

CDMX Commuting & Conversation Notes

Key Vocab & Phrases:

- **camion** – local city bus (used in Mexico, informal)
 - **Metrobús** – rapid bus with fewer stops, travels along dedicated lanes
 - **autobús** – intercity bus (e.g., CDMX to Puebla)
 - **chamba** – job (slang, very common in Mexico)
 - **meter currículums** – to submit résumés (from the verb *meter*, "to put in")
 - **andar en** [medio de transporte] – to get around using (bike, bus, metro)
 - **la neta** – honestly / to be real (very casual Mexican slang)
 - **cuestión** – matter/issue/topic (not the same as *pregunta*)
 - **concurrida** – busy, crowded (describes a place with lots of people)
 - **poblada** – populated (from the verb *poblar*)
 - **servicio social** – mandatory community service for students in Mexico (not the same as volunteer work)
 - **inestable** – unstable (used to describe the ground under CDMX due to it being built on a lake)
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Useful Everyday Expressions:

- **¿Cómo te va en el metro a horas de oficina?**
How is the metro for you during rush hour?
 - **¿Y de regreso?**
And on the way back?
 - **Depende del tráfico, el metro o el Metrobús.**
It depends on the traffic—either the subway or the rapid bus.
 - **Prefiero venirme en bici que andar en transporte público, la neta.**
I prefer to come by bike rather than use public transport, honestly.
 - **Contemplando a las personas que pasan**
Watching people go by / people watching
 - **La neta, no me dan ganas de subirme al metro.**
Honestly, I don't feel like getting on the metro.
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Grammar & Style Insights:

- **yo siento que** = I feel that
A softer, more emotional alternative to *creo que* or *pienso que*

- **cuestión** is more formal or thoughtful than just saying *es lo mismo* or *es igual*
 - **andar en** is about being out and about using a form of transport; it's not limited to walking or social use. It's movement-focused.
 - **sobre** is a more natural, conversational word than *acerca de* when saying "about" a topic
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Cultural & Structural Notes:

- **Servicio social** is mandatory in Mexico and often tied to a student's field of study. It provides real-world experience but is not always ideal in practice.
- **People watching** and urban observation (like sitting and *contemplando a las personas que pasan*) is common and culturally visible in Mexican public life.
- **Speech patterns differ** greatly among people, even when talking about the same topic (commuting). Learning from real interviews (like Easy Spanish videos) helps tune your ear to this variety.
- **Colonia, barrio, suburbio, zona, alcaldía, distrito:** These all refer to parts of a city, but they vary in tone and function. In Mexico:
 - **colonia** is the most common word for neighborhood (like a suburb or defined residential zone)
 - **barrio** can be affectionate, humble, or cultural
 - **suburbio** often implies a poor, peripheral area (unlike in Australia where suburb is neutral)
 - **zona** describes type/function: *zona comercial, zona escolar, zona peligrosa*
 - **alcaldía** is the larger administrative district (like a council or borough)
 - **distrito** is more formal or legal, like *distrito electoral*
- **Suburbs in Mexico vs Australia:**
 - In Australia, outer suburbs are often newer and better planned
 - In Mexico, peripheral areas (called *suburbios* or *zonas marginadas*) are often poorer, informal, and under-served
- **Metro system:** There is one unified subway system across CDMX. Not every alcaldía or colonia has a station nearby. Many people commute by combining **camión + Metrobús + metro** to reach work.
- **Physical risk:** CDMX was built on a former lake, making the soil unstable. The city sinks gradually each year, affecting infrastructure like metro tunnels. Despite this, millions rely on it daily.
- **Mental Maps & Meaning:**

- Every person forms their own "map" of the world based on experience
 - Miscommunication often happens when two people use the same word but imagine totally different realities
 - Words like "suburb," "barrio," or "colonia" reflect not just geography but social class, planning, and history
 - *Learning a new language is like drawing a new map — both mentally and physically.*
 - "This is the joy I experience in discovery: of other cultures, how they do things, how they see things, new meanings to same things, points of difference, bigger picture."
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Final Notes:

This summary combines vocabulary, usage, structure, culture, and personal insight gathered from natural Mexican Spanish, specifically around commuting, everyday expressions, and tone. It reflects practical city life, layered meaning, and the joy of discovering how language shapes perception.

Keep listening, watching, and noticing how people speak—your awareness of nuance is already doing the heavy lifting.