

## Safety in Lake Chapala Area in Mexico

The stereotypical view of Mexico by expats, particularly Americans and Canadians, is just that—stereotypical. The Lake Chapala area is generally safe, and just like in different countries, there are different types of crimes in different areas, but personal attacks are very rare in the Lake Chapala area. Don't kid yourself that you have the freedom to be under the influence of drugs, dealing drugs or being drunk out on the street or drunk driving, because doing so would be asking for trouble anywhere.

Even car theft is not that common in San Antonio or Ajijic. In Chapala (the town), as with Guadalajara, there has been a little bit of a rise in residential burglaries. To avoid that, know your neighbors where possible, don't flaunt your wealth by wearing flashy jewelry, and make sure you've got good locks on the doors. It's rare in Lake Chapala for crimes against people, such as assault, murder, rape, someone getting beat up. When it does happen, there is attention called to it because it's uncommon.

Much of the violence is concentrated in crime hotspots like the tiny western state of Colima in the west, followed by Baja California, Chihuahua in the north and Guerrero, (according to figures released by the National Institute for Statistics) where cartel gangs are either active or fighting over territory. There are many areas like the Lake Chapala area which have been relatively untouched by violence.

### Why You Don't Have to Worry

Common sense is the catchphrase. Unless you looking to form your own cartel or are out looking for hookers and cocaine at 2 am, and you are using basic common sense; you are going to be safer here than most places in North America. There will always be some level of petty or violent crime everywhere. As an expat retiring from either the United States or Canada or if you're just visiting as a tourist—you are quite safe. The reason—they support the economy. Everyone benefits from an area that is populated with expats and tourists, especially the Lake Chapala area. This area is the largest expat community in Mexico. The economic impact of retirees living in Mexico is believed to exceed \$500 million annually. Safety is not a major concern. If it was a concern, the people would stop coming which is why the government and its citizens make sure the areas are safe.

### Other Things to know

Generally, it's a rule of thumb that you should avoid driving at night, if possible, in Mexico. Nights in Mexico are no more dangerous than nights in the United States or nights in Canada. The reason that people avoid night-time drives is two-fold: a combination of cattle and large speed bumps create a potentially dangerous combination without the light of day and like any country, there are opportunists who take advantage of the night in the more dark and remote areas.

The main takeaway is that Mexico, and Lake Chapala specifically, are not nearly as dangerous as people might believe. In fact, and especially for an American or Canadian retiree or tourist, Lake Chapala is safe. That, combined with a little common sense, and personal and home-security ingenuity, makes the beautiful, peaceful, serene Lake Chapala even more accessible, and more than worth the trip.

For **US citizens**, stay updated on travel warnings and safety information at [U.S. Department of State website](#). For **Canadians**, more information on the GOC website at [Travel advice and advisories for Mexico](#)