'EL CHAPO' GUZMÁN HAD MORE AIRPLANES THAN THE BIGGEST AIRLINE IN MEXICO

News / Personalities

Before he was recaptured in January, Sinaloa cartel kingpin Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán ran the largest airborne operation in Mexico.

Between 2006 and 2015, Mexican authorities seized 599 aircraft — 586 planes and 13 helicopters — that the cartel used to ship drugs throughout Mexico and Latin America, according to information from the Mexican defense ministry (Sedena) that was obtained by Mexican newspaper El Universal.

The largest legitimate airline in the country, Aeroméxico, has 127 planes.

If Guzmán's cartel were a legal business, El Universal notes, then it would likely be one of the most successful in the country, based on its 4,771 clandestine landing strips — between 550 and 1,100 yards in length — dotting Mexico's northern states.

"I supply more heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine and marijuana than anybody else in the world," Guzmán said in a Rolling Stone interview published in January. "I have a fleet of submarines,

© 2015-2026 50SKYSHADES.COM — Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes is prohibited.

airplanes, trucks and boats."

In the first three years of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto's term (2012 to 2015) the military seized 55 planes and shut down 894 landing strips.

Most of the aircraft were captured in Culiacán, Navolato, and Ahome — municipalities in Sinaloa state, where Guzmán grew up and has twice been captured.

Honduran police with a privately owned plane that was seized after it was found holding nearly 1,000 pounds of drugs in Brus Laguna, Honduras, 372 miles east of Tegucigalpa, along the border with Nicaragua, on July 22, 2010.

"I went to the military base of the Mexican army in Sinaloa, in Culiacán, and they had more than 100 light aircraft they'd seized from drug traffickers ... And these were only the ones they'd seized," journalist Ioan Grillo told Business Insider.

"They actually put them in a military base because at first they had them in the regular airport, and the drug traffickers used to go in and take them back," Grillo added.

© 2015-2026 50SKYSHADES.COM — Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes is prohibited.

The wreckage of an aircraft, which crashed in the Yucatan Peninsula with 3.3 metric tons of cocaine onboard on September 24, 2007

Through transparency laws, El Universal acquired information about 105 of the aircraft seized since 2006 by the Mexican government.

Sixty of them were Cessnas, with the Cessna 206 the most popular version, likely because of its double side doors that allow quick off-loading, kits that allow its gas tank to be expanded, and the plane's ability to take off and land on runways as short as 300 to 400 yards.

© 2015-2026 50SKYSHADES.COM — Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes is prohibited.

Soldiers stand next to part of the 3.3 metric tons of cocaine found in the wreckage of a Gulfstream aircraft that crashed in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on September 24, 2007. An airliner stuffed with dozens of sacks of Colombian cocaine crashed in the jungle of southern Mexico, police said.

"The most sophisticated process when I was in Mexico was one of the cartels was buying commercial 727 aircraft and French-made Caravelles that could travel 570 mph," Mike Vigil, the former chief of international operations for the US Drug Enforcement Administration, told Business Insider in an interview.

"The only thing that could stay with [those aircraft] was a fighter jet, and each plane would carry about 15 metric tons of cocaine," Vigil added. "They landed them in the desert and if they lost the plane it was no big deal because they were buying them for about $800,000," an expense that could easily be made up by a single drug shipment.

"It's aircraft, commercial freighters, speedboats, you name it and they have it," Vigil said. "They never settle on one method of transportation or on one route. They're always exploring."

05 MAY 2016

SOURCE: BUSINESS INSIDER
ARTICLE LINK:
https://ids.50skyshades.com/news/personalities/el-chapo-guzman-had-more-airplanes-than-the-biggest-airline-in-mexico

© 2015-2026 50SKYSHADES.COM — Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes is prohibited.