



Traveling Safe in Mexico

Millions of American and Canadian tourists visit Mexico every year. Are they Safe? Bill and Dot Bell have traveled extensively throughout Mexico for over two decades. Their website www.ontheroadin.com is the most comprehensive RV and Camping guide to MÃ©xico on the internet. They teach courses throughout United States and Canada on how to RV and travel safely throughout Mexico.

([PRWEB](#)) July 11, 2005 -- The hot sun, the rolling waves crashing against palmed lined beaches and the friendly people of Mexico can lull you into a sense of tranquility and that elusive dream world of Å paradise found.Å But is Mexico truly safe for the average American and Canadian traveler? Specifically is it safe for those visitors who travel outside of the tourist resorts by car, bus, and RV; the traveler who wants to experience the Å real Mexico.Å

What about the stories of kidnappings, roadside hijackings, crooked cops and the ever infamous bandidos? After 20 years of exploring all 31 states in Mexico via bus, car, train and RV, we would be lying if we said that there wasn't anything to be concerned about. After all, in Mexico the average yearly wage of the Mexican would not even make the first down payment not to mention the worth of the cameras, computers, stereos and other equipment that is contained in the average mobile house.

Crime happens in all three countries, but there are cultural and economic differences. Many victims are those who are on holiday and are lulled into a false sense of security. They forget to put away valuables outside of their rigs at night; something most of us would never dream of doing back home. RVers and campers soon dock by themselves on a deserted beach or they don't plan their trips wisely and fail to reach their destination well before night fall.

The U S State Department's warnings about travel to Mexican border towns such as Juarez, Tijuana and Matamoros should be taken seriously and we certainly recommend that you drive through these border towns early in morning and get through as quickly as possible. Extra precautions have to be taken in larger metropolitan areas such as Mexico City where urban crime is as great if not greater than traveling to New York in the early 1990's. Pickpockets here are as numerous as those who ply the Paris Metro and the taxis you take in any large city should only be those recommended by the hotel where you stay.

This is not the case in tourist destinations and small and mid sized communities throughout Mexico where crime rates are similar to those in the same size communities back home. One notable and perplexing difference between cultures is the acceptance in Mexico that police can be bribed, called Mordida, or Å the little bite.Å After almost two decades of road travel in Mexico and talking and writing to RVers we find that this practice is getting less and less common. Both State and Federal governments of Mexico are making earnest attempts to stop it but the practice still exists.

If you are pulled over by the police for a real or sometimes imaginary traffic violation; speeding, making an illegal turn or driving through a red light, you will likely be faced with two options. You will be faced with your driver's license taken away by the police, having your rig impounded and waiting at least 24 hours before being able to pay the fine at the Å Ministerio PÃºblico or Transito.Å The other option, although abhorrent in our gringo eyes, is to have the policeman do the favor of paying the fine for you. Likely the price of this invisible ticket will be less than the official police station price. While Å the little biteÅ is repugnant to us, it has a

long tradition in Mexico.

Kidnappings in some parts of Mexico do occur and perhaps to us is the most disturbing aspect of the safety question. To date the vast majority of kidnapping has occurred in major centers such as Mexico City and the bulk of those cases have been inflicted on rich Mexicans. As parents of three children, two of whom live with us, and one who works and lives in Mexico City, this by far creates the most fear.

There lies the rub of traveling in today's world. 9/11, the London Tube bombings and the disappearance of the American high school girl in Aruba, all prove one thing. There is some inherent danger when traveling abroad and some that you cannot avoid. An event of such enormity is unlikely and should not deter you from travel and adventure. The key to the majority of petty crimes or crimes without violence is to be prepared, never let your guard down and apply basic common sense to your actions.

Lessen the possibility of crime by always taking note of your surroundings and acting appropriately. Don't flaunt your wealth by wearing a gold bracelet while jogging on a beach or openly carry an expensive digital camera while sauntering through an impoverished village or neighborhood.

When visiting or staying in a foreign country, register with your consulate. They will inform you by email if there is a major problem such as a hurricane or other threat that would possibly impede your stay. Read the State Departments warnings on travel to that country and take steps to minimize any potential peril. Report any crime to your consulate so that other travelers can be forewarned.

If you drive, start early and plan your trip daily to give yourself ample time to reach your destination before sunset allowing for extra time in case you have a mishap such as breakdown or flat tire. You shouldn't drive at night.

Mexico is a fabulous country, filled with superb contrasts, palmed lined beaches, colonial cities, ancient Mayan and Aztec pre-Hispanic treasures. Experiencing it can be a highlight in your life. Traveling carefully can save your life.

Here's list of some things you should do to avoid being a victim of crime while traveling in Mexico

- After a evening at a restaurant, bar or disco always take a cab back to your room or RV park
- Never walk on a beach late at night
- If you are at a disco or party, never be enticed to leave the establishment for fresh air or a romantic walk with someone you have just met
- If there are drugs present, leave immediately - even if it is in a reputable establishment
- Check with your consulate or go on line to read State Department warnings on criminal activities in the area that you are visiting
- Never give out personal information to strangers (address, phone numbers, etc)
- Do your homework and know the value of the currency you are using
- Only carry the money that is needed for the day (use the hotel safety deposit box to keep your bank and credit cards)
- Never wear valuable jewelry or carry expensive cameras openly
- Travel in pairs or groups whenever possible
- If you are camping or RVing, never boondock on deserted beaches or back country unless you are familiar with the locals in the area or there are other RVs parked there as well



Â□ When confronted by a thief with a weapon, never put up a struggle. Your life is far more valuable than anything they could take.

Â□ Never leave anything of value outside of your RV or tent, overnight or when visiting a neighbor, restaurant or even a facility onsite.

Â□ If you find yourself in any situation where you feel uncomfortable for whatever reasons, trust your judgment and leave.

Ensure you pack your common sense along with your bathing suit and sunscreen.

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