

Talking Points – Safe Travel to Mexico

The following Talking Points can be used in conversations with the media and clients when discussing travel to Mexico. We are providing the three main points upfront and then provide you with additional information/supporting material below. (Updated February 9, 2012)

1. The U.S. State Department's updated Travel Warning for Mexico does not warn against American traveling there, rather it further clarifies the relative safety of each state within Mexico with no advisories in effect for the most popular Mexican destinations we book.

2. All travelers, no matter what country they visit, can take precautions to help ensure their safety and well-being. First and foremost: obey the law.

3. Safety is our top priority for our clients.

Below you will find additional information, supporting material and statistics to help further illustrate each talking point.

1. The U.S. State Department's updated Travel Warning for Mexico does not warn against American traveling there, rather it further clarifies the relative safety of each state within Mexico with no advisories in effect for the most popular Mexican destinations we book.

- The updated Travel Warning offers “a state-by-state assessment of security conditions throughout Mexico divided into northern and southern regions.”
 - o The State Department does not explicitly say, “Do not travel to Mexico.”
 - o The State Department aptly notes: “Millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year for study, tourism, and business, including more than 150,000 who cross the border every day ... and there is no evidence that Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) have targeted U.S. visitors and residents based on their nationality.”
 - o It further states: “Resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the levels of drug-related violence and crime reported in the border region and in areas along major trafficking routes.”
- Major resort areas where Americans like to go, such as Cancun, Cozumel, the Riviera Maya and Cabo San Lucas are quite safe.
 - o *USA Today* reports that no advisories are in effect for such popular tourist areas as the state of Quintana Roo (Cancun, Cozumel, Playa del Carmen, Riviera Maya and Tulum), southern Baja California (Cabo San Lucas), Guanajuato (San Miguel de Allende and Leon), Oaxaca (Oaxaca, Huatulco and Puerto Escondido) and Chiapas (San Cristobal de las Casas), as well as Mexico City, Puerto Vallarta and nearby Riviera Nayarit.
- Travelers are advised to stay within the tourist areas of Acapulco, Ixtapa, Mazatlan, Monterrey and Zihuantanejo.
 - o Those individuals trying to lump Acapulco into the list of top Mexico destinations U.S. travelers visit are misinformed. It has been decades since it was a hot tourist destination – today it is more of a destination for Mexican nationals rather than U.S. tourists.
- Mexico is a huge country. Based on geographic size, it is among the top 15 largest

independent nations in the world.

- The distance between the U.S./Mexico border, where much of the violence takes place, and Cancun – which is one of the top land-based international destination for Americans – is over 1,400 miles. The flying distance between the border and Cabo San Lucas is the same as between Oklahoma and Indiana.
- Millions of tourists are well-educated about the situation in Mexico and appear to understand that tourist areas are safe. Mexico set an all-time record with 1,072,180 million visitors in December 2011 – up 13% from the previous December. About half of those visitors were Americans.
- According to *The Financial Times*: Mexico's "tourism sector has never been stronger. ... the overall figures show that the fall in tourism in 2009 was mainly the result of the U.S. financial crisis and the outbreak of swine flu in Mexico, rather than because of security concerns stemming from the country's drugs war."

2. All travelers, no matter what country they visit, can take precautions to help ensure their safety and well-being. First and foremost: obey the law.

- If our clients are going to pack one thing, we'd strongly recommend it be common sense. No matter what our clients' age or destination, they should always use good common sense when it comes to their personal safety, just as they would at home.
- To maximize safety and security while traveling in Mexico or any other international destination:
 - o Follow your instincts and avoid any areas or situations that seem as though they could become dangerous.
 - o Stay in the well-known tourist areas of the cities.
 - o Know and respect the laws in the country you are visiting.
 - o Visit only legitimate businesses and tourist areas, and avoid areas where prostitution and drug dealing might occur.
 - o Leave your itinerary with a friend or family member back home.
 - o Check with your cell phone provider prior to departure to see if your phone is capable of roaming on GSM or 3G/4G international networks.
 - o Do not display expensive looking jewelry, large amounts of money or other valuable items.
 - o Make every attempt to travel during daylight hours, and stick to main roads.
- The U.S. State Department has even put together a document called: Spring Break in Mexico - "Know Before You Go!" For more, go to:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/spring_break_mexico/spring_break_mexico_5014.html

3. Safety is our top priority for our clients.

- Our business is founded on repeat customers. Therefore, we want to be sure everything goes off without a hitch.
- We provide the facts so our clients can make informed decisions about their travel plans.
- We closely monitor the U.S. Department of State website for travel alerts for all destinations, including those that are most popular with our clients.
- Should we become aware of an issue for a specific destination, we alert clients who may be planning to travel there so they can make determine for themselves if they still wish

to travel.

- We also work closely with respected hotels and resorts to remain informed of security precautions they're taking to guard our clients' safety.