



coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine

**B.A.P. Unión**  
Peruvian Sailing Ship  
in Manzanillo Harbor  
Photo by John Chalmers



Around Manzanillo  
Entertainment  
History and Mythology  
Findings in Nature  
Around Manzanillo  
Nature's Wonders  
Finance  
Recipe  
Learn Spanish  
Path to Citizenship

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To send submissions for possible inclusion in the magazine, please send to the editor by 15th of each month. We are always looking for writers or ideas on what you would like us to see as topics for the magazine.

Article submissions:

- Preferred subjects are Manzanillo and Mexico
- All articles should be 1000 words or less or may be serialized or 500-750 words if accompanied by photos
- Pictures are welcome
- Comments, letters to the editor, articles, photos and advertisements are always welcome

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## A Ship for the Seven Seas

story and photos by John Chalmers



A regular sight at Manzanillo's port is container ships and cargo ships coming and going, or waiting their turn to enter the port.

Twenty-four hours a day, all year long, container ships, bulk cargo ships and other vessels transporting commercial goods are seen entering and leaving the port of Manzanillo. Occasionally, an ocean liner carrying passengers on a cruise will arrive early in the morning and leave at evening to continue a vacation voyage at sea.

But a rare sight is a four-masted sailing ship, longer than a football field, docked at central Manzanillo! It happened in early April when *B.A.P. Unión* arrived from its home port of Callao, Peru, the country's principal seaport, located near the capital city of Lima. The magnificent ship is both a training ship of the Peruvian Navy and a seafaring goodwill ambassador for its country. Manzanillo was the first foreign port of call for *Unión* since leaving home on March 16. On April 6-8, while the ship was at Manzanillo, its officers and cadets welcomed the public aboard for a free tour of the upper decks. After a short briefing and after receiving a brochure, visitors were given opportunity to roam the ship and marvel at its stunning appearance.

Sales onboard provided visitors a chance to purchase mementoes of their experience. Fridge magnets, key chains and dolls; pens, pins and coffee mugs; t-shirts and caps were available. So was pisco liquor and the syrup needed to make a Pisco Sour. All the purchaser needed to add when returning home to make one was ice and lime juice, which is easily available as there is no shortage of limones in Manzanillo! For anyone not familiar with that traditional Peruvian drink, free samples were offered.

*B.A.P. Unión* was built in Peru from September 2012-15 and commissioned on January 27, 2016. In July 2017, in an Atlantic voyage, the ship visited Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in a Tall Ships Regatta, held as part of the celebrations there of Canada's sesquicentennial – the country's 150th birthday. Later that month, the ship crossed the Atlantic Ocean for visits to London and Rotterdam. *Unión* is now sailing the Pacific.

Its journey will take it to San Diego, California, Vancouver, British Columbia, and then Hawaii. Crossing the ocean again, it will stop in Mazatlán and Panamá, then return to home port in Peru on July 26.



*B.A.P. Unión*, a training ship of the Peruvian Navy, was a special guest in Manzanillo in early April, and a splendid site at waterfront.

*B.A.P. Unión* is the largest sailing ship in the western hemisphere and the second largest in the world. It is a steel-hulled ship with an overall length of nearly 116 meters and a beam of 13.5 meters. The four masts, over 50 meters high, carry a total of 34 sails. When needed, a single diesel engine powers the ship. As part of their education, among the crew of 250 officers and cadets, naval trainees on board are taught navigation, meteorology, oceanography, and naval operations and maneuvers.

In an age of ships that can carry thousands of containers, battleships, aircraft carriers, and liners that accommodate thousands of passengers, *B.A.P. Unión* harkens back to the time of sailing ships that explored the Seven Seas, but trains sailors today in basic skills still needed in a modern navy.

... more pics follow

...A Ship for the Seven Seas



A walk down Manzanillo's long pier led visitors to *B.A.P. Unión* for a free tour of the ship.



Visitors boarded the ship and disembarked via the gangway when they toured the four-masted, steel-hulled barque.



From the *B.A.P. Unión*, a view of Manzanillo centro included the small mountain topped by communications towers, and La Cruz, the illuminated cross at the very top, which is the end point of an excellent hiking trail. Lower centre: the huge blue sailfish monument, symbolic of the city.



Sailors from the ship, in their dashing white uniforms, were easy to spot in Manzanillo's downtown when they left the ship to visit the city.



Young and trim, in their white uniforms, the young sailors of the huge tall ship were a handsome sight!



*B.A.P. Unión's* four masts are about 150 feet tall.

...A Ship for the Seven Seas



Cadets training as naval officers were among the crew who welcomed visitors and invited them to tour the ship.



Readily available to answer questions, many of the crew aboard the ship spoke English, to the benefit of visitors who didn't speak Spanish.



Bob Strynadka and his wife, Robin, pose with the wheel of the *B.A.P. Unión* while admiring the immaculate appearance of the ship.



A large group of students from the University of Colima were on board and many posed for photos of their visit.



University of Colima students check their selfies in one of the many cameras that were busy taking pictures.



Crew members were readily available to welcome guests, hand out brochures about the ship and speak to visitors.

...A Ship for the Seven Seas



Left: The visit of *B.A.P. Unión* to Manzanillo provided a rare opportunity to visit the world's second largest sailing ship during its Pacific voyage.

*B.A.P. Unión* stands for Buque de la Armada Peruana, indicating it is a ship of the Peruvian Navy.



Right: Visitors had the opportunity to purchase souvenirs related to Peru.



Colorful pennants adorned the ship and added to the naval appearance.



The ship's carved figurehead relates to Peruvian heritage, representing Inca emperor Tupac Yupanqui (1441-1493), who led a fleet of rafts across the Pacific Ocean to what is now Polynesia.

...A Ship for the Seven Seas



A colorful flag of the Peruvian Navy flies proudly from the stern of *B.A.P. Unión*.



Just as the ship's flag welcomed guests, the flag of México at waterfront welcomed the ship.



Perfect weather and clear skies complemented the fine sight of a tall ship anchored at Manzanillo.

...A Ship for the Seven Seas



With all sails up, *B.A.P. Unión* is truly a beautiful sight, a modern ship that harkens back to the age of sailing ships and explorers. (Photo via internet)

Photographed through the morning mist with just a few sails up, as it departed Manzanillo, *B.A.P. Unión* looked like a ghost ship!



Writer/photographer Chalmers had visited Peru with his wife, Linda, many years ago. While on board the ship, he took advantage to purchase souvenirs and the ingredients to make a Pisco Sour, Peru's national cocktail beverage!

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## At the Movies

by Suzanne A. Marshall

### Vice

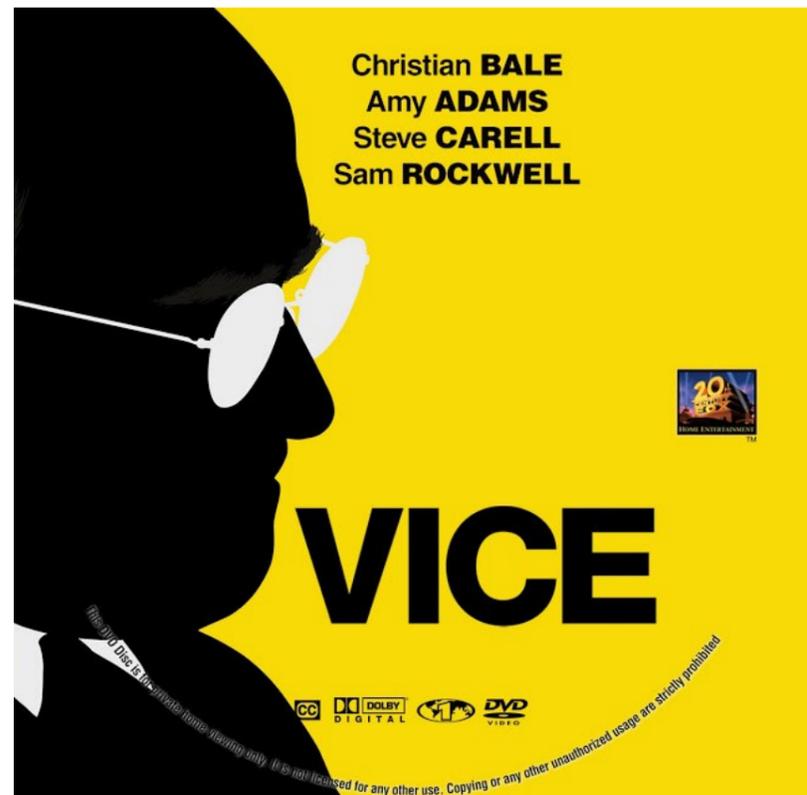
**Directed by:** Adam McKay

**Starring:** Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Steve Carell, Sam Rockwell, and more...

"The story of Dick Cheney, an unassuming bureaucratic Washington insider, who quietly wielded immense power as Vice President to George W. Bush, reshaping the country and the globe in ways that we still feel today."

I viewed this movie on Netflix as I had given up hope that it would make it to Manzanillo. The movie received 116 various nominations (26 wins) and won an Oscar for Best Makeup. In fact, the transformation of Christian Bale playing Dick Cheney is remarkable. The acting is superb by all, but most notably by Christian Bale and Steve Carell as Donald Rumsfeld. Sam Rockwell is also a pretty convincing George W. Bush.

What the story reveals is a very frightening inside look at the political machinations inside the White House and the seat of US government. If what is relayed in this story is true, it is a very shocking revelation of the global manipulations that took place under the direction of Cheney following the 9/11, 2001 twin tower attacks in New York. In fact, the message is one of trumped-up manipulations to blame ISIS (which didn't exist at the time) and to hone in on Iraq and its huge oil reserves, to benefit the 'Big Oil' industries in the US, which ultimately led



to increased profits of 500%. This is not to mention the thousands of US military sent to Afghanistan to fight the Taliban and ISIS and the thousands of civilians who died during those nasty few years of outright war in the Middle East.

If you're curious, I highly recommend this movie as a thought provoking revelation into US politics. That is my personal opinion only, I might clarify.

IMDB has rated this movie at 7.2/10 based on 59,421 viewers.

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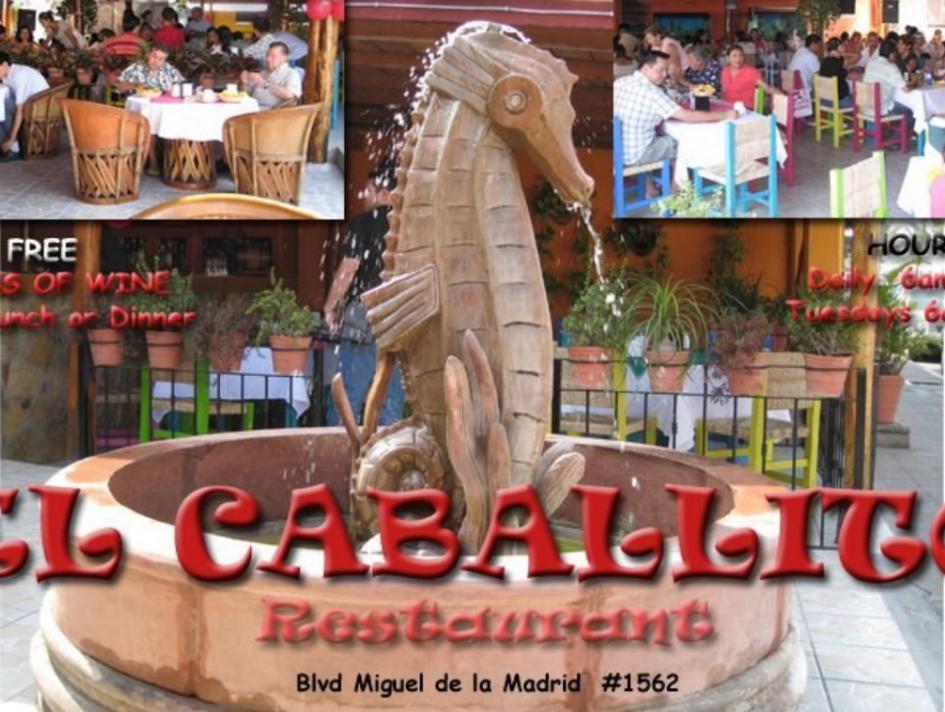
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by Tommy Clarkson

**Chile Petin** *Capsicum annum*

**Family** *Solanaceae*

**Also known as** *Chile Piquin, Bird Pepper, Turkey Pepper or Cayenne Pepper*

Often asked of me is "OK Tommy, how hot are these to eat?" Endeavoring to keep it all in perspective - on the Scoville scale at 30,000 to 60,000 Units - they're around five to eight times hotter than jalapeños. Their flavor is sometimes described as citrusy, smoky (this said, if they are dried with wood smoke), and nutty . . . others just simplify this effect on one's tongue by stating "pretty durned hot"!

The second inquiry is often that of their origin. Some believe it to be the "mother of all peppers." Naturally, it grows in South America, Latin America, and the southern United States.

Spread by wild birds, its tiny fruit measures only one-half to three-quarters of an inch (12.7 - 19.05 mm) in length. As the fruit matures, it changes from green to bright red in color and is sometimes confused with the Chiltepin, which is similar in appearance, but a wholly different pepper.

Being both cold and heat tolerant, with moderate watering needs, its ability to grow in locales of both partial to filtered sun (though it just might have a bit of preference for the former), and a flexibility to thrive in soil ranging from heavy clay to sandy loam, this is not a difficult plant to enjoy, both visually, as well as culinarily!



Yep, even the younger plants sport fruit!

In point of fact, the Chile Petin is an often sought-after perennial, hot pepper that is – as on writer observed – "well behaved"! (*A'hhhh, if only that expression had ever been used to describe me!*) It's an easy-to-grow favorite and, atop this, those wild birds, as well, generally appreciate them for their hot, edible offerings. Beyond these applications, they are quite attractive when used in mass plantings.

As regards the genus *Capsicum*, Muhammad Nadeem, Faqir Muhammad Anjum, Moazzam Rafiq Khan, Muhammad Saeed and Asad Riaz of the National Institute of Food Science and Technology, University of Agriculture of the Faisalabad-Pakistan, wrote "*Capsicum* (had its start with) the beginning of civilization (being) a part of (the) human diet since 7500 BC.

It was the ancient . . . peoples who took the wild Chili Piquin - *that other name by which they are known* - and (ultimately cultivated them into) the many various types (of peppers) known today. Native Americans (grew these) plants between 5200 and 3400 BC (placing) chilies among the oldest cultivated crops of the Americas (meaning that) the genus *Capsicum* (is) one of the first plants being cultivated in the New World - (along with) with beans.

...Chile Petin



Go ahead, start stuffing them into your mouth!

Now, to further encapsulate several tidbits of information regarding the Chile Petin, Paul W. Bosland, and Jaime Iglesias, of the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture at New Mexico State University have written that the name "Chile piquin" is probably derived from the Spanish words *chile* (pepper) and *pequeño* (small). . . (with its) fruit (being) oblong. . .Wild (ones are) found (ranging) from the southwestern United States (Arizona and Texas) to the Andes in South America. (Their) most commercial production occurs outside the United States, primarily in Mexico (with them also being grown in the) wild in the Mexican mountains, (where they are) collected and sold commercially. (They are) not grown commercially in the United States because of high costs associated with hand-harvesting."

But, let's move on to a bit more of the practical, "hands on and root in the dirt" sort of information we lay gardeners might seek. Taking care of them is as simple as "one, two three".

- 1 - Once sprouted, water your *Chile Pequin* regularly – perhaps one to two inches (25.4– 50.8 mm) every week;
- 2 - Apply one to two inches (for *metric numbers, see preceding phrase!*) of mulch/compost atop the soil and;

3 - Fertilize lightly, perhaps four and eight weeks after your *Capsicum annuums* have happily ensconced themselves with their location.



And on this purple hybrid, look closely at the small – but pretty –flowers.

Depending upon the writer, and their experience with this pepper, some state that they grow from one to two feet tall (2.54– 5.08 cm), while others assert that they reach five to six feet (1.52 – 1.83 meters) in height. My most mature one is slightly over forty inches (101.6 cm). At the front end of this growth process, perhaps the best manner of propagation is via its seeds. To so do, completely dry the ripened fruits in a cool dry area and, after breaking out the fresh seeds, store in a dry, refrigerated setting until ready to plant.

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## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF CHOCOLATL

as told by Kirby Vickery

Whenever the subject of what the New World gave to the Old World comes up, one of the first things that gets listed is corn or 'maize' as its known down here. What it looked like, and consisted of, back in the days before 1492, is a far cry from what you can buy now. The New World also introduced: corn, potato, tomato, bell pepper, chili pepper, tobacco, beans, pumpkin, cassava root, avocado, peanut, pecan, cashew, pineapple, blueberry, sunflower, petunia, black-eyed susan, dahlia, marigold, quinine, wild rice, gourds, and squash.



Female and male maize plants

The three I've left out of this list are, first, vanilla because not only does it come from an orchid, the Aztecs thought so highly of it they demanded it as their tribute from the captured 'tribes' rather than gold, slaves or food.

The second is Pulque. It's a milk-colored, somewhat viscous liquid that produces a light foam. It is made by fermenting the sap of certain types of maguey (agave) plants. In contrast, mezcal is made from the cooked heart of certain other agave

plants, and tequila, a variety of mezcal, is made all, or mostly, from the blue agave (and the worm has nothing to do with any of them). About six varieties of maguey are best used for the production of pulque. The name pulque is derived from Nahuatl. The original name of the drink was *iztāc octli* [i:sta:k okt i] (white pulque).

The term, pulque, was probably mistakenly derived by the Spanish from the *octli poliuhqui* [oktōi poliwiki], which meant "spoiled pulque". The maguey plant is also called a "century plant", in English. Native to Mexico, it grows best in the cold, dry climates of the rocky central highlands to the north and east of Mexico City, especially in the states of Hidalgo and Tlaxcala.



Pulque sap and plant

Maguey has been cultivated at least since 200 CE in Tula, Tulancingo and Teotihuacan, and wild plants have been exploited for far longer. The plant historically has had a number of uses. Fibers can be extracted from the leaves to make rope or fabric. Its thorns can be used as needles or punches and the membrane covering the leaves can be used as paper, or for cooking.

The name maguey was given by the Spanish, who picked it up from the Taino (Caribbean folk settled mostly in Cuba and Puerto Rico and the Eastern Caribbean). This is still its common name in Spanish, with agave being its scientific, generic or technical name. The Nahuatl name of the plant is *metl*.

...The Wonderful World of Chocolatl

The manufacturing process of pulque is complex and requires the death of the plant. As the plant nears maturity, the center begins to swell and elongate as the plant gathers stored sugar to send up a single flower stalk, which may reach up to 20 feet in height.

However, plants destined for pulque production have this flower stalk cut off, leaving a depressed surface 12-18 inches in diameter. In this center, the maguey sap, known as aguamiel (honey water), collects. It takes a maguey plant 12 years to mature enough to produce the sap for pulque.

All the gods followed the leadership of Quetzalcóatl. They taught the Toltec people all their knowledge, until they were wise in the arts and sciences, and could recognize the march of the stars. The Toltecs were then able to measure time and determine the change of the seasons to plant, and harvest.



Cacao plant

The Toltecs planted corn, beans, yucca, all sorts of cereals and fruits and spent their free time studying. In time, they were wonderful architects, artists, masons and delicate molders of clay.

The third product is that wonderful, stand-all-alone stuff from which the entire world craves for itself, in cold and hot drinks, in candy form, as a topping, or mixed into various pastries, and all by itself or with just a little chili, frothed up and creamy: Chocolate. People rate it as an aphrodisiac just above coffee. It has many proven health benefits and some aspects that aren't.

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## ...The Wonderful World of Chocolatl

Chocolatl, (as the Aztec called it) was a drink consumed by royalty and the upper class in their capital. It was served with water (they didn't have cows or milk). They flavored it with vanilla, spices, chili and sometimes honey; it was a bitter drink. Cacao beans were the currency throughout Mesoamerica. There is an ancient Mayan myth that says that cacao beans were given to men by the Gods.



Maya Possum God

Historically, the Mayas celebrated the new year with the Possum God carrying the Rain God on its back with an offering of cacao beans. A representation of the Possum God and of the cacao beans can be seen in the Dresden Codex. [The Dresden Codex is one of very few examples of Mayan literature that escaped the burning of Mayan libraries by Spanish conquistadores.]

### Quetzalcóatl visits the earth

Once upon a time, Quetzalcóatl descended to earth by the rays of a morning star, leaving all the Toltecs surprised by his coming down to earth. Everyone understood that this newcomer was not a simple mortal and they broke their ugly dark clay gods to worship him.

They built for him a very large five-storied temple with staircases. The roof was held up by four monumental stone columns carved in the shape of men. The outside of the house was decorated with large butterflies and a long line of tigers who seemed to be searching for the god.

The Toltecs called Quetzalcóatl, Tlahuizcalpantecutli, which means the star that comes in the afternoon. This name was quite appropriate because the star sometimes rises in the morning and another in the afternoon. Today we call this latter star, Venus.

The temple was located in a square in the city of Tollan (now Tula). The main gods of the city were Quetzalcóatl-



The God, Tlahuizcalpantecutli

Tlahuizcalpantecutli, and the god Tláloc, The Lord That Comes from the Earth, the giver of rain and life, and the owner of souls estranged from their bodies.

The city's goddess was Xochiquetzal which means 'Plumed Flower.' She was the goddess of happiness and love, and wife of Tlaloc and the giver of pulque.

Quetzalcóatl, who loved the people deeply, gave them a very special plant. This plant had been jealously guarded by the other gods because they extracted a drink which was reserved only for the gods. Quetzalcóatl stole the small bush with dark red flowers, which later became dark fruit. He planted the bush and asked Tláloc to water it and, asked Xochiquetzal to tend to it and make it beautiful with flowers.

The little tree flowered incessantly and Quetzalcóatl picked up the pods, roasted the kernels, then taught the Toltec women to grind them into a fine powder. The women mixed the powder with water from their jars and whipped it into a frothy drink which they called 'chocolatl.' In the beginning it was only drunk by priests and royalty. Because of its bitterness, the Mayas called it kahau (bitter).

...The Wonderful World of Chocolatl

The Toltecs became so wise, so learned in the arts and sciences, and so prosperous, that the gods became jealous at first, and then, angry, when they discovered that their chocolatl had been stolen from them. They vowed to make war on Quetzalcóatl and the Toltecs.

The gods called on Tezcatlipoca, 'The Fuming Mirror', the god of darkness and the night. He was the sworn enemy of Quetzalcóatl, who was the God of the Morning Star. Tezcatlipoca came down to earth, on the thread of a spider and, taking on the guise of a merchant, approached Quetzalcóatl, determined to cause his downfall. Quetzalcóatl was very sad. He had dreamt that the gods were plotting against him and he was worried for his Toltec people.

The false merchant, got close to Quetzalcóatl and asked,

"Why are you so sad my Lord?"

"Because the gods have ordered my downfall and the death of my people." answered Quetzalcóatl.

"I offer you this drink. It is the drink of happiness. Take it, give it to the people and they will be happy, too!"

Quetzalcóatl believed the false merchant and drank the juice offered to him. It was pulque, the drink made from fermented agave. He drank until he was completely drunk. He danced and jumped about, and made all sorts of hand gestures to the people outside the palace who did not know what to make of the strange behavior of their beloved god. Quetzalcóatl was so drunk that he did not notice he was losing the respect of his people. Finally, exhausted, he fell asleep.

Quetzalcóatl woke up the following morning with a bad headache and foul breath. He knew that the gods had made fun of and ridiculed him. He had lost face and was deeply ashamed. He then knew that the end of Tollan, the glorious city of the Toltecs, was near. He could not face the destruction of his city, nor the death of his people. So, he left Tollan, walking in the direction of the evening star.



The God Tezcatlipoca

As he walked, he noticed that the little chocolatl bushes he had planted had transformed themselves into dry plants with thorns. They had transformed themselves into agaves. He saw that the agave was the plant that made the juice that got him drunk in the first place. He cried and cried and walked for days on end.

He walked all the way to the land of Tabasco. When he reached the shore, before he left the land, never to return, he placed the last seeds of cacao he had left in this hand into the ground. The seeds, with time, flourished and became the last gift of the god of the morning star to the people of Mexico.

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by Tommy Clarkson

**Red Latan** *Latania lontaroides*

**Family** *Arecaceae*

**Also known as** *Latanier*

*(I feel – in the smallest of childish, self-satisfied ways – a bit vindicated from my sometimes-emergent feelings of botanical inadequacy! You see, my specimen of *Latania lontaroides* is but a small – though beautiful and healthy – youngster palm. But, when I commenced to check through my palm tomes (lo and behold), the very first two of my primary “go-to” books – “An Encyclopedia of Cultivated Palms”, by Robert Lee Raffle and Paul Craft, and “Palms Throughout the World” by David L. Jones, pictured palms of virtually the same age and size as mine. I wanted, so badly, to say “nana nana boo boo” to someone!)*

These are wonderful, palmate palms that rather closely resemble the Bismark Palm (*Bismarckia nobilis*). No few of my garden tour guests get these two species confused. However, the Bismark has less costapalmate leaves, a less flared trunk base and a stouter, taller trunk. But, regarding our subject palm, there are three species of *Latania* in the genus - Red Latan, Blue Latan and Yellow Latan. All originated on one or another of the three islands of Réunion, Mauritius and Rodrigues, which constitute the Mascarene Islands northeast of southern Madagascar in the western Indian Ocean. *(And that's your geography lesson for the day!)*



Notice the slightly armed margins of the petioles on this youthful Red Latan.

These strikingly beautiful, but somewhat slow-growing, palms, once flourished in great proliferation in these isles but, as a result of land clearing and animal grazing, specimens previously thriving in their natural state are, increasingly, a rarity.

The fronds, trunks and inflorescences are common between the three species, with specific identification done simply by perusal of the petioles and – to a lesser degree – the fronds themselves, as well as to study of the shape of the hastula. (That's the collar-like extension on each four to six foot (1.22 – 1.83 meters) long petiole.)

...Red Latan



We've this teen-aged, beautiful hybrid as a result of a late evening, lingering and loving liaison between a Red and Yellow Latan . . . OK, perhaps a bit of poetic license employed there!

Older Red Latans have greyish-green leaves with red-streaked veins as well as on the petiole. (Apply this species-specific, coloration trait to the Yellow and Blue Latans as well.) In mature plants, the trunk is grey. Sometimes short and concise is best.

Accordingly, I quote from Darla Wotherspoon's writings in her "Your Ultimate Palm Tree Handbook" - where, by the way, her picture of a Red Latan was also of a very young one! She states, "(Their) leaves are segmented half of the way toward the center of the leaf - (costapalmate). They are quite stiff so (they) usually appear to stand straight up without hanging tips." These fan-shaped fronds may grow to be five to seven feet (1.52 - 2.13 meters) wide. They consist of around thirty unsplit segments with finely-toothed margins. These beauties can grow up to thirty feet (9.14 meters) in height with twelve to twenty-four magnificent fronds.

In "A Guide to Palms and Cycads of the World," Lynette Stewart discussed the palm "boy/girl/babies thing" thusly: "male inflorescences have a thick peduncle (inflorescence primary stem) and up to fourteen spike-like flowering branches, each the thickness of a finger. Female inflorescences have fewer, but thicker, spike-like branches and fewer flowers than the male. Fruits are large, oblong to egg-shaped, smooth-skinned and usually have three seeds, though sometimes they have only one or two."



Still young - but quite attractive!

While the red foliar highlights of the Red Latan will fade, in maturity it can be distinguished from the Blue Latan by the pointed and upraised hastulas on the upper leaf surfaces. It'll also have less waxy scurf on the underside of the fronds and wider leaf scars on the trunk. (*And now we've completed our biology and ecology classwork.*)

*Latania lontaroides* come, solely, from Réunion Island. They, like their other colored kin, are hardy and adaptable palms. They need a bright, sunny location with - yep, you've often heard this from me before, when I "talk dirty" - well-draining soil. But remember, male and female palms (dioecious) are necessary for seed fertilization. As noted in the accompanying picture, hybridization between the three species is frequent. Fresh seeds will germinate within six to ten weeks.

They have a moderate salt tolerance and can handle drought rather well (but, prefer regular waterings). They are appreciative of a general purpose fertilizer if one seeks a fully attractive and healthy palm . . . and who wouldn't? As to Nature's bad things: Keep a sharp look out for Palmetto Weevils and don't overlook their slight susceptibility to Lethal Yellowing.

Let's close with Riffle and Craft's observation that "These palms are spectacular . . . and are amenable to almost any landscape situation."



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## Traveling with Pets

by Dana Parkinson

I recently had the pleasure of being part of a great group of volunteers that banded together to give a rescue animal a new home. My part in the chain of events was escorting Brisa on the flight so she could be with her new human and pet family in Canada.



The lovely Brisa in her foster home, before travel.

I never cease to be amazed at the generosity of volunteers and donors in supporting the many local charities in Manzanillo. We can all help the animal associations, in this case, by adopting or helping to find homes for the rescued pets and in giving them a "ride" to their destinations. If you have the opportunity to escort a pet, contact any of the local animal rescue organizations or just spread the word on social media and you'll likely find a match quickly.

Today's story is one about travel and a few practical tips for making your journey smoother. Brisa and I traveled on WestJet. I have done a similar trip with pets on Alaska. For those going to Canada, it's helpful to bypass the United States so as to only have to go through customs, immigration and inspection once on the trip.

The first step is to contact the airline and book travel for the pet. Only small (very small) pets can travel in the cabin. Others go as cargo. Only a certain number of in-cabin pets are allowed per flight so it's important to book ahead. Cost is around \$120 CAD depending on the airline.

At certain times of year or with certain aircraft, in-cabin or cargo options may not be available. The airline will also specify what type of carrier is needed (soft-sided, mesh sides for breathability and room for the pet to stand up and turn around, for in-cabin carriers). Note that the under-seat space is less for aisle and middle seats than for window seats.

Arrive early at the airport as it will take extra time to get checked in. The airline may ask you to take the pet out of the carrier and may inspect the carrier.

What I didn't expect, and which caused a pet (just before us) to panic and scramble out of security (all ended well) was that, in security, in Manzanillo, they asked me to remove Brisa's collar (I never had been asked to remove the collar before) and carry

her through. It's easy to lose a panicky, squirmy pet if they don't have a collar (or preferably a harness) and a leash on. I almost lost my cat in the Houston airport that way. Be prepared and take it slowly.

Upon arrival in the US and/or Canada, there may be a pet inspection fee, papers and pet will be inspected and the pet will likely have to come out of the carrier. Ask for a private room if you don't think you can easily control the situation.

They will want to see the letter of good health that you get from your vet in Manzanillo (should be no more than a week old), preferably in English, that outlines the pet's age, breed, weight, health condition(s) and date of important vaccines. The Canadian government provides a trilingual template [at this link](#).



Brisa and Dana, ready for take off.

They may want to see a record of vaccines to date and will, undoubtedly, want to see the rabies vaccine details, in particular. Allow extra time between flights as the pet will be inspected on your port of entry. That means waiting longer than you may normally allow.

Vets seem to differ in opinion about whether to sedate an animal before travel. Those opposed feel that the pet should have full use of his/her reflexes should it be necessary to react to a situation or physical challenge. Most seem to agree to not give the pet food or water the day of the flight, except perhaps early morning if travel is late afternoon. Discuss it with your vet.

Importantly, if you are traveling alone with a pet, don't hesitate to ask for help. There are very kind people that may be looking at your struggle with the carrier, luggage and pet and would be willing to help if you ask.

In my experience with both of the aforementioned airlines, the airline and ground crews were very helpful. People onboard can also be very kind. I sent a note of thanks to the WestJet crew afterward. Overall, we had a very successful day and flights!

you can reach Dana at [info@manzanillosun.com](mailto:info@manzanillosun.com)

## Try These Three Tips for Retiring with Minimal or No Debt

by Yann Kostic

Ideally, we would all retire debt-free, but we are a nation of borrowers. As of December 2016, the average American household debt totals more than \$135,000, according to a Nerd Wallet credit-card debt study. Credit card debt for the average household carrying a balance totals more than \$16,000.

Debt is particularly dangerous for those heading into retirement, because it puts pressure on an already limited budget. Yet the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau reports that 30% of homeowners age 65 plus still have mortgage debt. According to consumer financial information source Value Penguin, the average credit card balance of Americans 65 and older is \$6,351.

Here are some suggestions for paying down your debt before you retire:

**Live below your means.** Try creating a budget that represents only a portion of your income. If, for example, you earn \$6,000 a month, pretend 10% (\$600) of that amount does not exist by transferring it automatically into a savings account.

**Get an affordable mortgage or, even better, get rid of the mortgage all together.** The average American's highest monthly expense is housing; try to keep it low. Work to improve your credit score; it can make a big difference in your interest rate. Refinance when your score and the economy can offer you a better interest rate. Most of the time, moving south of the border allows you to sell your expensive real estate up north and buy a very nice property for about half the price, allowing you to get rid of your mortgage completely. Just remember to always rent in the area you are considering moving to, before committing to purchase.

**Avoid credit-card debt.** Credit-card debt can be tough to pay, down due to its typically high interest rate. Pay it down as quickly as possible, and from then on, pay it off completely every month.

You will find it well worth it when you retire.

Note: This material has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide financial advice for your particular situation.

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## Pumpkin Seed Sauce Enchiladas (Empipianadas)

### Ingredients

#### Empipianadas

- ✓ 3 - 1/8 oz. hulled untoasted pumpkin seeds (about 10 tbsp.)
- ✓ 1 Serrano pepper 2 if you like it spicy
- ✓ 1 small garlic clove unpeeled
- ✓ 1 cup of water or chicken broth
- ✓ 1/2 tsp. of salt
- ✓ 8 "La Tortilla Factory" handmade style corn tortillas\*
- ✓ 1/4 cup of vegetable oil to fry the tortillas
- ✓ 2 tbsp. of lard or oil for the sauce
- ✓ 1 1/2 cups of crumbled Queso Fresco
- ✓ 1/3 cup white or red onion chopped or thinly sliced

#### Optional ingredients

- ✓ 1/3 cup chopped cilantro
- ✓ 1 Serrano pepper thinly sliced

### Directions

Roast the serrano pepper and garlic clove on a griddle over medium heat. Remove promptly and set aside. Remove the skin from the garlic.

At low heat on the same griddle, roast the pumpkin seeds, making sure to not overcrowd the griddle. If necessary, roast them in two batches to have an even roasting. Once the seeds start popping, stir them frequently with a wooden spatula until they puff up. They will acquire a medium-golden color. Once they're done, place them in a bowl to let them cool.

Place the Serrano peppers, garlic clove, roasted pumpkin seeds, one cup of water (or chicken broth), and 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a blender. Process these ingredients until you have a fine sauce. If needed, you can stop the blender to stir the mixture manually in order to make sure everything gets processed evenly. Once the sauce is ready, set it aside.

Place a paper napkin on a plate and set aside. Heat the vegetable oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat and lightly fry the tortillas. This is a very quick step, since it takes about 15 seconds per each side of the tortilla. You will only warm the tortilla enough to make it pliable. Place the tortilla on the already-prepared dish covered with the paper napkin.

To assemble to your pumpkin seed sauce enchiladas, add 2 tablespoons of crumbled queso fresco on each tortilla and fold them. Place two folded enchiladas on a plate to make one serving.

Heat two tablespoons of lard or vegetable oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Once it is hot, pour in the pumpkin seed ("pipian") sauce. Gently stir it and reduce the heat; do not let it come to a boil since this will cause the sauce to curdle. Gently simmer it for 5-6 minutes; this last step will make the sauce thicker. If it looks too thick, add a few tablespoons of water or chicken broth. Taste the sauce and add more salt if needed.

Pour some of the pumpkin seed/pipian sauce over the enchiladas, then top them with more queso fresco and some chopped onion.



These Pumpkin Seed Sauce Enchiladas are called "Empipianadas" made with a pipian Verde salsa and are popular in my hometown of Tampico, as well as in other areas of the country.

They get their name from the seeds of a type of squash called "Pipiana", but you can use any type of pumpkin or squash seeds to make them.

#### HOW TO MAKE AN EASY & QUICK PUMPKIN SEED SAUCE.

Pumpkin Seed Sauce Enchiladas (Empipianadas) is a special, authentic dish to surprise your family or friends with, and is perfect for when you're celebrating a special occasion or holiday, like Cinco de Mayo.

Recipe and images from  
Mely Martínez of [Mexico in my Kitchen](http://mexicoinmykitchen.com)

## House for Rent

### Golfers, take note!

**Beautiful furnished home for rent, well situated in Real del Country next to the golf course.**



The home has 3 bedrooms (each with air conditioning), 2 full, large bathrooms. One of the bedrooms is on the main (lower) floor and adjoins the downstairs bathroom. It comes with a fully equipped kitchen, a washer and dryer.



In addition to 2 patios, and an amazing view of hole 3 of the golf course, a third terraced deck overlooks the social area of the complex that offers a pool, tennis court and a palapa for your enjoyment.

This home comes with 24-hour security, wifi, cable TV and includes water, maintenance fee and covered, off-street parking for 1 car.

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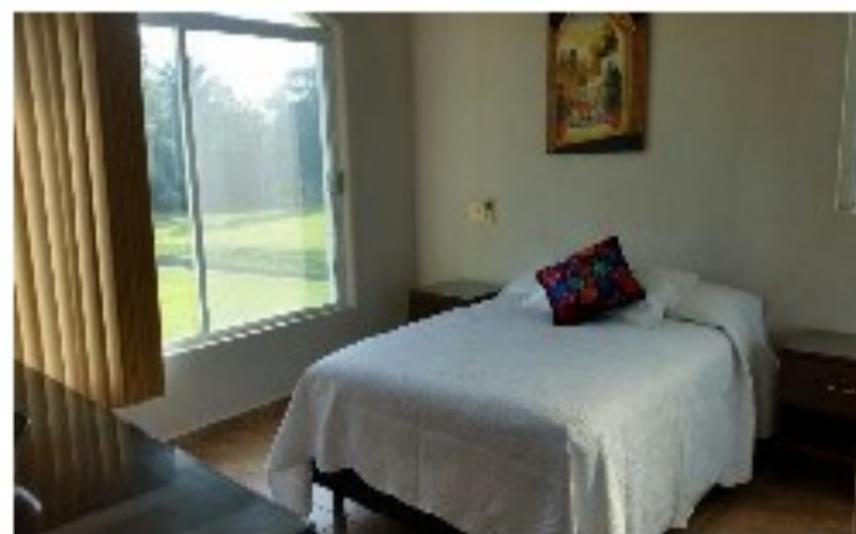
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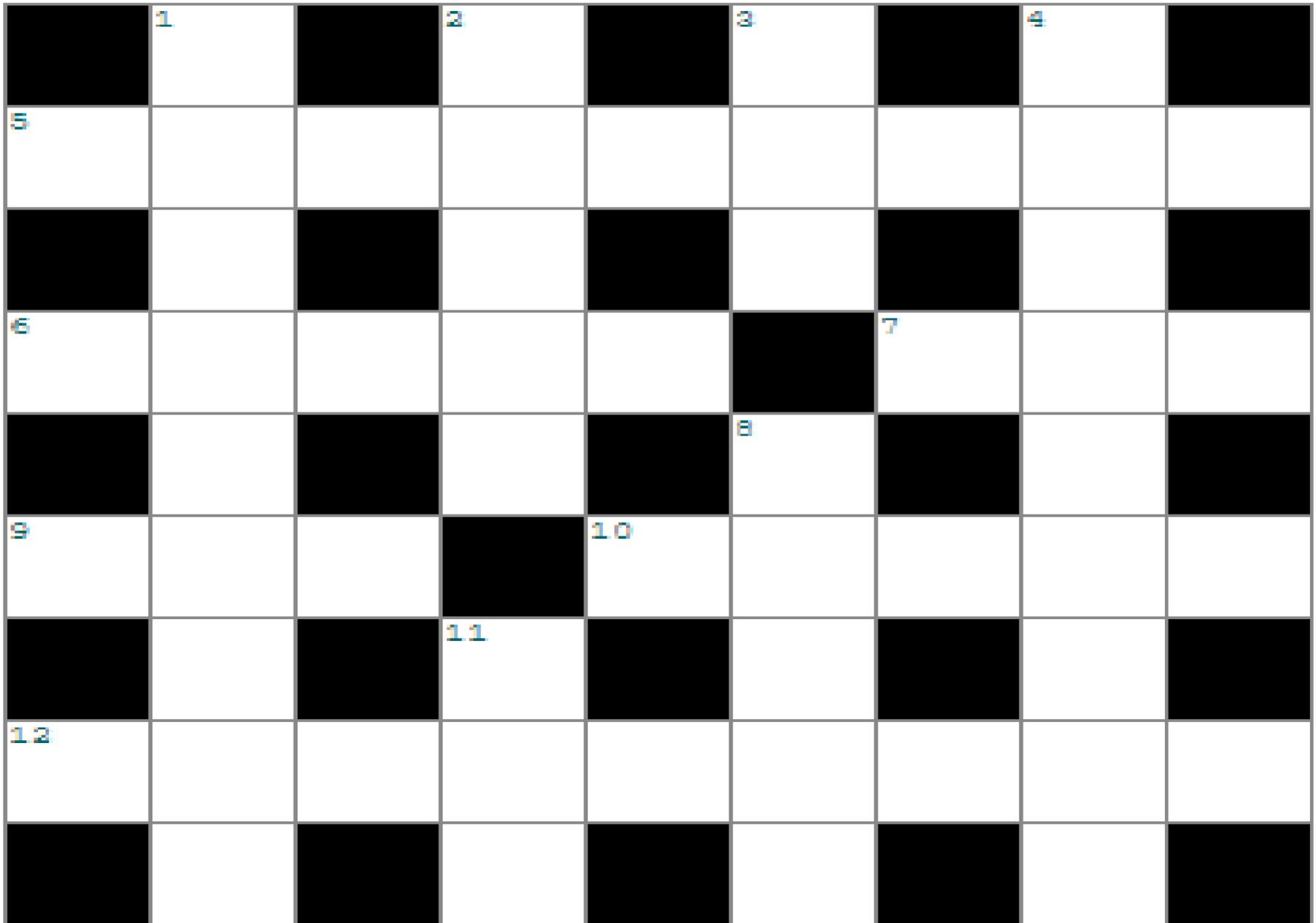
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Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 5 spines
- 6 to say
- 7 king
- 9 so, very
- 10 maybe
- 12 light blue (4,5)

Down

- 1 hope
- 2 to live, be alive
- 3 peace, tranquility
- 4 (I) will begin
- 8 thigh
- 11 (I) smelled

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

### Battle of Puebla

from the Path to Citizenship series

The Battle of Puebla took place on 5 May 1862, near Puebla City during the Second French intervention in Mexico. The battle ended in a victory for the Mexican Army over the occupying French soldiers. The French eventually overran the Mexicans in subsequent battles, but the Mexican victory at Puebla against a much better equipped and larger French army provided a significant morale boost to the Mexican army and also helped slow the French army's advance towards Mexico City.

The Mexican victory is celebrated yearly on the fifth of May. Its celebration is regional in Mexico, primarily in the state of Puebla, where the holiday is celebrated as El Día de la Batalla de Puebla (English: The Day of the Battle of Puebla).

There is some limited recognition of the holiday in other parts of the country. In the United States, this holiday has evolved into the very popular Cinco de Mayo holiday, a celebration of Mexican heritage.

The 1858-60 Mexican civil war (known as The Reform War) had caused major distress throughout Mexico's economy. When taking office as the elected president in 1861, Benito Juárez was forced to suspend payments of interest on foreign debts for a period of two years.

At the end of October 1861 diplomats from Spain, France, and Britain met in London to form the Tripartite Alliance, with the main purpose of launching an allied invasion of Mexico, taking control of Veracruz, its major port, and forcing the Mexican government to negotiate terms for repaying its debts and for reparations for alleged harm to foreign citizens in Mexico.

In December 1861, Spanish troops landed in Veracruz; British and French followed in early January. The allied forces occupied Veracruz and advanced to Orizaba. However, the Tripartite Alliance fell apart by early April 1862, when it became clear the French wanted to impose harsh demands on the Juárez government and provoke a war. The British and Spanish withdrew, leaving the French to march alone on Mexico City. Napoleon III wanted to set up a puppet Mexican regime.

The French expeditionary force at the time was led by General Charles de Lorencez. The battle came about by a misunderstanding of the French forces' agreement to withdraw to the coast. When the Mexican Republic forces saw these French soldiers on the march, they took it that hostilities had recommenced and felt threatened.

To add to the mounting concerns, it was discovered that political negotiations for the withdrawal had broken down. A vehement complaint was lodged by the Mexicans to General Lorencez who took the effrontery as a plan to assail his forces. Lorencez decided to hold up his withdrawal to the coast by occupying Orizaba instead, which prevented the Mexicans from



Depictions of the battle showing Mexican cavalry overwhelming the French troops below the fort at Loreto  
Scene recreated by Francisco P. Miranda.  
Oil on canvas, 1872

being able to defend the passes between Orizaba and the landing port of Veracruz.

On 5 May 1862, against all advice, Lorencez decided to attack Puebla from the north. However, he started his attack a little too late in the day, using his artillery just before noon and by noon advancing his infantry. By the third attack the French required the full engagement of all their reserves. The French artillery had run out of ammunition, so the third infantry attack went unsupported. The Mexican forces and the Republican garrison both put up a stout defense and even took to the field to defend the positions between the hilltop forts.

As the French retreated from their final assault, Zaragoza had his cavalry attack them from the right and left while troops concealed along the road pivoted out to flank them. By 3 p.m. the daily rains had started, making a slippery slope of the battlefield. Lorencez withdrew to distant positions, counting 462 of his men killed against only 83 of the Mexicans. He waited a couple of days for Zaragoza to attack again, but Zaragoza held his ground. Lorencez then completely withdrew to Orizaba.

Image and content source: [Wikimedia](https://www.wikimedia.org/)