



# Food System of Mexico

## General Overview

- Mexico has a mixed food system combining smallholder farms, ejido communal lands, large agribusinesses, and modern retail.
- Climate diversity (arid north, tropical south, highlands) enables varied crops but causes water scarcity challenges.
- Maize-based culture and traditional milpa system remain important.

## Consumers and Public Food Services

- Diet based on tortillas, beans, rice, chili.
- Rising ultra-processed food and sugary drink consumption.
- School meal and community kitchen programs address nutrition.

## Main Goals

- Improve self-sufficiency in maize and beans.
- Strong export focus on fruits, vegetables, beverages.
- Improve sustainability, reduce water use, protect soil.
- Ensure food safety, especially for exports.

## Primary Production

- 3.7 million agricultural workers; many informal.
- Ejido system covers over half of land; 80% smallholders.
- Key products: maize, beans, avocado, tomatoes, berries, coffee, sugarcane.
- Increasing use of greenhouses, smart irrigation, digital tools.



## Self Sufficiency and Food Security

- Self-sufficient in white maize, beans, horticulture.
- Dependent on imports for wheat, maize, soy
- Strategies for food reserves and modernization of irrigation for resilience.

## Food Trade and Retail

- Dual system - traditional markets (tianguis, mercados) and supermarkets.
- Major chains - Walmart, Soriana, Chedraui, La Comer, OXXO.
- Heavy reliance on imports: wheat, yellow maize, soybeans, rice

## Food Processing

- Major companies - Grupo Bimbo, Gruma.
- Food & beverage sector is resilient and economically important.

## Administration and Advisory

- SADER, SENASICA, DICONSA, LICONSA key actors.
- Subsidy programs for smallholders, fertilizers, agroforestry.
- Growing agri-tech investment and research support.

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## Exports

- Major exporter of avocado (70% of global supply)
- Strong exports of tomatoes, berries, peppers, mango, lime
- Leading exporter of beer and tequila
- Processed food exports: bakery products (Grupo Bimbo), tortillas (Gruma)
- Main export markets: USA (largest), Canada, Europe
- Agri-food exports exceeded USD 50 billion (2023) Export specialization in high-value horticulture and beverages



## Imports

- Heavy dependence on wheat ( $\approx 40\%$  of grain imports)
- Imports yellow maize and soybeans mainly for animal feed
- USA supplies over 70% of Mexico's food imports
- Imports essential industrial food ingredients for processing sector

## Strengths

- Global leader in avocado, beer, berries, tomatoes.
- Strong integration with USMCA markets.
- Large workforce and advanced food processing sector
- Economic contribution - 8% GDP, 17 mn workforce

## Challenges and Solutions

- Water scarcity  $\rightarrow$  smart irrigation, climate-smart agriculture. Smallholder vulnerability  $\rightarrow$  finance, training, regenerative farming.
- Soil degradation & food waste  $\rightarrow$  better soil care, storage, logistics.
- Nutrition issues  $\rightarrow$  improved food safety and diet programs.

## Cooperation with Finland

- Precision farming, water management, climate-smart solutions.
- Joint research, education, and sustainable agriculture innovation.