Mexico’s Blend of Cultures
Mexican culture is a blend of three influences: Native American culture, Spanish culture, and the unique Mexican culture that has developed over time. The Plaza of Three Cultures in Mexico City symbolizes these traditions. The plaza includes the stone ruins of an Aztec marketplace and a Catholic Church built by the Spanish. Nearby, skyscrapers stand as a symbol of modern Mexico.

More than 18 million people live in Mexico City. It is the largest city in Mexico and the second largest city in the world. Mexico City’s dense population has led to heavy traffic. This has caused problems with air pollution from car exhaust. There is a large gap between the lives of rich and poor citizens.

Life in the Countryside
Mexico’s traditional way of life can be seen in small villages and farming towns. At the center of each village is a plaza. People gather in the plaza to talk and hold weekly markets. Many people in Mexico’s rural areas live in poverty. Some homes have only one room and a dirt floor. Farmhouses often lack electricity and running water. Such conditions have forced many Mexicans to leave the countryside for urban settings. Cities offer more opportunities for employment, services, and education.

Mexicans celebrate Independence Day on September 16. On that day they reenact Father Hidalgo’s call to rise up against Spanish rule. People also watch fireworks, dance, and play music in the streets until late at night.

On November 1 and 2, Mexicans celebrate the Day of the Dead. The holiday honors loved ones who have died. At least once a year, each village also celebrates a fiesta with parades, games, and feasts. A fiesta usually takes place on a saint’s day. This is a day that honors the memory of a holy person.