

Transcription:

Curtis: Hi everybody, it's Curtis and Amy, and we are going to have a very interesting conversation today about living in another country. As some of you may know, Amy and myself are Canadian, but in 2016 we made the big move to live abroad in Mexico.

Amy: Exactly. And we have another podcast episode called *Moving to Another Country* where we talked about what it was like to really prepare our house and change our lives from living in Canada to selling our house and everything, we owned to be able to move to Mexico. So that's a different podcast episode and you can definitely check that one out.

Curtis: So, Amy, we get asked this question all the time about living here in another country and the question is, "Why do you guys want to live in Mexico?"

Amy: And it's said with a little bit of a confused tone, or they don't really understand why. And I can't blame them because internationally a lot of the news that reaches other countries around the world is related to, I don't know, we've got drug cartels, violence, there's poverty here and different issues like this. And these issues aren't really issues that aren't present in many other countries around the world, but in particular, Mexico unfortunately has a bad reputation for these types of things. But we want to explain today some of the wonderful things that this country has to offer and why we've chosen to make this our home and not just for a couple of years. Like, we love Mexico. We consider ourselves as Mexicans right now, not obviously by nationality, but we really love the culture and want to stay here.

So, one of the main points that we want to talk about is related to the people and the culture, and we're going to talk about the landscape and really the different geography that they have here. And lastly, one of our favorite topics, we'll be talking about the food. So, when you think about the people in Mexico, Curtis, what do you think – how would you describe them?

Curtis: I would describe them as really friendly people. Really happy people most of them and they are not afraid to say hi to you first if you want to make an eye contact with them, especially.

Amy: Exactly. They're more likely to greet you and say hello and start a conversation, I think. I think one of the big differences with Canadians, we're friendly but we're just kind of friendly on the street. We'll say hello to you, maybe we'll have a conversation with a cashier at the grocery store, for example, but we're not as open in terms of starting friendships and connecting with other people as quickly. I feel like there's a longer process that needs to happen in Canada. Whereas here, has it been difficult for us to make connections and to meet people?

Curtis: No, not at all. It hasn't been difficult at all. I mean, I met some of my deejay friends and they're always polite and inviting me out to come and play music, so I've developed friendships there. And we've really developed a good friendship with Yadi, our housekeeper.

Amy: Yeah, exactly. She's a sweetheart and she definitely thinks of us I think more like family rather than a boss. But one example, one day, okay so I went to go to the grocery store to do something in my car and it was the middle of summer. Where we live, that means it's extremely hot even at 9:00 in the morning. Unfortunately, my car wouldn't start, and I knew it was the battery because the car battery had been having some trouble, like taking longer when you're trying to turn on the car. Anyway, so I thought, "Ugh. Today's the day the battery has died." And in Canada, for example, how would we handle that situation?

Curtis: We would probably just call somebody to help us out, tow the truck, or even go to a store and buy a new battery, that sort of thing.

Amy: Yeah, get it delivered or whatever. But when you're in a foreign country, things are different. Like, this is another thing about adapting the living in a foreign country. You need to understand how things work and how they happen. And probably one of the biggest differences is that people actually pick up the phone and they call people. So, what happened for me, because I'm still Canadian somewhat, I prefer to walk to the store where I know the guy sells car batteries. And I knew it was only 10 or 15 minutes away from my house, so I started walking down the road.

I ran into Yadi on the way and she's like, "Amy, what are you doing?" I said, "Oh, my car battery died and I'm going to go to the store up the road and ask them if they can come to the house and install it or whatever," and she said, "Oh, well let me call my boyfriend. My boyfriend knows how to install batteries. Somebody delivered him a battery last week, his battery died too. I think he knows a guy." And boom, within half an hour, he was there at the house with the battery, and her boyfriend literally installed it. And at this point, he was just an acquaintance, so not a friend of ours, and he absolutely under no condition would accept money for doing this service. So, I thought that it was a really good example of the hospitality and willingness to help other people.

Curtis: Yeah. Like kindness out of your heart.

Amy: Yeah, exactly. Just doing something to help out another person. I think that they also recognized that we don't really understand 100% how things work, and I mean, obviously until you've been in the situation, you've never thought about it. So now we know probably it's best to call somebody that you know that knows a guy that can bring you a battery whenever you are in doubt.

Curtis: Another thing I absolutely love about Mexican people and culture is their sense of humor. So they're always having fun, joking around with each other and they love to

do that. It's like part of their culture, part of who they are. So, they might be picking on you or making fun of a friend, but it's all taken in a good stride. It's all taken as a joke.

Amy: Exactly. And the people they also have, for example, they like to play with the language. So, they'll say something, or you'll say something – I mean, as a language learner we're often the victim – we say something, there's a double meaning, we don't know the double meaning, they laugh at it as they teach us what it means, and everybody has fun. So yeah, I really like the sense of humor of Mexicans. What about the famous fiesta, the party?

Curtis: Oh yeah. They love celebrating birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, and they're always, always celebrating things like this. They have loud music on. Usually there are some cervezas or beers, and maybe during the course of the evening there might be a bottle of tequila or two involved but really, they like to really have a good time.

Amy: Yeah, they like to have fun, they like to celebrate. There's always something to celebrate. And because there are some fairly large families, someone's always having a birthday or some celebration, so why not have a party? That's great.

Moving on to the next part, what about the landscape in Mexico? What do you think when you think about Mexico and its geography and all of the great things that we have here?

Curtis: It depends on where you go in the country because there is a wide variety of different landscapes. For example, here where we live, of course there are beautiful beaches, but we're surrounded by a really spectacular mountain range called the Sierra Madre Mountains, and that's one of my favorite parts of living in this area. But if you go to other places like Mexico City, which we've been to, it's historical and it has big buildings in it, a lot of hustle and bustle, but it's a totally different landscape. We've been to coffee regions as well which are more mountains and things like that. So, it's a complete vast, different range of geography.

Amy: Mexico is actually a very, very big country and it has a lot of different climates from north to south and east west. So, in the northern part of Mexico, you're going to have some deserts that have a very different climate between the winter and the summer. The winters are cold, and the summers are extremely hot and dry. Whereas when you're in the southern part of the country, it's really like a jungle, it's very tropical. They have all of the tropical plants, and we have even rainstorms. We have hurricanes, for example, in the summertime we have big thunderstorms that happen, heavy rains during the summer.

And in the area of Mexico City, for example, it's very, very high in altitude. Actually, I checked it out and the elevation of Mexico City is the same elevation as the peak of the mountain that I used to go snowboarding in the winter in Canada. So big white ski resort has more or less at the very top, the peak of that mountain has the same elevation as Mexico City, which is the second biggest city in the world. So, you can imagine that's

pretty crazy. When you have that diversity from the coastline at sea level up to high mountains at a higher level, you're going to have a ton of different flora and fauna and fruits and vegetables and insects and animals. It's very diverse.

Curtis: Yeah. Different types of wildlife, for sure.

Amy: Out of the trips that we have done, the few trips that we have done around Mexico, what would you say was probably one of the most surprising or spectacular parts for you?

Curtis: For me, we went to this town called San Sebastián del Oeste. It's an old mining town and they have this mountain peak that has high elevation as well.

Amy: Yeah. La Bufa is the name of it.

Curtis: So, what we did was, we rented quads, four-wheel motorcycles, basically, is what they are, and I had never been on one before, but you have to take this all the way to the top. And what was really spectacular for me, to answer your question, was the view and you could see the whole bay of Banderas, the bay of flags which we live in from up top. So, you could get this bird's eye view of pretty much the whole bay from up there. So that just blew me away. It was beautiful.

Amy: Exactly. And they had very big mountains as well. It actually reminded me a lot of British Columbia from up there.

Curtis: Yeah.

Amy: I would say for me probably two of the coolest things and most memorable I experienced back in December last year and it was when we went to Tolantongo, which is an area of Mexico. It was just like as if it was in a completely different world. I couldn't believe it. There's this hot spring area, natural hot springs heated naturally by probably the volcanoes that are in the region. And they have these pools – dozens and dozens of pools with this beautiful light blue water, and they're on the edge of the mountain. So everywhere that you look, you have this beautiful view of the scenery around you. Down below in the valley, at the very bottom of the valley is this turquoise river, and if you can believe it or not, that river actually has warm water in it. I went swimming in it, it was super cool, and I've never experienced anything like this before.

Another thing that I think we should talk about are the pyramids that we were able to see at Teotihuacan, which is about one hour outside of Mexico City. But these pyramids are crazy. Like, you don't need to go to Egypt to see pyramids. You can actually see them in Mexico. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Curtis: That was an amazing thing for me. I really made that a highlight of the trip. When I was younger, I was on the other side of Mexico. And all throughout the country they have these ruins or ancient temples or pyramids. So, when we were close to Mexico City, we went to this area, the site, and the pyramids were awesome, they were

spectacular, and most of all they were huge. They had the Sun pyramid and the Moon pyramid. One is bigger than the other, but they are both huge. Then they have different areas where they played sports way back in the ancient days, they created a basketball game, so they've had that court there, and various places where they lived as well.

Amy: Yeah, they had different structures. It's actually a fairly large area and I don't even know how to articulate the size of these pyramids. They were way bigger than what I was expecting. Well, for the one pyramid I know that we were able to walk partially up the Moon pyramid and it was quite high. The steps were very high and narrow, and they were very steep. I think due to the elevation of Mexico City and the fact that I had a cold, we decided to only climb up that one, not the big Sun pyramid. But after climbing up just that one level of the Moon pyramid, I had a lot more respect for the massive size of the Sun pyramid. I highly recommend, if you guys don't know what these look like, to jump on Google and check out what they look like.

Curtis: The view from up top, wow, spectacular.