

Mexico Residency Visa Cheat Sheet

The practical things to know before your consulate appointment, when entering Mexico, and while completing canje.

Residency is manageable when you prepare correctly. The biggest problems usually come from choosing the wrong route, relying on an old checklist, arriving with incomplete records, or entering Mexico under the wrong status.

1. Start with the right legal route

Financial solvency

Qualifying income, pension, savings or investments. Amounts and document rules vary by consulate.

Family unity

A qualifying relationship to a Mexican citizen or resident. The exact relationship and civil records matter.

Employment in Mexico

A Mexican employer normally begins the authorization with INM before the consular step.

Property or investment

Possible only when the current threshold and documentation are met. Most property owners do not qualify this way.

Mexican ancestry: You may need a nationality or civil-registration process instead of a residency visa. Confirm whether you already have a claim to Mexican nationality before proving financial solvency.

2. Understand the two-stage process

STAGE 1 - Consulate

Apply outside Mexico unless a different legal route applies. If approved, a residency visa is placed in your passport.

STAGE 2 - Mexico

Enter Mexico correctly, then exchange the visa for your resident card at INM. This is called canje.

Do not confuse the deadlines. Use the consular visa within the validity printed on it, commonly up to 180 days. After you enter Mexico with that visa, begin canje within **30 calendar days**.

You can apply before you move full time

Mexico does not generally impose an annual minimum-day presence requirement simply to keep a valid resident card. It can be legal to establish residency years before your move. You must still complete canje, renew temporary residency on time, and enter and leave Mexico as a resident. Absences can matter later if naturalization is your goal.

Before Your Consulate Appointment

Your exact consulate controls its appointment method, financial thresholds and document format. Recheck its current instructions even if a friend applied there last year.

Apply sooner rather than later

You may qualify this year and fall short next year even if your finances do not change. Thresholds, exchange rates, appointment systems and scrutiny can change. If salary is your qualification route, apply while you still have the job, pay stubs and matching deposits.

Schedule through the required channel

Many U.S. consulates use MiConsulado. The official WhatsApp or telephone number commonly published is **+1 424 309 0009**. Online appointments may be available at citas.sre.gob.mx. Some consulates use email, local forms or separate visa systems, so follow the current website for your chosen office.

Prepare financial records like an auditor will read them

Your main folder

- ☐ The exact number of months requested by that consulate.
- ☐ Complete, legible statements showing your name, institution, dates and qualifying balances or deposits.
- ☐ Unredacted statements unless the consulate explicitly permits redactions.
- ☐ Originals, copies, certified records or bank-stamped statements when requested.
- ☐ Proof of recurring deposits, such as pay stubs, an employer letter or pension letter.

Your separate backup folder

- ☐ If six months are requested, consider carrying twelve months in total.
- ☐ If twelve months are requested, consider carrying fourteen months in total.
- ☐ Extra supporting records that can answer a question without overwhelming the officer.

Do not build your plan around crypto. Most published solvency checklists ask for traditional personal bank, investment, salary or pension evidence.

Avoid the expensive property mistake

Do not spend most of your liquid assets on a home and assume the property will qualify you. The property route has a high threshold, specific deed requirements and limited consular availability. Confirm the route in writing before buying. Whenever possible, obtain residency first.

Keep the interview honest, short and respectful

DO

Answer the question asked. Be truthful, calm and concise. Explain that you researched Mexico and can support yourself.

DO NOT

Volunteer political complaints, say Mexico is only cheap, speculate about losing your income, or give the officer attitude.

Entering Mexico and Completing Canje

Your entry record matters. Make it obvious that you are entering for canje or returning as a resident, not entering as an ordinary tourist.

At an airport

Use a human immigration officer. For canje, show the residency visa in your passport and say you are entering to complete canje. If you already have a resident card, present the card first, then your passport. Do not use an automated tourism kiosk or self-scan gate for a residency entry.

At a land border

Stop at INM. Do not simply drive across. Show the residency visa or resident card and confirm that your FMM or digital entry record reflects the correct status. Save screenshots or copies of every stamp, QR code and entry record.

Give yourself enough time

Official decision period

The published maximum resolution period for canje is 15 business days, and a complete case may sometimes be resolved sooner.

Real-world trip planning

Appointments, document review, biometrics, follow-up requests and card pickup can make the full process approach 20 business days.

Plan for up to four weeks when practical. Use flexible lodging and transportation. Do not assume a three-day trip will be enough.

There is no implied permission to leave

If canje or renewal is pending, remain in Mexico unless INM issues a written permiso de salida y regreso. Leaving without the proper permit can jeopardize the application or be treated as abandoning the process. The permit must be obtained before departure and recorded as instructed on exit and reentry.

What a facilitator can and cannot do

A facilitator can

Review your case, help with appointments, prepare forms, explain the local INM process, arrange a perito traductor, accompany you when allowed and track the file.

A facilitator cannot

Guarantee approval, change the requirements, force an appointment, legally cut the line, attend your required interview or complete biometrics for you.

A vetted professional may need passport copies, civil records, your visa, FMM and proof of address. That is normal for legitimate immigration work. Confirm how sensitive documents will be stored and avoid sending them to random people found in social media groups.

Your Mexico Residency Checklist

Print these two checklist pages or save them to your phone. Add the exact instructions from your consulate and local INM office.

Before choosing a consulate

- ☐ Confirm whether you need residency, family unity, a work-authorized route or a nationality process through Mexican ancestry.
- ☐ Confirm the qualification route you will use.
- ☐ Read the current checklist for the exact consulate where you plan to apply.
- ☐ Confirm that the consulate accepts applicants from your location.
- ☐ Check its current financial threshold and appointment method.
- ☐ Apply while still employed if salary is the evidence you plan to use.
- ☐ Do not buy property or deplete liquid savings before confirming your route.

Prepare your documents

- ☐ Make sure your passport will remain valid for the required period.
- ☐ Prepare complete, legible and unredacted financial records.
- ☐ Carry extra months of statements in a separate backup folder.
- ☐ Bring originals, copies and bank-stamped or certified records when required.
- ☐ Bring proof explaining salary, pension or recurring deposits.
- ☐ Obtain apostilles before traveling when your case requires them.
- ☐ Arrange an accepted perito traductor for official Spanish translations when needed.
- ☐ Keep a digital backup of every document and confirmation.

Appointment day

- ☐ Bring the requested package plus your separate backup folder.
- ☐ Answer questions honestly, briefly and respectfully.
- ☐ Do not volunteer unrelated information or political complaints.
- ☐ Confirm how and when the passport and visa will be returned.
- ☐ Review the visa sticker for name, passport number and validity before traveling.

Remember: Someone else's successful appointment is not your checklist. Requirements and local practices change.

Canje, Renewal and Travel Checklist

The consular visa is only the first half. Your resident card, renewals and entry records are what protect your status afterward.

Before entering Mexico for canje

- ☐ Check the validity printed on the residency visa.
- ☐ Plan enough time in Mexico for appointments, biometrics and card pickup.
- ☐ Choose flexible transportation and lodging when practical.
- ☐ Carry the documents required by the INM office you will use.
- ☐ Confirm current turnaround times with your local facilitator or INM office.

When entering Mexico

- ☐ Use a human immigration officer, not an automated tourism kiosk.
- ☐ Show the residency visa and state clearly that you are entering for canje.
- ☐ At a land border, stop at INM and confirm the correct entry record.
- ☐ Save your FMM, digital record, passport stamp, receipt and any QR code.

While your case is pending

- ☐ Begin canje within 30 calendar days after entering Mexico with the visa.
- ☐ Keep copies of the application, NUT, receipts and every document submitted or received.
- ☐ Do not leave Mexico unless you receive a written permiso de salida y regreso.
- ☐ Follow up quickly if INM requests another document.

After receiving your card

- ☐ Check your name, nationality, CURP and expiration date for errors.
- ☐ Read dates as day/month/year.
- ☐ Track the temporary-residency renewal date and prepare early.
- ☐ Enter Mexico as a resident and present the resident card before the passport.
- ☐ Keep a personal log of every entry and exit, especially if naturalization may be a future goal.

You do not have to figure this out alone.

Mexico Relocation Guide has helped hundreds of thousands of people research and prepare for life in Mexico. The Complete Mexico Relocation Guide gives you step-by-step instructions and access to vetted, English-speaking professionals across Mexico.

[Learn more at mexicorelocationguide.com/guide/](https://mexicorelocationguide.com/guide/)

Verify current rules before applying

Official starting points: [SRE temporary residence](#) | [INM canje](#) | [Exit and return permit](#) | [Renewal](#) | [Family unity](#) | [Nationality by birth](#)

Educational information only. This is not legal advice and does not guarantee a visa, resident card, appointment or processing time. Always verify the current requirements with the relevant Mexican consulate and INM office.