

Train service is a practical alternative on some routes. Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México (FNM), the national railway, is heavily oriented toward cargo, and passenger service can be unreliable and uncomfortable. But FNM also offers a first-class service, called *primera especial*, on selected routes using modern equipment. These services are comfortable and inexpensive but are still relatively slow.

Food and Drink

Visitors to Mexico may suffer from traveller's diarrhea. Micro-organisms in water are the usual cause. Local people tend to be tolerant to these organisms, but visitors may not be. Drinking only bottled water, which is widely available in hotels and restaurants, can prevent problems. Food in tourist-oriented restaurants is generally safe, but eating food purchased on the street is not recommended. Some travellers avoid uncooked food, such as fresh salad, that has been washed in water. It is a wise precaution to take over-the-counter medicine for the treatment of traveller's diarrhea with you when you leave Canada. But if symptoms persist, seek medical attention.

My key please.

Mi llave por favor.

Health Care

Good-quality health care is available from private hospitals and clinics in most parts of Mexico. But it is unlikely that Canadian health coverage will provide adequate protection, and many doctors and hospitals require payment in advance. Provincial health care programs generally include limited coverage for medical expenses incurred during short-term stays outside the country. Coverage may lapse after a few months, and there may be a re-qualification period when you return. Supplementary health insurance policies often cover the full cost of foreign health care, as well as emergency evacuation back to Canada. Canadians who sever their residency ties with Canada and become residents of Mexico usually purchase private insurance in Mexico.

When purchasing health insurance, be sure to ask whether your insurer has an in-house worldwide emergency hotline you can call if you are in trouble. Check whether it is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week; whether the operators are multilingual; and whether nurses or physicians are on staff. Also find out whether your policy:

- pays foreign hospital and related medical costs and, if so, whether it pays "up front" or