

Getting Started with Research for Your Mexican Ancestors

New York Biographical and Genealogical Society

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Hispanic Naming Conventions - What is My Family Name!

1. In Spain or former Spanish territories, people bear a single or composite given name (*nombre*) and two surnames (*apellidos*) - Díaz Alvarez
2. Traditionally (but not always) a person's first surname is the father's first surname (*apellido paterno*), and the second one is the mother's first surname (*apellido materno*.) Díaz Alvarez
3. Each surname can also be composite, the parts usually linked by the conjunction "y" or "e" (and), by the preposition "de" (of) or by a hyphen.
4. Don't get too hung up on the exact spelling of surnames. *Ibáñez* can be written as: *Ibañez*, *Ibañes*, *Ivañez*, *Ybañez*, *Ybañes*. They are still all the same names.

Research in the United States

Census Records

- Ancestry.com (paid subscription) or FamilySearch.org (free with registration)

World War Draft Registration

- Ancestry.com (paid subscription) or FamilySearch.org (free with registration)
- U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services Genealogy Program
 - a. Request an Index Search
<https://www.uscis.gov/records/genealogy>

Obituaries

- Chronicling America Collection - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
- Newspapers.com - <https://www.newspapers.com/>

Border Crossing Records

- Best records begin in 1908.
- An index of all legal border crossing files from Mexico to the U.S. between 1895 and 1964 is available on Ancestry.

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- Information: Name, Age, marital status, birthplace, last permanent residence, destination, persons accompanying the alien, name and address of nearest relative or friend in Mexico.

Mexico Resources Online

1930 Mexico Census

- Ancestry.com - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1771/>
- FamilySearch - <https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/catalog/1307314>

Civil Registration

- Mandatory government registration of births, marriages, and deaths in regional offices in Mexico.
- Began in 1859, not strictly enforced until 1867.

Church Records

Ecclesiastical records are held at individual Catholic churches on the island.

1. Before civil registration, churches, particularly the Catholic Church, were the only institutions keeping official records of births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths.
2. Records of baptism, confirmation, marriage, death, and burial have been maintained by individual parishes in Mexico for almost 500 years.

Do You Speak Spanish? Language Resources

- Spanish Genealogy Word List - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Spanish_Genealogical_Word_List
- BYU Script tutorial
<https://script.byu.edu/spanish-handwriting/introduction>
- Spanish Genealogy Words list and Google
- Mexico "How to" Guides - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Mexico_%22How_to%22_Guides
- Mexico Guided Research - <https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/GuidedResearch:Mexico>