonable. For an entire household, it usually becomes a very different proposition.

Cost: Very low. If you are driving the vehicle across the border anyway, there may be little additional transportation cost attributable to what you transport yourself.

Advantages: In addition to low cost when compared to having someone else transport your items, you also get direct control over your household goods and handle the border crossing yourself.

Disadvantages: You can bring only a relatively small amount, you have to transport it yourself, you have to handle the border process, and you must understand and comply with the requirements that apply to your goods, your vehicle, and your trip.

How to Save Money with This Option: Bring only the relatively small number of items that are the most important to you and that can reasonably and legally be transported in your own vehicle.

[Everything You Need to Know About Using the Menaje de Casa to Move Your Household Goods to Mexico]

Option 3: Hire "A Guy With a Truck"

What if you do not want to drive your household goods across the border yourself? There are lots of people offering to do it for you, and they are easy to find on Facebook and elsewhere.

Before I started Best Mexico Movers, I did a lot of research to understand how moving household goods to Mexico actually works. Before doing that research, I was very naïve, and Option 3 was the option I was planning to use.

Just get my gardener, his cousin, or the local furniture guy to drive up to the U.S., get my stuff, and drive down. Or, if that did not work, hire the guy I found on Facebook who says he has a trailer, does

it all the time, and may even have a website with lots of stock photos of smiling people, moving boxes, and trucks. A few other people on Facebook say he is fabulous.

No need to pay those expensive movers, right? I'm smarter than that! We're in Mexico!

Then I learned enough about international household-goods moving to understand what I didn't know and the questions I had to ask.

What Changes When You Pay Someone Else?

In Option 2, you were transporting your own household goods in your own vehicle. You were not a mover for hire.

Option 3 changes that. Once you pay someone else to transport your household goods, that person or company is providing a commercial moving service. That makes the provider a mover for hire.

That distinction matters because as a mover for hire, legal and regulatory requirements apply to that provider's operation, including transportation authority and permits, customs requirements, insurance requirements, and other obligations that do not apply to you when you transport your own possessions in your own vehicle.

Complying with those requirements costs money. That is one reason you should not compare the price charged by The Guy with the cost of transporting your own household goods in Option 2 as though the only difference is who drives the truck. It's not.

In our experience talking with transportation companies, moving companies and customs brokers, as well as other people who used The Guy, some Guys operate legally and some do not. You need to know which it is.

The point is not that a small operator or "Guy with a Truck" is automatically illegitimate. The point is that price and appearance alone do not tell you whether the provider is operating legally or what protections you have.

How Do You Know Whether The Guy Is Operating Legitimately?

Ask questions and do not be satisfied with "I do this all the time." Ask enough questions to understand exactly how your move will work.

Under whose legal or transportation authority is The Guy transporting your goods? How will your shipment legally cross the border? Who will handle the customs work? What insurance or other protection applies? What documents or contract will you receive? And what happens if

your household goods are damaged, lost, stolen, delayed, stopped at the border, or otherwise cannot be delivered as planned?

Most importantly, ask what recourse you have if something goes wrong after you have entrusted The Guy with what could be your entire lifetime's worth of personal possessions.

If the person you are hiring cannot give you clear, credible answers to these questions, that is information you need to know.

"No One Follows the Law in Mexico Anyway"

We sometimes hear some version of, "This is Mexico. Nobody follows all those rules anyway."

The implication is that there is little or no consequence if one does not follow the law.

After completing more than 1,000 household-goods moves to or from Mexico, I can tell you that this is not how you should approach an international household-goods shipment. The laws and procedures that apply to your move matter and there can be severe consequences if they are not followed.

The worst time to discover that a requirement really does matter is after someone else has possession of your household goods and a customs authority, transportation authority, insurer, customs broker, or another party has stopped the shipment or created a problem that could have been avoided.

What About Insurance?

Insurance is of central importance to a move. We are discussing it here because Option 3 is where the issue can become especially revealing, but you should understand the protection that applies whenever you use a mover for hire.

Ask whether your household goods are insured against loss or damage while they are in the mover's possession. If The Guy says they are, do not stop with the word "insured." Ask who the insurance company is, how much coverage you have, what is excluded, whether the coverage applies to your international move, and what the claims process would be if your household goods were damaged, lost, or stolen.

What if The Guy tells you that he does not offer insurance for your household goods?

There are at least two very different possible explanations.

The first is that he could arrange or offer insurance but chooses not to. If that is his answer, ask why he chooses not to. (Perhaps he has a perfectly reasonable explanation.) But also ask yourself how you would feel if your household goods were damaged, lost, or stolen and there were no insurance policy protecting them.

The second possibility is that he would like to offer insurance but cannot find an insurance company willing to work with him.

Insurance companies are not required to insure every mover that wants to work with them. They can decide which movers and risks they are willing to insure.

We know this firsthand. Before our insurance provider agreed to work with Best Mexico Movers, we had to be vetted. Since then, the insurer has closely monitored our claims ratio and has told us explicitly that if our claims exceed an acceptable level, it could stop working with us. (For the record, we have never even been close to exceeding an acceptable level.)

So if The Guy would like to offer insurance but cannot find an insurance company willing to work with him, it might be good to understand why. That he cannot provide you with insurance does not in itself prove that The Guy is operating illegally or that he is untrustworthy. But keep in mind that insurers evaluate risk for a living. If an insurer is unwilling to accept the risk of household goods being in the care of The Guy, please consider why you would be willing to accept it.

What About the Customs Broker?

Here is another question to ask. Who is the licensed customs broker who will be clearing my household goods into Mexico or the U.S.?

If the type of shipment The Guy is transporting requires a customs broker and The Guy tells you that he is not using one, ask how the shipment will legally clear Mexican customs.

We know from our own experience that customs brokers do not work with just anybody. All three of the Mexican customs brokers BMM currently works with have told us that they choose carefully whom they are willing to work with and that they refuse to work with some movers and other potential clients. One reason they refuse is that the broker takes on responsibilities and risks when submitting a shipment to Mexican customs, so they choose carefully who they will work with.

The fact that a customs broker will not work with a particular mover does not, by itself, prove that the mover is dishonest or operating illegally. But, just as with an insurance company, a customs broker is an experienced professional third party deciding whether it is willing to accept the responsibility and risk associated with working with that mover to import household goods to or from Mexico. Licensed customs brokers know a lot about this subject.

That means if they refuse to work with The Guy it is worth considering why.

Why Is The Guy's Price So Low?

A low price does not, by itself, mean that The Guy is doing anything wrong. A smaller operator may have lower overhead, provide fewer services, offer less protection, or use a simpler business model.

But before choosing Option 3 because of the price, understand exactly what is—and is not—included and why it costs less.

If part of the lower price comes from providing fewer services or from you knowingly accepting more responsibility or risk, you can decide whether the savings are worth it.

If the price is lower because the mover is ignoring laws or regulations that actually apply to his operation and your shipment, however, then part of what makes the service cheaper is that he is operating illegally.

Cost: Often substantially less than Options 4 and 5. Before deciding that the lower price makes this the better choice, understand why the price is lower and what services, protections, compliance costs, or other expenses may not be included.

Advantages: It can cost substantially less than Options 4 and 5. A small operator may also offer a simple, direct arrangement with flexible scheduling and direct communication with the person transporting your household goods.

Disadvantages: The risk can vary enormously depending on who The Guy actually is. The lower price may come with less insurance, less documentation, less accountability, fewer services, or noncompliance with requirements that apply to the move. If the provider cannot clearly document the transportation authority, customs

process, insurance or other protection, contracts, and recourse behind the move, you may be accepting risks that you do not fully appreciate.

How to Save Money with This Option: The price may already be low. Before trying to reduce it further, make sure you understand why it is low, what you are giving up in exchange for the savings, and how that could affect you if something goes wrong.

Option 4: Use a Smaller Legally-Compliant Independent Mover to Move Your Household Goods

There are legitimate international movers that operate independently of the household-name moving networks. Like the movers in Option 5, they are movers for hire and must comply with the requirements that apply to their operations. The difference is that an independent mover may use a very different business model than a mover from a household-name moving network.

This distinction is important after our discussion of Option 3 to distinguish it from Option 3. Just because a smaller independent mover may have a lower price than a mover from a household-name moving network does not necessarily mean that the independent mover is cutting corners, omitting required protections, or ignoring laws and regulations. A legitimate independent mover may be able to charge less than a traditional network mover because of how it structures its business and how the services are purchased and delivered.

There Is No Single Option 4 Business Model

It is not accurate to lump all independent movers into one category. Their prices, services, equipment, insurance arrangements, degree of specialization, and methods of coordinating a move can be very different.

That variation can create opportunities for you to get a move that fits your needs more closely, but it also means that you should not assume that one independent mover operates like another. Best Mexico Movers is one example of an Option 4 mover, but the way BMM operates should not be assumed to describe every company in this category.

How Can an Independent Mover Charge Less Without Cutting Corners?

A lower price does not always come from doing more work yourself, accepting more risk, or giving up services or protections. It can also come from how the moving company structures its business.

Depending on the mover, some services may be unbundled rather than automatically included in one package. You may have more choice over who performs certain local services and may be able to pay those providers directly. An independent mover may also have fewer network layers, different overhead, or greater specialization in a particular type of move. It may also not have much of the infrastructure the Option 5 movers have, such as trucks, warehouses, offices, etc., while still potentially providing service equal to or better than what an Option 5 mover provides.

None of this guarantees that an independent mover will charge less. Rather, it explains how a legitimate mover can sometimes reduce costs through choice, efficiency, specialization, and business model rather than by ignoring requirements that apply to the move.

How the Best Mexico Movers Model Works

Best Mexico Movers was designed around this idea. We perform the core services where we add the most value, help our clients arrange certain local services separately when it makes sense, and coordinate the overall move.

We do not have the overhead of trucks, warehouses, and offices. Instead, we operate as a modern organization that uses the best and most cost-effective resources for each move, when and where they are needed.

For example, you can choose to do some packing or loading yourself, but you do not have to. The same is true at destination: depending on your move, you may have choices about who unloads your household goods.

The difference is that BMM does not necessarily provide certain local services such as packing, loading, and unloading directly. When it makes sense, we can introduce you to local packers and loaders, and you can hire and pay those providers directly. This gives you more control over who comes into your home to pack and load your items, and it can save you a meaningful amount of money. If we bundled those services into our price and then paid the providers

ourselves, we would have to charge you more. We would rather give you the opportunity to pay them directly and keep that markup out of your moving cost.

Paying a local provider directly does not mean that responsibility for coordinating your move is handed off to that provider. Best Mexico Movers continues to coordinate and supervise your overall move from beginning to end.

What Choices Might an Independent Mover Give You?

Depending on the mover, you may have the option to:

- Do some or all of your own packing or loading, if you want to and if the mover and applicable insurance or other coverage permit it.
- Choose and pay local packers, loaders, or unloaders directly rather than having those services automatically bundled into the mover's price.
- Transport your household goods to the mover's facility or another agreed location if that is practical and the mover permits it.
- Choose among transportation or service arrangements that better fit your shipment rather than automatically purchasing one standardized package.

Do not assume that every Option 4 mover offers these choices. Ask exactly what you can choose, who coordinates each part of the move, who is responsible for each part, and how your choices affect the price and the protection that applies to your household goods.

How Do You Know if the Company You're Considering Really Is Option 4—and Not Option 3?

Option 4 assumes that you are dealing with a legitimate mover for hire. Do not make that assumption merely because a company has a professional website, calls itself an international mover, or because some people on Facebook seem to like him.

Use the same due-diligence questions discussed in Option 3. The mover should be able to give you clear, credible answers about the transportation authority and permits that apply, the customs process,

insurance or other protection, contracts and documentation, and what recourse you have if something goes wrong.

The difference is that an Option 4 mover should be able to demonstrate that it is operating legitimately while also explaining how its particular business model may provide flexibility or reduce costs.

Specialization Can Matter Too

Another possible difference is specialization. A smaller independent mover may concentrate heavily on a particular country, route, or type of move rather than handling many different kinds of moves in many different places.

That does not mean that every independent mover is a specialist or that specialization automatically makes a mover better. It is simply another factor worth evaluating.

Best Mexico Movers, for example, is focused on household-goods moves to and from Mexico and that is our only business. That specialization affects how we design our process, coordinate customs and border procedures, work with brokers and other providers, and plan the transportation of your shipment.

Cost: Often more than Option 3 and less than the traditional full-service network described in Option 5, but there is no universal rule. The meaningful comparison is between actual quotes for comparable shipments, services, protections, and responsibilities.

Advantages: Potentially lower cost than Option 5, greater flexibility, more choice over who performs certain services, the ability to pay some providers directly, and the possibility of working with a mover that specializes in the type of move you are making. Depending on the mover's model, these advantages do not necessarily require you to perform more of the physical work or coordinate the international logistics yourself. They can just mean more flexibility and lower cost.

Disadvantages: There is no single independent-mover model, so you need to understand exactly what you are buying, who is doing what, what is included, how the move is coordinated, and what protections apply. You also need to verify that the company really belongs in Option 4 and is not actually Option 3, "A Guy With a Truck."

How to Save Money with This Option: Ask which services can be unbundled, which providers you can choose and pay directly, what service or transportation choices are available, and which tasks you may perform yourself if you want to. The savings may come from choice, efficiency, specialization, and the mover's business model—not simply from doing more work yourself.

Option 5: Go with a “Household Name” Mover — A Traditional Full-Service Moving Network

The final option is the traditional full-service international moving network—the model many people first think of when they hear “international mover.”

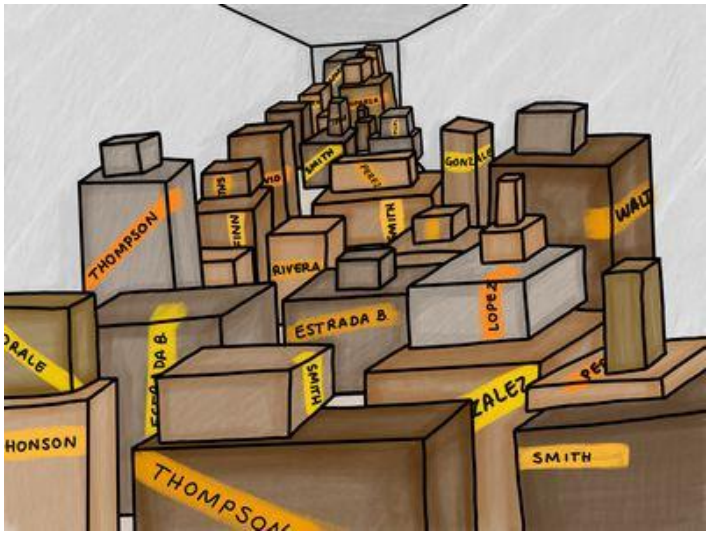
With this model, the customer generally purchases a package of services through a larger moving network rather than separately choosing and paying some of the companies, licensees or franchisees that perform different parts of the move. For a customer who wants packing, loading, transportation coordination, destination delivery, and unloading arranged through one system, that convenience and structure can be valuable.

It can also add cost. Option 5 is generally at the higher-cost end of the five options in this guide because more services are typically bundled into the move and multiple businesses may participate in providing them.

How the Traditional Moving Network Works

Many household-name movers operate through networks of independently owned local moving companies that serve as agents of the larger network. Companies within systems such as Allied and Mayflower, for example, can be independently owned local moving businesses while also operating as agents of the national or international network.

An Origin Agent typically handles services at the beginning of the move, such as surveying the shipment, packing, and loading. The shipment then moves through the network, and a Destination Agent typically handles final delivery and unloading at destination. Other companies or agents may participate between those two points, depending on how the shipment is transported.



This structure can make the move easier for a customer who wants these services arranged through one moving system rather than separately finding, hiring, and/or paying each provider.

One reason some people prefer this model is that it can feel as though they are hiring “one company” to handle the entire move. We hear this frequently from prospective clients.

But if you purchase your move through one household-name network, that does not necessarily mean that the company you're purchasing it from will actually perform or coordinate every part of the move.

In a traditional international moving network, multiple separate businesses can participate in a single move. Depending on the shipment, these can include an Origin Agent, a Destination Agent, transportation providers, warehouse operators, customs-related providers, and other companies or agents involved along the way. The trucks, warehouses, crews, and other resources used for different parts of the move do not necessarily belong to one company.

The network connects and coordinates these different participants. That can provide convenience because the customer does not have to independently find and arrange all of them. But the underlying move is not necessarily less operationally complex simply because the customer sees one familiar household name.

This is also an important difference between the traditional network model and the Best Mexico Movers model. With BMM, you may pay certain local service providers, such as packers, loaders, or unloaders, directly. But that does not mean that coordination of your move is handed from one company to another.

Best Mexico Movers works with you throughout the move and coordinates and supervises the different parts of the process from beginning to end. With BMM, responsibility for coordinating your overall move does not pass from one local service provider to another. BMM remains the company working with you and coordinating the move throughout.

So there are two different questions to ask: How many companies will perform services during my move, and who will coordinate my move from beginning to end? Those are not the same thing.

When comparing movers, do not ask only, "Do I have one company to call?" Also ask, "Who will actually handle my household goods, how many different companies will be involved, and who will remain responsible for coordinating my move from beginning to end?"

More companies participating and/or an older model does not automatically mean that the structure is wasteful or that the charges are unnecessary. Those companies are performing services and have their own operating costs. But when multiple businesses participate in a move and the services are bundled through a network, those costs become part of the economics of the move.

How Much Mexico Experience Will the People Handling Your Move Have?

A household-name moving network may have enormous overall experience with international moves. That does not necessarily tell you how much experience the particular Origin Agent,

Destination Agent, packers, loaders, or other people assigned to your shipment have with moves to or from Mexico.

The local Origin Agent handling your move may be a very experienced moving company while also handling local, interstate, and international moves as part of its regular business rather than specializing in moving to or from Mexico.

That does not mean the agent is not a good mover. It means you should ask how much Mexico-specific experience the people actually packing, loading, coordinating, and delivering your household goods have, rather than assuming that everyone involved specializes in Mexico because you hired a household-name international network.

As an example, packing for a move to or from Mexico can require additional care because the trip is often longer than a domestic move and may include rougher roads and additional handling. The more times household goods are handled or transferred between trucks or warehouses, the more important good packing becomes.

Also ask who is responsible for coordinating the customs portion of your particular move and how much experience that person or company has with household-goods shipments to or from Mexico.

How Many Times Will Your Household Goods Be Handled?

In the traditional-network Mexico moving models BMM has encountered, shipments may involve warehouses, transloading, consolidation, or some combination of them as they move through the network. We learned this during our original research before founding BMM and have continued to encounter it in our subsequent work with traditional-network moving companies.

Warehousing, transloading, and consolidation can serve legitimate logistical purposes. The important issue for you is to understand how your particular shipment will move and how many times your household goods will be physically handled along the way.

Every additional unloading, reloading, warehouse stay, or transfer is another point at which your household goods are being handled. That does not mean something will go wrong, but it makes the quality of the packing and the way the shipment is managed especially important.

When you ask about transloading and consolidation, be specific. Ask how many times your household goods will be unloaded from one vehicle and loaded onto another, whether they will spend time in a warehouse, whether they will be combined with other customers' shipments, and how many different companies or agents will physically handle them before delivery.

Insurance vs. Limited Carrier Liability

As we discussed in Option 3, do not stop when a mover tells you that your household goods are "insured." Find out exactly what protection applies.

One particular source of confusion is protection based on the weight of the damaged or lost item. We regularly talk with people who tell us that their mover included "insurance" at no additional cost, only to discover when we ask more questions that what they are describing is not an insurance policy protecting the value of their household goods, but rather, it is limited carrier liability.

In the U.S. interstate moving context, the FMCSA explicitly distinguishes 60-cents-per-pound Released Value Protection from insurance: it is a limited level of the mover's liability for loss or damage, not an insurance policy.

Here's how it works. Suppose you have a 17-pound television that is destroyed during your move. At 60 cents per pound, the mover's liability would be:

17 pounds × $0.60 = $10.20.

It does not matter for that calculation whether the television cost $300, $1,000, or $2,000. If the applicable protection is limited to 60 cents per pound, a 17-pound television produces $10.20 in compensation.

That does not make 60-cents-per-pound protection illegitimate. But it does make it very different from an insurance policy designed to protect the value of your household goods.

So if a mover tells you that "insurance is included," ask what is actually included. Is it an insurance policy or limited carrier liability? Who is the insurer, if there is one? What value is protected? What are the deductibles and exclusions? How would a claim be calculated?

"Insurance included" can sound reassuring. $10.20 for your destroyed television may sound considerably less reassuring.

Calculating the Price by Weight or Volume

Although we are discussing pricing methods under Option 5, the same principles apply to any mover that calculates its price by weight, volume, or another measurement.

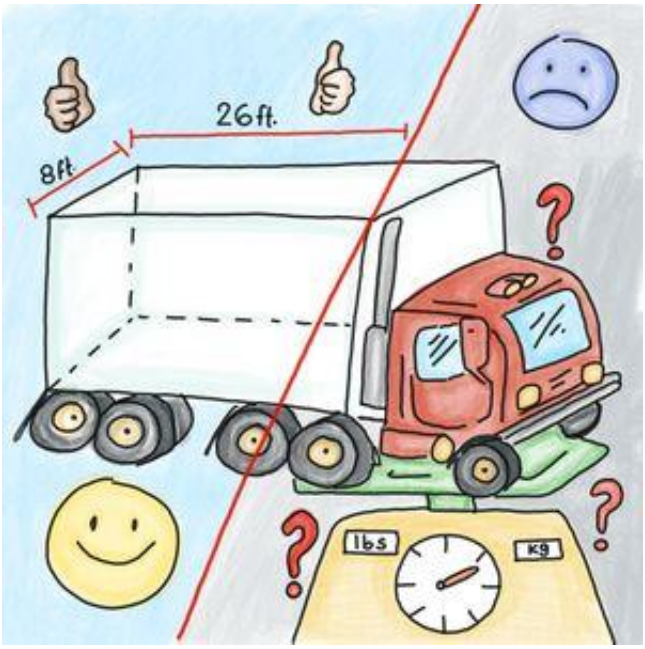
There is nothing inherently wrong with charging by weight. The issue is how easily an ordinary customer can understand and independently evaluate the measurement on which the final price is based.

Do you know how much your household goods weigh?

Most people do not.

Suppose your estimate is based on 5,000 pounds. Upon what basis would you evaluate this?

Suppose further that after your household goods are packed and loaded, the mover tells you that the actual weight is 7,000 pounds and that your price has increased accordingly.



Would you know whether 7,000 pounds was reasonable? Unless you have access to the actual scale documentation and understand how the weighing was performed, you may have very little ability to judge the number for yourself.

At that point, the mover already has your household goods on the truck.

What are you going to do?

In many cases, you are going to pay.

That does not mean the mover necessarily did anything wrong. Your shipment really may weigh more than estimated. But it illustrates why you should understand before your goods are loaded how the final weight will be determined, what documentation you will receive, what happens if the actual weight exceeds the estimate, and how much your price can increase.

Charging by volume is different in an important way. While it is true that most people are not experts in calculating cubic feet, they can know directly how many cubic feet their household goods occupy, because they can see how much room their possessions take up. If your goods

occupy approximately one-quarter, one-half, or most of a trailer, you can see that with your own eyes. When the occupied space can be clearly seen and measured, that can make volume easier for an ordinary customer to understand and independently evaluate than weight.

This is one reason Best Mexico Movers prefers pricing based on volume. We know the interior height and width of the cargo space. Once we know how many linear feet the shipment occupies, multiplying the interior height × interior width × linear feet occupied gives us the cubic volume. That gives the customer a basis for understanding the size of the shipment that is relatively easy to see and evaluate, both when the move is being planned and after their household goods are loaded.

Whatever pricing method a mover uses, we recommend that you do not agree to a number you do not understand and cannot judge. Ask how the estimate was calculated, how the final measurement will be verified, what can cause your price to change, and what proof you will receive of the final measurement.

Cost: Often the highest-cost approach in this five-option comparison because the price can include full-service origin and destination work plus the costs associated with coordinating and compensating multiple businesses within the network. It will not necessarily be the most expensive choice for every shipment, so compare actual quotes for comparable services and protections.

Advantages: A full-service structure in which packing, loading, transportation coordination, destination delivery, and unloading can be arranged through the network. Customers may also value the network's geographic reach, a more standardized and longer-established structure, less need to separately locate local service providers, and the familiarity of a household name.

Disadvantages: Potentially higher cost, potentially less choice over the specific Origin and Destination Agents or other providers involved, and a move in which multiple companies may physically handle or participate in the shipment. A large network may have extensive overall international experience while the particular local agent assigned to your move may or may not have extensive Mexico-specific experience. Depending on the transportation model, the shipment may also be warehoused, transferred, or consolidated with other shipments.

How to Save Money with This Option: Ask which services are optional, whether any services can be unbundled or purchased separately, whether doing some packing or other work yourself changes the price or affects the protection on your household goods, how reducing the shipment size changes the quote, and exactly how the final transportation charge will be calculated. If the network requires a largely fixed full-service package, there may simply be fewer opportunities to reduce the price than with an Option 4 mover that permits more customization.

Questions to Ask Any Mover Before You Compare Prices

Before comparing prices, make sure you are comparing more than the numbers at the bottom of the quotes. Ask enough questions to understand who will perform your move, how it will be handled, what protections apply, and what you are actually receiving for the price. Here are some that may be useful to you.

- Are you legally authorized to provide the moving and transportation services you are selling me, and can you show me the applicable authority, permits, or other documentation?

- Who will be my primary point of contact throughout the move, and will the same company remain responsible for coordinating my move from beginning to end?

- How many different companies or agents are expected to participate in my move, and what will each one do?

- Who will pack, load, and unload my household goods? Can I choose any of those providers, pay them directly, or perform any of those services myself? If I pay a provider directly, does that eliminate a markup that would otherwise be added to my price? How would any of these choices affect my price and the protection that applies to my household goods?

- How much experience do the people who will actually handle and coordinate my shipment have with household-goods moves to or from Mexico?

- How will my household goods legally clear customs, who is responsible for that process, and if a licensed customs broker is required, who is the broker?

- Will my household goods be warehoused, transloaded, transferred between vehicles, or consolidated with other customers' shipments? If so, where is that expected to happen, and approximately how many times will my goods be unloaded and reloaded?

- What protection applies if my household goods are lost, damaged, or stolen? Is it an actual insurance policy, limited carrier liability, or some other form of protection? Who provides it, how is compensation calculated, what are the exclusions and deductibles, and how does the claims process work?

- Is my price based on weight, volume, a fixed shipment size, or another method? What can cause the final price to change, what limits apply to those changes, and how can I verify the final measurement or amount?

- If something goes wrong, who is responsible for resolving it, what contract or other documentation governs my move, and what recourse do I have?

The Bottom Line on Lowering the Cost of Moving Your Household Goods to or From Mexico

The cheapest way to move your household goods to or from Mexico is not necessarily to find the mover with the lowest quote. The best value can come from choosing the right type of move for the amount you are bringing, understanding which services you actually need, knowing what you are paying for, and comparing prices only after you understand what each option includes.

Depending on your situation, you may save money by bringing very little, transporting a small amount yourself, choosing a legitimate mover with a different business model, paying certain service providers directly, doing some work yourself if you want to, or simply not using or paying for services you do not need.

But lower cost should not come from unknowingly giving up legal compliance, insurance or other protection, proper customs procedures, accountability, or services you thought were included. A low price is valuable only after you understand why it is low and are comfortable with what you are—and are not—getting for your money.

If you are planning a household-goods move to or from Mexico and are trying to decide which approach makes sense for you, we are happy to speak with you. We can learn about what you want to move, where you are moving from, where you are moving to, what is important to you, and then help you understand whether Best Mexico Movers is a good fit for your move.

Related BMM Guides

We invite you to visit our site and to review the guides below. All are 100% free with no obligation whatsoever.

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How Much of My Household Goods Should I Bring to Mexico?

Everything You Need to Know About Using the Menaje de Casa to Move Your Household Goods to Mexico

Common Misconceptions About Moving Household Goods to or From Mexico

How We Are Different

The Best Mexico Movers Process

Why Trust Best Mexico Movers