

Mexico bakes under killer heat wave

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People try to protect themselves from the sun in Guadalajara, Mexico, on June 12, 2023.

Roberto de Jesus, a day laborer, stands beside the cathedral in Mexico City sweating a river as he waits for work, while homemaker Wendy Tijerina tries in vain to keep her food from spoiling.

The latest blast of a heat wave that has killed eight people in Mexico is making life very difficult for millions of people.

De Jesus, a 50 year old construction worker, positions himself beside the Metropolitan Cathedral in the capital city, which saw a [record temperature](#) of 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) this week.

He is braving the third heat wave to hit Mexico this year, and forecasters say the latest blazing temperatures could last another two weeks.

It is noon and the streets and buildings of the sprawling, crowded metropolis are positively roasting. There are people everywhere, cars and smog everywhere, in what makes for a suffocating atmosphere.

"The heat hits really hard, it really affects you. While waiting for work it even makes you sleepy," said De Jesus.

He stands outside the cathedral up to nine hours a day hoping someone hires him for the day. The worst part is if the gig is outdoors. "We suffocate," he said.

But it is not just work that becomes challenging in these conditions. Eating from food stalls in the street—a time-honored Mexican custom—becomes risky because the heat is spoiling the food.

De Jesus got a taste of this recently and missed three days of work. "I got sick in the stomach from tacos I ate in the street," he said.

—'It makes us dizzy'—

And the taco stand vendors put up with another source of heat—the grills and stoves they have to man.

"The heat is horrible," said Javier Ramos, 30, who prepares tacos on a major thoroughfare in downtown Mexico City, putting in 15 hour days.



A heat wave in Mexico has claimed eight lives since April.

"You have to stay hydrated all day," said Ramos.

He said it is tricky to keep the meat and vegetables, which he keeps in ice chests, from spoiling as the temperatures soar.

Also near the cathedral, Natividad Flores, a 40 year old vendor selling homemade clothing, said "we are seeing the consequences of global

warming."

Flores wears gloves, a broad hat and sun-block lotion, and drinks a lot of water as she tries to sell clothing she describes as light and airy—and just right for this kind of weather.

"It makes us dizzy, all this sun," she said.

Homes lack water

The government says seven people have died in various cities from heat stroke, and one from dehydration, from April 14 to June 12.

In the northeastern city of Monterrey, the temperature surpassed 40°Celsius.

The city endured a historic drought last year and is now grappling with low water pressure in homes, while constant use of air conditioners has sapped the electrical grid and caused blackouts.

Tijerina, who lives in the nearby town of Apodaca, said the heat there is even worse because it is an industrial area. "The thermal sensation is stronger," she said, and because of water shortages she cannot bathe her kids. She said people cannot even turn on a fan because of the electricity cuts.

She says her refrigerator cannot compete with the [heat](#) as it tries to keep food edible.

"We are going to get an ice chest for medicine that requires medication and for food that is somewhat fragile," Tijerina said.

The state government of Nuevo Leon, which includes Monterrey, has

ordered that kids go to class in person only two hours a day so as to keep them out of the sun.

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