

Geography

Location: Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, between Belize and the US and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Guatemala and the US

Map references: North America

Area:

total area: 1,972,550 sq km

land area: 1,923,040 sq km

comparative area: slightly less than three times the size of Texas

Land boundaries: total 4,538 km, Belize 250 km, Guatemala 962 km, US 3,326 km

Coastline: 9,330 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

International disputes: claims Clipperton Island (French possession)

Climate: varies from tropical to desert

Terrain: high, rugged mountains, low coastal plains, high plateaus, and desert

Natural resources: petroleum, silver, copper, gold, lead, zinc, natural gas, timber

Land use:

arable land: 12%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 39%

forest and woodland: 24%

other: 24%

Irrigated land: 51,500 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: natural fresh water resources scarce and polluted in north, inaccessible and poor quality in center and extreme southeast; raw sewage and industrial effluents polluting rivers in urban areas; deforestation; widespread erosion; desertification; serious air pollution in the national capital and urban centers along US-Mexico border

natural hazards: tsunamis along the Pacific coast, destructive earthquakes in the center and south, and hurricanes on the Gulf and Caribbean coasts

international agreements: party to - Biodiversity, Climate Change, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Marine Life Conservation, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone

Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling; signed, but not ratified - Desertification

Note: strategic location on southern border of US