

Getting our FM3 at the Consulate General San Diego was easy!

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We decided to get our FM3 Visa because a FMT Visa may be valid for up to 6 months, but becomes null and void when you return to the US. Upon returning to Mexico, legally you must acquire a new FMT Visa for a fee of \$22.00. While we get away with a lot in Ensenada, Mexico, we did not want to be illegal gringos, especially if our future plans are to travel south. The FM3 Visa does provide for additional opportunities in Mexico that are not available with an FMT Visa.

Taken From (with notes added): <http://consulmexsd.org/doc/non-mexican/fm3.htm>

The following is a list of requirements to apply for your FM3

FM3 Application Form: Form must be filled out completely (Front & Back) [Download application.](#)

Documents: Valid Passport plus one (1) photo copy of your passport.

Important Note: Passport must have at least 12 months of validity remaining. If you are not a US citizen but a permanent resident in the USA, a copy of your Alien Registration is required

Finances: You must show that your monthly income is no less than \$1000 (us) There are two options to document your income. (1) A letter from your bank that states you do make a minimum monthly deposit of \$1000 and \$500 for each dependent. (2) A copy of your last six (6) months of bank statements

Important Note: If you have dependents you must also present a copy of your Marriage Certificate. If the dependents are minors, you must present a copy of their birth certificates.

Passport Photos: Two (2) photos are required.

Note: No automatic machine photos will be accepted. Photos must be recent

Rental Property – Mexico: You must present a copy of your "Fideicomiso" or rental/property agreement from Mexico

Important Note: Your Marina should provide copies of your slip fees **PLUS** a letter indicating you are living aboard your boat at their marina for the past specified period and planned future.

Important Note: We added a cover letter that summarized our intentions including going to the Sea in the fall and financial summary which seemed to help the process.

Fee for FM3 VISA: \$36 .00 and FM3 IS \$98.00 (dollars) for a **TOTAL COST of \$134.00 (dollars)**

Important Note: Cash only - no money orders, company, personal, or cashier's check will be accepted.

Hours of Operation (*Consulate General San Diego*: Applications are accepted between the hours of 8 a.m. to 12 Noon - Monday through Friday.

Important Note: Issuance of a FM3 Visa Document will take 24 hours. They will keep your pass port over night to install the Visa document and it will be returned the next day with your FM3 Visa.

Very Important Note: All applicants must wait in the Mexican Consulate where they have applied for their FM3 Visa until they are told their Visa has been approved. This approval is conducted by the Mexican Immigration in Mexico City. This may take more than one hour, probably less than two hours. Once your Visa is approved you can leave and return the next morning to pick up your completed official FM3 Visa Document.

Renewals: Renewal for your FM3 Visa is not conducted at the Mexican Consulate in the USA. You must contact the Mexican Immigration office, 30 days prior to the expiration date, in the geographic part of Mexico where you are or are living.

Understand the difference between a FMT Visa, FM3 Visa and a FM2 Visa- Next page

Non-Immigrant Visas are FMT and FM3

There are various classifications of Non-Immigrant visitors to Mexico - the main ones are listed below. [Your local Mexican Consulate](#) will be able to give you full details about how to apply (and in some cases, pay) for permits that are required in advance.

FMT - The Short-Term Non-Immigrant Visa

Short term visas are intended for visitors to Mexico on short term (six months or less) visits; usually tourists and short-term visitors. For trips of longer than six months, a non-immigrant or immigrant visa should be considered -- see the sections below for details. The FMT has a 'Business Visitor' section, specifically for persons who come to Mexico for short business visits not exceeding thirty days. FMT visas are issued by airlines and are also available at ports of entry* Also See: [Entry Requirements for Tourists](#)

FM3 - The Long-Term Non-Immigrant Visa

Mexico operates what is known as a FM3 Visa. The FM3 visa is a renewable long term (more than six months) permit which gives non-immigrant temporary residency status to the holder. This means that it gives a person the right to live in Mexico (under terms as set out in the visa) but it does not lead to, and cannot be converted to, a visa leading to permanent residency.

There are various categories under which FM3 visas are granted, and these relate to the activities you intend to undertake while in Mexico. Under the terms of the FM3, you are authorized to only undertake certain, specific activities which may be lucrative or non-lucrative, depending on the visa's classification.

One of the criteria that the Mexican authorities require for the issuance of a FM3 Visa is that the applicant prove that they have 'sufficient funds to sustain themselves while in Mexico' and/or a proven steady income. There is no official minimum or maximum amount -- every application appears to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Proof of funds and/or income is usually requested by means of bank account statements, proof of investment income, credit cards, or a combination of these.

Once applied for and granted, the FM3 may be renewed for an additional four years (for a total of five years). After this period, a new FM3 may be applied for and, if granted, will serve for another (max) five year period, renewable annually.

The FM3 visa may not be exchanged automatically for a visa leading to permanent residency (FM2); a FM2 must be applied for separately. Any years accrued under a FM3 visa are not transferable towards FM2-residency status (see FM2 Heading, below, for details).

You may apply for a FM3 visa while in Mexico and in possession of a short-term FMT (Tourist/Business Visitors Visa), or abroad via your nearest Mexican Consulate.

Immigrant Visas are FM2

Immigrant Visas (FM2) are issued to foreign nationals who have the intention of living in Mexico for long periods of time (over one year) AND who intend to seek permanent residency in Mexico

Immigrant, Economically Active (FM2)

When you want to acquire permanent residency AND you want to work in Mexico:

You will need to satisfy the requirements for entry (e.g. professional, sponsored by a company, etc -- see notes above about FM2), OR be able and prepared to invest a significant amount of capital to apply for a FM2 investor's visa.

Immigrant, Not Economically Active (FM2)

When you want to acquire permanent residency but DO NOT want to work in Mexico:

If you are of retirement age (50+), and have a regular source of income from abroad (investments, savings, etc), then a Retiree FM2 visa will be the most straightforward route. NB: There is no 'official' minimum income, by law, that you need to prove; criteria and income levels vary and each application is dealt with on a case-by-case basis; you will need to contact your local immigration office in Mexico for the latest advice or hire an [immigration lawyer](#) to give you counsel based upon your individual circumstances.

FM2 - The Immigrant Visa

FM2 visas are intended for people seeking permanent residency status in Mexico or those seeking eventual Mexican Citizenship.

There are various categories under which FM2 visas are granted, and these relate to the activities you intend to undertake while in Mexico. Under the terms of the FM2, you are authorized to only undertake certain, specific activities which may be lucrative or non-lucrative.

You must hold a FM2 for a qualifying period* before you may apply for "immigrant" status or Mexican Citizenship.

You do not need to have held a FM3 visa before applying for a FM2, and any years you may have accrued while living in Mexico under the auspice of a FM3 permit do not count towards your FM2 qualification period.

If your goal is to seek long-term residency in Mexico, or to become a Mexican Citizen, you should apply for FM2 status (or request a change of status from FM3 to FM2) so that your time starts counting towards the qualification period as soon as possible.

You may apply for a FM2 visa while in Mexico and in possession of a FMT (Tourist/Business Visitors Visa) or a FM3.

Following the qualification period, you may apply for full resident status. When your full residence status has been accepted, you are entitled to full rights (e.g. access to IMSS sickness pay) and responsibilities (e.g. pay income taxes) as any other Mexican Citizen. Naturalized citizens are also allowed to vote in Mexican elections.

When your full residence status has been accepted, you may also begin your application for Mexican Citizenship, although you do not have to do this; you can remain a 'resident alien' on a FM2 visa indefinitely.

Upon receiving immigrated status, you will receive a document that looks like a Mexican Passport (called a "FM2") -- newer versions look like a driver's license -- which enables you pass through Mexico's borders as if you were a Mexican National.

You do not, under Mexican law, need to surrender your national passport -- whether you remain a resident-alien or apply for citizenship -- which you'll use when you return to your home country: either for visits, or when returning home to dwell. Your home country's policies may require you to surrender your passport and/or citizenship; check with your local authorities for details.

If you hold a FM2 visa and stay outside of Mexico for longer than 2 years, or for 5 years in any 10 year period, you will lose your permanent resident status in Mexico.

*Qualifying periods vary depending on your circumstances. Seek advice from an immigration lawyer about this matter.

Examples of the kinds of people who might apply for FM2 visas:

Retirees

If you are over 50 years of age, and want to engage in "non-remunerative activities" and you are receiving funds from abroad (from a pension or other investments or fixed income) you can apply for a Retiree Immigration Permit. Read more about [Retirement in Mexico](#) on Mexperience.

Investors

You can receive an immigration permit if you are willing to invest your capital in Mexico. Your investment can be directed at industry or services, and must equal a minimum set amount--check with an immigration lawyer for the latest investment levels required for this visa.

Professionals

If you are a qualified professional, you can have your certificates validated by the Mexican Consulate in your home country and apply for an immigration visa to live in Mexico and seek permanent residence.

Technical or Scientific Professions

If you are a qualified technician or scientist, Mexico offers a category of visa which enables you to live and work in Mexico under sponsorship from a foreign company. For example, if the company wants to open an office or factory in Mexico, a person or persons representing that company may enter Mexico to manage the commercial operations on a long term basis.

Artists and Sports People

Artists or sports people who seek long term permanent residency in Mexico may apply for a FM2 visa. Each case is considered individually and entry is at the Interior Ministry's discretion.