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## Getting to San Carlos

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### • Flying



Currently, the only major carrier with regular flights into [Guaymas](#) (about 10 miles from [San Carlos](#)) is [America West](#) (now US Airways). For more on the [Guaymas Airport](#) follow the link provided.

You can also fly into [Sonora's](#) capital city of [Hermosillo](#) (about 1 hour from [San Carlos](#)) on [America West](#) or on Mexico's own [AeroMexico](#). There are some web sites that list other carriers, but we have not verified these. For example, you may want to look at this listing on [www.sanbachs.net](http://www.sanbachs.net).

You will need a rental car to complete your journey, and most of the major car rental companies service the [Hermosillo Airport](#). Here is a partial list: [Avis](#), [Budget](#), [Hertz](#), and [Thrifty](#).

These flights typically originate in Phoenix, but please check with the airline or your travel agent for more information. In addition, there are connecting flights from [Baja](#) cities like [La Paz](#) and [Loreto](#). Please see [AeroCalafia](#) for details.

Smaller private aircraft may soon be able to fly directly into San Carlos, using an airstrip that is currently undergoing renovation. Visit [www.AirportSanCarlos.com](http://www.AirportSanCarlos.com) for more details.

Please read the next section for important information on Passport and Visa requirements .

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## • Crossing the Border



If you are traveling in México 21 kilometers or more south of the border, you must obtain a Tourist Permit/Visa (FMT). For an FMT you will need to show proof of citizenship (valid passport or notarized copy of your birth certificate). Your FMT can be obtained at the "Kilometro 21" (21k) checkpoint, located on Highway 15 just south of [Nogales](#), as well as other entry ports along the border.

The FMT cost is 210 pesos (apx. \$21 US), and is valid for 180 days. This fee does not apply if you are staying less than 7 days, and you are returning home through the same port of entry. If you are flying into México, this cost is typically a part of your airfare. Your airline will provide you with an FMT form to fill out and hand in to an immigration official upon arrival in México.

Keep your permit with you while you are in México, and remember to hand it back to an immigration official before you leave the country.

Single parents traveling with children will need to provide a notarized release, signed by the other parent, granting permission to take the child(ren) into Mexico.

Upon returning to the United States by car, you will need a passport or some other proof of citizenship. If you are traveling by air, then a passport is mandatory. The regulations and procedures for entering the United States have been changing quite a bit lately, so we highly recommend staying up-to-date by visiting the US Customs & Border Protection web site at [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov).

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## • Driving in Mexico

### ○ Insurance



Since foreign insurance policies for automobiles are not recognized in México, visitors are required to have a Mexican policy when driving into the country. We recommend purchasing and printing your insurance online, as it is fast, convenient and hassle-free.

We do not endorse any one Mexican Insurance company, but we have listed below some links that you might find helpful. Most policies are quite inexpensive, averaging about \$40 to \$70 per weekend for a new vehicle:

[www.sanbornsinsurance.com](http://www.sanbornsinsurance.com)

[www.drivemex.com](http://www.drivemex.com)

[www.gotosonora.com/links/insurance.htm](http://www.gotosonora.com/links/insurance.htm)

[www.mexicoinsurance.com](http://www.mexicoinsurance.com)

You will find literally hundreds of carriers if you search online; you may want to ask friends or relatives who they have used in the past if you need help in selecting a policy.

### ○ Vehicle Permit (Only Sonora)

Thanks to Sonora's Free Trade Program, visitors from the United States and Canada are allowed to drive directly to cities like [Guaymas](#), [San Carlos](#), [Hermosillo](#), [Bahia de Kino](#), [Puerto Peñasco](#), [Caborca](#), [Magdalena](#) and [Santa Ana](#), as well as many of the [Father Kino](#)

[Missions](#), without the time-consuming process of obtaining a car permit.

Visitors wanting to drive south of the Free Trade Zone (basically as far as [Empalme](#), just south of [Guaymas](#)) can obtain a car permit at the checkpoint located at kilometer 98 on Highway 15, south of the Guaymas bypass beyond [Empalme](#), or at any [Banjercito](#) branch office, of which there are many in this region.

You can also obtain this permit at the Banjercito module in the Mexican Consulate in Phoenix, or online at [www.banjercito.com.mx](http://www.banjercito.com.mx). For more information on this subject, visit [www.gotosonora.com](http://www.gotosonora.com).

Many car rental companies will provide you with a vehicle for travel into México, and they will usually handle all necessary documentation for you as well.

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	Only Sonora			Banjercito
(From the US)	(Guaymas)	(Hermosillo)		(Guaymas)
800-4-Sonora	622-224-2488	662-262-1201		622-224-1859
	622-224-2375	662-262-1203		622-224-1022

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#### o Road Assistance

If you have an emergency while driving in Sonora, call the Sonora Tourism Office new hotline 078. This line connects you to the "Green Angels," a fleet of radio-dispatched trucks with bilingual crews ready assist you.



Their services include protection, medical first aid, and mechanical aid for your car, as well as basic supplies. You will not be charged for services, but you will pay for parts, gas and oil. The Green Angels patrol daily, from dawn until sunset, so if you are unable to call them, pull off the road and lift the hood of your car; chances are good they will find you.

The "Green Angels" have been helping tourists since 1960, and have distinguished México worldwide through their unique and valuable services.

For more information visit [www.gotosonora.com](http://www.gotosonora.com)

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#### o Driving Directions

Visit our [Maps](#) page for general directions: [www.posadacondominiums.com/Maps.htm](http://www.posadacondominiums.com/Maps.htm)

From Phoenix: take I-10 east to Tucson.  
From Tucson: Take I-10 to I-19 south to [Nogales](#), Arizona.

[San Carlos](#) is about 270 miles/435 kilometers due south of Nogales, Arizona.

Take I-19 south about 60 miles to Nogales, through Green Valley, Tubac, and Rio Rico. Though you can cross at the main Port of Entry in downtown Nogales,



we highly recommend that you use the Mariposa crossing (take exit #4 off I-19, Mariposa Road).

About 3 miles into México (using the Mariposa crossing) you will find a toll booth, which currently costs 37 pesos/\$3.40 for one vehicle (boats and trailers are additional). They usually accept dollars, and will typically give your change in pesos unless you ask otherwise. There are two more toll booths on the route to [San Carlos](#): one at [Magdalena](#) (19 pesos/\$1.75, about 1 hour from the border) and another just before the city of [Hermosillo](#) (59 pesos/\$5.45, about 3 hours from the border).

Just past the Mariposa toll booth you will encounter the first of two customs-inspections "traffic lights." Red means you need to pull in for a random inspection; green indicates that you can continue your trip without stopping. If you get a red light, don't worry. Mexican customs officials will only briefly inspect your vehicle and contents, and ask you a few questions regarding your destination and the duration of your stay. Don't be nervous, they are good people, and this process usually only takes a few minutes. They are primarily interested in imported taxable goods (groceries, furniture, etc.) or prohibited items (firearms, drugs, etc). For more details on what you can or cannot bring into the country, please visit [www.gotosonora.com](http://www.gotosonora.com).

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A few miles beyond the first toll booth and customs-inspection station is the 21k checkpoint. This is where you should stop and obtain your Visa (FMT). There is also one more "red-light/green-light" as you leave the 21k facility.

Stay on Highway 15 most of the way to [San Carlos](#), passing through [Magdalena](#), [Imuris](#), [Santa Ana](#), and [Hermosillo](#). You will probably notice a [military checkpoint](#) south of [Santa Ana](#) at [Benjamin Hill](#), for the northbound traffic (note: on your return trip you will need to stay to the right - semi trucks will clog the left lane - and be ready to pull over briefly if they decide to do a random vehicle search, which rarely takes more than 2 or 3 minutes).

[Hermosillo](#) is the largest city along the way, about 3 to 4 hours from the border, and you can get through this large, congested city by either staying on the main road (heavy traffic as well as many stop lights) as it arcs through from the northeast to the southwest side, or you can take the truck bypass around the it's eastern edge. Here is a printable [Hermosillo map](#) showing the routes through the city.

After getting through [Hermosillo](#), it is only about 1 hour more to [San Carlos](#). There is a well-marked turnoff (west) to San Carlos just before [Guaymas](#).

NOTES:

**Fuel** is about the same price as it is in the US, and is available only at the state-owned [Pemex](#) stations (there are plenty!). Some take credit cards, but most will require cash (pesos or dollars). The green-labeled "Magna-Sin" is equivalent to our unleaded gas.

**"Breakdown lanes"** (paved shoulders) are practically nonexistent along this route, so please exercise extreme caution while driving on the otherwise well-maintained, 4-lane divided Highway 15.

**Pedestrians** and **livestock** are not uncommon along either side of the roadway, day or night. Again, with no shoulder to speak of, please drive with extreme caution at all times.

**Left lane** is for passing only; please stay to the right except to pass. A great driving rule that is rarely adhered to in the US, but is followed rigorously in México.

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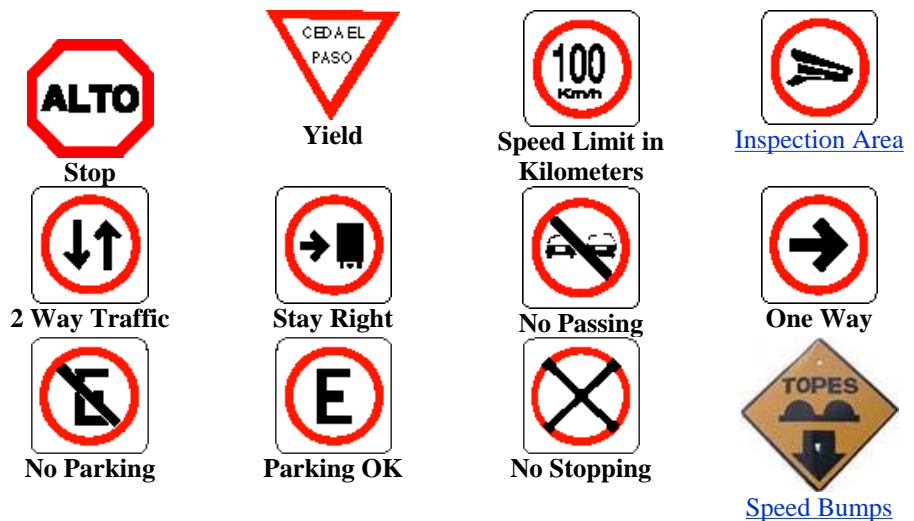
- o **Traveling to Mexico Checklist**

Proof of citizenship for each passenger.  
 Current driver's license.  
 Current vehicle registration.  
 Proof of current US or Canadian vehicle insurance.  
 Mexican auto insurance.  
 Driving map.  
 Download a driving map to San Carlos here: [www.gotosonora.com/sonora-map.htm](http://www.gotosonora.com/sonora-map.htm)

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### o Mexico Road Signs

Here are some important road signs for you to review before driving in México.



## • Firearms



Please do not attempt to bring firearms and/or ammunition into México! The only exception to this rule is for hunters, and that is with proper authorization only. There are stories of foreigners finding themselves in trouble with the Mexican authorities, for a single bullet left in the glove compartment or under the seat.

## • Pets



Domestic animals (dogs and cats) are the only pets allowed into México, and they will need to have a current rabies vaccination certificate. It is also a good idea to carry a current "wellness certificate" from your US or Canadian veterinarian, to present when re-entering the US.

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## • Customs

### o Importing



Visitors entering the country by foot or car are allowed to carry into Mexico up to \$50 tax-free in new merchandise per person, along with personal belongings. People arriving by plane or ship may import up to \$300 per person. Be prepared to pay tax of about 15% on the amount in excess of these limits. Also, U.S and Canadian visitors are allowed to import up to \$1,000 in new merchandise per vehicle, for which they will be required to pay taxes, without the services of a broker. Anything over that amount will require the assistance of a customs broker.

#### o **Duty-Free Items**

The following is a partial list of duty-free items:

- Personal use items such as clothing, shoes and toiletries, appropriate to the length of your stay
- Books and magazines
- 2 cartons of cigarettes
- 3 liters of wine or alcohol
- 1 camera or video camera, power source and up to 12 rolls of film -or video cassettes
- Medication for personal use (with prescription)
- 1VCR
- 1 Individual used sports item or piece of equipment that can be transported by one person
- Suitcases to transport your items
- Binoculars, camping equipment
- Laptop computer or typewriter
- Portable TV, radio, CD player with up to 20 CDs
- Bicycle with our without motor
- Household linens
- Kitchen utensils

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#### o **Customs Declaration**

When arriving to the country by car, visitors have the option of making a voluntary declaration or going thru the fiscal light ("red-light/green-light").

**Voluntary declaration** applies when visitors bring in merchandise whose value exceeds the tax-free limit, and they wish to declare these items. Again, be prepared to pay tax of about 15% on the amount in excess of these limits, and to be referred to a customs broker if the total value exceeds \$1000.

The **fiscal light** is a device used to randomly flag non-declaring traffic as either green (pass) or red (stop for inspection).

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## • **Money**



- U.S. dollars or credit cards (Visa and MC) are accepted by most businesses.
- Exchange rate varies daily, but has been averaging about 10.85 pesos to 1 dollar.

-There is a Banamex bank branch in [San Carlos](#), which includes two functioning ATMs. Bank hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

## Dollar-to-Peso Exchange Rate = 1 to 10.94 as of 13 January 2008

Visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) for access to an online currency converter, and to get an idea of how many pesos you will need to bring for your trip to San Carlos.

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## • Weather

[Current San Carlos Conditions](#)  
from [The Weather Channel](#):

San Carlos, Mexico



**70°F**  
Mostly Cloudy

Feels Like: 70°F  
Humidity: 56%  
Wind: CALM calm  
[Hour-by-hour](#) | [10-day](#)

[@weather.com](#)  
[Check Flight Delays](#)  
[Destination Weather](#)  
[MapQuest Directions](#)

During daylight hours,  
[click here](#) to view  
current conditions on  
our [Webcam](#)!

Another great website  
for checking current  
conditions is the  
[Weather Underground](#)

### Average air temps:

January – 60-75 degrees  
February – 60-75 degrees  
March – 60-77 degrees  
April – 64-83 degrees  
May – 70-85 degrees  
June – 78-90 degrees  
July – 80-94 degrees  
August – 80-94 degrees  
September – 80-94 degrees  
October – 74-88 degrees  
November – 69-80 degrees  
December – 60-77 degrees

### Average water temps:

January – 63 degrees  
February – 64 degrees  
March – 67 degrees  
April – 72 degrees  
May – 77 degrees  
June – 85 degrees  
July – 89 degrees  
August – 89 degrees  
September – 87 degrees  
October – 87 degrees  
November – 71 degrees  
December – 65 degrees

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