

This is Mexico—V Biggest Share of Tourists in Mexico Come From North of Border

By HARRY FERGUSON
Acapulco, Mexico — UPI — When a Mexican talks about tourists, he almost always means Americans. About 850,000 persons travel to Mexico each year in search of sun and sand and 95 per cent of them come from the United States.

Precise figures are impossible to come by, but it is likely that each of them spends an average of \$400 including transportation down and back. That makes tourism big business. Mexico knows it and the hospitality is lavish. There is almost no place where a tourist would want to go that he can't find persons speaking English and delighted to accept American currency at the rate of 12.50 pesos to the dollar.

Climate is what Mexico has to sell, and it almost lives up to the proud claims made for it by the national tourist bureau. Mexico is a land of sunshine most of the year with warm days and cool nights. There are periods when it is not supposed to rain, but mother nature is a fickle lady and sometimes she double-crosses the tourist bureau. Recently this correspondent wandered out into the streets of Mexico City, unaccompanied with umbrella or raincoat, but having been firmly assured he would need neither. It was too late for the morning mist and too early for the twilight dew, and the inescapable conclusion is that the moisture that soaked into his suit was rain.

Acapulco Best Known
There are many notable resorts in Mexico, but this ancient fishing village of Acapulco on the Pacific Coast is the best known. Its breathtaking scenery, pleasant climate and a mushroom growth of hotels have made it one of the great playgrounds of the world. The mountains march boldly down to the edge of the sea, stopping just soon enough to provide excellent sand beaches.

On the crags and slopes of the mountains that surround Acapulco's harbor hotels and cottages have been built and from a distance they seem to be suspended in air. June through September is the rainy season, but the rest of the year is arid. Daytime temperature usually is in the 80s with an occasional rise up to close to 100. Night temperature is in the 60s.

Acapulco offers anything you and your pocketbook command in the way of accommodations from boarding houses at \$2 per person per day to penthouse suites. For about \$14 a day you can get a comfortable double room in almost any hotel. The people who travel the farthest to get to Acapulco are the fishing enthusiasts. They have a choice of going for marlin, sailfish, yellow tail, tuna, red snapper, amberjack and a half dozen other varieties.

Temblors Shake City
Even the Garden of Eden had its snake and it would be misleading to give the impression that Acapulco is a paradise without flaw. About 15 miles offshore there is a geological fault in the floor of the Pacific Ocean that causes earth temblors. There was a heavy one in 1957, considerable damage was done, and the tourist must be prepared to awaken to the shaking of his hotel room.

To enter Mexico an American needs proof of his citizenship and a certificate showing he has been vaccinated for smallpox within the last three years. He can obtain three types of tourist cards: for \$3, permission to go in and stay six months; for \$5, permission to go in for six months and depart and return as often as he chooses; for 50 cents, per-

mission to go in for a five-day stay. When he leaves, he can take back into the United States \$100 worth of merchandise duty free.

The Pan-American highway persuades many persons to travel by automobile to Mexico. If you are going into remote parts of the country, fill up the gas tank at every opportunity. Slow down when you approach a village, because you might find goats disputing the right of way on the main street. Once in Mexico, you will find the railroad service good and the air service excellent. There are about 20 airlines operating out of Mexico City to all parts of the world, and a flight on a Mexican air liner from the capital to Acapulco takes only 40 minutes. Buses run frequently to centers of tourist interest.

Dollars Always Accepted
Travelers' checks, of course, are acceptable everywhere, but the American dollar bill is just as good in the large cities. You can pay a hotel bill, a restaurant check or a department store purchase in dollars. At the Mexico City airport and other points of tourist arrival there are bank branches which will change dollars into pesos.

Women will need a stole or a light coat for the cool evenings. Men should take lightweight suits and a light topcoat. Here in Acapulco and other resorts the dress is informal and the dining rooms are filled with men wearing slacks, sports shirts, no coat and no necktie. Women wear slacks and tunic tops, but apparently shorts are not favored in dining rooms. A bathing suit is common attire until sundown.

Mexican food is not all highly spiced with chili peppers, but some of the best of it is made that way. Beef is plentiful and you can get any quality you want depending on how much you want to pay. Chicken and turkey are available everywhere and the

menu almost always has at least three choices of fresh fish.

Beer 'First Rate'
This correspondent recalls a memorable meal in which the main course was shell fish soup. Almost every shell inhabitant of the ocean was cooked into a stew and seasoned slightly with pepper and chill.

Mexican beer is first rate. Tequila, the native spirits, is something that had better be left to the individual taste. It bears a distant kinship in flavor to vodka and with a dash of lemon juice makes a palatable martini.

But, to one visitor at least, the culinary triumph of Mexico is the tortilla. It is a thin corn cake, the dough of which has been soaked in lime water. The corn taste comes through so strong that after eating it you never will be entirely happy again with American corn bread. The tortilla can be wrapped around chicken, shrimp, beef or fish and heated in an oven with a result that you will carry memories through the years.

Court Studies Heat Control System

The Jackson county court is studying the possibility of changing the temperature control arrangement in the courthouse offices.

Judge Earl Miller explained that each year the oil fuel costs to heat the structure have increased. All offices are now at the same temperature. Costs of converting to individual thermostat controls in each office is now being discussed with heating engineers to see if it will be more economical, Miller pointed out.

Heating costs for 1962 totaled \$6,900, the judge said, but noted that extremely cold temperatures were recorded during the winter.




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