

## What I learned visiting my parents homeland.



Via twenty- 20 @gr0o0ovydanny

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I'm Mexican - American. My parents came to the United States in the 1980s with my two older siblings, which I will be forever grateful for. I was born and raised here in the states. One of my biggest dreams was to visit my parents' roots and learn more about my Mexican culture. Finally, last year in 2016, I went to Mexico for the first time. I wasn't sure what to expect. All I wanted was to get to know my family members that I knew about through Facebook. In the 25 years of my life, I've only been to Mexico twice, and I still need to experience much more of my Mexican roots. I can say that I experienced some eye-opening moments and beautiful memories that I would not trade for the world.

### **Social class difference**

Here in the United States, I grew up in the middle class, and that's a great blessing. Unfortunately, in Mexico, the situation is either you're rich, or you're poor. In Mexico, there isn't a middle class compared here in the United States. I grew up listening to stories of poverty that my family grew up in. I learned this by seeing it with my own eyes and hearing all the stories from friends and family. One story, for example, one of my cousin's friends from the United States, his family in Mexico, couldn't afford a boiler for hot water. So his family took showers in cold water until he and his father bought a boiler for their family. In the states, 150 dollars isn't a

big deal, but it's not easy to afford to people in Mexico. It makes me appreciate the little things that we take for granted every day.

### **The importance of family and customs**

One of the main reasons I wanted to visit Mexico was to visit my mother's side of the family. Most of my father's family migrated to Mexico, and they live here in the United States. I met new members of my family, and I felt right at home and loved. One of the most beautiful experiences of my life. They know I was born and raised in the United States, and they didn't care about that. The essence of family is a number one priority, especially when it came to eating together. Here in the United States, everyone has their own schedules and priorities, so eating dinner is rare. Each time I ate dinner with my family, we would all eat together. It wasn't separate individuals at different times. One custom that I love is when you go out to eat in Mexico people will tell you "buen provecho," which means have a good meal. You are sitting down eating, and the person next to you gets up tells you, "buen provecho." These are strangers telling you this. The only person who tells you have a good meal here in the states is your waiter.

### **You aren't a real Mexican**

When you visit your parents' homeland, people born there can distinguish and tell you're American. That's disheartening when your own roots don't want to accept you because you were born in a different country. One experience is when we went to eat in Mexico, and people kept staring at us because we looked different. I felt out of place because I was getting judged and not realizing that I still had sangre Mexicana. Another example is going to the bathroom and talking to some girls in line and saying I'm from the United States. They gave a look of disgust and that I wasn't good enough to be in their homeland. The look of "you aren't good enough to call yourself Mexican." I understand that not everyone will accept Mexican born in the United States, but I believe that will never make me less of a Mexican. I love my Mexican side just as much as I love my American side. I am here to fall more in love with my Mexican roots and Mexico. I never let those looks or words discourage me and my mission.

The best advice is to go visit your parents' homeland because you will learn things you never thought about. You will experience new foods, new customs and even meet new family members. I can tell you in advance there will be people from your parents' homeland who will not accept you because you weren't born in that country, but don't let that hurt you. Go out there keep learning. The biggest lesson you will learn is to continue to be humble and be grateful for things you have now because not everyone is fortunate as you are.