

# **The History of Michoacán and Guanajuato (March 2019)**

**by John P. Schmal**

# **The Free and Sovereign State of Michoacán de Ocampo**

# The State of Michoacán de Ocampo

The State of **Michoacán de Ocampo** occupies 58,599 square kilometers and is the sixteenth largest state in Mexico, taking up 3.0% of the national territory.

Politically, Michoacán is divided into 113 municipios. With a population that was tallied at 4,584,471 in the 2010 census, Michoacán has the ninth largest population in Mexico (3.8% of the national population). The capital of Michoacán is Morelia which had a population of 597,511 in 2010.



Sources: INEGI, Superficie de la República Mexicana por Estados. 2015; INEGI, 2010 Population Statistics.

# Michoacán's Relief

Dominated by the mountains of the Sierra Madre Occidental, Michoacán extends from the Pacific Ocean northeastward into Mexico's central plateau.

Michoacán is a rugged mountainous state, dominated by two large mountain ranges (**Sierra Madre del Sur** and the **Neovolcanic Axis**) that cover 63.2% of the surface of the state.

Plains, low hills and plateaus make up another 30% of the state, primarily in the southeastern region.




Sources: Cuéntame, Página de inicio / Información por entidad / Michoacán de Ocampo; INEGI. Anuario Estadístico y Geográfico de Michoacán de Ocampo 2017.

## The Neovolcanic Axis

The Eje Neovolcánico – also known as the **Neovolcanic Axis** or **Transverse Volcanic System** – crosses through central Mexico from Veracruz on the Gulf coast to Jalisco on the Pacific coast.

It has an approximate length of 920 km (572 miles). Its width varies from 400 km (249 miles) to about 100 km (62 miles).

Oceano Pacífico



Sistema Volcánico  
Transversal de México

Source: Lifepersona.com, “Transversal Volcanic System of Mexico: Characteristics and Location.” Online:

<https://www.lifepersona.com/transversal-volcanic-system-of-mexico-characteristics-and-location>.

Included in this region is the **Michoacán–Guanajuato Volcanic Field**, which contains 1,400 vents. Its most famous volcano was the **Parícutin volcano** which began in 1943 as a fissure in a cornfield owned by a Purépecha farmer and grew quickly. The nearby villages of Parícutin and San Juan Parangaricutiro were both buried in lava and ash. However, the eruption of El Parícutin ended in 1952 and it is believed to be monogenetic volcano, which means that once it has finished erupting, it will never erupt again. Any new eruptions in the Michoacán-Guanajuato volcanic field will erupt in a new location.

# The Purépecha of Michoacán

For more than a thousand years, **Michoacán** has been the home of the **Purépecha** Indians. The name Michoacán derives from the Náhuatl terms, michin (fish) and hua (those who have) and can (place) which roughly translates into “**Place of the Fisherman.**”

In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, Michoacán consisted of several small city-states that competed with each other in the military and economic realms. These city-states were internally stratified, with elaborate civic and religious architecture.

Eventually, a leader named Tariacuri (who reigned circa about 1350-1408) consolidated power in the city of Pátzcuaro, conquering the other city-states in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin and establishing the Triple Alliance. During the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, a rapid process of cultural assimilation and political unification brought the different groups of the region into a United Tarascan ethnicity and socio-political system.

Sources: Tumblr. Tlatollotl: What Was the Tarascan Government Like”; Gerónimo de Acalá, Relación de las Ceremonias y Ritos y Poblacion y Gobierno de los Indios de la Provincia de Michoacán (2013); J. Benedict Warren, The Conquest of Michoacán: Spanish Domination of the Tarascan Kingdom 1521-1530 (1985); Mike Cartwright, "Tarascan Civilization." Ancient History Encyclopedia (Last modified December 11, 2013).

# The Purepécha of Michoacán

Eventually, the Purépecha Kingdom would control an area of at least 45,000 square miles (72,500 square kilometers), including parts of the present-day states of Guanajuato, Guerrero, Colima, and Jalisco. However, 240 miles to the east, the Aztec Empire, centered in Tenochtitlán, had begun its ascendancy in the Valley of Mexico.

## The Purepécha Empire (Circa 1500)



Source: Mike Cartwright, "Tarascan Civilization." Ancient History Encyclopedia (Last modified December 11, 2013). Online: [https://www.ancient.eu/Tarascan\\_Civilization/](https://www.ancient.eu/Tarascan_Civilization/).

Map Source: Tumblr. Tlatollotl: What Was the Tarascan Government Like." Online: <https://tlatollotl.tumblr.com/post/154284146371/what-was-the-tarascan-government-like>.



# The Purepécha Versus The Aztecs

Over time, the Aztecs came into conflict with their western neighbors. In 1468, the Aztecs launched a powerful offensive against the Purépecha. This offensive turned into a bloody and protracted conflict that lasted until 1478.

## The Purepécha and Aztec Empires (Circa 1500)



Finally, in 1478, a force of 32,000 Aztec warriors engaged an army of 50,000 Tarascans in the Battle of Taximaroa (today the city of Hidalgo). After a daylong battle, the Aztecs withdrew, with a loss of 20,000 warriors. The Purépecha continued to put off the Aztecs up to the arrival of the Spaniards. In the map at the upper right, the Tarascan Empire is green, while the Aztec Empire is light purple.

Source: Mike Cartwright, "Tarascan Civilization." Ancient History Encyclopedia (Last modified December 11, 2013).

Online: [https://www.ancient.eu/Tarascan\\_Civilization/](https://www.ancient.eu/Tarascan_Civilization/).



# The Purépecha Language

Today, the Purépecha language is recognized as a **language isolate** that is not even provisionally linked with any other neighboring language. Its origin and early history are shrouded in mystery. Some prestigious researchers have suggested that Tarascan is distantly related to **Quecha**, one of the man languages in the Andean zone of South America. Some historians have regarded Purépecha as a **hybrid language**, the product of a wide-ranging process of linguistic borrowing and fusion.

## The Present Distribution of the Purépecha Language in Michoacán



The Purépecha language presently consists of 22 consonants and six vowels. Today, the language is spoken mostly in rural communities in the highlands of Michoacán. Ethnologue counts Purépecha as two languages: a central language, spoken by approximately 40,000 people (2005) around Pátzcuaro, and a western highland language, spoken by 135,000 speakers (2005) around Zamora.

Source: Wikipedia, "Purépecha language."

# The Spaniards Enter Michoacán (1522-1526)

The first Spanish colonizer to have contact with the Purépecha Indians was Cristóbal de Olid, in 1522, who by peaceful means got the Indians to recognize King Carlos V, without their leader (Cazonci) Tangáxuan losing his status as ruler. Although the Purépecha army may have numbered 100,000, the kingdom chose not to fight when Spanish forces arrived soon after.

In 1524, King Tangoxoán visited Mexico City and was baptized the next year with the Christian name of Francisco. Later, he asked the bishop to send Catholic priests to Michoacán. Meanwhile, fifteen young Tarascan nobles were sent to Mexico City in June 1525 to study at the newly built Franciscan school.

Although the Purépecha tried to cooperate, the suspicious relations between the Spaniards and their new subjects grew more tense and, in 1526, Tangoxoán was imprisoned as a means of persuading him to turn over the treasures of the Tarascan state to the Spaniards. After destroying the Purépecha temples, the Franciscan missionaries built a large Franciscan monastery in 1526.

# The King is Murdered (1530)

In December 1529, The President of the First Audiencia in Nueva España (Mexico), **Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán**, left Mexico City with a force of 350 Spaniards and over 10,000 Indian allies. He also brought along King (Cazonci) Tangoxoán as a hostage, demanding that he turn over all his gold to Guzmán.

On February 5, 1530, the Cazonci was accused of treason and interrogated under torture. He was finally executed on Feb. 14, 1530, allegedly because he had abandoned Christianity and had lapsed back into paganism. Guzmán had Tangoxoán dragged behind a horse and finally burned at the stake.

According to the historian J. Benedict Warren, “the execution of the Cazonci was the most symbolic act marking the end of the pre-Spanish kingdom of Michoacán and the completion of the Spanish conquest of the region.” In the following decades, Tarascan puppet rulers were installed by the Spanish government to rule the area.

Source: J. Benedict Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán: Spanish Domination of the Tarascan Kingdom 1521-1530* (1985).

# After the Conquest

The cruelty of **Nuño de Guzmán** stunned and horrified the Tarascan people who had made their best efforts to accommodate the Spaniards. **Guzmán's forces plundered the kingdom, destroying temples, houses and field.** Eventually, Guzmán was disgraced and arrested and returned to Spain in 1537 to stand trial for his crimes.

Fearing for their lives, many of demoralized Purépecha population either died or fled far into the mountains to hide. Eventually, **Don Vasco de Quiroga**, who became the Bishop of Michoacán in 1538, played an important role in ameliorating the physical and moral damage inflicted by Guzmán on the people of Michoacán. Quiroga rapidly gained the respect and friendship of the natives and became their protector. He was known to them as Tata Vasco (Father Vasco). Quiroga died on March 14, 1565 at the age of 64 in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico.



Source: Bernardino Verástique, "Michoacán and Eden: Vasco de Quiroga and the Evangelization of Western Mexico" (2010).

# Morelia



Morelia — the capital of Michoacán — is one of several large cities located in Michoacán, not far from the border with Guanajuato. Morelia was founded by Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza on May 18, 1541, who first named it **Nueva Ciudad de Mechuacan** (New City of Michoacán). The city's name was changed to **Valladolid** in 1545. In 1828, the city was renamed **Morelia** to honor **José María Morelos**, a hero of the Mexican War of Independence and a native of Valladolid.

The newly founded settlement grew quickly over the next two centuries. The 17th century saw growth for Valladolid, with the construction of a cathedral and an aqueduct. The cathedral was begun in 1640 (finished in 1744) and the aqueduct in 1657. At the end of the colonial period, Valladolid was a small city with about 20,000 inhabitants.

# **The Free and Sovereign State of Guanajuato**

# The State of Guanajuato

Guanajuato is a relatively small state – twenty-second in terms of size among the Republic's states – with a surface area of 30,608 square kilometers of territory, giving it 1.6% of the national territory. Politically, the State is divided into 46 municipios.

Guanajuato's 2010 population was 5,853,677, representing 4.9% of Mexico's total population and ranking six among the 31 states and the Distrito Federal.



Source: Nacho Ferrer Vidal , “Mapa de Guanajuato,” Mapas de America, March 23, 2012.

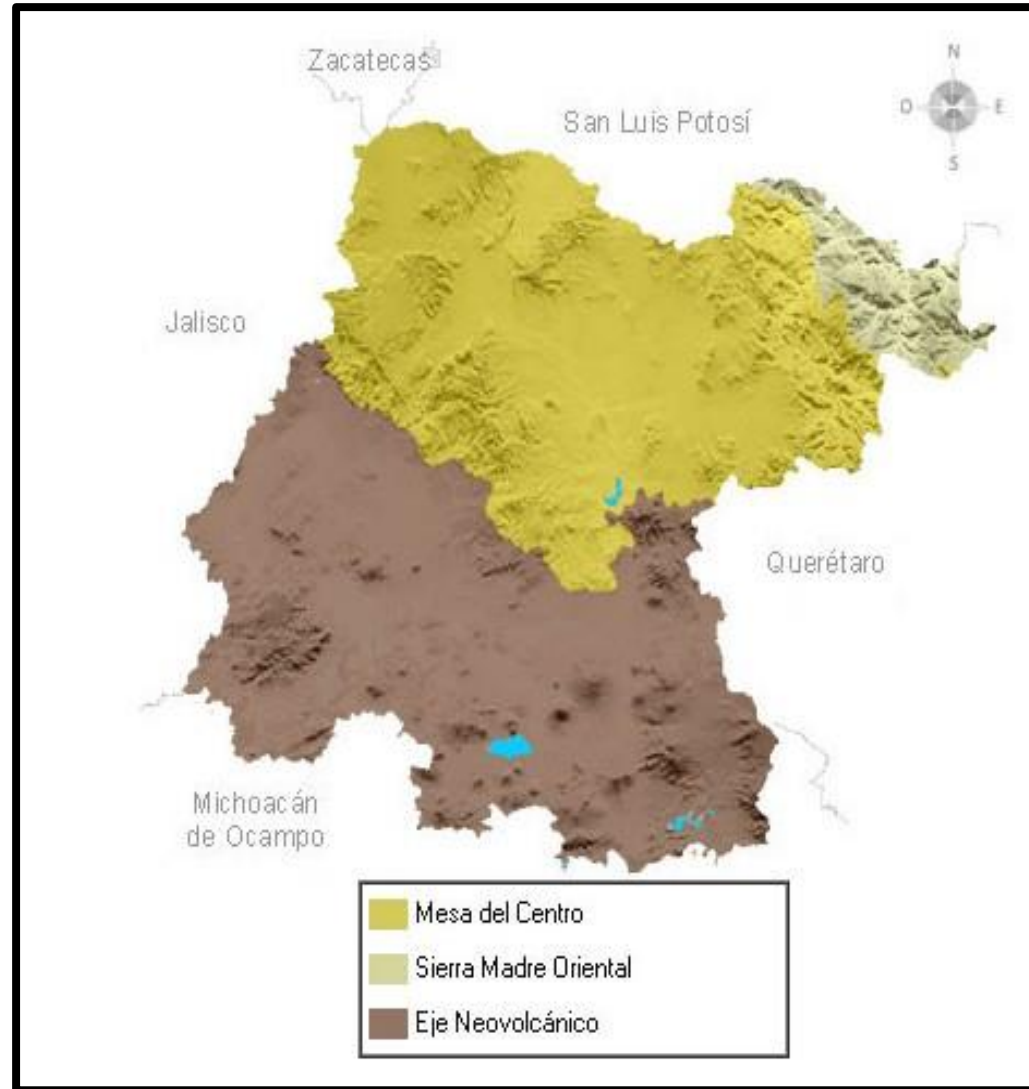


# Guanajuato's Relief

Guanajuato has three physiographic provinces. The **Sierra Madre Oriental Mountains** in the northeast occupies only 5.32% of the state territory.

The **Mesa del Centro** of the north and northwest occupies 45.31% of the State territory and consists of plains, interrupted by scattered mountain ranges.

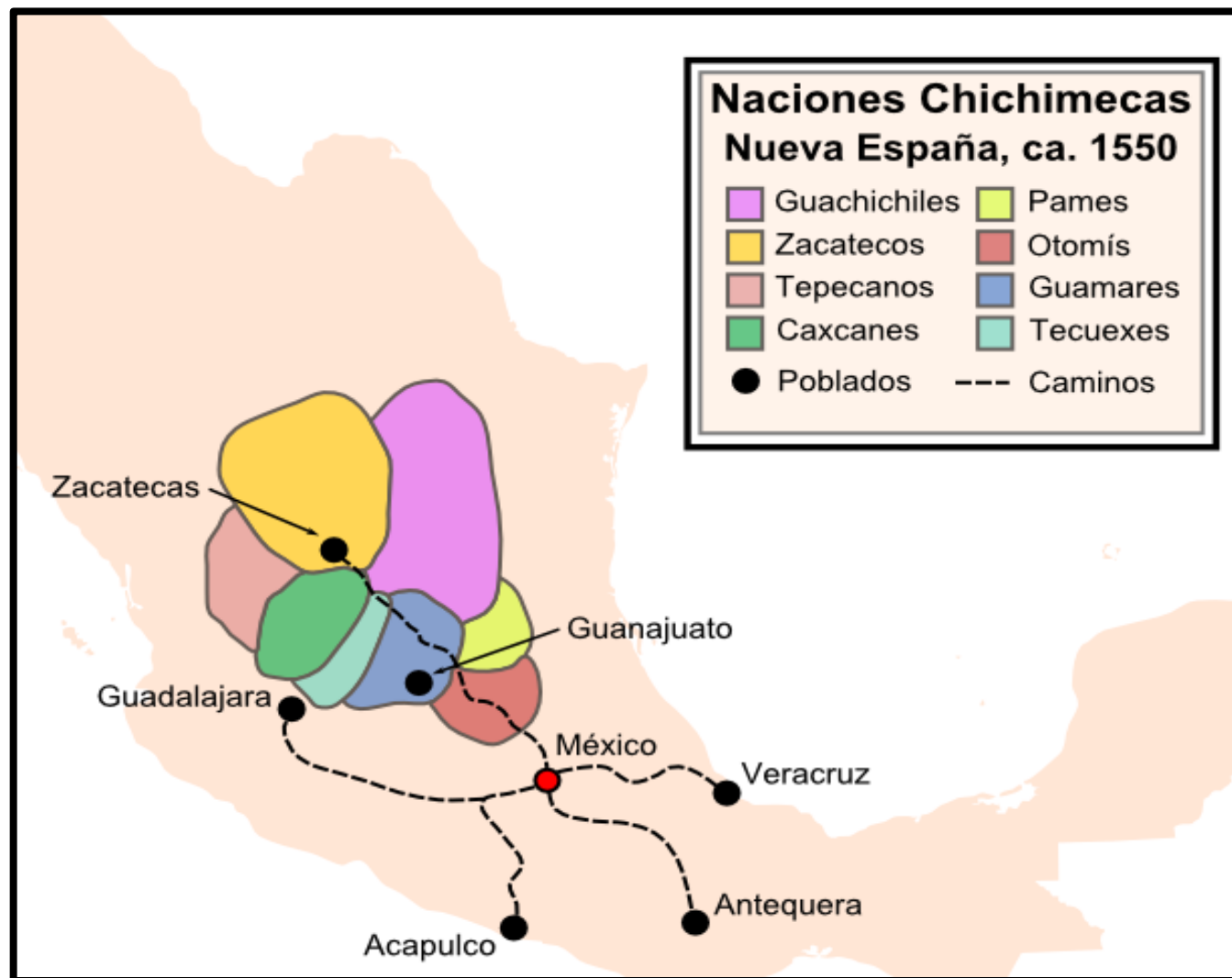
The **Eje Neovolcánico (Neovolcanic Axis)** occupies 49.37% of the state territory and consists of great volcanic mountain ranges situated among the extensive plains of lake basins.



Sources: Cuéntame, Página de inicio / Información por entidad / Guanajuato; INEGI. Anuario Estadístico y Geográfico de Guanajuato 2017.

# The Chichimeca Nations

**“Chichimecas”** was the collective name for a wide range of indigenous groups living throughout Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Jalisco, Aguascalientes, Jalisco and Guanajuato. The Chichimecs were not a single people sharing a common language, but consisted of several indigenous groups living through the large swathe of territory known to the Spaniards as **“La Gran Chichimeca.”**



Source: Philip Wayne Powell, “Soldiers, Indians and Silver: North America's First Frontier War” (Tempe, Arizona: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1973). Map Source: Wikipedia, “Chichimeca War.”

# The Chichimecas: Assimilation & Mestizaje

From 1550 to 1590, the Chichimeca War was waged by the Chichimecas against the Spaniards who were settling in their territory. Unable to decisively defeat the native groups, the Spanish initiated a **“peace by purchase”** policy, which bribed the Chichimecas to make peace by offering them a more luxurious existence with the trappings of the so-called “civilized world.” This new policy involved the shipment and distribution of food, clothing and agricultural implements to strategically located depots as incentives for peaceful settlement.

Soon Christian Indians were brought from the south (Tlaxcalans, Aztecs, Otomíes and Tarascans) and settled among the Chichimecas to **help them adapt to their new existence**. The peace offensive and missionary efforts of the Spaniards were so successful that **within a few years, the Zacatecos, Guachichiles and Guamares had settled down to peaceful living** within the small settlements that now dotted the Zacatecas landscape. Working in the fields and mines alongside their Indian brethren, the Chichimeca Indians were very rapidly assimilated and, as historian Phillip Wayne Powell writes, **“The Sixteenth-century land of war thus became fully Mexican in its mixture.”**

Source: Philip Wayne Powell, “Soldiers, Indians and Silver: North America's First Frontier War” (Tempe, Arizona: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1973).

# The Guachichiles

The **Guachichile Indians** were the most populous Chichimeca nation, occupying about 100,000 square kilometers, from Lake Chapala in Jalisco to modern Saltillo in Coahuila, including parts of western Guanajuato. The name "Guachichil" was given to them by the Mexica, and meant "head colored red" (Quaítl = head; Chichitic = red). They had been given this label because they wore red feather headdresses, painted their bodies and their hair red, and wore head coverings (bonetillas) made of hides and painted red.

The Spanish frontiersmen and contemporary writers referred to the Guachichiles **"as being the most ferocious, the most valiant, and the most elusive" of all their indigenous adversaries**. It is believed that the Guachichile Indians were closely related to the **Huichol Indians**, who presently live in Nayarit. Consider the similarity of **"Guachil"** and **"Huichol"** – the theory states that the Huichol were a subgroup that moved to the west and developed their own culture and language.

Sources: Stacy B. Schaefer and Peter T. Furst (eds.), "People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion, and Survival" (1996); Philip Wayne Powell, "Soldiers, Indians and Silver: North America's First Frontier War" (1973).

# The Guamares

The nation of the **Guamares**, located in the Guanajuato Sierras, was centered around Penjamo and San Miguel.

The author Gonzalo de las Casas called the **Guamares** "the bravest, most warlike, treacherous, and destructive of all the Chichimecas, and the most astute (dispuesta)." Like Guachichiles, the Guamares painted their body in red and white colors. The map at the right shows that the Guamares occupied the largest segment of Guanajuato, with the Pames and Otomies to their east.



Sources: Philip Wayne Powell, "Soldiers, Indians and Silver: North America's First Frontier War" (Tempe, Arizona: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1973); Peter Masten Dunne, "Pioneer Jesuits in Northern Mexico" (1944).



# The Otomí Indians (The Sierra Nahñu)

The Otomíes were a Chichimeca tribe, occupying Querétaro, Guanajuato, Hidalgo and parts of the state of México. At one time, the Otomí held a great deal of power and prestige throughout east central Mexico. However, the rise of the Aztec Empire caused a decline of the Otomíes during the Fourteenth Century.

Soon after the Spaniards arrived in Mexico, most of the Otomíes allied themselves with the Spaniards and Mexica Indians. As a result, writes Mr. Powell, Otomí settlers were “issued a grant of privileges” and were “supplied with tools for breaking land.” For their allegiance, they were exempted from tribute and given a certain amount of autonomy in their towns. Today, the Otomí (who call themselves Nahñu, or Hñahñu) speak the seventh most common language group in Mexico.



Source: Wikipedia, “The Otomí Language.”

# The City of Guanajuato

The Spaniards arrived in the region in 1522, led by Cristóbal de Olid. Other explorers followed, but in 1552, Captain Juan de Jaso discovered mineral deposits in the Guanajuato region and subsequently established **Real de Minas (The Royal Mines)**.

In the 1540s and 1550s, Spanish entrepreneurs found rich veins of silver in the mountains surrounding the city. The indigenous tribes in the Guanajuato region had noticed the numerous frogs in the area and referred to it as “Quanax-juato,” combining the Tarascan “quanas” (frogs) and “huato” (mountainous), which essentially means a high place with many frogs. The Spaniards would later translate Quanax-juato into Guanajuato.

The Town of Guanajuato was founded in 1554, but it did not receive the title of Ciudad (City) until 1741, when King Felipe V of Spain bestowed the honor. The discovery of silver in the region led to rapid settlement by the Spanish throughout the 16th and 17th centuries.





# Mexico's Silver Belt Runs Through Guanajuato

Today, Mexico is the world's leading producer of silver with 21% of global production, followed by Peru (15%), China (12%) and Australia and Russia (each 6%).

**Mexico's "La Faja de Plata" (The Silver Belt) runs 1,000 km from NW of Mexico City to Chihuahua and is the most prolific mining district in the world, with a historical production of more than 10,000 million ounces of silver (311,000 tons).**

Many of the major mines in the belt include Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Fresnillo, Santa Eulalia, Parral-Santa Barbara-San Francisco del Oro, and Charcas, all of which have been in nearly continuous production since the 16th century.



Source: University of Texas at Dallas, "Colonial Silver- Potosi (Bolivia) and Guanajuato (Mexico)."

# Guanajuato's Silver Wealth



Guanajuato's silver wealth lies near the southeastern end of the famous **Silver Belt** running through central Mexico. Silver mining in Guanajuato first began in 1548 along the great "Mother Lode." In 1558, the site of the **Veta Madre Mine** was discovered. It became an integral part of the famous **Guanajuato Mine Complex**. The Guanajuato Mining District is one of the most prolific and best-known silver districts in the world. During the 18th century, the district was reportedly producing one-third of the world's silver. Today, the Valenciana Mine is still believed to be one of the richest silver mines in the world.

Source: University of Texas at Dallas, "Colonial Silver - Potosi (Bolivia) and Guanajuato (Mexico)."

Map Source: CBR (Canadian Business Resource), "Great Panther Silver Limited: Mexican Projects."

# **The War for Independence (1810-1821)**

# The Insurrection Begins

Valladolid in Michoacán became a well-known educational center that turned out scholars such as **Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla** and **José María Morelos y Pavón**, who became sympathetic to the new republican ideas coming out of post-revolution France and the United States.

On September 16, 1810, **Father Miguel Hidalgo** rang the town's church bells of his Guanajuato parish to call the people to mass. He then gave his famous speech, the **Grito de Dolores, or Cry of Dolores**. What started as a small rebellion quickly snowballed into a full-scale revolution. Gathering recruits from the countryside, **Hidalgo's peasant army of mestizos and indios** grew to 80,000 men and marched 120 miles (193 km) south to Mexico City.



Fr. Miguel Hidalgo



Hidalgo's Regions of Support

# Hidalgo's Campaigns (1810-1811)

Moving from one town to another through Guanajuato, Michoacán, Mexico State and Jalisco, Hidalgo's insurgents were able to take control of some cities without firing a shot. In September 1810, Hidalgo's peasant army seized Guanajuato City and a month later, they took Valladolid. However, the cities were taken back by royalist forces soon after.

Although Hidalgo gained a great deal of support around the country, his army eventually succumbed to professionally trained royal soldiers with superior weapons. Eventually he was captured, found guilty of treason, and **executed by a firing squad on July 30, 1811.**



**The Campaign of Father Miguel Hidalgo, Sept. 1810 to March 1811.**

Map Source: Rodrigo Moreno, *Independencias Iberoamericanas* (Colegio de Historia, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UNAM).

# The Cradle of the Rebellion

Guanajuato was truly the cradle of the rebellion, with many of its native sons taking part in the struggle for independence. **Ignacio José de Allende** was a captain of the Spanish Army in Mexico who came to sympathize with independence movement. He chose to fight along with **Miguel Hidalgo** in the first year of the revolution.

**Juan Aldama** (from San Miguel del Grande) was a captain of a cavalry regiment who joined Hidalgo. **José Mariano Jiménez**, an engineer from San Luis Potosí, also joined Hidalgo's cause, rising quickly to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the rebel army. Nearly all of the conspirators were captured in March 1811, tried for insubordination and executed by firing squad in Coahuila on June 26, 1811. However, Dolores native **Jose Mariano de Abasolo** was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in Spain, where he died on April 14, 1816.





## Morelos Carries on (1811-1815)

In October 1810, **Father José María Morelos** from Michoacán joined Hidalgo's revolt. With the execution of Hidalgo in July 1811, Morelos took up the revolutionary leadership. However, realizing that his untrained volunteers were no match for large numbers of professional Spanish soldiers, Morelos **trained his followers in guerilla warfare, attacking without warning with small effective bands of fighters, capturing small towns and villages.**

From 1811 to 1815, Morelos fought numerous battles in the states of Michoacán, Guerrero, Morelos and Oaxaca. The map on the right shows the insurgency of Morelos in 1813. The green areas were areas in which the royalists occupied the cities, while the rebels controlled the countryside. The areas colored in gold — including Michoacán — were primarily under the control of Morelos' forces.



**The Insurgency of Morelos, 1813**

Source: El Museo de las Constituciones, "Línea de Tiempo: Apatzingán."  
Online: <http://museodelasconstituciones.unam.mx/lineadetiempo1814/>.

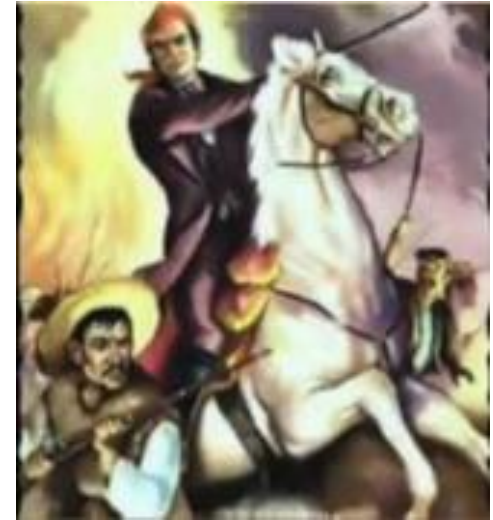


# The Revolution Continues

As the new leader of the movement, Morelos — a native of Valladolid — advocated that Mexico become an independent republic.

However, royalist forces under another native of Valladolid, **Agustín de Iturbide**, soundly defeated Morelos at the Battle of Puruarán in Michoacán on Jan. 5, 1814. Morelos would never recover the initiative after this battle. Iturbide and other Spanish commanders relentlessly pursued Morelos, capturing and executing him in late 1815.

Vicente Guerrero would carry the torch of independence from this point, but the City of Valladolid would remain in royalist hands until the end of the war in 1821, when Iturbide changed sides.



Morelos: A Cry for Freedom



Emperor Iturbide

# The Tide Turns Against Spain

In February 1821, one of the most successful creole generals, **Agustín Iturbide**, a native of Valladolid and the military officer in charge of suppressing the rebellion in southern Mexico, was campaigning with 2,500 men against the rebel leader, **Vicente Guerrero**. Suddenly, Iturbide joined forces with Guerrero and together they proclaimed the **Plan of Iguala**. On Sept. 27, Iturbide — leading an army of 16,000 soldiers — entered Mexico City and the Royal Government in Mexico collapsed.

Half a million people died during the Mexican War of Independence. Iturbide was named **President of the Provisional Governing Junta**. Thanks to overwhelming support from the elites and his own role in Mexico's independence, Iturbide served as president from Sept. 1821 to May 1822 and then became the **First Constitutional Emperor of Mexico** on May 19, 1822.

Soon after, Iturbide lost favor among the Mexican generals and high-ranking government officials and was forced to abdicate his throne in 1823. He went into exile but returned in July 1824 in a new bid for power, but was arrested and executed.

Source: Christon I. Archer, "Politicization of the Army of New Spain during the War of Independence, 1810-1821," in Jaime E. Rodríguez O., "The Evolution of the Mexican Political System" (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1993), pp. 17-43.

# **Modern Times**

# The Mexican Revolution

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 turned Michoacán into a battleground. Several revolutionary leaders fought for land reform in Michoacán, supported by thousands of landless peasants who clamored for the fair distribution of land. During the revolution, Michoacán – like most of the states – was ravaged by banditry, drought and devastating epidemics during this time. Finally in 1934, Lázaro Cárdenas, a native of Michoacán, became President of Mexico, adopting land reforms and giving millions of peasants the right to farm on communal (shared) lands.

The Revolution also took a strong toll on Guanajuato, with one major battle fought at Celaya (April 6–15, 1915) between the troops of Álvaro Obregón and Pancho Villa. But many people from Guanajuato fought and died in other parts of Mexico, leaving behind widows and children. According to Mexican census data, Guanajuato lost a fifth of its population, while Michoacán and other Mexican states experienced considerable losses.

State	1910 State Population	1921 State Population	Percent Decrease (1910-1921)
Guanajuato	1,081,651	860,364	-20.5%
Michoacán	991,880	939,849	-5.2%
Mexican Republic	15,160,369	14,334,780	-5.4%

Source: Departamento de la Estadística Nacional, “Anuario de 1930” (Tacubaya, Distrito Federal, 1932).

## Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929)

One of the major consequences of the Mexican Revolution was the Constitution of 1917. The articles of this constitution deprived the Catholic Church of its traditional privileged position in Mexican society by **secularizing all primary education and requiring the registration of all clergymen with the government**. Article 24, which forbade public worship outside the confines of the church, had antagonized many Mexican citizens.

These laws were ignored until the anti-clerical President Elias Calles signed his "**Intolerable Acts**" on June 14, 1926. The provisions of these acts stated that priests were to be fined 500 pesos for wearing clerical garb. In addition, a priest could be imprisoned five years for simply criticizing the government. The implementation of these strongly anti-clerical laws antagonized many Catholics and laid the foundation of the so-called "**Cristero Religious War**" in Jalisco, Michoacán and Guanajuato.



# Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929)

On July 11, 1926, Mexico's Catholic bishops voted to suspend all public worship in Mexico in response to the Calles Law, and Catholic Church essentially went on strike, depriving Mexican citizens of receiving the sacraments.

The economic boycott against the Mexican Government was particularly effective in west-central Mexico (the states of Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes and Zacatecas). Catholics in these areas stopped attending movies and plays and using public transportation, and Catholic teachers stopped teaching in secular schools.

## Map of Cristero Rebellion: Zones Of Conflict



Map Source: Modern Mexico Lecture, "The Catholic Revival and the Cristero Rebellion." Online:

<https://slideplayer.com/slide/5213533/>



# The End of the Cristero Rebellion

The Catholic Church's militant opposition to some of the policies of the Calles government and the uprising of Catholic loyalists generated much tension in both Guanajuato and Michoacán. However, in June 1929, the Cristero War formally ended. On June 25, 1929, the first public Catholic Mass took place in Mexico since August 1, 1926. Soon after, churches around the country were reopened. However, some outbreaks of violence continued up until 1934.

Some historians have claimed that as many as 250,000 people were killed. Wikipedia states that the war had claimed the lives of some 90,000 people (56,882 on the federal side and 30,000 Cristeros, as well as civilians).

Over time, the uneasy relationship between the Church and state relaxed considerably and, while the oppressive laws originally signed into law by Calles remained on the books, little effort was made to enforce them and, in 1938, President Lázaro Cárdenas suspended the laws.



# **Indigenous People in Modern Day Guanajuato and Michoacán**

# The 1921 Mexican Census

Mexico's 1921 census asked people to categorize themselves by three primary categories: Pure Indigenous, Indigenous Mixed with White, and White.

## The Racial Classifications of Michoacán and Guanajuato in the 1921 Census

Racial Classification	Guanajuato: No. of Persons	Guanajuato: % of Total State Population	Michoacán: No. of Persons	Michoacán: % of Total Population
Indígena Pura	25,458	3.00%	196,726	20.90%
Indígena Mezclada con Blanca	828,724	96.30%	663,391	70.60%
Blanca	4,687	0.50%	64,886	6.90%
Question Ignored or Other Classifications	1,395	0.20%	14,101	1.50%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>860,364</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>939,849</b>	<b>100%</b>

Classifications: Indígena Pura (Pure Indigenous Origins); Indígena Mezclada con Blanca (Indigenous Mixed with White); Blanca (White); Extranjeros sin distinción de razas (Foreigners without racial distinction) One percent of the population of the Republic of Mexico chose a fifth option: "Cualquiera otra o que se ignora la raza" (persons who chose to ignore the question or "other.")

Source: Departamento de la Estadística Nacional, "Anuario de 1930" (Tacubaya, Distrito Federal, 1932).

# Indigenous Michoacán Today

In the 2010 census, Michoacán was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> among the Mexican states with 3.5% of its population speaking indigenous languages (136,608 individuals in all). The single largest group among the indigenous speakers were the Purépecha who represented 83.1% of Michoacán's total indigenous-speaking population. Náhuatl was the second most common language spoken in the state. The Nahuas primarily lived in the coastal region, while the Mazahua and Otomi Indians occupy five eastern municipios.

The 2010 Census: Indigenous Languages Spoken in Michoacán		
Indigenous Language	Population 3 Years and Older Who Speak an Indigenous Language	Percent of all Indigenous Speakers
Purépecha (Tarasco)	117,221	83.2%
Náhuatl	9,170	6.5%
Unspecified Indigenous Language	5,457	3.9%
Mazahua	5,431	3.9%
Mixteco	1,160	0.8%
Otomí	592	0.4%
Zapoteco	321	0.2%
Total	140,820	100.0%
Source: INEGI. Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010: Tabulados del Cuestionario Básico: Población de 3 años y más que Habla Lengua Indígena por Entidad Federativa y Lengua.		

# Indigenous Guanajuato Today

In the 2010 census, Guanajuato ranked 30<sup>th</sup> among the Mexican states and the Distrito Federal in its percentage of indigenous speakers. In fact, only 0.3% of Guanajuato's residents actually spoke an indigenous language. More than one-third of the 15,204 indigenous speakers 3 years and older in Guanajuato in the 2010 census did not specify which language they spoke, as noted in the following table:

**The 2010 Census: Indigenous Languages Spoken in Guanajuato**

<b>Indigenous Language</b>	<b>Population 3 Years and Older Who Speak an Indigenous Language</b>	<b>Percent of all Indigenous Speakers</b>
Unspecified Indigenous Language	5,331	35.1%
Otomí	3,239	21.3%
Chichimeca Jonaz	2,142	14.1%
Náhuatl	1,264	8.3%
Mazahua	818	5.4%
Purépecha (Tarasco)	568	3.7%
Other Languages	1,842	12.1%
Total	15,204	100.0%

Source: INEGI. Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010: Tabulados del Cuestionario Básico: Población de 3 años y más que Habla Lengua Indígena por Entidad Federativa y Lengua.

# The 2015 Intercensal

INEGI's 2015 Intercensal Survey, published in 2016, indicated that the % of people who are traditionally indigenous exceeds the % of people who actually speak indigenous languages. The data for Michoacán and Guanajuato and selected neighboring states are shown below.

## Linguistic and Ethnic Identity in Mexico (2015)

State	Status	% of the Total Population That Consider Themselves to be Indigenous	% of Persons 3 Years of Age and Older Who Speak an Indigenous Language
Oaxaca	No. 1 in Mexico	65.7%	32.2%
Yucatán	No. 2 in Mexico	65.4%	28.9%
<b>Michoacán</b>	<b>Subject State</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>Guanajuato</b>	<b>Subject State</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
Colima	Neighboring State	20.4%	0.6%
Querétaro	Neighboring State	19.2%	1.7%
Aguascalientes	Neighboring State	11.7%	0.3%
Jalisco	Neighboring State	11.1%	0.8%
Zacatecas	Neighboring State	7.6%	0.3%
<b>The Mexican Republic</b>	<b>All States Combined</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>

Source: INEGI, "Principales resultados de la Encuesta Intercensal 2015. Estado Unidos Mexicanos: III: Etnicidad." Online: [http://www.senado.gob.mx/comisiones/asuntos\\_indigenas/eventos/docs/etnicidad\\_240216.pdf](http://www.senado.gob.mx/comisiones/asuntos_indigenas/eventos/docs/etnicidad_240216.pdf)

# **The Modern Economies of Guanajuato and Michoacán**



# The Michoacán Economy

In 2017, Michoacán had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 526,910 million pesos, contributing 2.5% to Mexico's national GDP. The three largest economic activities making up Michoacán's GDP were:

1. Wholesale and Retail Trade: 27% of total GDP
2. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting: 15% of total GDP
3. Real Estate and Rental and Leasing: 12% of total GDP

In fact, the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector is so important to the state that Michoacán has 10.5% of the entire Mexican workforce in that category, second only to Jalisco.

In 2017, Michoacán had 1.9 million workers, most of whom were engaged in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (26%), Commerce (19%) and Manufacturing (12%). Agriculture occupies 20% of the land area., and their principal crops include corn, sorghum, avocados, strawberries, peaches, wheat, limes, sugar cane and mangos. While corn accounts for 43% of the crops harvested, Michoacán is the largest producer of avocados in Mexico and in the world.

# The Guanajuato Economy

In 2017, Guanajuato had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 914,368 million pesos, contributing 4.4% to Mexico's national GDP. The two largest economic activities represent half of Guanajuato's total GDP:

1. Manufacturing: 29% of total GDP
2. Wholesale and Retail Trade: 21% of total GDP

In 2017, Guanajuato had 2.5 million workers, the majority of which were engaged in Manufacturing (25%), Commerce (19%), Construction (10%) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (10%).

Over the decade leading up to 2015, Guanajuato's manufacturing industry has been dynamic and expanded at an average annual rate of 4.8%. In addition, the expansion of the manufacturing sector has brought numerous ancillary benefits. For example, the transport, real estate and services sectors have all grown substantially as a result of the increased investment in industry. Guanajuato's geography and climate present favorable growing conditions for the agricultural sector. Guanajuato is now Mexico's top producer of broccoli, cauliflower, anise, barley and artichokes.