

Etiquette in Mexico

Basics



Good manners are very important in Mexico. When you meet someone, especially once you have made eye contact, it is polite to wish them "Buenos días", "Buenas tardes" or "Buenas noches". If you need to make your way through a group, "Con permiso" means "Excuse me". "Con permiso" is also used as you leave a group - for instance as you prepare to get out of an elevator. When someone

else uses the phrase with you, the correct response would be "Propio" which is somewhat equivalent to "no problem".

Mexicans hate to disappoint you and so they go to great lengths to leave a good impression. An Indian group in Tula, to the North of Mexico City, has eleven ways of saying "yes" but no word for "no". Hence the custom of using "mañana" which mostly does not really mean tomorrow - it may mean "I'll do my best, but I can't make a firm promise". In the same sense "perhaps", "maybe", "let me check on that" is a polite way of implying "no".

At meals "Buen Provecho" is like the French "Bon Appetit", meaning "Enjoy!" You should say this at the beginning of any meal just before you start to eat.

Introductions are very important. When someone joins a group you should introduce everyone. Mexicans are very inclusive and welcoming. Women usually kiss each other on the cheek when they meet and it's perfectly normal for a man to lightly kiss a woman on one cheek once there is a "relationship" - meaning friendship or frequent business contact. You'll learn when this is appropriate by watching how Mexicans treat each other. It's also expected for men to give each other a hearty hug, usually with a gentle slap on the back once there is a business or friendly relationship.

Keogh & Associates Consulting, LLC has special expertise conducting business in Mexico. We have the contacts, and consultants that you need to succeed in this fascinating country.