



In Port
Good Deeds
Behind the Lens
RV Travel
Plants We Eat
Good to Know
Dining
Culture



Juan Sebastián Elcano in Manzanillo
Photo by John Chalmers

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The 8th Annual BOCCE BALL TOURNAMENT
and SILENT AUCTION is

Thursday, February 20th, 2025

All proceeds benefit Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare-
Animal Angels of Manzanillo and their commitment to
providing ongoing sterilizations and vet care for animals in
need.



AUCTION BIDDING WILL START AT 1PM

***Amazing Silent Auction *Premium Booze Basket Raffle**

***50/50 Raffle *Dancing to Music by DJ Randy Dean**

***2 x 1 Beer, Margaritas and Well Drinks All Day**

***\$200 Peso Entry Donation for non players**



See You On the Beach!

OASIS
ocean club
restaurant bar

Container Ships, Cruise Ships and Tall Ships

story and photos by John Chalmers

Twenty-four hours a day, ships come and go from the Port of Manzanillo, where massive cranes unload and load thousands of sea containers each day at the country's largest port. As well as container ships, heading to and from the port, we see oil tankers, bulk carriers and car carriers.



A walk out on the breakwater pier near the navy installation at Manzanillo provides a place for a fine close-up view of container ships entering port. Seen here is *Athos*, a container ship 349 meters long built in 2011 in South Korea, sailing under the flag of Liberia.



At left are shown some of the cranes at the Port of Manzanillo, which receives ships from around the world. At right is *MSC Valentina*, a container ship built in 2023 and registered in Liberia. She is 366 meters long, as much as four NFL football fields!

Capacity of container ships is measured in its TEU - Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit. Some ships have a TEU of more than 10,000. The containers come in 20-foot and 40-foot lengths.

...Container Ships, Cruise Ships and Tall Ships



But not all ships sailing to Manzanillo are there for shipping commercial goods! Several times a year cruise ships arrive, bringing passengers for a chance to enjoy time at the city or environs. Shown above is *Crown Princess* of the Princess Cruise Line, docked at Manzanillo Centro. Built in Italy, registered in Bermuda and sailing since 2006, she can accommodate over 3,000 passengers and a crew of 1,200.



From the waterfront at Manzanillo centro, a fine view can be seen not only of cruise ships, but oil tankers, naval ships, fishing boats and pleasure craft. Shown above is *Kourois*, an oil/chemical tanker under the flag of Liberia, 183 meters long, built in Seoul in 2008.

In recent times, ocean liners docking for the day at Manzanillo have increased in number to visit the city and area. Anchored seaside at Manzanillo centro, the cruise ships see their passengers walk off the ship right into the city's downtown area. There they can stroll the waterfront or wander into town to visit the shops for jewelry, t-shirts or other souvenirs of their visit.

...Container Ships, Cruise Ships and Tall Ships

They can stop at a local café or bar to enjoy a cerveza, a margarita or Mexican cuisine at the historic Colonial Hotel or at any one of a number of restaurants. As an option, cruise passengers can take a bus tour to places in the area such as a turtle sanctuary, spend a day at the beach, or visit inland to Comala and Colima, the state capital. Likewise, passengers can visit the market shops in the Santiago district of Manzanillo to see the wide variety of Mexican arts, crafts, clothing and other products.

Expected to arrive in 2025 are 17 ocean liners from Princess, Holland America, Norwegian, Regent Seven Seas, Oceania and Crystal cruise lines. First scheduled to arrive in 2025 is *Seven Seas Grandeur* on January 5. A ship of relatively small size, with a maximum occupancy of 829 plus 542 crew, she is sailing on a 10-day Mexican Riviera cruise from Los Angeles and back. For a list of cruise ship arrivals in 2025, see the listing on the internet at <https://cruisedig.com/ports/manzanillo-mexico/arrivals>.



Magnificent cruise liners offer passengers fine dining, professional entertainment in beautiful theaters, luxurious features such as spectacular atriums, a casino, and the opportunity to exercise on a promenade deck or in a swimming pool or a gymnasium. In contrast, unlike scheduled cruise liner visits, Manzanillo is occasionally a stop for a century-old three- or four-masted tall sailing ship used as a training vessel for naval cadets.

Shown here is *Juan Sebastián Elcano*, launched in 1927 and used by the Spanish navy to train naval cadets in the art of sailing. She is 370 feet long with masts that are 159 feet high and powered by a diesel engine as well as sails. The ship has a steel hull and carries a crew of 270 plus 90 cadets. Her three-day stop at Manzanillo in 2024 was part of an eight-month training voyage that began in Spain. At rear from the modern age is *Crown Princess*, which happened to be in port at the same time. See more about Juan Sebastián Elcano when you [click here](#).



Shown above are two ships of Norwegian Cruise Line. At left, docked at Manzanillo, is *Norwegian Sun*, 258 meters long, sailing since 2001 with a capacity of 1,936 passengers and 908 crew. Sailing away in late afternoon is *Norwegian Bliss*, built in 2018 with 20 decks, capable of carrying over 4,000 passengers and over 1,700 crew.

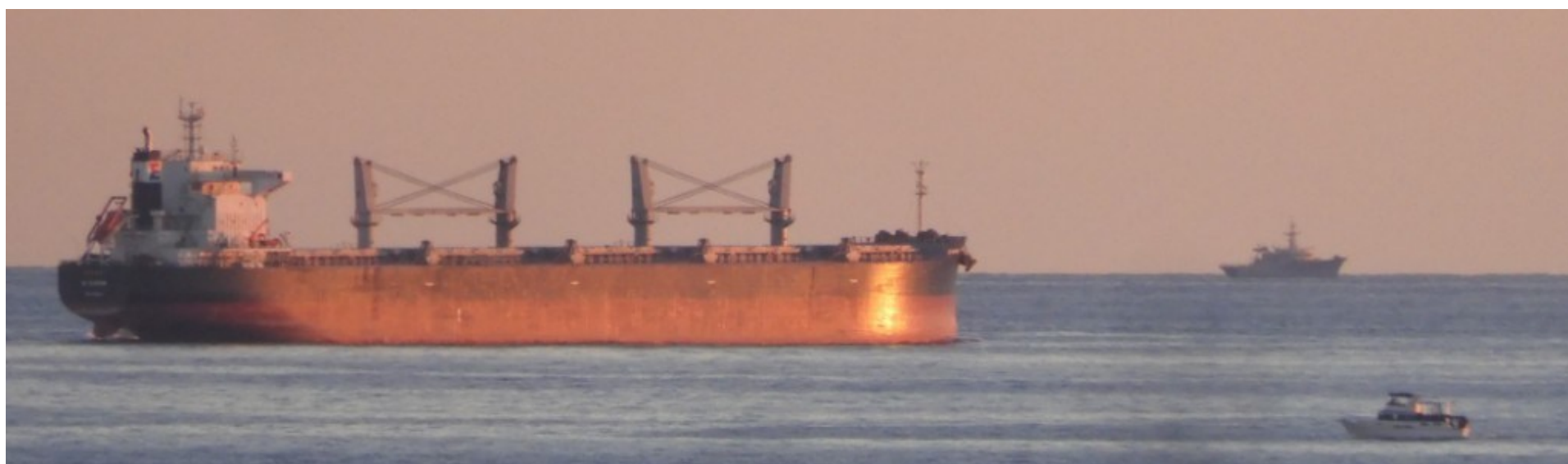
...Container Ships, Cruise Ships and Tall Ships



By using the telephoto lens of your camera or your binoculars, you can often see the name of the ship as it sails past, not far from our Pacific coast. At left is *Chiapas Star*, a general cargo ship, built in 1997, 153 meters long, sailing under the flag of México. At right, sailing away through the view from our condo at Vida del Mar, is *Volendam* of the Holland America line, launched in 1999, She can carry 1,432 passengers and 604 crew, on ocean liners, very often the crew is almost half as many as the passengers.

To learn more about any ship you see passing by or anchored in town, an internet search using the name of the ship will tell you where and when the ship was built, under which flag it sails, the length and breadth of the vessel, where it sailing, the type of ship it is, and the capacity of passengers or cargo.

While nobody but registered passengers can board the cruise ships, when a tall ship sails into Manzanillo, visitors are invited to come aboard. They can wander around the ship, marvel at its beauty and construction, and chat with crew and cadets. Don't miss a chance to do that if opportunity arises! Although the ship may boast many sails, an engine provides power when needed. Besides seeing the ships in port or even stepping on board, cruise liners and tall ships with all sails up can be enjoyed as they sail past our western coast, heading south or north, to ports in the U.S. or Canada, or on a passage through the Panama Canal to destinations in the Caribbean or the east coast of America.



At any time of day, watching the ships of Manzanillo adds to the pleasure of seeing them come and go. Here as the sun starts to set, a cargo ship is illuminated with a golden glow, while a navy ship in the distance and a pleasure craft in the foreground pass through the view from a seaside restaurant. Seeing ships of all kinds sail by every day is one of the true pleasures we enjoy on the west coast of México!

you can reach John at john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com



Thank You

from the
Club de Leones de Santiago

*With your donations and support of our Art Raffle and our
Vendors' Table at the Oasis during the Ladies' Luncheon
We now have Our Very Own
PlusOptix Vision Scanner*



**In 2025 we will continue our work in Elementary Schools in the
Manzanillo area to identify children who may require eyeglasses**



**Your continued support will help to buy Eyeglasses
Please Watch for Upcoming Fundraising Events**



by Tommy Clarkson

The Edible Jungle

Over the last, nearly twenty years, many visitors have been by our place for a tour and visit of Ola Brisa Gardens in addition to being familiar with some of my previous books including two, three-book, sets: *The Civilized Jungle* and *The Medicinal Jungle*.

I thought that perhaps readers might enjoy a brief "taste" of my newest three-book set - *The Edible Jungle*. . . a collection of unique recipes featuring fruits, vegetables and plants themselves, all from the Torrid Zone, between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

The following are recipes which will be in my latest *Jungle* book!

Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*)

"Those folks familiar with me know of my creation of Coconut Post, in Hawaii, wherein vacationers could write on and mail Coconuts home. Like those nuts, I've traveled a long and fun filled way since then!"

Discussed further in *The Civilized Jungle, Volume III* and *The Medicinal Jungle, Volume I*

Origin: Old World Tropics (Probably somewhere between the Indian Ocean and Melanesia.)



Nifty Nuggets of Knowledge: The coconut is actually a drupe and not a nut. Each has three layers: the exocarp, mesocarp and endocarp. The palm tree itself can grow up to 82 feet (25 meters) tall and produce up to 180 coconuts per harvest.

They derived their name via Portuguese sailors who called them "nuts" as they reminded them of ugly faces, with rough hair. By the way, the husk of a coconut can be burnt to act as mosquito repellent!

Health Benefits: The Coconut is the world's richest source of MCTs (a type of fat that's easier for the body to digest than animal fats) which converts into ketone bodies that help with diabetes and heart disease.



...The Edible Jungle

They contain copper, iron, manganese, potassium and zinc, helping with enzyme function and fat metabolism, while its copper further helps with bone formation and heart health. The coconut is a significant source of antioxidants and electrolytes, a source of energy and has an accelerating effect on metabolism.

Lentil Coconut Curry

(Serves six)

Ingredients:

- The "meat" of one freshly shredded Coconut
- One (1) tablespoon coconut oil
- One (1) onion, diced
- Five (5) cloves garlic, minced
- One (1) tablespoon fresh ginger, grated - or one (1) teaspoon ground ginger powder
- Two (2) tablespoons curry powder
- One (1) teaspoon ground turmeric
- One-quarter (1/4) teaspoon cayenne pepper (to taste)
- One-half (1/2) teaspoon salt
- One (1) cup carrots, diced
- One and one-half (1 ½) cups dry lentils, rinsed (either green or brown)
- One (1) 14 ounce can of diced tomatoes
- One-half (1/2) cup water One 14 ounce can of light coconut milk
- One-quarter (1/4) cup cilantro - For presentation
- One lime (1) - For presentation

Instructions: (Choose between stove top or a slow cooker)

Stovetop:

1. Heat a large pot or Dutch oven over medium high heat.
2. When hot, add oil and let melt; Add onion and carrots.
3. Cook until beginning to soften, about six to eight minutes, stirring as needed.
4. Add the garlic, ginger and other seasonings; Cook for one minute.
5. Add the lentils, tomatoes with juices, water; Stir to combine.
6. Bring to a simmer and turn heat down to low; Continue to simmer.

7. Cover and cook 30-40 minutes until lentils are tender; Stir in the coconut milk.
8. Season with salt and pepper as needed.
9. Serve with shredded coconut, lime and cilantro.

Slow Cooker:

1. Add everything except the coconut milk to the slow cooker.
2. Cook on high for four hours or low for seven to eight hours.
3. Once the lentils are cooked and tender, stir in the coconut milk.
4. Taste and season with salt and pepper.
5. Serve with shredded Coconut, lime juice and cilantro.



...The Edible Jungle

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) "How many of us have ever considered Fennel as a side dish? I admit, for years, I had not." Discussed further in *The Medicinal Jungle, Volume 1* Origin: Southern Mediterranean region.

Nifty Nuggets of Knowledge: While a member of the carrot family, it's not a root vegetable, but has been cultivated and used for thousands of years. Ancient Greeks and Romans believed it had medicinal properties, while Egyptians used it in their embalming process. In medieval Europe, it was believed to ward off evil spirits . . . *and maybe a mummy or two!*

Nutritional/Health Benefits: Besides indigestion help, it's rich in antioxidants, dietary fiber, minerals, nutrients, potassium, and vitamin C. It boosts the immune system and helps protect against infections, reduces inflammation, protects against chronic diseases, helps regulate blood pressure, aids cholesterol management.

It is also a good source of calcium, magnesium and phosphorus for maintaining healthy bones, promotes weight loss, improves skin health and helps alleviate menstrual pain and regulate hormones.

Roasted Fennel with Parmigiano Cheese

Ingredients:

- Fennel bulbs, several
- Extra-virgin olive oil (The best you can find!)
- Herbs (Such as combination of oregano, thyme and the finely chopped fennel fronds.)
- The zest of one (1) lemon
- Fresh oregano, thyme, parsley and fennel fronds
- Spices, fresh ground black pepper and a pinch (no more) of freshly ground toasted fennel seed. (To make the latter, toast two (2) tablespoons fennel seeds in a small skillet until they turn a shade darker, and you can smell their fragrance; Let the seeds cool; then grind in a spice mill.
- One-third (1/3) cup Parmigiano cheese
- A few drops of Balsamic vinegar (optional and to taste)

Instructions:

1. Slice off the long stalks with feathery fronds. Slice bulbs into quarters lengthwise, pulling off tough outer layers. Then slice each quarter in half lengthwise for a total of 24 pieces from each bulb.;
2. Put the wedges into a large, shallow bowl.
3. Add four (4) tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, two (2) tablespoons finely chopped fresh herbs (a mix of oregano, thyme, parsley, and fennel fronds), the zest of one lemon, a generous pinch of fine salt and one-quarter (1/4) teaspoon freshly ground pepper. (If ground fennel seed is sought, now is the time to add it);
4. With a large spoon or spatula, gently toss everything together carefully coating all of the fennel bulbs evenly.
5. Spread the fennel bulb pieces onto a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper. The parchment will allow the fennel to roast and brown properly without sticking to the baking sheet.
6. In a pre-heated oven of 400 degrees, with the rack in the upper third of the oven, roast the fennel for fifteen (15) minutes at which time it should turn golden. (If purple, chartreuse or bright blue you've done something terribly wrong!); Sprinkle one-third (1/3) to one-half (1/2) cup freshly grated Parmigiano cheese over the roasting fennel, coating each wedge evenly.
7. Roast the fennel for an additional ten to fifteen (10 to 15) minutes or until the cheese is nicely browned, and the edges of the fennel bulbs are caramelized.
8. With a spatula, transfer the fennel wedges to a platter. If you wish, sprinkle with a few drops of good balsamic vinegar over the wedges and serve.

...The Edible Jungle

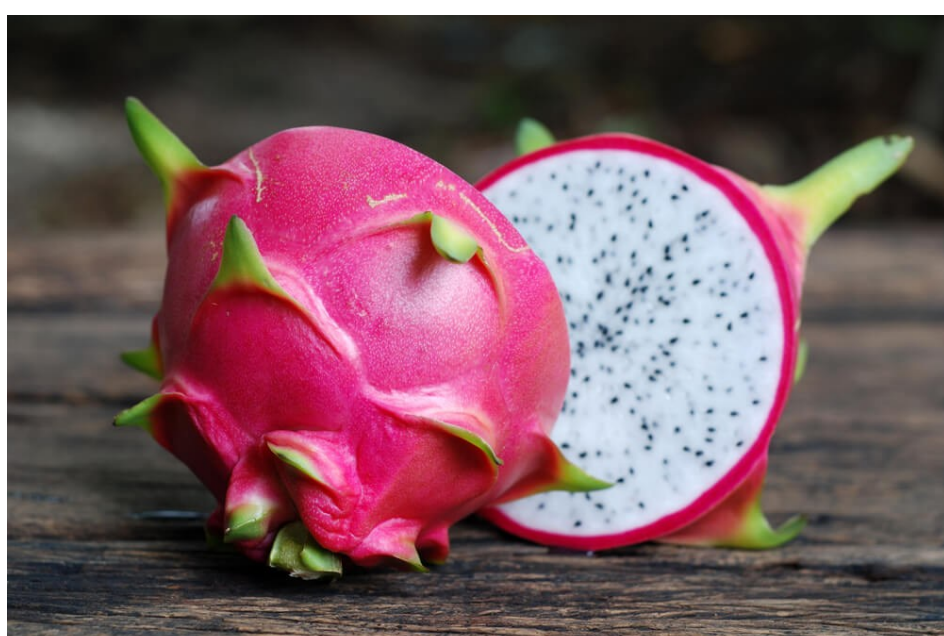
Dragon fruit (*Selenicereus undatus*)

"An amalgamation of the words, 'unexpected,' 'weird' and 'delightful' seems appropriate for these intriguing cactus fruits!"

Discussed further in *The Medicinal Jungle, Volume II* Origin: Central to southern Mexico and along the Pacific coasts of Guatemala, Costa Rica and El Salvador.

Nifty Nuggets of knowledge: Beyond having red skin and green scales that make it appear to be dragonsque, the fruit was once thought to be the last thing that comes out of a fire-breathing dragon's mouth. Dragon fruit is juicy with a slightly sweet taste described as a cross between a kiwi, a pear and a watermelon with its seeds having a nutty flavor. This most interesting fruit certainly has "a peel" with such coming in a variety of colors such as red, pink or yellow! The pulp inside can be red or white.

Nutritional/Health Benefits: The flower buds of the Dragon Fruit are edible when cooked, but the fruit skin should not be eaten. Early-stage laboratory studies and analysis indicate that its potential, positive health benefits could include the prevention of oxidative damage, help lowering blood sugar, improving gut health, strengthening the immune system, lowering inflammation, boosting iron levels and increasing iron absorption and improving skin health and easing constipation.



Dragon Fruit Raspberry Rosé Sangria

Ingredients:

- One (1) bottle (750 mL) rosé wine
- One (1) dragon fruit
- One (1) cup strawberries quartered
- One (1) cup raspberries
- One (1) lime
- One-quarter (1/4) cup raspberry liqueur
- One (1) tablespoon raspberry Syrup (In the absence of raspberry syrup, regular simple syrup will do or add sugar.)
- Two (2) cups soda water
- One-third) 1/3 cup sugar

Instructions:

1. Add the strawberries to the wine in a large pitcher, and refrigerate overnight, or for at least four hours.
2. Add the soda water, raspberry syrup, and sugar. Stir until the sugar is dissolved.
3. Halve the lime. Next, juice one half lime setting the other half aside. Add the lime juice to taste and stir until incorporated.
4. Using a melon baller, scoop out the dragon fruit adding half the raspberries and dragon fruit balls to the sangria. Refrigerate for up to two hours.
5. Fill eight stemless wine glasses about 3/4 full with ice, and pour sangria through a strainer into each glass.
6. Use a slotted spoon to scoop some fruit into the glass.
7. Garnish with a lime wedge, and the extra raspberries and dragon fruit balls.

Find the publications by Tommy Clarkson and Ola Brisa Gardens at the links, below:

The Civilized Jungle, Volumes I, II and III

The Medicinal Jungle, Volumes I and II (III coming soon)

The Edible Jungle (coming soon)

[Amazon Canada](#)

[Amazon USA](#)

you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com



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At: El Caballito Restaurant, Manzanillo, Mexico

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At: Cabo Blanco Hotel, Barra de Navidad



John & Catherine Gonzales

RSVP: 331-255-3945 Mexican cell 713-805-1703 U.S. Cell

Or email: Catherine.gonzales@skymed.com

Photographer: **Marg McKenna**

RIGHT Northern Jacana at the golf course in Club Santiago



LEFT Yellow-Crowned Night Heron

RIGHT Brown Pelican. On the rocks out from La Boquita, seen as we were heading out fishing.

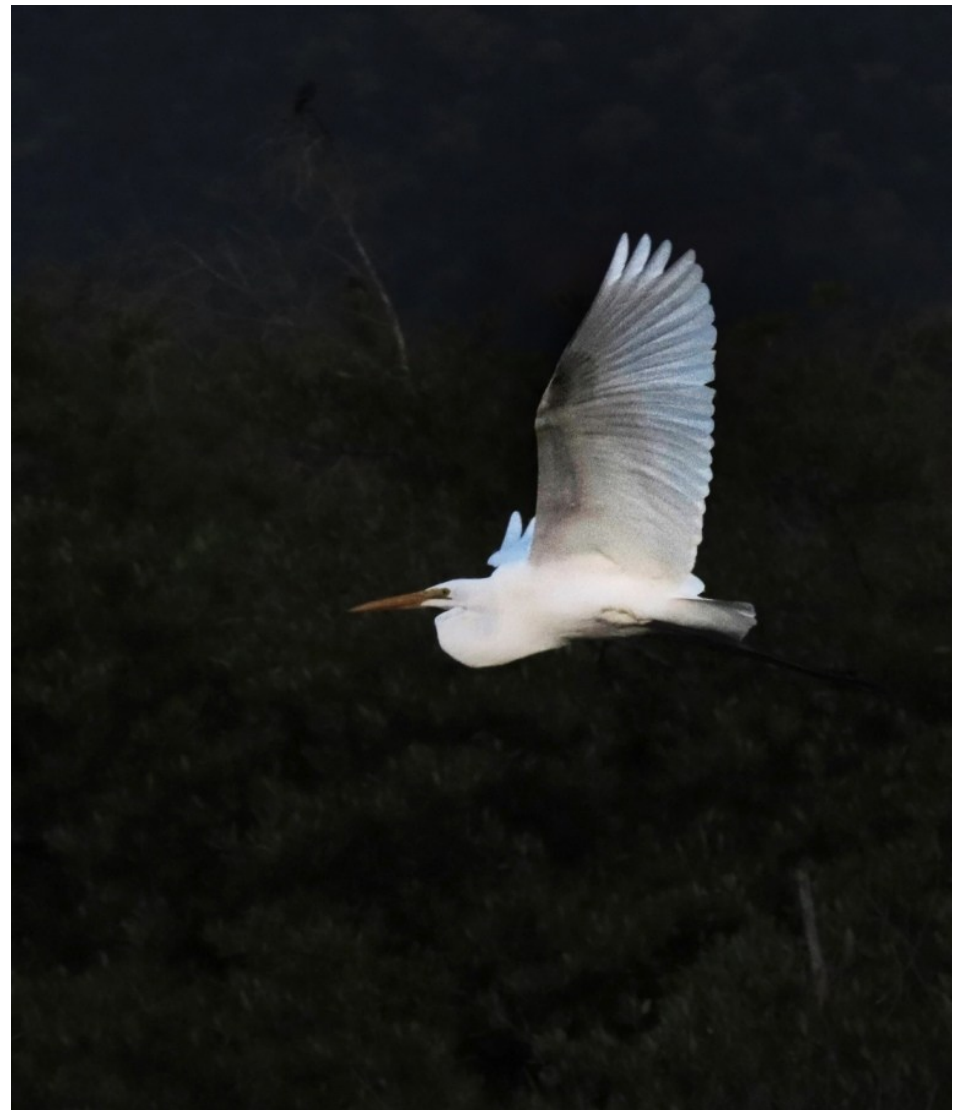


Photographer: **Marg McKenna**



LEFT Snowy Egrets

RIGHT Snowy Egret in flight



BELOW Roseate Spoonbills at the lagoon of La Boquita



Photographer: **Marg McKenna**

RIGHT Russet-Crowned Motmot
Real de Santiago



LEFT Silhouette of a Heron in the wooded area near
Club Santiago Golf Course

RIGHT Feeding frenzy of the Brown Pelicans
at Playa Miramar



Photographer: **Marg McKenna**



Green Iguana near Real de Santiago

RIGHT Roseate Spoonbills
in the lagoon at La Boquita



LEFT Snowy Egrets
at Playa Miramar



Photographer: **Marg McKenna**



LEFT Shovelnose Guitarfish, La Boquita

BELOW Pera's, a colourful and unique Ramada at La Boquita



LEFT Child in Club Santiago.



Photographer: **Marg McKenna**

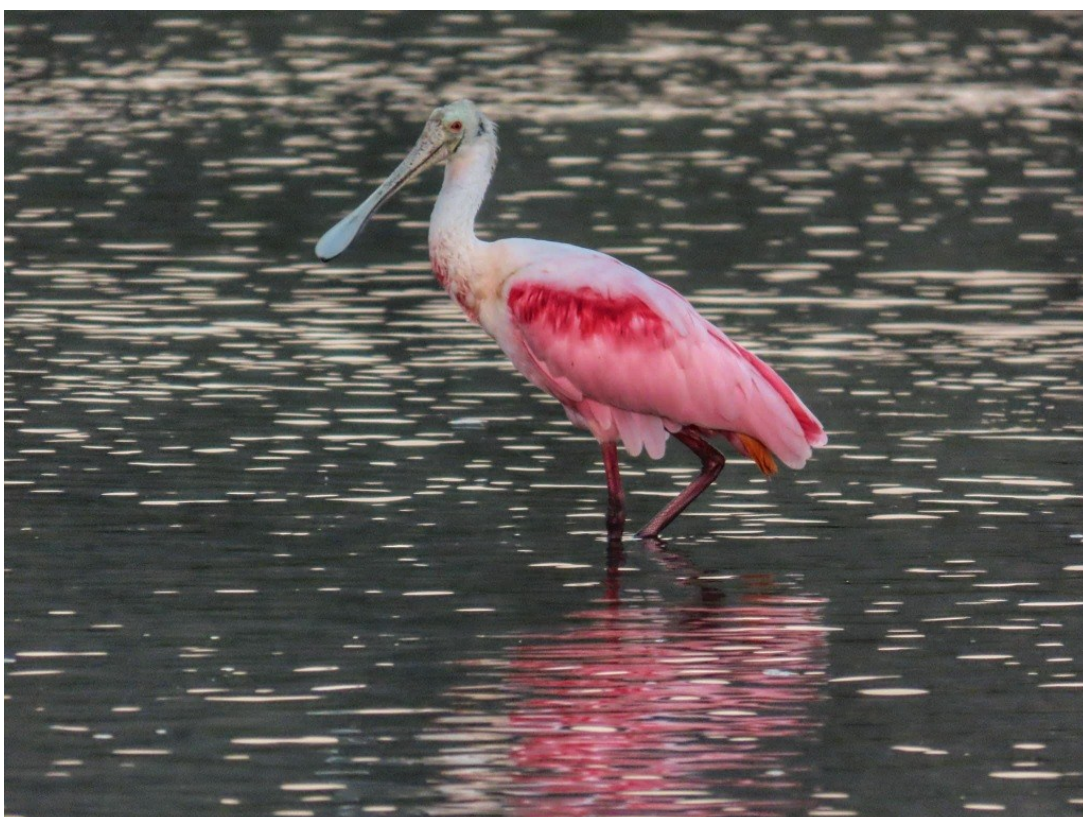


ABOVE Cactus near Palma Real
LEFT Playa Miramar



RIGHT Rocks of La Boquita

Photographer: **Marg McKenna**



ABOVE and LEFT Roseate Spoonbills in the Lagoon

Photographer: **Marg McKenna**

RIGHT White Faced Ibis, Golf Course at Club Santiago



LEFT and BELOW Royal Terns at the Lagoon



Photographer: **Marg McKenna**



LEFT La Boquita and people fishing
as seen from the Casa Abandonada



RIGHT Restaurant in Santiago

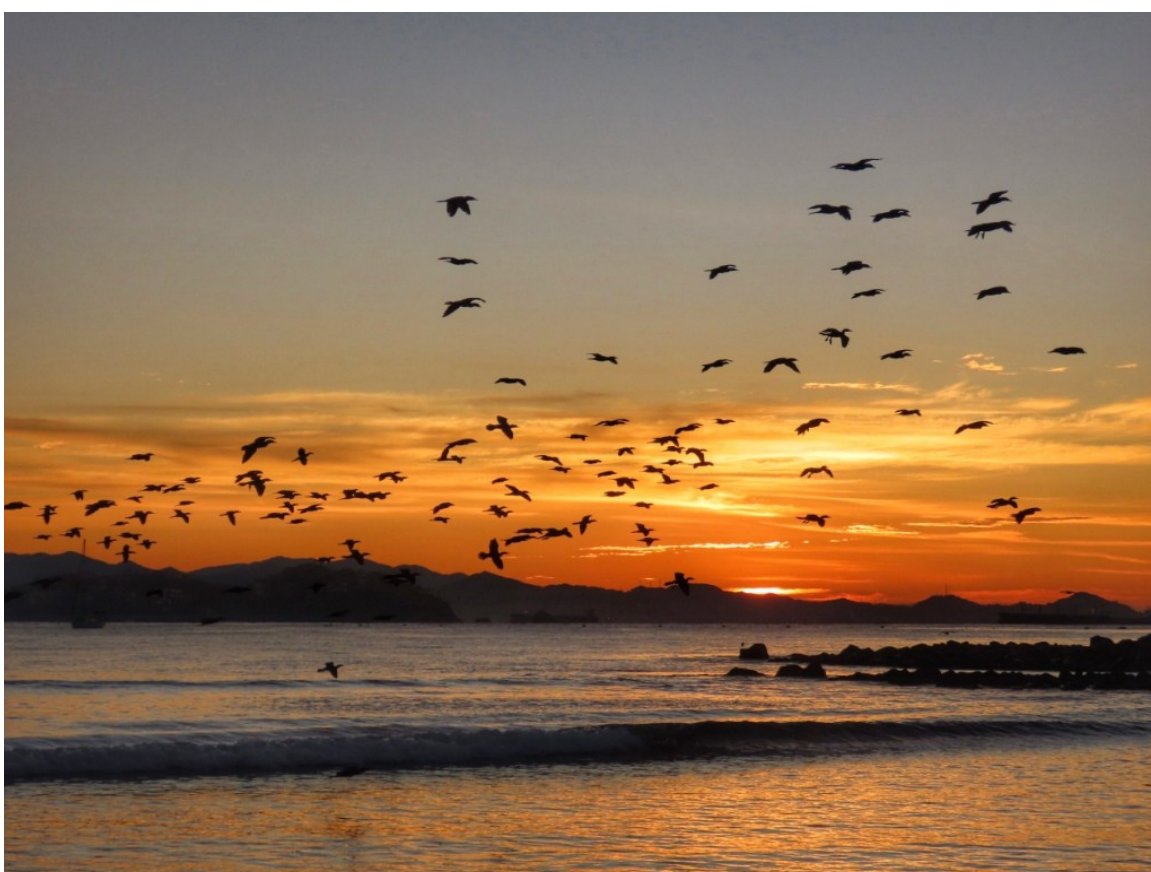


LEFT Pylon keeping watch over a road
damaged during an earthquake

Photographer: **Marg McKenna**



ABOVE, BELOW and RIGHT Semana Santa at La Boquita and guards prepared to watch over tourists



Photographer: **Marg McKenna**

RIGHT Snowy Egret with a small fish at La Boquita



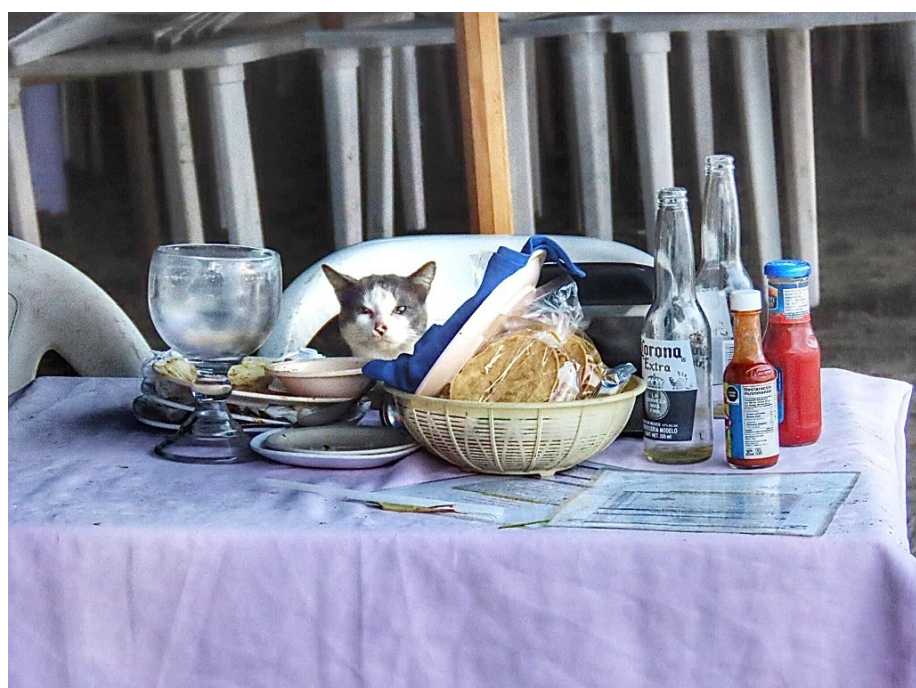
LEFT Snowy Egret puffy and proud at La Boquita



RIGHT Reddish Egret among the Snowy Egrets at La Boquita

Photographer: **Marg McKenna**

Images from La Boquita



MELAQUE MURDER CLUB



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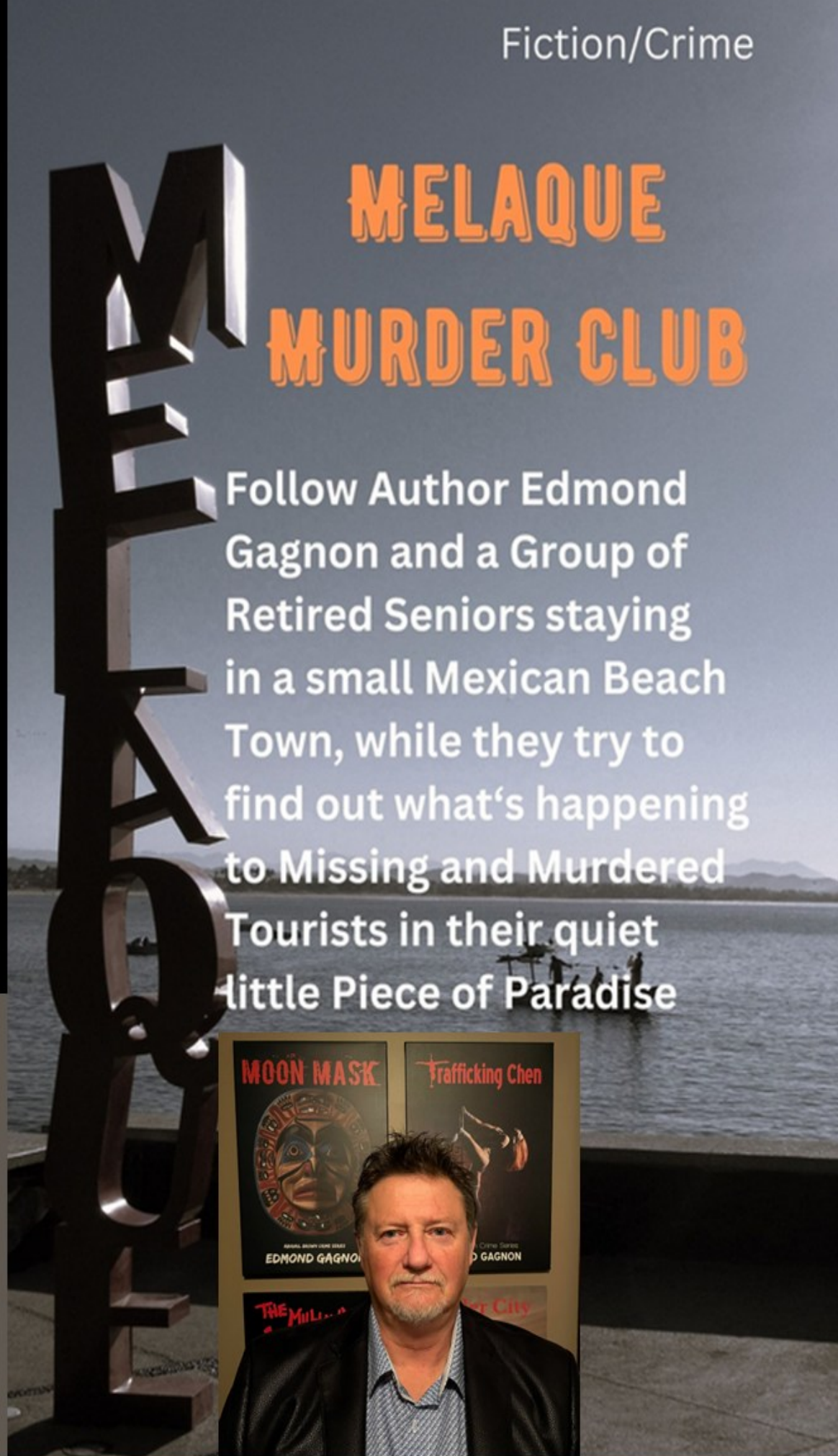
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Fiction/Crime

MELAQUE MURDER CLUB

Follow Author Edmond Gagnon and a Group of Retired Seniors staying in a small Mexican Beach Town, while they try to find out what's happening to Missing and Murdered Tourists in their quiet little Piece of Paradise



Edmond Gagnon is a Melaque resident and Canadian author celebrated for his captivating crime and mystery novels. Drawing on his rich experiences as a retired police detective, Gagnon weaves authentic narratives that immerse readers in the gritty realities of law enforcement. His works, including the popular **Norm Strom** series (with such titles as “**Finding Hope**” and “**Border City Chronicles**”), showcase his keen eye for detail and deep understanding of human behaviour. In addition to his fiction, including “**Melaque Murder Club**”, Gagnon has penned travel memoirs, sharing his adventures and insights from exploring diverse cultures. Passionate about storytelling, he continues to write compelling tales that reflect his life’s unique journey.

Mexico is Calling RV Snowbirds More Now Than Ever

by Dan and Lisa Goy (Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours)



44' Class A RV on the Baja

Almost 40 years have passed since a young couple with 2 small children from Burnaby, BC, Canada, headed to Mexico for the winter. Originally, they had planned to join friends who also had 2 children the same age and had been to Mexico a few years before and had nothing but positive things to say about their experience. The 2 couples were excited at the prospect of traveling south together on a Mexican adventure.

At the end of the day, only 1 couple made the trip, the couple from Burnaby, who had never even been south of the Canadian border, never mind Mexico. Dan and Lisa Goy sold their house, purchased a somewhat camperized van and, much to their parents' objections and concerns, joined a much older generation of Snowbirds and headed south. Ultimately, this would be a life-changing decision as they fell in love with Mexico "hook, line and sinker".

2002 was their last Mexican vacation as a family. This was an epic road trip. Metro Vancouver to Las Vegas, Acapulco, Mexico City, Disneyland and return to Surrey, BC in a month. 7 years later, they started Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours leading snowbirds across Baja California known as the Magnificent Peninsula. Although their company, Baja Amigos, continues to escort RVers throughout Mexico, Dan and Lisa no longer lead tours and, rather, spend the winter on the Pacific Coast of mainland Mexico, often commonly referred to as the Riviera Nayarit near San Blas.

Bus takes Baja Amigos group into Mexico City



Winter weather is always better in Mexico

Although the weather does vary depending on your destination, weather is always better in Mexico during the winter than it is in the southern US. This is not an opinion, just a fact. We all know that RV Snowbirds' primary reason for heading south each winter is to escape the snow, rain, cold and freezing temperatures. Mexico can always provide that environment somewhere. When North America is in a deep freeze, nowhere in the US is immune.

Fortunately, regulating what climate works for you is straightforward. Keep heading south or head into the interior. Mexico also enjoys an average of 10 hours plus of daylight in the winter. For us, this means 6:30 am to 5:30 pm.

...Mexico is Calling RV Snowbirds More Now Than Ever



Chichén Itzá tour

As we move from December into January, the humidity drops and temperature moderates to the perfect temperatures for us. Sometimes, we need a long-sleeved shirt or shawl in the evening when there is a breeze off the ocean.

Many long-term expat Canadians and Americans gravitate to Ajijic on Lago de Chapala, which borders the states of Jalisco and Michoacán and is considered to have the 2nd best climate in the world. You can pretty much count on sunshine every day. The mean yearly temperature recorded in Chapala is 20.4 °C | 68.8 °F, so with such a moderate climate, often summers are not easy to define.

Mexican Snowbird RV Destinations

The most popular destinations for Snowbird RVers range from Baja California Sur to the Westcoast of Mexico from Puerto Peñasco (Sonora) to Puerto Arista (Chiapas). San Carlos (Sonora), Las Glorias (Sinaloa), Mazatlán (Sinaloa), Riviera Nayarit (Lo de Marcos, Rincón de Guayabitos, La Peñita de Jaltemba) and San Patricio Melaque (Jalisco) are the most popular of the coastal destinations with enough RV Parks to support the RV traffic.



The attraction is a combination of climate and the proximity to the ocean for long-term winter stays. There are plenty of other destinations in Mexico, a couple even on the coast of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, just not as popular. The rest are destinations for short-term visits, at least for RVers.

Mexicans - Mestizos

Mexicans have a well-known reputation for being very welcoming hosts, warm and generous people, and it is well deserved. This has been our experience over 40 years of visiting Mexico, from folks that took us in at Christmas in 1985 in Mexico City to a couple we met last week who stopped to see if we needed help when we had a flat tire. This has not been our experience when traveling in the US or Canada. For Mexicans, it is just part of the fundamental fabric of their identity.



Copper Canyon—on the edge

Did you know the majority of Mexicans have varying degrees of Spanish and Mesoamerican ancestry and have been classified as Mestizos. In the modern meaning of the term, this means that they identify fully neither with any indigenous culture nor with a Spanish cultural heritage, but rather identify with the uniquely Mexican identity which incorporates elements from both Spanish and indigenous traditions. One thing to always keep in mind, irrespective of where you decide to winter, if you are looking for peace and quiet, you have come to the wrong country. Mexicans love their fiestas and any opportunity to party loudly.

...Mexico is Calling RV Snowbirds More Now Than Ever

Budget Concerns

Long gone are the days when you could take your RV to Mexico for the winter and live for \$10 a day. In 1985, we were getting \$600 pesos for one (1) US dollar. Fuel was government subsidized and cheap. Free beaches were available to camp on everywhere and beer was only 25 cents per bottle.



Palenque,
Chiapas

PEMEX privatized years ago and competition was welcomed into the Mexican fuel industry soon after. In turn, prices have skyrocketed, for both gas and diesel, now more expensive in Mexico than in California. However, camping fees, groceries and restaurant meals remain 40% to 50% less than what you would pay in Canada or the US for RVers who shop locally in Mexico.

Another significant factor particularly for Canadians is the falling USD, now 70 cents against the US greenback. The good news is the CAD remains strong against the Mexican peso, as does the USD. Compared to last season, spending the winter in the US has become much more expensive. At the same time, camping in Mexico has become less expensive.



Oaxaca



Playa Santispac, Bahía Concepción

Activities - What do we do?

You can do everything in Mexico that you can do in the southern US, actually more. You can walk your dog on the beach off leash, you can have a beer or glass of wine in public legally and you can head out on your ATV or side-by-side without concerns about licensing.



Uxmal

Pickleball is very popular, and courts are readily accessible in many Snowbird destinations. Fishing has always been central to tourism in Mexico and remains very affordable. Larger RV parks such as La Peñita, in Nayarit (<https://www.lapenitarvpark.com/home/>), provides access to all the activities you can imagine.

Another popular option often overlooked is to "take a vacation" while you winter in Mexico. This could be taking the El Chepe train to Copper Canyon which is easily 10X larger than the US Grand Canyon or perhaps a visit to the cities of Guanajuato, San Miguel de Allende or Mexico City or a bus tour to "Pueblo Mágico" San Cristóbal de Las Casas, the Agua Azul waterfalls and the ancient Mayan archaeological site of Palenque in Chiapas. Air travel within Mexico remains very inexpensive.

...Mexico is Calling RV Snowbirds More Now Than Ever



The Main Square in Mexico City

Green Angels

This is a service offered to RVers and vehicle travellers alike that is not well known. Essentially, it Mexico's version of AAA, without any fees. The Green Angels started in 1960, when motoring tourists were the kings of tourism. There were no toll roads, and most highways were two-lane. Gas stations were few. In response to these conditions and to improve the perception of safety (stories of banditos were plentiful but, like today, mostly unfounded), the Secretary of Tourism started this service. The one difference is that Green Angels focuses primarily on highways.

Called Angeles Verdes in Spanish, these are mechanics who drive the roads of Mexico in green and white pickups, helping stranded motorists. We were first introduced to the Green Angels when our camperized van overheated in 1985 heading to Mexico City. They correctly diagnosed the problem, which was our radiator.

What a great introduction to Mexico! Most importantly, based on our own history of driving in Mexico, and that of the hundreds of people we have talked to, this is not an uncommon story.

The Green Angels will help anyone motorist and provide fuel (gas or diesel), emergency medical services, road information and make minor repairs for free. There may be no fee, but it is always important to tip them.

When you need assistance with your vehicle on the highway, dial 078 or 911. 911 works better from cell phones. Your call is routed to a dispatch center with state-of-the-art equipment. From the dispatch center, the agent closest to you is contacted to give you support.

Security in Mexico - Is It Safe?

This question has been asked continuously since the end of the Mexican Revolution in December 1920. This was the primary concern of our parents in 1985, is the #1 question asked at every RV show or RV rally we have ever attended in Canada and the United States and remains the #1 concern expressed by those interested in RVing in Mexico.



Whale Sighting

If you are involved in drugs and gangs, do not come to Mexico. Although many criminals see Mexico as a playground without rules you are an easy target and your enemies abroad will find you. Many tourists killed in Mexico are later found to be known to police back home wherever they come from.

...Mexico is Calling RV Snowbirds More Now Than Ever



RVs on the Road in Baja

Mexican politicians who campaign vigorously against corruption and cartels at the municipal, state and federal levels sadly are at real risk of assassination given the cartel presence and control of many regions in Mexico.

Tourism plays a vital role in the Mexican economy. As one of the largest contributors to the country's GDP (almost 10%), tourism has a significant impact on various sectors, including employment, infrastructure development and cultural preservation. Subsequently, tourists are off limits when it comes to any interaction involving organized cartel violence. That does not mean tourists are not subject to crime or criminal activity, just like back home.

Our primary advice to RVers travelling in Mexico has always been: do not drive at night. Why? On Baja you are likely to hit a cow and everywhere in Mexico drinking and driving remains a reality. In addition, for seniors, our eyesight is just not what it used to be. We do our best to avoid driving at night back home, why would we drive at night in Mexico?

Over the past 40 years, we have driven over 160,000 km or 100,000 miles across all of Mexico and we have yet to be confronted by banditos. This does not mean they do not exist. This fall, folks we know personally were stopped at gunpoint in transit to Nayarit and car jacked losing their truck and toy hauler trailer containing an ATV.

Unfortunately, they were traveling alone and later in the day than we would normally be on the road. As anywhere, common sense should prevail. We rarely travel alone in Mexico or the US.

At the end of the day, we continue to RV in Mexico and plan to do so into the future.

Submitted by
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Tips and Tricks to Stay Safe and Spend Less While Travelling

The following are tips, gathered over time and through experience, to make travel in Mexico, and elsewhere, smoother and safer. For ease of reading, this context is for visitors to Mexico.

Money

1. The ATM (bank machine) and points of sale machines will often offer you an exchange rate and for you to see how much the withdrawal or purchase will cost in your card's currency. Decline offers to have a credit card or debit charge in CAD, USD or other foreign currency at bank machines and establishments and take the charge in local currency only. Your bank will provide a better exchange rate.
2. Know what your bank/credit card charges you for foreign currency transactions (withdrawals and purchases). Some don't charge any fee.
3. Learn what each local bank charges for an ATM withdrawal and what the maximum local currency withdrawal amount is.
4. Know what your bank charges you for an ATM withdrawal, in addition to the charge the ATM's bank will charge as some don't charge you a fee.
5. Know what your bank's daily limit for cash withdrawals or debit purchases.
6. Don't use a bank machine that has a card reader that sucks the card into the machine. There are several where you don't need to lose sight of your card while using the machine. This saves it being swallowed by the machine and having to get it back or get it replaced.
7. A preferable cash withdrawal bank machine will ask you to remove your card before you get your cash out.
8. Always keep all receipts and discard (shred) later.
9. If exchanging money somewhere, keep the transaction receipt and shred it later with a cross-cut shredder. Don't leave it in the trash or ask someone else to shred it unless you see them do it. Typically, personal information is apparent on money exchange slips. This is also true for duty-free purchases. A considerable amount of personal information is on those slips.
10. Check the bank machine or establishment's card reader to see if it looks newly replaced or bulkier than usual (card skimmers).
11. Preferably use a bank machine within or near a large store, before you start your shopping, and then walk around for a while before exiting the building, to be a less interesting (and harder to follow) target for opportunists.
12. Don't keep all your cards or ID on you while walking around (check if required to carry passport, visa or travel permit with you).
13. Put ID stickers with your mobile phone number (and country), email address on your debit and credit cards, ID, passport, on items that a Good Samaritan would make an effort to return to you, and ideally get a secondary email address and phone number (available free online) for that purpose so that you are not giving away the email and phone number attached to any accounts you use.

...Tips and Tricks to Stay Safe and Spend Less While Travelling

14. Decline options to defer payments (zero interest, months with no interest as they call the promotions in Mexico) over several months unless it is your own credit card company offering it and you know the terms as zero interest offers may only apply to local banks and not foreign credit cards.
15. Ideally don't let a merchant take your card away "to the back" or out of your sight to process the charge, although this is a common practice still in some countries without intention of fraud, so it's good to talk to people locally to understand how this normally works.
16. Use prepaid credit/debit cards (Wise, others) where possible, or keep your available balance/limit low to limit liability in the event a card or its info are stolen.
17. Keep an eye on your bank accounts and credit cards while you are away to see if any unexpected charges show up.
18. Sign up for transaction alerts on your credit or debit card transactions by email rather than SMS (text message) in case you are not using your phone from home while traveling. Some people get a local SIM card while on the road and a text message notifications won't help.
19. Set up multi-factor authentication that uses email or an authenticator app and not SMS (text message).
20. Know if the practice in the country or the establishment you are using is to charge tax on top of the bill or if tax is included in the price, as well as whether a service charge or tip is already included with the bill before you do calculations in your head about what the item really costs and so that you don't double tip. It is a common practice in many establishments, especially when there is a large group dining, to include the tip (servicio) with the bill.
21. Check with your phone company before you go about enabling Wi-Fi calling on your device and understand about any roaming charges or a roaming cap you may put on your phone before you leave, as it may be cheaper to get a local SIM card and pay as you go or take a second unlocked phone with you for that purpose while you leave your main phone on Wi-Fi calling.

Safety

1. Always have your belongings in view and don't leave them unattended. Don't put your own purse or backpack on the back of your chair where you cannot see it. Rather, put it on the back of a chair next to you where you can keep an eye on it. It's best to have some kind of buckle or strap to secure it to a chair rung or other so it can't be lifted away quickly.
2. Do not accept help from anyone at a bank machine unless you went into the branch and got an employee to help you. If uncertain, ask for the bank manager.
3. Watch for distractions in stores, parking lots, etc. where seemingly innocent or well-intended people distract you while another pickpockets you.
4. Keep an eye out for new scams on social media.

All of the aforementioned said, it is not common to fall victim to scams and pranks. While it can happen to anyone, it is also largely possible to prevent such events by staying vigilant and using your instincts. With that, wishing you safe and happy travels ahead!

Shattering Expectations

THURSDAY JAN. 30, 2025

A Benefit Dinner and Event for
CASA HOGAR LOS ANGELITOS

6:00pm Doors open
7:30pm Dinner and Show
7:30pm Silent Auction Closes
8:00pm Program and LIVE AUCTION
9:30pm Event Closes



Location: "CALA"

Centro de Artes Los Angelitos
Octavio Paz -5 Nuevo Salagua

<https://tcfcares.org/events/>

TICKETS AVAILABLE: \$75 US - \$1500 pesos

Tables of 8 or 10 also available

Order Online by QR code above

In person sales or Cash with Walter Hill

at 204-230-5231, +52-314-124-0793,

email: Whillwpg@gmail.com



Information 314 33 4 08 78

info@tcfcares.org

mexico@tcfcares.org



Play in Pink for a Good Cause

story and photos by John Chalmers

Pink was the colour of the day at the Santiago Golf Course for the Play in Pink women's golf tournament in 2024. Organized by Jacquie McKechnie and Lorna Kramer, it was the sixth annual event to raise funds for women with breast cancer who need financial support for medical treatment, mammograms, travel costs and so on.

A full slate of 44 women signed up for the tournament, which included 18 holes of golf, breakfast, lunch and refreshments, plus prizes.



In 2025, the tournament will again be held at the Santiago Golf Course. Anyone who wishes to play should sign up soon as a full list of players is again limited to only 44. Contact Jacquie at jacquiemckechnie@hotmail.com to sign up and for details regarding date, fee and to donate a prize or to serve as a sponsor.

After a putting contest to start, tournament organizer Jacquie McKechnie speaks to the competitors.

The tournament begins at 9:00 a.m. when golfers board their carts to drive to their assigned hole in a shotgun start. Players have to go twice around the 9-hole course to complete a game of 18 holes.



...Play in Pink for a Good Cause

Participation in the pink tournament is another example of how snowbirds who spend the winter in México come together to provide financial support for our Mexican neighbors. For some 35 years, Play in Pink golf tournaments in the United States have supported research in cancer treatment. In Ireland, the National Breast Cancer Research Institute is associated with many "Pink" tournaments each year.

Pink clothes, pink hats, pink balls, pink flowers and pink golf carts are all part of the show in a fun-filled tournament to support a very worthy cause!



Resident geese at the golf course are given a free pass to enjoy the game as spectators.



The tournament supports [Una Nueva Vida IAP](#) (A New Life Institución de Asistencia Privada). At right above, players putt around the challenging hazard of pink shoes that are scattered around the green.

...Play in Pink for a Good Cause



Una Nueva Vida IAP was established to offer economic and emotional support for women to deal with cancer through detection, treatment and education. Una Nueva Vida IAP was established in the city of Colima in 2010 and fund raising events are held to enable the organization to achieve its goals. Regular meetings are held to consider what events can be used to generate funds. As stated in the web site, "The Institution's attention has been based on the job of training service providers and representatives through different workshops and activities. Not only do they help patients with per diem for medicines or transfers to hospitals, most of which are located in Colima, but also psychological help."



Originally organized by Janet Gibbons and Sue Jackson, the Play in Pink tournament at the Santiago Golf Club will see competitors tee up for the seventh year in 2025. As the course has only nine holes, that is why the number of players is limited to 44. Nevertheless, in 2024 the event raised 45,000 pesos to support women with breast cancer. Players themselves are rewarded not by just competing, but in qualifying for various prizes and enjoying the company other golfers during lunch at the golf club.



...Play in Pink for a Good Cause



In Ireland, several tournaments of the Play in Pink program support the National Breast Cancer Research Institute. To find a “Pink” tournament near where you live, do an internet search for Play in Pink, which will bring up many links to sites you can explore to find a tournament or learn more.

you can reach John at john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com

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viveplants.com

Yes, chef!

interview by Krista Parkinson

From Humble Beginnings to the Top Culinary Experience: Chef Freddy's Journey at Bistro Mexicano Alatraste

The journey of a chef is rarely straightforward - it's a mix of passion, grit and an unwavering commitment to a dream. For Chef Freddy, the man behind Bistro Mexicano Alatraste, this journey has been nothing short of inspiring. Today, his restaurant is a celebrated hub of authentic Mexican cuisine, but its story begins years ago with a young man whose love for food ignited a dream of sharing his culture with the world.

A Passion Born in the Kitchen

Chef Freddy's culinary adventure started in his family's kitchen in Mexico City, where the aroma of freshly made tortillas mingled with the vibrant sizzle of chiles roasting on the comal. Growing up in a close-knit community in Mexico, food wasn't just nourishment - it was a celebration of life, family and culture. His earliest memories of cooking alongside his abuelas (grandmothers) are what planted the seed of passion in him. His maternal grandmother was from Puebla and his paternal grandmother from Oaxaca, representing expertise from some of the top culinary regions of Mexico.



While other kids dreamed of becoming doctors or engineers, Freddy found his muse in the kitchen. The traditions of Mexican cuisine were more than recipes; they were stories passed down through generations, and he wanted to be the storyteller who shared them with the world.



A World of Experience and Connections

In the early days of his career, Chef Freddy spent time in the United States, at first as a young teen, where a family he met took him under their wing, helping with both shelter and educational opportunities, and he worked his way up in an Italian restaurant that gave him his first opportunities. He later married an American woman and became a citizen of the United States. Chef Freddy uses his first BART (rapid transit in San Francisco) pass that he uses as a bookmark in his recipe books. The pass meant a lot at a time in the past where it allowed him to get anywhere he needed to be, facilitating access to work.

Chef Freddy's culinary pursuits have taken him around the world, allowing him to refine his skills and develop a global perspective on food. He has trained and done practicums at renowned culinary institutes and restaurants such as Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas and worked in some of the most prestigious kitchens across Europe, North America and Latin America. He was the main chef for the San Francisco Giants. His time in France introduced him to classic techniques, while his stints in Germany, Italy and Greece deepened his understanding of the importance of regional ingredients.

Throughout his career, Freddy has collaborated with some of the biggest names in the culinary world. He has worked and learned alongside celebrated chefs, including the likes of Thomas Keller at The French Laundry in the Napa Valley, Masaharu Morimoto in France, Martín Berasategui in Spain and Anthony Bourdain in New York, who inspired him to push the boundaries of his craft.

...Yes, Chef!

These experiences not only honed his technical expertise but also enriched his vision of elevating traditional Mexican cuisine to new heights. Recently, he prepared a culinary experience for Guy Fieri who has taken a part-time residence at El Tamarindo in our beautiful nearby Costalegre.

Freddy's time in high-profile kitchens also earned him opportunities to cook for celebrities and dignitaries, further cementing his reputation as a chef who brings authenticity and innovation to every plate. His global experiences now influence the menu at Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme, blending tradition with modernity to create unforgettable dishes.

Chef Freddy says his left hand comes from the United States and his right hand from Mexico. He believes people are more than where they came from. He feels like all of his past experiences have made him what he is today.

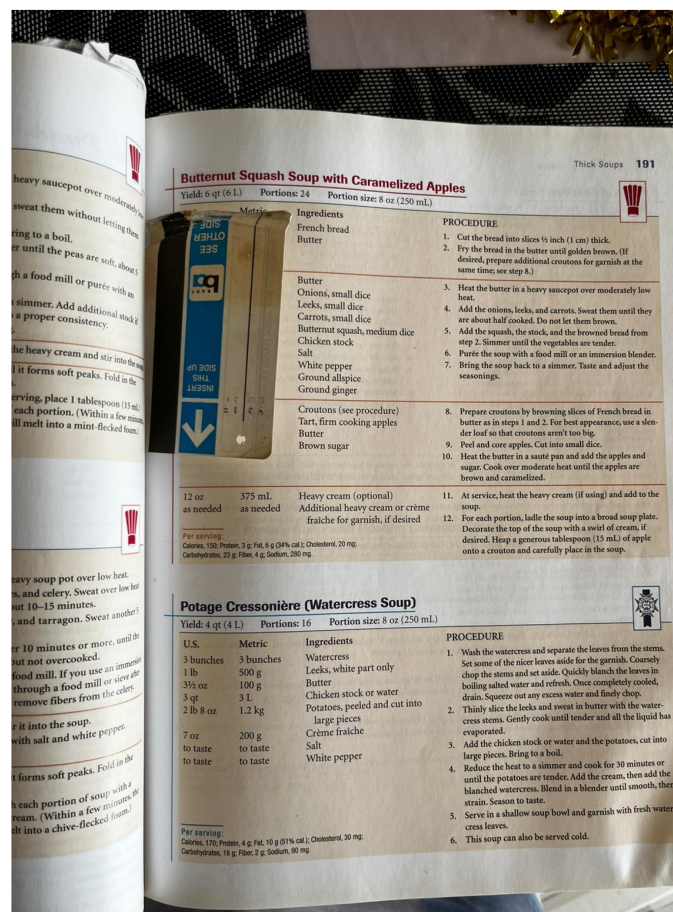
Crafting a Vision for Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme

In Manzanillo, Chef Freddy has had many opportunities. He has collaborated with the beloved, late Chef Wolfgang Hausladen at Pacífica del Mar. He has worked with local politicians in providing guidance on tourism and innovation. He has had cafés and restaurants in Manzanillo on a smaller scale which have led him to his current offering of prehispanic, contemporary, original and elevated Mexican food.

So it was that years of hard work culminated in a dream: a place where people could experience the heart and soul of Mexican cuisine. Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme was born from that vision, a space that captures the vibrancy, warmth and authenticity of Freddy's heritage.

The name "Alatrisme" holds a special significance, reflecting the richness of Mexican storytelling and culture. Freddy's goal was clear - he wanted his bistro to be more than a restaurant. It was to be a cultural experience, where every dish told a story, and every ingredient carried a piece of home.

From the first plate served, Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme has stood out for its commitment to authenticity. Freddy worked with local suppliers to source the freshest ingredients while also bringing specialty items directly from other parts of Mexico. The menu is a homage to traditional Mexican cuisine, blending classic techniques with a modern flair.



A Culinary Leader and Innovator

Freddy's leadership extends beyond the kitchen. He has cultivated a team that shares his vision, mentoring young chefs and inspiring them to take pride in their craft. His approach is collaborative, ensuring that every dish that leaves the kitchen reflects the passion and precision he expects.

In addition to running a successful restaurant, Freddy has become a champion of community engagement. He frequently partners with local organizations to celebrate Mexican heritage, hosting events and workshops that highlight traditional cooking techniques and ingredients.

...Yes, Chef!

Social media has played a crucial role in expanding Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme's reach. Freddy's Instagram posts - featuring colorful dishes like enchiladas de mole, tamales, and freshly made salsas - have garnered a loyal following. Customers frequently share glowing reviews, praising not only the food but also the warm and inviting atmosphere of the bistro. Some have even had an opportunity to taking his cooking classes.

Looking Ahead

For Chef Freddy, the journey is far from over. His dream is to continue evolving Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme, expanding its offerings while staying true to its roots. Plans are already underway to introduce seasonal tasting menus that dive deeper into regional Mexican cuisine, from the coastal flavours of Veracruz to the smoky, rich dishes of Oaxaca.

Freddy also envisions using his platform to mentor the next generation of chefs. He believes in the importance of passing on knowledge, much like his abuelas once did for him. "Cooking is about connection," Freddy says. "It's about bringing people together, sharing stories, and creating memories. That's what I want every guest to experience when they walk into Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme."

Rumour has it that Chef Freddy has a book or two in mind and looks forward to the time to write and compile his stories. These would represent yet another form of expression from the very creative culinary expert.



A Legacy Built on Passion

Chef Freddy's story is a testament to the power of perseverance and the beauty of following one's passion. From humble beginnings to becoming the heart and soul of Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme, his journey inspires anyone with a dream.

As the bistro continues to thrive, one thing is certain: Chef Freddy's love for food and culture will keep delighting guests for years to come, one plate at a time.

To reserve a table at **Bistro Mexicano Alatrisme**, visit their Facebook page facebook.com/bistromexicanoalatrisme or contact them directly at +52 314 125 9677 or via email at bistroalatrisme20@gmail.com

...more pics follow

...Yes, Chef!



...Yes, Chef!



Dra. Elizabeth: A Life of Cultural Connection, Service and Transformation

interview by Krista Parkinson

Dra. Patricia Elizabeth Torres Villanueva's life is a testament to the power of cultural preservation, human connection and a deep commitment to personal and community growth. With a career spanning continents, diverse disciplines and profound humanitarian work, her story is one of resilience, curiosity and unwavering dedication to uplifting others.

Early Life and Academic Pursuits

Born into an overprotective but nurturing household in Jalisco, Dra. Elizabeth's formative years were marked by rigorous academic discipline. As the only child, she spent much of her youth immersed in study, excelling in various subjects and languages. Her parents, while shielding her from the social liberties many children experience, instilled in her a thirst for knowledge and an appreciation for the arts and culture. This foundation would later inform her passion for dance, psychoanalysis and teaching.

Dra. Elizabeth, also known by her indigenous name, Tezcacoatzin, or Coatzin, meaning "precious energy of life", pursued higher education with an insatiable curiosity, studying multiple languages and disciplines. She now speaks the 5 languages represented at the United Nations in addition to learning Arabic, Swahili and Hindi. A Freudian psychoanalyst by training, she also explored various cultural and philosophical traditions, blending Western methodologies with ancient, indigenous wisdom.



Championing Cultural Dance and Education

One of Dra. Elizabeth's most enduring passions is dance, which she describes as a transformative force that connects individuals to their inner selves and their communities. She teaches osteogenic exercises and cultural dance, hosting sessions both in-person and online. Her international Zoom classes attract participants from as far as Greece, Cyprus and Asia, highlighting the universal appeal of her approach.

Her work extends to organizing cultural events that preserve and promote pre-Hispanic and folkloric dances. These dances, deeply rooted in Mexico's indigenous traditions, hold symbolic significance, representing elements of nature and universal truths. Dra. Elizabeth emphasizes the importance of aligning thoughts, feelings, and actions - a philosophy reflected in her structured approach to dance, which she teaches as a path to self-awareness and empowerment. She has studied psychodance, which is about the five rhythms.

In her role as a cultural ambassador, she collaborates with UNESCO and other organizations to certify dance practitioners, ensuring proper technique and injury prevention. Her efforts aim to elevate dance education while preserving its authenticity, particularly in small Mexican communities where traditions risk being lost.

...Dra. Elizabeth: A Life of Cultural Connection, Service and Transformation

Humanitarian Work and Leadership

Dra. Elizabeth's humanitarian efforts are equally impressive. As a self-proclaimed activist and a member of the Rotary Club in Manzanillo, she leads initiatives that address critical needs, from providing clean water to supporting education and healthcare. Her leadership in this international organization underscores her commitment to service and her ability to mobilize resources for meaningful change.

Her community work in Mexico includes supporting underprivileged neighborhoods, teaching children to dance and helping families establish small businesses. By fostering entrepreneurship and cultural pride, she empowers individuals to build sustainable futures while preserving their heritage.

Dra. Elizabeth's philosophy is grounded in gratitude and mutual respect. She teaches children and adults to appreciate life's essentials - water, fire and air - while instilling a sense of responsibility for their communities and the environment.

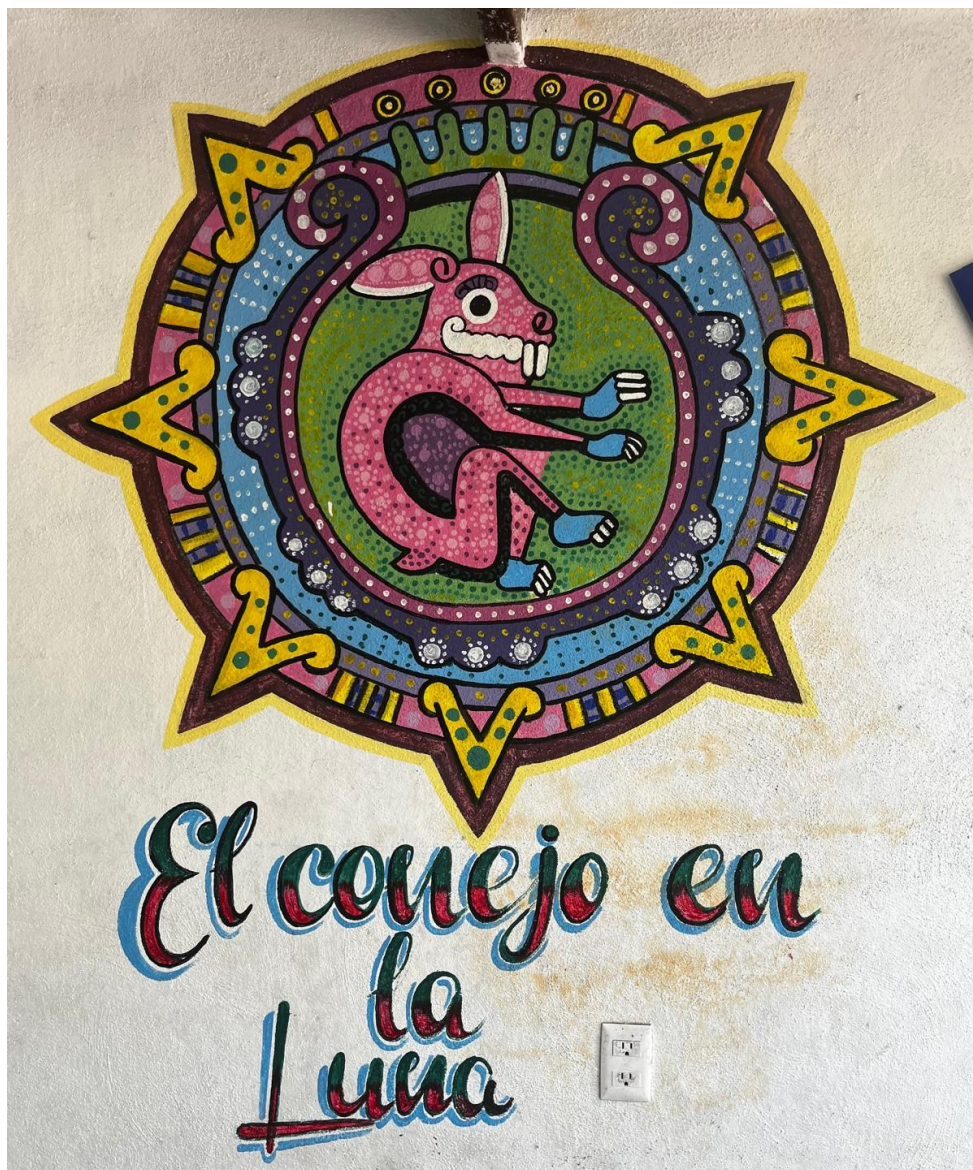
Her lessons extend beyond the practical, encouraging spiritual growth and a deeper connection to the natural world.



A Life Rich in Travel and Discovery

Dra. Elizabeth's love for travel has taken her across the globe. Her journeys have included cultural exchanges in Africa, Asia, and Europe, where she studied traditional dances and engaged with local communities. Her four children live in countries around the world, so she is always on the move.

One of her most cherished experiences was meeting the Dalai Lama during his visit to Mexico. This profound encounter deepened her understanding of spirituality and the interconnectedness of all life, further inspiring her work as a cultural bridge-builder.



Mural of the Rabbit on the Moon in Punta Chica where dance classes are held

Her travels are not merely about exploration but about learning and sharing. Whether participating in a Maasai dance in Kenya or studying the ritual movements of Sufi traditions, she integrates these experiences into her teachings, creating a rich tapestry of global cultural exchange.

Challenges and Resilience

Like many great leaders, Dra. Elizabeth's path has not been without challenges. She faced personal and professional setbacks, including the closure of her cultural center due to a lack of returning volunteers. Yet, her determination to rebuild and her belief in the importance of cultural education remain steadfast.

Her personal life also reflects her resilience. As a widow, she honors the memory of her late husband, a supportive partner who embraced her passions and traveled the world with her. Their relationship was a model of mutual respect and shared purpose, qualities she continues to embody in her interactions with others.

...Dra. Elizabeth: A Life of Cultural Connection, Service and Transformation

Future Aspirations

Dra. Elizabeth's vision for the future is as ambitious as it is inspiring. She plans to host international cultural events in collaboration with UNESCO, bringing dancers and educators from around the world to Mexico. These initiatives aim to certify dance practitioners, promote cultural exchange and enhance the quality of dance education.

Her calendar is filled with events and commitments, from organizing fundraising tours and gala dinners to teaching at universities and visiting ethnobotanical gardens. Each project reflects her dedication to preserving cultural heritage and empowering individuals through education and community engagement.

Always on the move, Dra. Elizabeth, the coming weeks will visit her botanical garden in the Sierra Norte of Puebla state. During 2025, she will be travelling in the coming months to visit Greece, Cyprus Czechoslovakia, Poland and Spain.

Legacy of Connection and Growth

Dra. Elizabeth's life is a powerful example of how one person can create ripples of change through passion, service and authenticity. Her ability to blend ancient wisdom with contemporary practices has made her a beacon of inspiration for those seeking to connect with their roots and embrace personal growth.

Through dance, teaching, and humanitarian work, Dra. Elizabeth continues to leave an indelible mark on the lives of those she touches.

Her story reminds us that cultural preservation is not just about honouring the past but about creating a future where traditions thrive and communities flourish.

As Dra. Elizabeth often says, "Good energy brings good energy." Her life embodies this truth, radiating positivity, wisdom and an unwavering commitment to making the world a better place.



Manzanillo Migrant Mission

In December 2014, as Bernadino Orozco (Chico) was collecting several of us gringos from the Manzanillo airport, we drove past many men, women and children working in the jalapeño fields. He explained to me that these people were usually of Indian descent, from the rather impoverished Mexican states of Chiapas and Guerrero and living in temporary camps under the most abysmal conditions.

Deeply concerned for these folks, he and his wife, Belen, shared their Christmas bonus with this group, gifting them food and clothing. However, due to the large number of people, he lamented their effort made very little impact.



When we sought to know more of their plight, he took us to a nearby camp. His assessment was absolutely correct. There were many children being cared for by two elderly women, while their parents - and no few older children - labored beneath the hot sun in the fields. For this

arduous, back-breaking work, they were paid but 150 pesos a day (About \$8 USD at the time). Their homes consisted of stretched plastic sheeting between poles for cover. Quite simply, the conditions were most appalling.

When asked what they would like for Christmas. The answer was an immediate, and simple, "beans and rice". When asked what they would like if they were to have a really nice holiday, their responses were pathetically shocking - "Could we have a Coca Cola"?



About this time a third woman joined us. When she learned the nature of my inquiry, she requested blankets...as she had just lost her infant to pneumonia.

For the next nine days, approximately 38 people volunteered time and money to help these unfortunate people have a better Christmas than those in the past.

Nearly \$5,000 was donated by the local American/Canadian community and 375 gift bags (or *despensas* as they are called in Mexico) were distributed to 375 people. Each bag contained a blanket, beans, rice, a three liter bottle of Coca Cola, sardines, coffee, sugar, maseca (to make tortillas) and cookies.



In December 2015, we partnered with The Children's Foundation as part of the Casa Hogar Los Angelitos Ministries of Love Program. Through this program our generous donors can receive tax deductions for their gifts. This program helped increase donations to \$12,965 which resulted in 1,052 bags of food (19,000 pounds) being distributed.

December 2016's donations increased yet more with 65 people giving \$19,840! This allowed us to fill 1,000 bags with



33,300 pounds of food. Due to cost and logistical problems, very few blankets were purchased, but many more tons of food were distributed. Each bag consisted of 3 kilos (1 kilo =

2.2 pounds.) of rice, 3.5 kilos of beans, cooking oil, 1 kilo each of maseca, salt, oatmeal and cookies, 1/2 kilo of sugar, powdered milk, candy, soap, and a can of jalapeños.

Fast forward to 2023 where we spent \$30,541 purchasing 1,533 bags weighing a total of 37,099 pounds. The bags for the last several years now consist of:

5 kilos of beans, 3 kilos of rice, 1 kilo of animal crackers, 1/2 kilo of sugar, 1 kilo of salt, 1 can of chilies, 3 cans of tuna, and 14 grams of instant coffee.

If you would like to help support this cause, donations may be left at the Vida Del Mar office in an envelope marked "Manzanillo Migrant Mission".

If you would like to donate by credit card and receive the taxable benefit please contact stisidores@stisidores.com or visit stisidores.com/manzanillomission.

Thank you for your consideration.