A CAPSULE HISTORY OF MEXICO

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8000 BC: First Mesoamerican agrarian cultures cultivate squash and beans

2000 BC- 250 AD: The Olmec civilization, known for its colossal stone head artifacts, thrives in the southern Gulf Coast region.

250 AD - 900 AD: Mayan Classic Period - Mayan civilization based in the Petén Basin of the Yucatan region reaches its zenith, with advanced cities, astronomy, mathematics, calendars and glyphic writing.

900-1519: Mayan Post-classic Period - The Maya move northward on the Yucatan Peninsula. The Toltec and Aztec civilizations emerge in central Mexico. The Aztecs (who called themselves the *Mexica*) eventually emerge supreme through conquest and build the grand city of Tenochtitlan (present-day Mexico City) and build a powerful empire. They develop intricate social, political and religious institutions with a strong economy driven by bustling markets visited by as many as 50,000 people on major market days. Their language, Nahuatl, is the dominant language in central Mexico by mid-1350s. Magnificent temples and palaces and stone statuary embody the civilization's devotion to its many gods.

1517: Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, the first European to visit Mexican territory, arrives in the Yucatán from Cuba with three ships and about 100 men.

1519: The Spanish Conquest begins when Hernán Cortez arrives in Mexico from Cuba with 11 ships and 450 soldiers and strategically allies with numerous indigenous groups against the ruling Aztecs.

1521: Tenochtitlan falls to Cortez. Mexico becomes a Spanish colony known as New Spain. Indigenous populations are subjugated. Cortez razes Tenochtitlan and builds the new Spanish capital of Mexico City.

1810: Father Miguel Hidalgo's "Grito de Dolores" (the shout or call of Dolores) marks the start of the decade-long Mexican War of Independence from Spain.
1821: The war for independence ends with a Mexican victory. The new 'Empire of Mexico' is born.

1823: General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna declares Mexico a republic.

1846-8: The Mexican-American War is fought as a result of 2 related issues:

1-Texas sovereignty: Texas had declared independence from Mexico in 1836 and was annexed by the United States in 1845 and admitted to the USA as the 28th state in 1846. Mexico never fully recognized the annexation.

2- Border Dispute: The U.S. claimed the border between Texas and Mexico was the Rio Grande, while Mexico insisted it was the Nueces River.

The war ends with an American victory. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo secures American sovereignty for Texas in addition to other massive territorial concessions known as The Mexican Cession, which included all of present-day California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico & Texas, as well as parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas & Oklahoma. Mexico received $15 million in 'compensation'. The Rio Grande was recognized by Mexico as the southern border of the U.S. state of Texas.

1850s: Mexico faces internal strife with conflicts between liberals and conservatives. An aging Santa Anna and cabinet member Benito Juarez shepherd in a new constitution establishing a federal form of government and guaranteeing freedom of speech, universal male suffrage, and other civil liberties, along with curtailments of the power and wealth of the Catholic Church.

1862: French forces invade Mexico and install Maximilian I as Emperor.

1867: Mexican and U.S. opposition lead to Maximilian's execution.

1910: The decade-long Mexican Revolution begins. The revolution was a multifaceted and protracted sociopolitical rebellion against the long-standing dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and championed social justice, agrarian reform, and democratic reforms. It resulted in the establishment of a new government and the new 1917 Constitution. The tumultuous decade resulted in large-scale emigration to the USA.

1914: Mexico is neutral in WW I.

1917: A new Mexican Constitution brings land reforms, labor rights, and other progressive measures.

1917-2000: Mexico experiences political, social, and economic changes, with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) dominating politics for most of the century.

1941-45: Mexico initially declared itself neutral in WWII but in May of 1942 it joined the Allies after German U-boats sank 2 Mexican tankers. Mexico's contributions were primarily focused on providing raw materials, particularly oil, rather than direct involvement in military operations.

1968: Mexico City hosts the summer Olympics despite ongoing protests demanding social justice.

1976: Oil reserves are discovered in the Bay of Campeche off the shores of the states of Campeche, Tabasco and Veracruz, at the southernmost end of the Gulf of Mexico. The oil proves to be of low quality.

1985: An earthquake in Mexico City kills 10,000.

1994: The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), goes into effect, phasing out longstanding trade barriers between Mexico, the USA, and Canada.

2000: Vicente Fox's election ends the PRI's 71-year rule, marking a significant shift in Mexican politics.

21st Century: Mexico faces challenges including drug trafficking and related violence, corruption, economic disparities, and migration issues.