NOT-FOR-PARENTS
THE TRAVEL BOOK
COOL STUFF TO KNOW ABOUT EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD
Everyone knows which is the world’s highest mountain, but do you know which country banned chewing gum? Or what’s the world’s stinkiest fruit? Or who invented roller skates? Or which building leans more than the Leaning Tower of Pisa? Or where can you eat fried spiders as a snack?

Here at Lonely Planet we decided to make a book about the world’s countries for children, not parents. The world is a very big place, and in The Not-for-Parents Travel Book we’ve concentrated on the really interesting bits to create a snapshot of what each country is like. (Warning to parents: these might not be the same ‘really interesting bits’ that you like… where to buy coffee, how many stars the hotel has, what’s the phone number for the airport, blah, blah, blah.)

In this book are the epic events, amazing animals, hideous histories, funky foods and crazy facts that make the world’s 200 countries so fascinating. Each country has a page to itself – so tiny Tuvalu gets as much space as superpower USA.

If you want to know all the cool stuff about every country in the world, turn the page.
Canada  
United States of America  
Mexico  
Belize  
Guatemala  
El Salvador  
Honduras  
Nicaragua  
Costa Rica  
Panama  
Dominican Republic  
Cuba  
Jamaica  
Saint Kitts & Nevis  
Antigua & Barbuda  
Dominica  
Saint Lucia  
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines  
Barbados  
Grenada  
Trinidad & Tobago  
Suriname  
Guyana  
Venezuela  
Colombia  
Ecuador  
Peru  
Brazil  
Bolivia  
Paraguay  
Uruguay  
Argentina  
Chile  
Scotland  
Ireland  
Wales  
England  
Portugal  
Spain  
Andorra  
France  
Monaco  
Netherlands  
Belgium  
Austria  
Germany  
Luxembourg  
Switzerland  
Liechtenstein  
Italy  
San Marino  
Vatican City  
Malta  
Slovenia  
Croatia  
Bosnia & Herzegovina  
Serbia  
Montenegro  
Albania  
Greece  
Macedonia  
Bulgaria  
Romania  
Moldova  
Ukraine  
Hungary  
Slovakia  
Czech Republic  
Poland  
Belarus  
Lithuania  
Latvia  
Estonia  
Russian Federation  
Finland  
Sweden  
Denmark  
Norway  
Iceland  
Morocco  
Algeria  
Tunisia  
Libya  
Egypt  
Sudan  
Chad  
Niger  
Mali  
Mauritania  
Cape Verde  
Senegal  
Gambia  
Guinea-Bissau  
Guinea
**MEXICO**

**Mexico City**

- Official language: Mexican Spanish
- Population: 111,211,789
- Currency: Mexican pesos
- Area: 1,900,000 sq km (733,594 sq miles)

**HOLA (oll ah)**

The sun in Mexico is very hot, so don’t forget to wear a *sombrero* and do a Mexican hat dance. The people love eating chocolate chicken (called chicken *mole*), tacos and hot chillies – but also you can gobble fly eggs that you mix with chopped cactus to make a fly-egg omelette! Before Hernán Cortes landed in 1519 and claimed the land for Spain, the Maya and Aztecs sacrificed people to the gods. Sadly, diseases brought by the Spanish wiped out 20 million more.

**Crazy Facts**

- Mexico City is sinking by 10cm (4in) a year.
- The ancient Toltec tribe went to war armed with wooden swords – so they wouldn’t kill their enemies.
- Mexico has more Spanish–talking people than Spain.
- The chihuahua (*chi wa wa*) is the world’s smallest dog, growing only to about 15cm (6in) high – half a ruler.
- Mexico has the world’s three longest underwater caves.

**Happy hat** Sombreros are big straw hats you can wear, or put on the ground and dance around.

**Day of the Dead**

Every 2 November the dead come back to say hello. Not a horror movie, but a happy day as people put out food, flowers and treats in their homes for their dead pals to enjoy. Some light candles in graveyards and sing and dance together.

**Heads Up**

At Chichén Itzá there is a huge ball court where players would try to hit a 5kg (11lb) rubber ball – or perhaps a human head – through high stone hoops. Losers were put to death!

**Heads through here, please.**

**Counting the days** Chichén Itzá is an old pyramid with 365 steps – one for each day of the year. In spring and autumn, a shadow shaped like a snake slides down the steps to join a stone snake head at the bottom. (For another New Wonder of the World, see the Taj Mahal on page 166.)

**Have a bash** A *piñata* is a big, bright clay or papier-mâché figure, filled with toys and treats and hung from a big string. Kids take turns whacking it with a stick so all the treats fall out.

**Heads through here, please.**

**ONe OF THe NEW WONDERS OF THe WORLD**

**They grow on you** Imagine growing a new leg! Axolotls can. These ‘walking fish’ are really salamanders and can regrow hurt body bits.

**Hideous History**

**Happy hat** Sombreros are big straw hats you can wear, or put on the ground and dance around.

**Scary Stuff**

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Belize

**Belmopan**

Tiny Belize has one of the world’s least populated capital cities, Belmopan, with only 20,000 people. Maybe there are so few people because Belize is the home of El Sisimito, a mythical creature with backwards feet and no knees that eats human flesh! Jaguars and pumas lurk in the country’s jungles, which hide hundreds of Mayan ruins, some of them 4000 years old. The sea is also full of life – the Belize Barrier Reef is the world’s second largest, after Australia’s Great Barrier Reef.

**WORLD’S TOP 5 Loudest Animals**

1. Tiger pistol shrimp: Atlantic Ocean
2. Blue whale: world’s oceans
3. Howler monkey: South America
4. Grey wolf: North America
5. Elephant: Africa, India

**Official language:** English

**Population:** 307,899

**Currency:** Belizean dollars

**Area:** 22,966 sq km (8867 sq miles)

**ARRIGHT? (arr rite?)**

Whale of a time Imagine snorkelling with a fish 10 times as big as you are! Whale sharks can grow more than 12m (39ft) long, but they won’t eat you.

Hole Lot of Water

The Great Blue Hole on Lighthouse Reef is 300m (984ft) wide and 130m (427ft) deep. It’s so big you can see it from outer space! It’s full of bright corals, colourful fish – and sharks.

Lizard lunch In Belize, they call iguana meat ‘bamboo chicken’. They grow big green iguanas on farms to eat them.

Queen Eats Rat!

When Queen Elizabeth II visited Belize in 1985, she was served a local rodent called a gibenut, which some people say looks a bit like a giant rat without a tail. It tastes like rabbit.

Secret Stuff

Queen eats Rat!

Sparkling Bones

Ancient Maya sacrificed humans to the gods in the Actun Tunichil Muknal caves more than 1000 years ago, and the bones are still there. The Crystal Maiden is the skeleton of a teenage girl, probably a sacrifice victim, whose bones sparkle.

Hideous History

Now hear this Howler monkeys are one of the loudest animals in the world. Their growls can be heard 5km (3 miles) away.

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