

What is a mega-diverse country?



Mexico is considered a "mega-diverse" country and as such forms part of a select group of nations that possess the greatest number and diversity of animals and plants; nearly 70% of global species diversity. For some authors, the group incorporates 12 countries: Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Zaire, Madagascar, China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia. Others increase the list to more than 17, adding Papua New Guinea, South Africa, USA, Congo, Philippines and Venezuela.

Mexico is one of three mega-diverse countries (along with the United States and Colombia) with coastlines on the Atlantic and the Pacific.

Megadiverse countries contain one or more of the following characteristics:

Geographical position: many are found in tropical regions where there is a greater diversity of species. The Tropic of Cancer (23° 26 '22" North) crosses Mexico and extends from 32° North (Northern Baja California) to 14° North (Chiapas).

Landscape diversity: the complexity of mountain landscapes provides a

diversity of environments, soils and climates. Mexico is a predominantly mountainous country. In addition, it is almost surrounded by seas.

Isolation: Separation of islands and continents has allowed the development of unique flora and fauna. Mexico combines the fauna and flora of two continents that have long been isolated (North and South America).

Size: The larger the area, the greater the diversity of landscapes and species. Mexico is ranked number 14 globally in terms of area (1,972,550 km²).

Evolutionary history: Some countries are located in contact zones between two biogeographic regions in which flora and fauna with different histories are mixed. In Mexico, the confluence is between the Nearctic and Neotropical areas.

Culture: Although the development of culture is relatively recent, the domestication of plants and animals has contributed to natural richness. In Mexico, 66 indigenous languages are spoken, in addition to many variations, and it is one of the main centres of domestication in the world.

Cancun Declaration (2002). In 2002 the "Group of Megadiverse Countries" was established as a mechanism for consultation and cooperation to promote the priorities for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

