

Mexico's Gun Laws for Americans



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Warning: there is a *lot* of false information about Mexico's gun laws floating around, including in Wikipedia. The information in this web page has been verified with Mexican sources.

Mexico's gun laws are quite restrictive, and *extremely* harsh if you run afoul of them.

Unlike [Canada](#), where you're likely to be turned away at the border if you have unauthorized firearms or ammo, unwary visitors to Mexico have languished in Mexican jails for five years due to a single spent casing in their vehicle.

It is true that Mexico's constitution has a Right to Keep and Bear Arms for its *citizens*. However, it is quite a bit more restrictive than the USA's Second Amendment:

In the original 1917 Constitution, Mexican RKBA was:

Artículo 10. Los habitantes de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos tienen libertad de poseer armas de cualquiera clase, para su seguridad y legítima defensa, hecha excepción de las prohibidas expresamente por la ley y de las que la nación reserve para el uso exclusivo del Ejército, Armada, y Guardia Nacional; pero no podrán portarlas en las poblaciones sin sujetarse a los reglamentos de policía.

(Unofficial translation)

Article 10. The inhabitants of the United Mexican States are entitled to have arms of any kind in their possession for their protection and legitimate defense, except such as are expressly forbidden by law, or which the nation may reserve for the exclusive use of the Army, Navy, or National Guard; but they may not carry arms within inhabited places without complying with police regulations.

This right has been substantially abridged by subsequent amendments, and now reads:

Artículo 10. Los habitantes de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos tienen derecho a poseer armas en su domicilio, para su seguridad y legítima defensa, con excepción de las prohibidas por la Ley Federal y de las reservadas para el uso exclusivo del Ejército, Armada, Fuerza Aérea y Guardia Nacional. La ley federal determinará los casos, condiciones, requisitos y lugares en que se podrá autorizar a los habitantes la portación de armas.

(Unofficial translation)

Article 10. The inhabitants of the United Mexican States have a right to arms in their

homes, for security and legitimate defense, with exception of those prohibited by Federal Law and those reserved for the exclusive use of the Army, Navy, Air Force and National Guard. Federal law will determine the cases, conditions, requirements, and places in which the carrying of arms will be authorized to the inhabitants.

Note: some sources (including Wikipedia) incorrectly state that the 1917, more liberal, RKBA is the current version; and that the current, more restrictive, version is the original. This is *incorrect*. Mexican RKBA has become *more* restrictive, not less!

Mexican federal law regarding firearms and explosives (*Ley Federal de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos*) is [here](#). Note in particular Article 27:

Artículo 27. A los extranjeros sólo se les podrá autorizar la portación de armas cuando, además de satisfacer los requisitos señalados en el artículo anterior, acrediten su calidad de inmigrados, salvo el caso del permiso de licencia temporal para turistas con fines deportivos.

(Unofficial translation)

Article 27. The right to bear arms will only be authorized for foreigners when, in addition to satisfying the requirements indicated in the previous article, they accredit their status of "Inmigrados" [equivalent to permanent residents], except in the case of temporary license permits for tourists with sports-related intentions.

What this all means:

Visitors do *not* have RKBA rights without a license. This license is only issued for "sporting purposes".

Mexican citizens and "inmigrados" have RKBA *in their homes*, and only of permitted firearms. The *privilege* of carrying a firearm outside of one's home is limited to what is authorized by Mexican federal law.

All privately-owned firearms are registered with the Mexican army.

Article 11 of [Ley Federal de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos](#) lists prohibited "military firearms" in Mexico. They include:

- anything full-auto
- any semi-auto handgun larger than 380 (e.g., 9mm, .38 Super, or larger)
- any revolver in .357 Magnum or larger
- any rifle in larger than .30 caliber
- any shotgun larger than 12ga or with a barrel shorter than 25".

Where there are prohibitions, there are penalties. The penalties for possession of prohibited "military firearms" include: 3-12 months in prison for bayonets, sabers and lances, 1-7 years for .357 magnum revolvers and any revolver larger than a .38 Special, and 2-12 years for other prohibited weapons. You don't want to run afoul of this law!

Members of hunting clubs *may* be able to acquire hunting guns in an otherwise-prohibited caliber.

There is one gun store in the country (in Mexico City). It takes about a month for your purchase to be approved. Approval will be denied once you own more than 2 handguns or 10 long guns.

Carry permits exist for outside of your home, but generally not for mere mortals. Even if you get a carry permit, the biggest that you can carry is 380.

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