
A BRIEF HISTORY OF MEXICO

REVISED EDITION

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Facts On File, Inc.

APPENDIX 1

BASIC FACTS ABOUT MEXICO

Official Name

Estados Unidos Mexicanos

Government

Under the Constitution of 1917, Mexico is a federal republic with a centralized government dominated by the office of the presidency. The presidential term is six years with no reelection. There is a bicameral federal congress composed of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies; legislators may serve only one term. The judiciary forms a third branch of government; judges are appointed by the president.

There are many parties, but the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) governed Mexico during most of the 20th century. Recent electoral reforms have strengthened opposition parties such as the conservative PAN (National Action Party) and the progressive PRD (Democratic Revolutionary Party). In the 2000 election the PRI presidential candidate was defeated for the first time in more than 70 years, and the opposition parties gained a majority of the congressional seats in both houses. The midterm elections in 2003 again resulted in a multiparty Chamber of Deputies with the PRI controlling a plurality of the seats but not a majority.

Political Divisions

States

Thirty-one, plus the federal district which includes the capital.

Capital

Mexico City

