

MEXICO IMPORT INFO

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Dear Friends & Customers,

I have been importing products (Non Stop) from Mexico for over forty-five years now. Many things have changed and some things never change. Nowadays El Paso Saddleblanket manufactures most of our own products and imports very little Ethnic Mexican Arts & Crafts. This has not always been the case.

I have been all over Mexico hundreds of times, owned a nice ranch near Chihuahua City and traveled almost every back road in the country trading and doing business. Down there I've been happy, pissed off, drunk, stoned, sick with diarrhea, hot, cold, and lost on more than one occasion.

Today, I am going to give you some real practical advise on doing business in Mexico. This advise may not be what a lot of you "Dreamers" really want to hear, but think about what I am saying and use your head rather than any fantasies you may have about the romantic adventures of Importing from a Foreign Country.

Ask your self "Do I want to be in the wholesale import or the retail import business?"

If you do not already know the answer to this, it may be the first sign you shouldn't jump into this business. Later in this letter I will give you some locations where certain things are made in Mexico, but please read and consider the advice of someone who has been doing this for a very long time. I've seen hundreds of "Dreamers" go belly up and lose hundreds of thousands of dollars. It happens EVERYDAY !!!

VERY IMPORTANT! First, find the customers you plan to sell to. Any fool can find any product in the world to buy, but to be successful, you need to know who, how and where to sell the product. To be a successful importer, it should be 10% about buying and 90% about selling. This is the single biggest Mistake made.

Import Wholesale or the Import Retail Business??
O.K., again let's be practical and examine this.

WHOLESALE - From the Get-Go, if you plan to be in the Mexican Import Wholesale business you need to be in Mexico or on the border somewhere. I don't care what kind of Mexico product or how good your prices are. it's like the old saying "You don't go to Kansas to buy Seafood!! Secondly be prepared for a competitive cut throat business with a lot of competition including many Mexicans now living in the US. Are you prepared to warehouse large inventories, offer credit terms, do your own custom broker crossings, deal with Mexican Officials, deal with U.S. Customs Officials, pack and ship your merchandise and still be able to compete. All this and much more needs to be addressed before you "jump in head first".

RETAIL QUESTIONS

- Just how large of a retail store do you have or do you plan to have in order to justify direct importing 53 foot Tractor Trailers full?
- If you are selling retail, do you need to stock the 100 or 200 or 500 of each item you would purchase in order to get the "right" price?
- How long would it take to turn the merchandise?
- How many Tractor Trailers could you import in a year? 6? 20?
- Do you speak Spanish?
- How do you keep from getting screwed in Mexico or somewhere along the way?
- Import Bonds?
- Breakage?
- Marking Orders form
- U.S. Customs?
- Textile Quotas?
- Agriculture Clearance?
- Transportation to the border?
- Transportation from the border to the destination?
- Duties?

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- Custom Broker fees?
- These are only a few of the considerations.

Do you have the answers? Do your HOMEWORK or otherwise you will have lots of problems, this I promise!

O.K. DUSTY - WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST? I suggest you do some research, then do whatever the Hell you want to do. That's exactly what I would do .

ABOVE, I have given you some hard information based on my experience as a successful trader. Last year El Paso Saddleblanket imported about 160 forty foot containers from around the world and I feel like although we never stop learning, I kinda know the process. BELOW, I will give you some locations in Mexico where you can find various products.

WHERE TO BUY MEXICAN GOODS

The US-MEXICO Border

TIJUANA, B.C. Tijuana is mostly a tourist town with little to offer, some cheap leather goods is probably about the only thing worth looking into. Nearby Tecate, B.C. makes some cheap flower design pottery mostly for nurseries. In general the whole northern half of Mexico is not known for Arts & Crafts items.

NOGALES Nothing, forget it unless you want to import tomatoes or fruit.

EL PASO/JUAREZ On the El Paso side there is some boot factories, western shirt manufacturers, some great cast iron and cast aluminum dealers with foundries in Juarez. Mexican food wholesalers, Antique Stores. This is probably the best place to buy the Mexican Pine rustic furniture although Mexico is losing ground to India (fast). And let's not forget the World Famous World Headquarters of El Paso Saddleblanket Co. with a One Acre Showroom and 3 warehouses full of everything .. You can contact my personal email dustyhen@swbell.net and I will forward you our "now famous" past newsletter that list Names and Addresses of various wholesalers in El Paso and Juarez.

CIUDAD ACUNA and PIEDRAS NEGRAS forget it (small border towns) nothing there. LAREDO, TEXAS and NUEVO LAREDO, MEXICO This is probably the best selection of Mexican Curios on the border. The action on the American side mostly on San Bernardo Street. Mostly trinkets, plaster items, cheap pottery, onyx, paper mache, iron and much more. Lots of selection, but be careful as both Laredos are famous for their crooks. If you want to stock up on cheapo stuff, this is the place.

REYNOSA and MATAMOROS pleasant little tourist towns with no serious wholesalers and very little to offer in the way of Arts & Crafts.

The INTERIOR of MEXICO For the most part you can forget about anywhere on the coast, most of Northern Mexico or the extreme South of Mexico. A couple of exceptions would be Mata Ortiz, Chihuahua for overpriced super quality expensive pottery and Saltillo, Coahuila for limited serape production. Western Saddles are made in Monterrey, but 99.9 % of the Saddle Factories are either owned or under contract by large American companies (including El Paso Saddleblanket Co.)

GUADALAJARA Known for high quality furniture and fine antiques at outrageous tourist prices. Tonala and Tlaquepaque (near by) have some nice small pottery workshops, but most are small operations with no inventory or knowledge of exporting. There are some silversmiths in the area. Use extreme caution with Mexican Silver as it is by U.S. Customs. I can tell you some horror stories.

MEXICO CITY If you plan to be a big player in Mexico Imports then Mexico City is "ground zero". It has the inventory, the competitive prices, and the production of about anything you want plus it's the Market Center for all the other Craft producing communities in a 300 mile radius. There are many market places and wholesalers in Mexico City. It's like New York.. fast pace and you need to learn to

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Juarez, Mexico is across the Rio Grande river in El Paso. The Bridge can be walked over in about 20 minutes with you leaving your car near the bridge on the American side.

There is usually a very little wait in line to cross into Mexico, but can be up to an hour and a half. I would say 30 to 45 minute wait would be average depending on the time of the day.

Last summer people were passing out from heat until finally they put up some canvas for shade. Trust me, you don't want to drive or take your car into Mexico. Your best bet is to walk over and back in the day. Food is much better and safer on the El Paso side. It's the same culture on this side. El Paso is about 85% Hispanic and much of the population does not speak English.

In Juarez, Don't trust taxi drivers, police, or people coming up to you wanting to be a guide or pimp or something (??) Stay on the main streets and watch for crowds of kids playing very close to you or who come up in a group, keep your back to a wall always. Watch if someone accidentally spills something on you and someone rushes to help you. Don't buy gold or silver jewelry.

In the "good old days", Juarez Ave. in Juarez was a jumping, good time, busy place. Now most of the "Strip" (Juarez Ave.) is Pharmacies, Shoe Stores, dangerous Disco and Bars that cater to underage American kids and many buildings are vacant and crumbling. There are lots of drug dealers and gang activity. HOWEVER there are some small time curio and souvenir dealers:

Casa Gales 148 Juarez Ave

Tony's Curios 383 Juarez Ave

Boots Don Vigo 475 Juarez Ave.

California Rocks 630 Juarez Ave.

Apache Leather 637 Juarez Ave

Tipico Market 300 Juarez Ave (various small stalls)

Bob's Boots 505 Juarez Ave.

JUAREZ CITY MARKET ... (Not much English spoken)

Av. 16th de Septiembre (about a one and half mile walk)

This place attracts some tourist and you have a bunch of phony "want-to-be exporters" in the market that knows nothing about all the International documentation required to cross the merchandise. This could be a Big Problem for you. Always, check with your Customs Brokers before buying anything to Export!! All merchandise entering the U.S. must be clearly stamped and marked "Made in Mexico" CUAUHEMOC MARKET... Juarez, Chih, Mexico 2 blocks west on Ave. 16 de Septiembre from the intersection of Ave. Juarez and Ave 16 de Setiembre. The City Market is for tourist, this markets is for the locals. Open air market for meat, chickens, fish, fruit ect.

El Patio... Large outdoor store & market featuring low end furniture and tile.. Cheap flower pots, plaster animals Ave. Lincoln # 787 .. Juarez, Mexico Tel. 13-85-07

Pueblito Mexicano Mall

1 mile south of Bridge of the Americas

Beautiful Building that has never been even half full. A couple of gift shops, a good restaurant and a large Grocery Store.

J.J. Market

Ave. Lopez Mateos # 479 Norte Tel. 13-22-91

Mexican Arts & Crafts Store ... Lots of Mexican Dresses, boots, small cheap Curios. 20% discount for wholesale, but WARNING you will need a Licensed Customs Broker to declare your imports. It's Not worth it unless you are buying large truck loads. You must hire a Bonded Mexican Truck and driver to haul your Merchandise.

Decor

Corner of Ave. Ignacio Mejia and Ave. Lincoln (some English spoken) some Glass and Ceramic Tile.. some Jewelry and Boots.

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Again, you must have everything labeled "Made in Mexico" Always be especially careful with any textile products as some may require Textile Visa which can be difficult to obtain . Be careful with counterfeit items and "knock offs" Some gold and silver in Juarez is plated and not solid.

Casa Mendoza (behind the City Market) Tel 12-03-04 One of the better places to buy ceramic Ashtrays, Dishes, Mexican Toys and Dolls. Always be honest with your receipts as Customs Agents will know the Market Value of most Arts & Crafts..

Juarez Pharmacies (Farmacias) ... Drugs (the legal ones) are often 25-40% less in Mexico than in the U.S. Prescriptions are not needed for things like Tagamet and antibiotics. Most are made by Mexican subsidiaries of large multinational pharmaceuticals so quality control is good. There seems to be Farmacia on every corner. U.S. Customs regulations state that you can only cross the amount of a prescription for personal use back into the U.S. and that you should have a copy of the prescription.

Old Mexico General Information and Suggestions...

Talk to a U.S. Customs Broker in El Paso BEFORE you purchase anything in Mexico. Whatever you do, DO NOT try to use your personal \$400.00 limit to cross any merchandise you plan to sell and DO NOT make multiple trips crossing merchandise as all this is a Federal Offence and U.S. Customs has no tolerance or pity for even the smalltime smuggler. If you should ever be questioned by U.S. Customs, tell the absolute truth and it's "Yes Sir or No Sir" (ALWAYS). You could be subjected to what we call "Crack a Smile" (or better known as cavity search) No Fun !!

Beware of Mexican Police and the Mexican Custom Inspectors as you are both entering and leaving Mexico.

Repeat!! I suggest you DO NOT drive your car into Mexico, but if you should, it's a good idea to scrub your car tires and wheels before you cross back into the U.S. (If a dog in Mexico should pee on your car tires, it can drive the Drug Sniffing dogs crazy and you could be in for a long hassle with the American Inspectors. DO NOT take pets into Mexico, DO NOT wear watch or jewelry, Keep money in your front pocket, DO NOT take Guns into Mexico or you are in big trouble.

I have tried to be fair, objective, and honest in this newsletter. You should always be extra careful in border towns like El Paso, Tijuana, Laredo or Nogales. If you ever plan to be an Importer you need to learn Spanish and the customs of a different country.

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BUY ONLINE

Mexico Wholesale Sources

Let me start by listing some major wholesalers and manufacturers here on the American side of the Rio Grande in El Paso, Texas. I would guess you all will end up buying 97% of what you need on this side of the border after you weigh everything up. I have know the people on this El Paso Old Mexicolist an average of 25 years and can certainly recommend all of them. As always, in Mexico and other foreign countries, "you're on your own!!" Never the less, below are the names of some Mexico wholesalers. I will give you some very valuable tips and "dos & don't" of Importing & Exporting...

Rocket Buster Boots.. "Movie Star" Custom Cowboy Boots, Top of the line hand made Cowboy & Cowgirl Boots... Owners: Navina Christy & Marty Snortum.

Check it out www.RocketBuster.com

115 S Anthony, El Paso, Texas Tel 915 541- 1300

Riata Manufacturing...HUGE Foundry, wholesale Distributors cast aluminum EVERYTHING !! Outdoor Furniture, Lamp Post, Fountains etc. Lots of things !!

www.RiataMfginc.com

Brian Hatley, owner

Galeria San Ysidro...4 floors of Southwest Furniture, Rustic Decor and Antiques.. Exotic Moroccan & Mexican Furnishings Wholesale.. Giant Operation !!

Harl Dixon, owner

801 Texas St. Tel. 915 544-4444

Go to: www.GaleriaSanYsidro.com High End Top Quality !!

Ruddock Shirt Co...The most famous Cowboy Shirts in America. Sold in about every Western Store in the U.S. & Canada.. Made in El Paso, Texas Four generations of Shirt makers.

www.RuddockShirts.com

1801 McGoffin St.

El Paso, Texas 79901

Thousands of dozens of Shirts !!

El Paso Chile Co. ... World Famous Chile Sauces and Mexican Food Products..

Owner: World Famous Cookbook Author, Park Kerr

An El Paso Institution & Worldwide Shipper

www.ElPasoChile.com

909 Texas St. El Paso, Texas 79901 (915) 544-3434

El Paso Imports Rustic Furniture...Rustic Furniture from Mexico ..Home Office for their 15 stores !!

311 Montana St., El Paso, TX (915) 542-4241

El Paso Connection...Low price Mexican Furniture, Pottery... Big Place..

14302 Gateway West, El Paso, TX (915) 859-3181

Kessler Industries...Iron Furniture etc. They sell to all the Chain Stores...

8600 Gateway East, El Paso, TX (915) 591-8161

There are about 8 or 10 various Big wholesalers here in El Paso that sell a lot of Mexican Gift Products, Clothing, Furniture of All Kinds.. & Cowboy Boots: Tony Lama, Cowtown, Champion Boots, J.B. Hill, Justin, all have big wholesale Stores here. El Paso has cheap hotel rates, good food, sunshine, gambling , clubs, wholesale shopping, great Juarez "entertainment".

Whatever you want can probably be gotten here in this beautiful, exciting, HOT bordertown!!! Come enjoy a relaxed Open attitude place. You'll Always Have FUN in El Paso.. We have lots of customers that come to El Paso at least once a month to stock up ... You'll love it !!

BUYING FROM MEXICO

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bargain hard. Go to Mexico City and save all the running around all over the place. For over 20 years EPSB had it's own warehouse in Mexico City (near Lagunillas) where we purchased products from artisans on a daily basis with our trucks leaving for Juarez/El Paso on a regular schedule. We had a HUGE variety and selection of Folk Art and Mexican Curios at that time. As we began to manufacture our own product line, we eventually gave up the Mexico City warehouse. Even with the volume we were doing at the time it was very difficult to make money on Native Handicrafts.

PUEBLA a large city famous for Talavera pottery and rustic pine furniture.

LEON, Guanajuato Leather Capital of Mexico (90% of which is shoes for the Mexican Market)

SAN LUIS POTOSI Beautiful City with very small production of leather goods

TAXCO silver jewelry producing town (hard to compete with China, India, and Thailand)

OAXACA Total Tourist Town No legitimate wholesalers there

SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE The Santa Fe of Mexico. sorry not the place to buy wholesale.. it's full of Art Galleries and Art Snob retired American want-to-be Artist

TOLUCA for Baskets, Tinware and wood carvings

YUCATAN for Hammocks and Guevara Shirts

In closing, I suggest much research before you decide to be a do-it-yourself importer. I suggest to start with you might want to try to find a reputable wholesaler on the American side, buy some products, check out your target market area and you can always go direct when the time is right. Don't get caught up in the excitement and make wrong "emotional" business decisions. Plan an exit strategy and always keep an eye on the back door.

OLD STORY - 2004 - old story

Huge 2 story Warehouse/Showroom in El Paso, Texas

World's largest inventory of wholesale Mata Ortiz Pottery

Dear Friends & Customers,

Today I wanted to remind everyone about the Super Package Deals we have on some beautiful blankets, pottery and placemats and give you some information about buying and importing from Mexico.

I have included our much requested "Mexico wholesale List" in this weeks newsletter. Be sure to drop us a note if you have any questions or need additional sources.

If you are interested in buying small lots or samples to start out, we suggest you see the more than 500 wholesale Auction we have posted at: www.EPSBauction.com (again, this is wholesale to stores & dealers only)

We invite you to visit our HUGE 2 story, block long wholesale warehouse/showroom at 601 N.Oregon St. in downtown El Paso, Texas (located six blocks north of MEXICO) Open 9 to 5 weekdays MST

See hundreds of Saddles, over 150,000 handweavings, over 200,000 Arrowheads, Horns, Cow Skulls, Mandillas, Bullwhips, Cowhides, and the Largest selection of Genuine Casas Grandes Pottery in the world!! Fast, Friendly, service. You pick, We pack & Load for you.