



Iguana in Manzanillo
photo by John Chalmers



Findings in Nature
RV Travel
Nature's Wonders
History and Mythology
Recipe
Learn Spanish
Path to Citizenship

A Decade in the Sun

December 1, 2019

Manzanillo Sun eMagazine celebrates a special milestone this month. Since November 2009, the monthly magazine has reached the many Manzanillo and Mexico readers that share our love for the local culture and continues to bring amazing articles and photos by our dedicated and growing community of contributors.

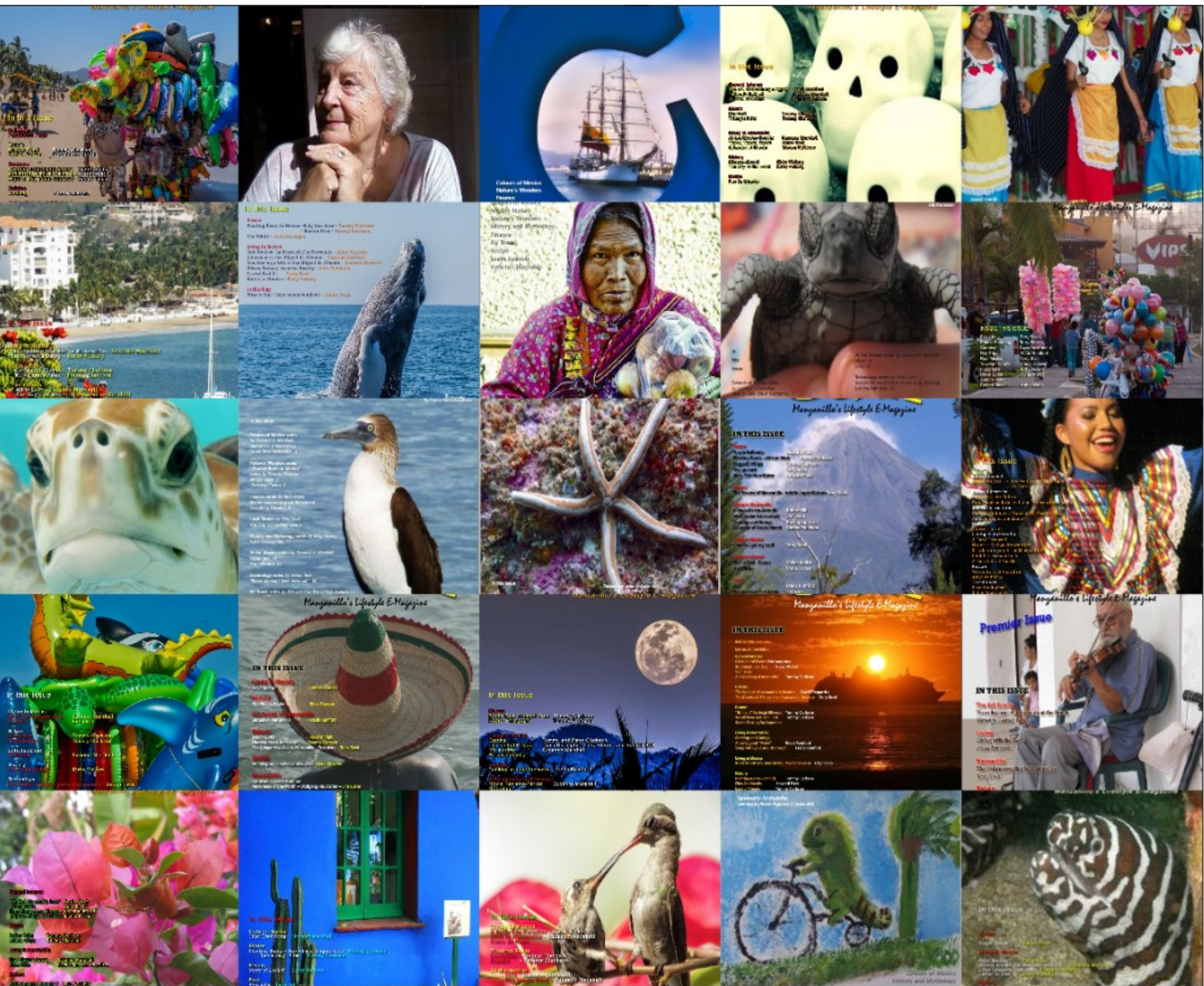
We put together a collection of just some of the covers that have made history, from edition 1 through 122.

Our special acknowledgment today goes to Freda Rumford Vickery and Ian Rumford for creating a place for people to meet and share their stories and for bringing the Manzanillo Sun eMagazine to life.



Thank you, readers, contributors, founders! You made it all possible.

ManzanilloSun.com



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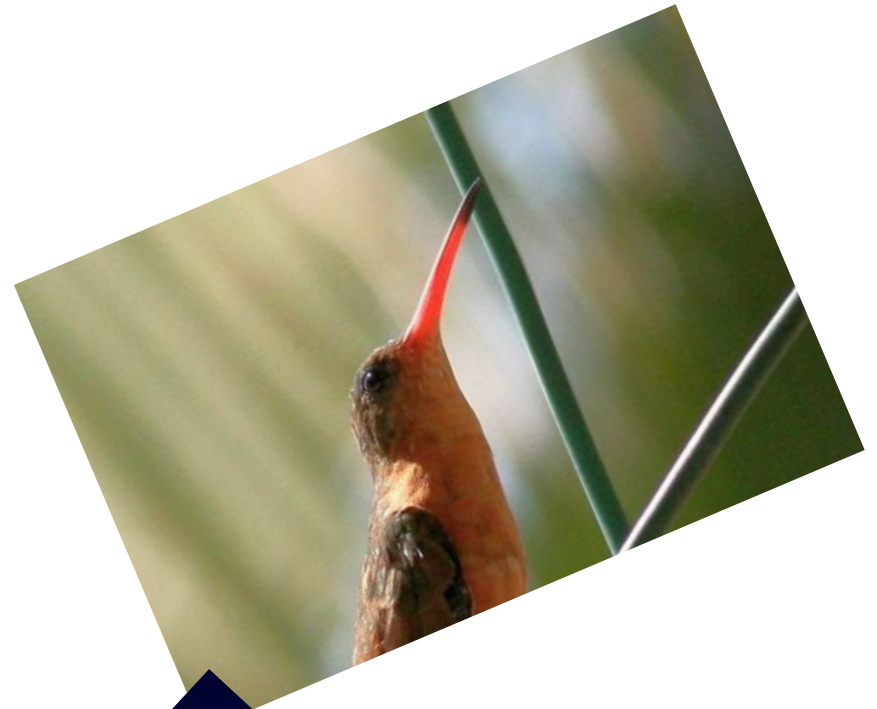
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To send submissions for possible inclusion in the magazine, please send to the editor by 15th of each month. We are always looking for writers or ideas on what you would like us to see as topics for the magazine.

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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Colibrí or Hummingbirds

by Terry Sovil

There are 338 known species of Hummingbirds, or Colibri, in the world. There are 50 that live in Mexico, but only 12 are endemic. A reference page from Puerto Vallarta calls out 8. All are small birds with weights from 2 grams / .07 ounces up to 24 grams / 8 ounces. All have long, thin bills and tubular tongues through which they feed. All use nectar as a main source of energy and small insects for food. These birds can fly! They hover and fly sideways and backwards, driven by chest muscle that is 30% of their body mass. That means 80 wing beats per second and up to 200 during courtship! Courtship drives them from 50 to 95 km per hour / 31 to 60 mph.

They have a high metabolism, some of the highest body temperatures in warm-blooded animals, getting to 40 C or 104 F. This means they need to eat half of their body weight every day. Translation: eat every 10 minutes! They have keen eyes they depend heavily on. That pushes them to one of the bigger brains among birds at about 4.2% of their body weight.



Hummingbirds are iridescent, meaning their colors change depending on how the sunlight hits them. This can mean brown or dark in the deep shade and bright metal colors in the bright sun. This makes them hard to identify. Males tend to be more colorful than females. Most photos are of males. Plus, they fly away, FAST! Hard to identify.

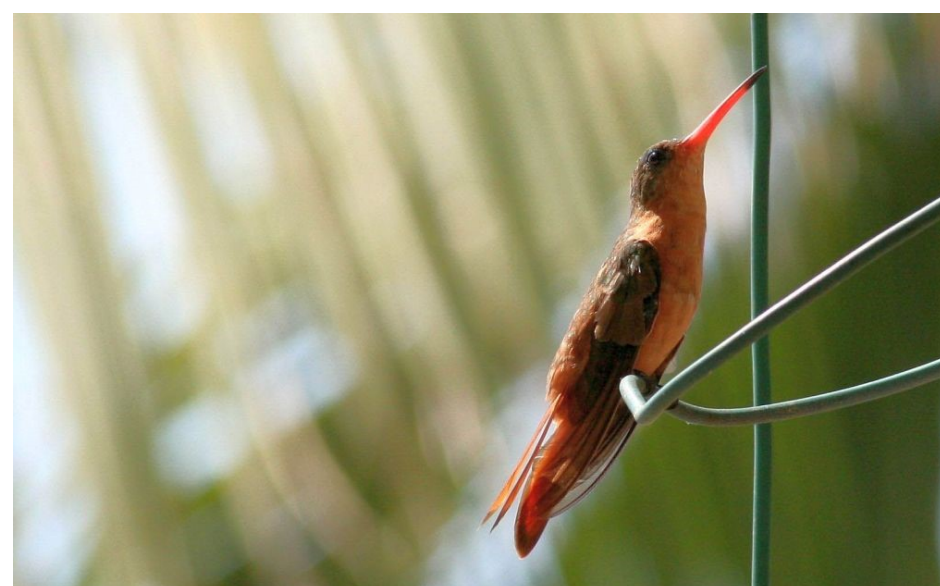
Hummingbirds feed on nectar from flowers of many plant species. They also pollinate more than 1,000 species as they feed. Flowers that contrast with their surrounding attract the most. Their bills have adapted in length, width etc. to plants they commonly use for nectar.



Want to try feeding hummingbirds? Get two feeders. It works better. They will fight and claim territory, so 2 red feeders is a good start. I've ordered online, from Amazon, but pay a visit to La Marina. They carry decent feeders. Get the feeding holes small. I've got two kinds of Orioles and Woodpeckers feeding. Their weight tips the feeder and it spills on the floor or ground and turns a nasty black.

The nectar? One cup of sugar *estandar* and 1 cup of water. Boil it. When it boils, add 3 more cups of water. It creates 1 liter. Nectar will last 5-7 days in the refrigerator. If you are just starting, don't completely fill your feeder. Wait for more birds. Don't let the nectar sit in the sun for more than 2 days as it will start to ferment! Boiling not only dissolves the sugar, but it sterilizes the nectar. Use only purified water, not tap water. Keep the feeders clean. Get some small brushes and other types so you can keep any black mold away! Clean daily.

Hummingbird nests vary depending on size. Nests are built with twigs and leaves; cobwebs hold it together. They camouflage or hide them with lichen and moss. They will nest on very thin branches of trees and shrubs. Females handle construction.



...Hummingbirds



Hummingbirds are polygamous meaning the male may have more breeding partners in a year. Females raise the chicks, feeding them nectar and insects. Normally, two white eggs are laid.

Do hummingbirds migrate? Yes! Some incredibly long distances. An example is the Rufous Hummingbird. This bird breeds in Alaska and Canada but then winters in Southern Mexico. This is a migration of 6,000 km / 3,728 miles! They have sites for eating and resting along the way and will stop for a day, or possibly weeks, to recover and start again.



Here are the 7 hummingbirds in Colima

Golden-crowned emerald

This bird is bright emerald green. It is not endangered, and habitat is in Mexico mostly on the western coast.

Mexican Woodnymph

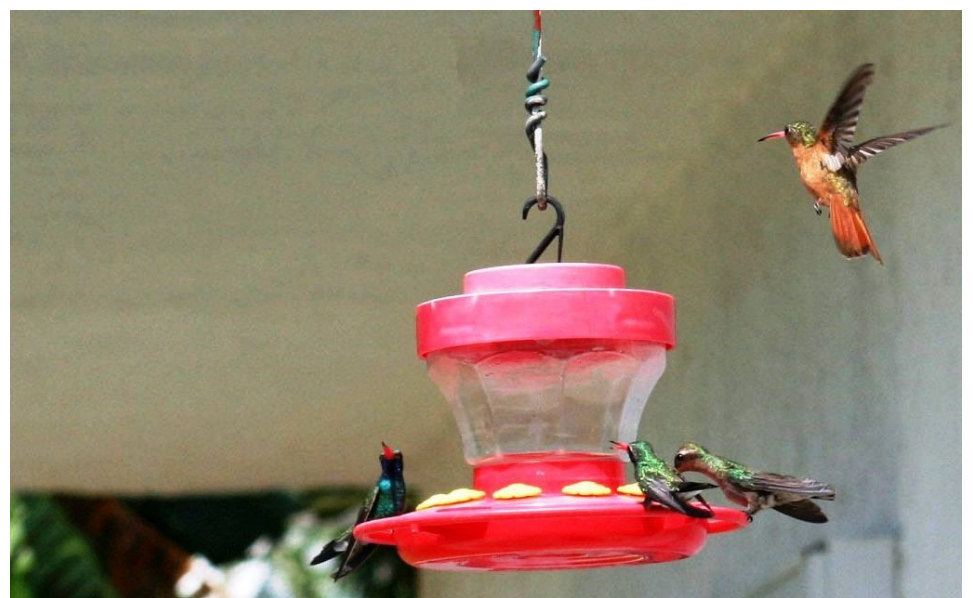
In western Mexico, Colima, Jalisco and Nayarit, it is a hummingbird that enjoys subtropical and tropical habitats. Habitation is under threat. This bird is green on top and grey below, with blueish tail feathers.

Long-Tailed Hermit

Scattered along the Pacific near Nayarit and Chiapas but from Mexico to Brazil. It enjoys nectar from Heliconia and Passiflora. They feed by trap-lining, where the bird visits the same feed sources on a regular, repeatable sequence, much like trappers check their traps.

Broad-Billed Hummingbird

Colorful and broad-billed, it can be found from Mexico to Southeastern Arizona. If they nest in Arizona, they migrate back to Mexico. If they are resident in Mexico, they are year-round residents.



Cinnamon Hummingbird

Found from northwestern Mexico to Costa Rica. Habitats are subtropical or tropical in dry forests. Its natural habitats are subtropical or moist lowland forest.

Plain-Capped Star Throat

A large-sized hummingbird 11-12 cm long weighing approximately 7-8 grams. Colored predominantly metallic bronze on their upper parts, tail, back and crown with a dark eye-stripe and a white stripe above and below.

Violet-Crowned Hummingbird

A medium-sized hummingbird, 10 cm long weighing 5 grams. Has a violet-colored cap. A dark olive green for upper parts and tail. Under parts are white.

Visit our "Reference" library area, including downloadable files, for free at: <http://www.aquaticsportsadventures.com/Library/Reference/RefManuals.html>

you can reach Terry Sovil at terry@manzanillosun.com

... more pics follow

...Hummingbirds



Golden-crowned Emerald
Esmeralda Mexicana
Chlorostilbon auriceps
3.7 in (9.5 cm)



Plain-Capped Starthroat
Colibrí Corona Oscura
Heliomaster constantii
4.7-5 in (12-13 cm)



Long-Tailed Hermit
colibrí ermitaño de cola larga
Chlorostilbon canivetii
3.5 inches (8.8 cm)



Violet-crowned Hummingbird
Colibrí Corona Violeta
Amazilia violiceps
(4-4.5 in (10-11.5 cm)



Mexican Woodnymph
Ninfa Mexicana
Thalurania ridgwayi
3.5-4 in (9-10 cm)



Broad-billed Hummingbird
Colibrí Pico Ancho
Cynanthus latirostris
3.5-4 in (9-10 cm)



Cinnamon Hummingbird
Colibrí Canelo
Amazilia rutila
4-4.5 in (10-11.5 cm)

The 4th Annual Bocce Ball Tournament to Benefit Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare

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**Due to popular demand, the tournament has been
expanded from 48 teams to 56 teams!**

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First game starts at 9 am, Championship game at 3:15 pm

Contact Fred Taylor

To Register,

fltaylor88@yahoo.com



by Dan and Lisa Goy

The Valle de Guadalupe (Guadalupe Valley) is just a 1-hour drive from the US crossing at Tecate, Mexico. This region is part of the Ensenada Municipality, Baja California, Mexico and is an increasingly popular tourist destination for wine and Baja Mediterranean cuisine. It is located 20 kilometres (12 mi) north of the City of Ensenada and 113 kilometres (70 mi) southeast of the border crossing from San Diego to Tijuana. It includes communities such as Ejido El Porvenir, Francisco Zarco and San Antonio de las Minas, with approximately 3,000 inhabitants.

To make land and loan payments, they paid in wheat. Many settlers rented as much as 50 square miles, from about 10 nearby ranches, north to the border. Most moved to California by World War II to join more prosperous relatives and work in the factories. Some intermarried with Spiritual Christian Dukh-izhizniki in California. Those who remained intermarried, assimilated and lived in Ensenada and Tijuana.

When the valley economy shifted to winemaking, the Baja government funded a museum to preserve the history of the former settlers from Old Russia and enhance wine tourism. Soon, two private museums opened, one with a cafe across the street from the state museum, to provide Russian-Mexican dishes for tourists and groups. Roads are improved with asphalt paving to accommodate wine-tour buses.

In the RV caravan tour business, it is as important to finish as strong as you start, hence Rancho Sordo Mudo is our final stop on all of our Baja RV tours. Located on Mex 3 at the 75 km mark, 39 km (24 miles) north of Ensenada, Rancho Sordo Mudo is a Christian-based residential school for deaf children in Mexico.



Rancho Sordo Mudo camping

The community was founded in 1834 by Dominican missionary Félix Caballero as Misión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe del Norte, making it the last mission established in the Californias. Caballero had to abandon the mission in 1840, under attacks from the indigenous peoples.

From 1905-1910, a mixture of Spiritual Christian faiths, mostly Pryguny from Transcaucasia, South Russia, settled in 4 farming colonies near Ensenada, Baja California Norte Territory, Mexico. Guadalupe was the main colony of about 20+ square miles purchased in 1905. Most owned or rented land communally. Not all were ethnic Russians and were of various folk-Protestant (non-Orthodox) faiths. A few Russian Orthodox immigrants, but

Ed and Margaret Everett founded the school 40 years ago after their son, Luke, lost 85% of his hearing from a series of illnesses at the age of five. During a trip to visit missionaries in Mexico, they learned that there was nothing being done educationally or spiritually to fill the needs of the poor and orphaned deaf children in Mexico.

...Valle de Guadalupe

This led the Everetts to sell their home and business in North Carolina and relocate to Mexico as faith missionaries. The RV Park, which is across the highway from the school entrance, was originally constructed for use of visitors helping out at the school. The founders then purchased 500 acres in the beautiful Guadalupe Valley, becoming pioneers to a ministry to the deaf.

The RV park itself was in disrepair when we first started Baja Amigos. Although fundamentally intact and in reasonably good shape, the campground has several back in spaces and 20 pull-through sites that will accommodate rigs of all sizes. There is a great large covered eating area, with lots of picnic tables, a fire pit, washrooms with showers (now open), 15/30- and 50- amp outlets and water at each site (also now working) and a common pull-through dump station.



Donations at Rancho Sordo Mudo

Situated among the vineyards of the picturesque Valley of Guadalupe, you are surrounded by palm and citrus trees (you can pick all the fruit you want) and the fee is by donation. Most often, someone drives over from the school. The current school operators are now prepared to reinvest in the campground, ensuring all facilities are returned to working order and this is happening. This initiative includes recruiting Campground Host (s) to assist in operating the campground and maintaining services. Our contacts at Rancho Sordo Mudo are Ed and Luke Everett and they can be contacted at rancho-sordomudo@hotmail.com.

Wineries

Over time, we have visited many of the local wineries in the Valle de Guadalupe including LA Cetto, Bibayoff, Casa Pedro Domecq, La Casa de Doña Lupe, Adobe Guadalupe and Chateau Camou. All our RV Caravan Tours now include a Wine Tour and Tasting at LA Cetto, a 5-minute drive from the RV Park.



Ed Everett Jr, Lisa, Ed Everett Sr.

Baja's Wine Country enjoys a Mediterranean climate which is ideal for grape growing and there are few microclimates in the world that can claim such unique characteristics that include elevation, soil, seasonal change and temperature. Add to this a tradition of winemaking from Spanish, Italian, French and Russian cultures and the Valle de Guadalupe is very different from California's rich vineyard country or the Okanagan Valley in BC.



Adriano explains the wine process

This fertile valley is very laid back and less pretentious. You still can feel the old-world charm that exudes from its boutique vineyards and quaint mission-style haciendas and French-inspired inns.

...Valle de Guadalupe

Though Mexico is more famous for its other "nectars" made from Nature's bounty - like tequila, rum, mezcal, and Mexican beer - it also has a long, interesting history of winemaking, at least since the days of the Spanish conquest. It has only been in the last 100 years or so that Mexico's wine industry resurged onto the international market.



Domecq Tasting Room - Lisa and Sylvia

A little-known fact is that the grapes of Napa Valley owe much to the vineyards of the Valle de Guadalupe because the original Napa stock came from there and remains one of the few places in the world where premium wine grapes can still be grown today. The Guadalupe, Calafia and San Antonio de las Minas Valleys are filled with rolling lush vineyards of every size and sport dozens of boutique vineyards and a handful of industrial-size vineyards and are the heart of the Baja Wine Route, "Ruta del Vino Baja California".



Barrels at LA Cetto

Baja's Wine Country also offers a diverse array of other attractions and services from countryside and unique cuisine restaurants, arts and crafts studios, art galleries, elegant B&B's, community museums and a newly opened Wine Museum, a short drive south from Sordo Mudo.

LA Cetto is one of the most renowned and oldest wineries in Mexico, founded by an Italian, Angelo Cetto, who left for Mexico in 1926 and started the wine business in 1930. In 1963, Don Luis Agustín Cetto spearheaded a rapid modernization and vast transformation of the winery, including the purchase of a number of small wineries in the 1980s. Currently, Luis Alberto Cetto is the third generation of this wine-crafting tradition.



Baja Amigos at LA Cetto

Today, LA Cetto is now responsible for more than half of the country's wine, cultivating 2,500 acres of vineyards in Baja California; also, tequila and olive oil. This winery produces approximately 1,000,000 cases of wine each year, in three facilities, and has become the largest wine producer in the country, not to mention one of the largest wineries in all of Latin America. The Valle de Guadalupe tasting room is spacious and elegant, served by friendly and competent winery staff, most of whom speak both Spanish and English fluently. We are often hosted by our friend, Mariana Gutiérrez.

...Valle de Guadalupe

Casa Pedro Domecq is the oldest commercial winery in the Valley of Guadalupe, now owned by the same company that produces El Presidente Brandy. Domecq is the second largest wine producer in Mexico after LA Cetto, with current production of 3.4 million liters per annum.



Located across Highway 3 from LA Cetto, this winery is often simply referred to as just Domecq. Domecq has been a driving force behind the modernization of the wine industry in Spain and is doing the same in Mexico. Visitors to the winery will be immediately struck by its elegant white walls, mission style warehouse, beautifully maintained rows of vines and serene atmosphere.



Domecq's barrel room

Domecq's tasting room (stunning view), underground wine cellars (really cool) and endless fields of vines can be enjoyed on a reservation basis. For a small fee, bilingual tours are offered for both visitors and wine connoisseurs. They offer a very reasonably priced tasting of three exquisite reds and two whites. The dark caves and antique barrels still on display help to provide a sense for guests of the historical depth of Mexico's winemaking culture.

MUSEO DE LA VID Y EL VINO

This gleaming, state-of-the-art structure in the heart of the sun-drenched Guadalupe Valley is a traveler's dream destination. The beauty of the architecture stands out against the backdrop of granite mountains, fertile soil and lush graceful vines, now showing their fall colors. Just north east of Ensenada, the Vine and Wine Museum was inaugurated August 6, 2012. The museum is a rich collection of viticulture history, as well as the most modern methods of wine production happening today.



Museo de la Vid y el Vino

Wine enthusiasts descend into the museum as if going into a wine cellar. This is a priceless resource for wine lovers, ranging from the true connoisseur to those who just like a good wine with a meal. It is also a great opportunity for a first-time visitor to Baja and the wine country. The museum offers a foundation for understanding wine production, from the soil and weather requirements to the bottling.

The climate makes it ideal for producing the very deep red Nebbiolo to the fresh organic of the Misión grape. Baja's Mediterranean climate is similar to the California's wine country, but Baja winemakers are creating their own distinctive bouquets that some say rival their northern neighbors.



Wine museum exhibit

...Valle de Guadalupe

A visit to the Vine and Wine Museum benefits all visitors by creating a deeper understanding of the love and the art that goes into making good wine. A tour of the valley can start here, and the traveler is guaranteed a deeper appreciation in the wine-tasting experience. Newly added are the weekend conferences for the history buffs and wine enthusiasts; these are free of charge.



Wine museum exhibit

Thoughtful organization went into presenting the history. Baja has a rich ethnic history from the Spanish Jesuit fathers planting grapes for their sacramental wine to the Russian Molokanes who developed large commercial vineyards in 1906. Many of their wooden tools are on display from that time period. Today, according to a local winemaker, if you include the major, minor and artisanal winemakers in the valley, there are well over a hundred. In fact, 90 percent of the country's wine comes from the Ensenada region.

In the softly lit interior, fine art and bronze sculptures are a perfect pairing, each with a touch of the vine as a theme. Huge oak barrels are embedded in the walls; track lighting spotlights the displays and create a vivid impression of what goes into making good wine.

A series of towering glass shelves hold wine bottles from each vintner of the valley. Included at intervals along the way are movies showing the production, and even how the oak barrels are crafted...a true art, in itself. The special attention to detail and the lovely low lighting sets the mood for the whole experience, as if being in a cava where the wine is aged.

Above the underground museum is a convention center with a panoramic view of the spectacular valley. During the summer months, as far as you can see, are the grape vines, lush with leaves and clusters of maturing grapes. The harvest is celebrated as the Vendimia every year in August, while the actual harvest can go well into September. October has the vines showing their fall colors and winter vines are bare and snakelike.

Russian Community Museum



Mexico's President Felipe Calderón, during the inauguration, stressed that Baja winemaking has a long tradition, and is "a deep source of pride for Mexico." Certainly, this is one of the most sophisticated day excursions close to home, and only two hours from the US border.

Directions

Take Highway #3 Tecate, the Ruta del Vino, between the small town of San Antonio de Las Minas and Fransico Zarco at Kilometer 81. Open 9 am to 5 pm, six days a week, closed Mondays. Donations: \$4.00 US or \$50 Pesos, seniors and students are half-priced with ID. <http://matra.temp.domains/~museodelvinobc/index.php>

We highly recommend making Guadalupe Valley part of your itinerary any time you are in this part of California.

Submitted by

Dan and Lisa Goy

Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours

www.BajaAmigos.net

... more pics follow

...Valle de Guadalupe



Bibayoff Russian Winery

Russian Baja headstone

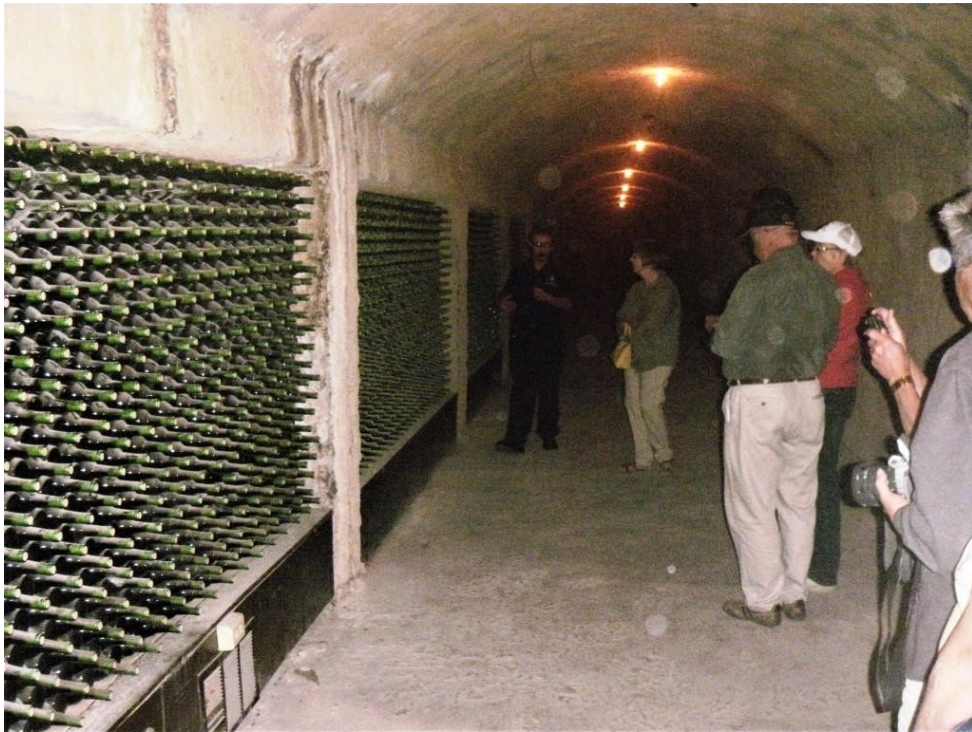


Early Russian immigrants on Baja circa 1905



Valle de Guadalupe
Molokan girls
circa 1910

...Valle de Guadalupe



Domecq wine caverns



Domecq display



Vineyards at
Valle de Guadalupe
Wine Museum



Wine press at
the museum

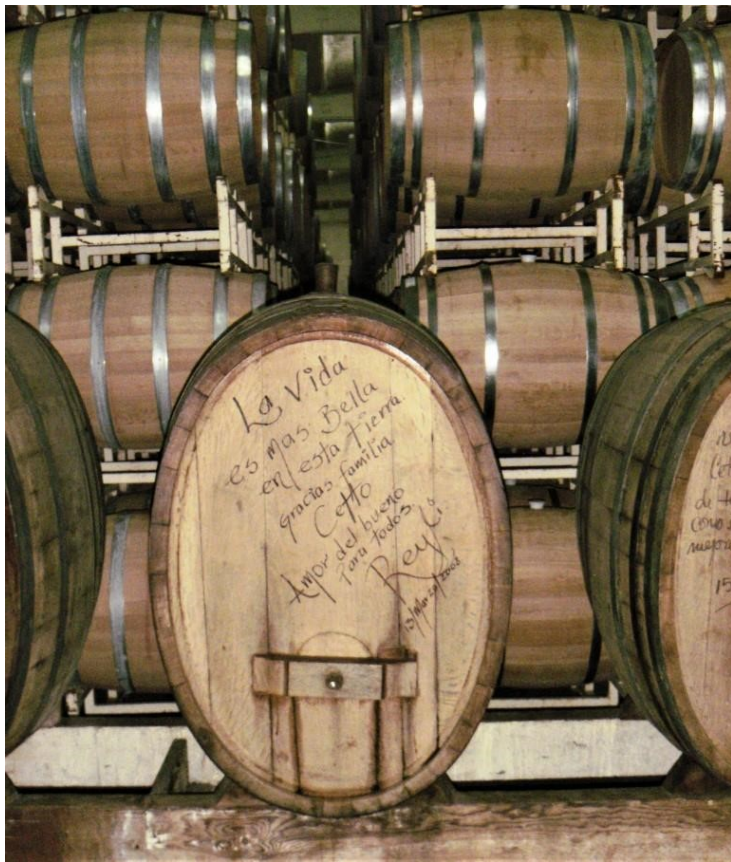


LA Cetto
wine tree

Happy hour at
Rancho
Sordo Mudo
RV Park



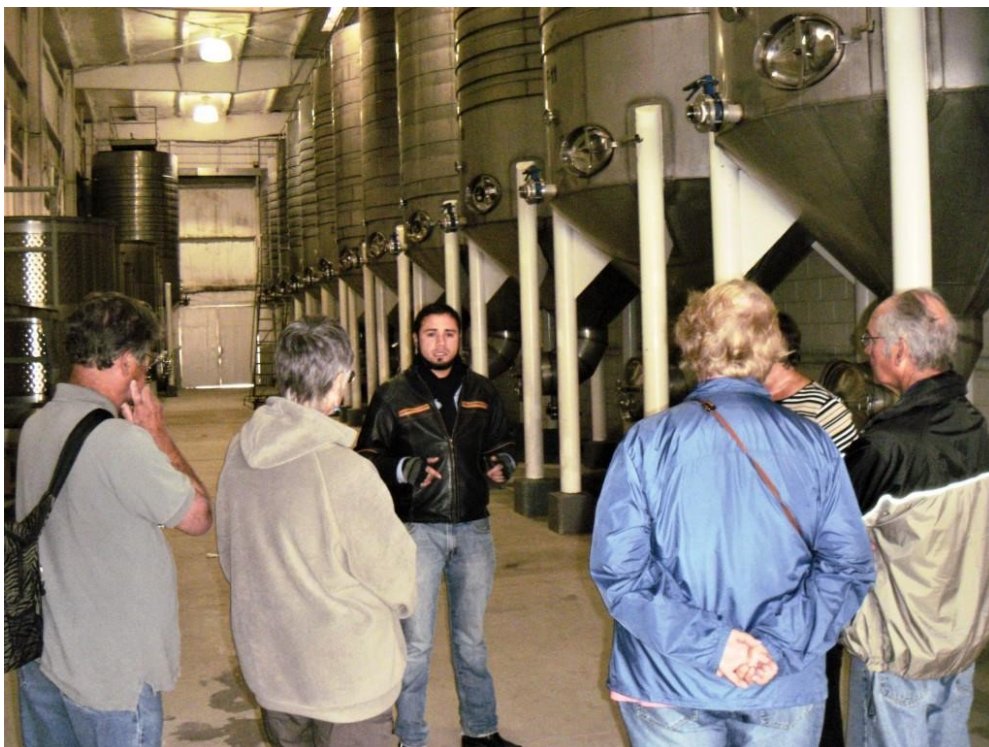
...Valle de Guadalupe



LA Cetto barrel room



LA Cetto vineyards



LA Cetto tank room



LA Cetto tasting bar



LA Cetto wine tour



LA Cetto tasting room



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Morning walk on the beach in Manzanillo by [Elisa Jarquín](#)





by Tommy Clarkson

Sunburned Gringo Tree *Bursera simaruba*

Family *Burseraceae*

Also known as Paper Bark Tree, Gumbo-Limbo Tree, Naked Indian, Copperwood, Turpentine Tree, Mulatto Stick, West Indian Birch or Tourist Tree

Within the greater family as a whole, there are some 600 species in 15 genera, including species that yield frankincense and myrrh. (*I guess you might say, "That makes good scents!"*) The *Bursera simaruba*, however, has other interesting uses and intriguing qualities!

This unique – but highly apt - common name came about as a result of Americans (Gringos) who, in visiting our magnificent, sunbathed beaches, all too often, are oblivious to the severity of the tropical sun. And as a result of their over-exposure - like this tree – they turn red and peel in somewhat, paper-like appearing shreds (Read: bad sun burn!) Accordingly, as one might expect, Sunburned Gringo Tree is native to the tropical zone ranging from southern Florida, through the Caribbean islands, including Mexico to Brazil, Columbia, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

A most intriguing tree that flourishes in both wet and dry season, the *Bursera simaruba* can grow - rather rapidly – to between sixty to 100 feet (18.29 - 30.48 meters) tall. In parts of Central America, densely planted ones serve as windbreaks and also aid in erosion control on hillsides. Here in Mexico, in the Sayulita area, I know that straight pieces of its wood are used for fence posts. Intriguingly, often, when employed in this way, the cutting resurrects itself, growing new roots and becomes a living fence.



Even more pronounced is the peeling "skin" on this, somewhat, more bluish trunk variant of *Bursera fagaroides* (I think) variant.

This wood is light-weight, light in color and soft. In our youth, we may well have often sat astride some from this very species in that, in the United States, it was carved to make the horses for merry-go-rounds! Haitians make drums from its trunk; the West Indians use its somewhat turpentine-scented trunk resin to make glue, incense, varnish and water repellent coatings. Nature, herself, provides the berries as an important food source for an array of migratory bird species.

Like so many tropical plants, the Sunburned Gringo tree has various ethnobotanical, curative and health treatment applications. The itch of poison ivy and other plants, in addition to the pain of insect stings, gout and muscle sprains, can be alleviated through the application of its resin by members of some indigenous, native cultures. Tea made from the bark and leaves, mixed with sugar, has been used to treat low blood pressure. It is used in the treatment of dropsy, dysentery and yellow fever. It is purported to be an effective diaphoretic, diuretic, purgative and vulnerary.

...Sunburned Gringo Tree

The Maya called it *chakáh* and used it to relieve skin irritations and scoriations (scrapes or abrasions). *(I know, I should have just said those words in the first place but have so few opportunities to use it, I just had to!)*



Usually found as solitary specimens, I came upon this delightful multiple tree grouping recently.

It has pinnately compound (for we lay folks, let's just say they are featherlike) leaves. That unique, attractive, reddish bark peels away in thin flakes revealing a smooth and sinuous gray underbark. Its trunk is massive in size - two to three feet (.61 - .91 meters) in diameter. The tree has huge, irregular branches with a rounded, spreading crown. Its leaves are four to eight inches (10.16 - 20.32 cm) long and have three to seven oval or elliptic leaflets, each one to two inches (2.54 - 5.08 cm) long. They are semi-deciduous. As a result, they lose their leaves in early spring, prior to the arrival of its new leaves.

The Sunburned Gringo Tree blooms in our "winter," These come in the form of small, inconspicuous flowers made up of three to five greenish petals arranged in elongated racemes (unbranched, indeterminate inflorescences bearing pedicellate flowers [flowers having short floral stalks called pedicels] along its axis). Both male and female flowers, generally, bloom on the



Looks pretty sunburned to me!

same tree. Its dark red fruits are elliptical in shape, about a 0.5 in (1.3 cm) in length and take a year to mature.

Almost constantly on the move, traveling all around planet Earth, generally doing botanical research with his students, several years ago, my pal Dr. Mark Olson of the Department of Biology at the National University of Mexico, graciously gave me four different species of *Bursera*. Never a conventional sort, I have been striving to keep them somewhat "bonsai-esque" at below six feet (1.83 meters) or so, growing them in large pots on my roof! *(Yep, you're correct, there's never a dull - or possibly, even all that normal - moment here in Ola Brisa Gardens!)*

Get your copy of The Civilized Jungle: Tropical Plants Facts and Fun From Ola Brisa Gardens [Volume I](#), and now [Volume II](#) is here!!

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FUN in February!

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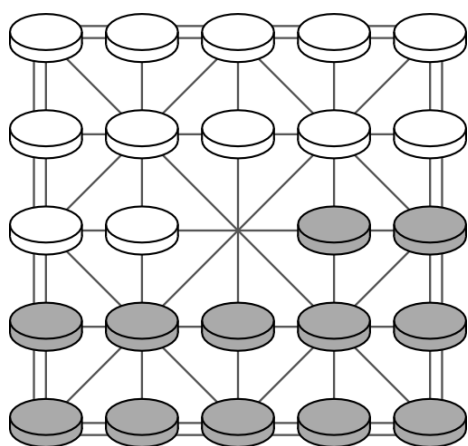
For more info, contact Fred Taylor, fltaylor88@yahoo.com



MESOAMERICAN SPORTS

as told by Kirby Vickery

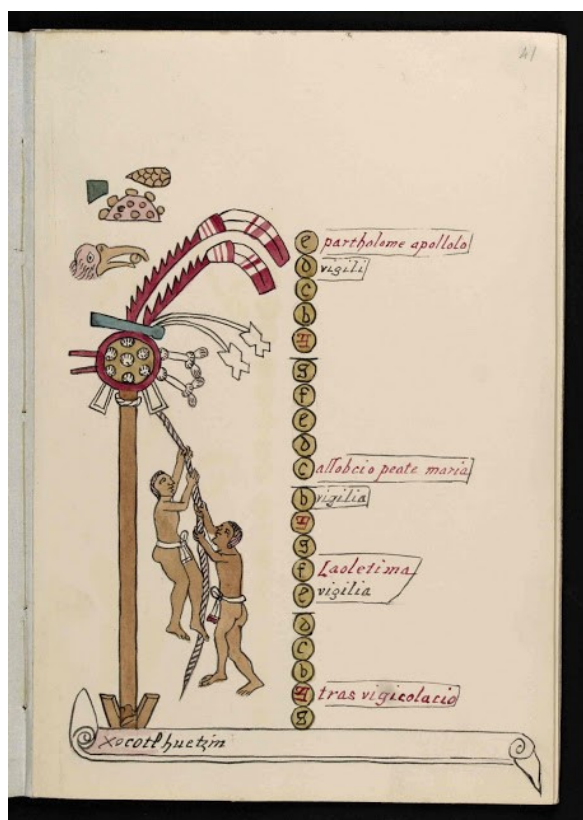
As with all civilizations, the Mesoamerican people played a variety of games. Some had religious connections and even others were used by the better competitors to gamble and make a living. One such game of skill resembled bowling. There is very little information on it except that the Dominican Historian, Diego Durán, states that there isn't any information on the type of ball or pins used but that he did talk to a man who "... was a great player of "Pins", and his vice was such that he played not only on holidays but on workdays. This individual seems to have been a professional Pin gambler who attributed his success in gambling to invoking divine intervention from one of the Aztec deities."



Alquerque

There were also board games, one of which might be similar to checkers. Durán called it by its Spanish name, Alquerque. Although the Mesoamerican peoples didn't have playing cards, they did follow the social rules of all societies and make sporting competitions from war and fighting. As with Europe and other world societies, the rulers and the 'upper crust' enjoyed bow and arrow contests, hunting small animals and birds with blow guns firing small pellets.

The Pole climbing contest during the Festival Honoring Xocotl Huetzi



The Voladores or Pole-Flying ceremony

During the season in which all the trees drop their fruit (a drought), the Nahuatl speakers, starting with the Olmecs, would have a celebration (in one version) to honor Xocotl Huetzi (an Aztec name). An effigy of the god was then put on the top of the pole and two wings of white paper were then stuck to it, depicting two eagles. The execution of dances and songs preceded the ascent of some young men, one at a time, towards the top of this sort of tree of "plenty".

Today, this is performed by the ritual ceremony of the Voladores. In some cultures, a fertility thing, back then it was done by aristocratic young men to honor Xocotl Huetzi, who wasn't a god, but a term used for the sour or acidic fruits that were being dropped.



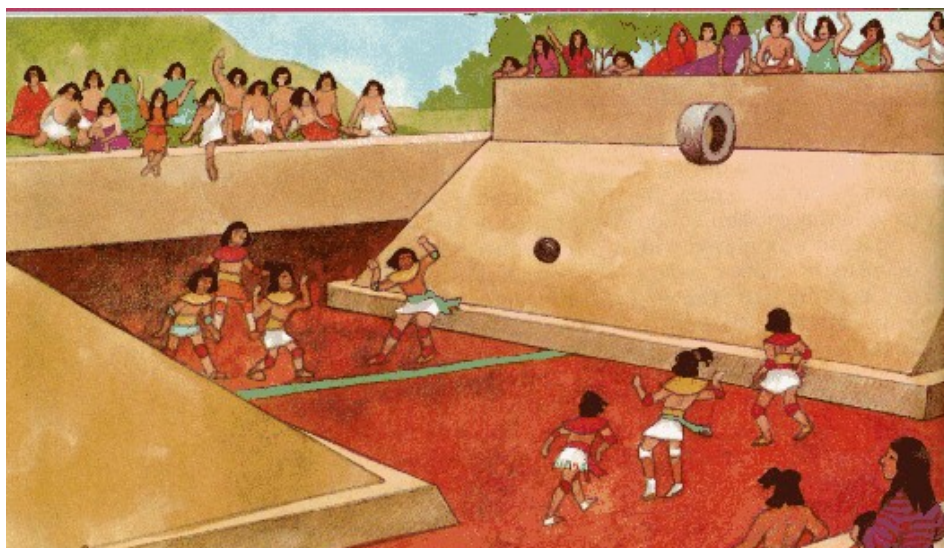
Tlamatecutli

The Aztecs also had a game which was played the day after their festival for the goddess, Ilima Tecutli, aka, Ilamatecutli. She was about the only goddess in the Aztec pantheon of deities that doesn't appear to have any sexual duality. She is the goddess of midwifery, subsequently fertility.

The Aztec festival consisted of human sacrifice and other games for joy and happiness, mock battles, and other religious rites. The next day, the men (boys) in the town would prepare soft net bags filled with picked flowers or stripped out corn

...Mesoamerican Sports

(maize) leaves. These they would attach to long ropes and start swinging at all the ladies. Some women, anticipating the situation, took a staff or a branch of the "devil-fruit-thorn" for defense. At times, boys were so rough that it made the girls cry.



The Aztec ball court

In Mexico today, the major outside sport is football, known to her northern neighbors as soccer. The Aztecs' version is known as Ulama and is still played, with minor variations, today in some parts of Central America. The original game had no other name other than "ballgame." The sport started with the Olmec and was played throughout Pre-Columbian times by every culture in Central America. The court was usually the second thing built after the alter in a new town. Sometimes chronicled as "Hipball," the players had to keep the ball from hitting the ground for over an hour.

In some cases, they came out of a game fairly beaten up, in spite of the leather guards they wore, all while trying to hit the ball through rings placed high on the walls of a court. In most Mesoamerican cultures, it had strong religious affiliations. The Maya even designated a portion to one of their five worlds or creation stories to it. There were both amateur and professional players. In some cultures, only the losers were sacrificed. In some cases, all the players were sacrificed. In still others, all the players were either slaves or captured warriors, or from another caste who were trying to win their freedom, and sometimes they were allowed to live to play another day.

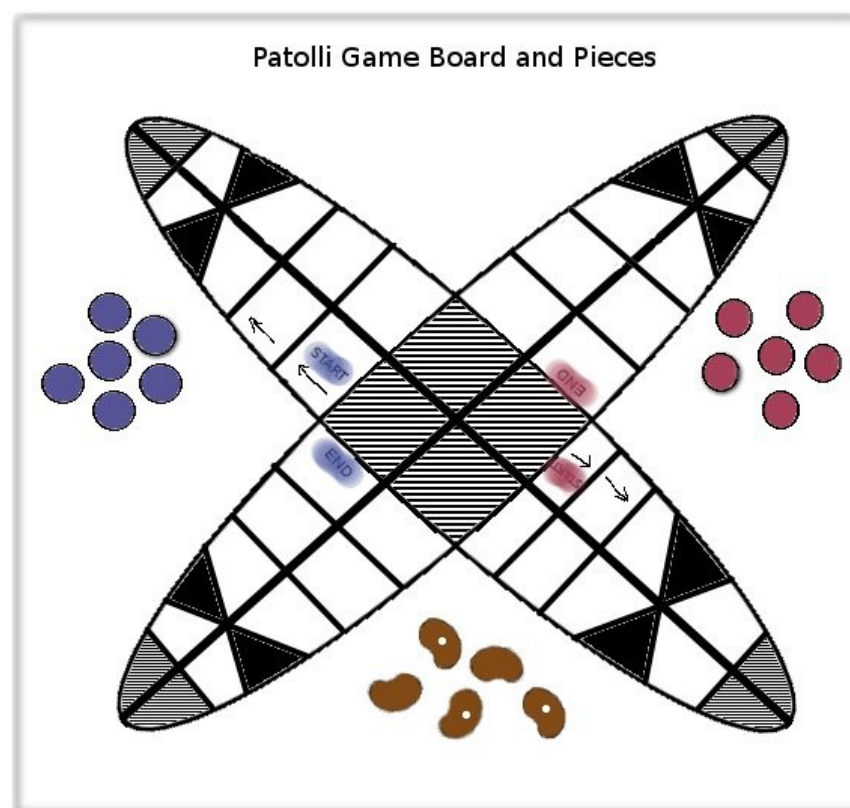
'The Game' was a team sport and had a distinctive court known as the Tlachtli or Tlachco. Each team had anywhere from two to seven players and the idea was to put a hard rubber ball through rings placed on the side walls of the court without

using your hands, arms, feet (in some cases) knees or legs. There were a few cases where other means of scoring were provided.

The betting on these matches was always heavy for both the amateur and professional teams, as well as on individual players. It was not unheard of for a man to bet his wife or children into slavery, or even himself sometimes. That's not to mention his home, fields, corn supplies and maguey plants.

Again, probably for the older set, the Mesoamerican culture had a dice game called Patolli. It reminds me a little of Parcheesi, which is originally from India.

Here is a popular dice game, which was played by people that just wanted to sit and have a nice game of Patolli, and by those that relied on the game for their livelihood. Designed to be played mostly on feast days, it was very portable and designed to be gambled on.



Historians report that people would crowd into a place just to watch and place wagers on this game or others protected and blessed (as it were) by their gods.

Some say Patolli was a blood game. But, if you look over the pantheon of games and of their gods, you will see that here was a series of cultures that looked to human sacrifice for a continued existence and they liked to gamble—a lot.

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by Tommy Clarkson

Variegated Cuban Oregano *Plectranthus amboinicus*

Family *Lamiaceae*

Also known as Oregano Brujo, Broadleaf Thyme, Country Borage, Soup Mint – and, virtually, all of the same names as the classic Cuban Oregano

In Volume I of "The Civilized Jungle," I wrote about the classic Cuban Oregano – Also known as Mexican Mint, Spanish Thyme, French Oregano or Indian Borage. Well, directly outside of our kitchen, happily pot-thriving among several other of my "what herb shall we cook with today" plants, sits this attractive Variegated Cuban Oregano. Suffice it to say that the leaves of both species have a strong fragrance. (Beyond these two, be aware that there are actually fifteen to twenty different varieties of oregano.) Virtually all that I earlier put together about its less "gussied up" kin applies to this good-looker! Hence, why repeat myself all that much?

While my, presently in process, book, "The Edible Jungle" (along with "The Medicinal Jungle and "The Poisonous Jungle"), focuses on "munchable" plants one can easily grow in the semi-tropical and tropical environs, we'll - so to speak - take a page from it with some culinary data regarding this lovely, aromatic, succulent perennial. You see, increasingly, it is used as a substitute for Mediterranean Oreganos - both dried and fresh. When the leaves are dried and crushed, they may be incorporated with all manner of meat dishes. In turn, in small amounts, fresh leaves are used in soups and stews.



Yep, right there between the Chile Piquin and the classic Cuban Oregano sits our subject plant!

As to its use in this array of cooking applications, bear in mind that this strong herb can easily overpower other, more subtle, flavors – so use it most judiciously! And, to grow one's own as we do, simply remember it prefers well-draining soil, in partial shade, and is quite easy to root from cuttings. Growing it is pretty much a no-brainer!

It is often found in the local cuisines of "Castro's Isle," India and the Philippines, as well as the West Indies, which includes Haiti, Puerto Rico and several, smaller, surrounding islands - where it is added to traditional 'jerk' seasoning blends, a diversity of bean dishes and wonderful salsas. But, first and foremost, as maybe surmised, oregano – classic and variegated – occupies a prominent place in Cuban cuisine.

Many times, it is employed in meat and poultry stuffings or, chopped finely, used to spice up dishes of wild game, beef, fish or lamb. It can also be delightfully sautéed with assorted vegetables.

And if ever there was a memorable duo beyond Amos and Andy, Burns and Allen, Crosby and Lewis or –moving on a bit in time - Rowen and Martin (*I chose all of them just to drive my younger readers crazy wondering who they all are!*) it is orega-

...Variegated Cuban Oregano

no and Cuban black beans! Why, sautéed with chopped garlic and then added to black beans while cooking them with a bay leaf, cilantro, pepper and salt, is a guaranteed yummy dish! On a creative culinary roll here, consider seasoned chopped beef, featuring Cuban Oregano, with onions, garlic, tomatoes, apples and almonds!



Attractive and a culinary delight - what a great deal!

While my mouth is watering, let's think of grilled, toasted Cuban pork sandwiches complemented by mayonnaise flavored with variegated, or plain, Cuban Oregano and a dash of garlic! (To make this great dressing additive, mix a couple of teaspoons of oregano with a cup of olive oil, a quarter cup of vinegar, some minced garlic cloves, a dash of Worcestershire sauce with some salt and pepper. Keep in mind its flavorful strength, so don't overdo the number/amount of oregano leaves included.)

As to the nutritional value of *Plectranthus amboinicus*, it contains high amounts of vitamin C, vitamin A, and the essential fatty acid, omega 6, having compounds that include anti-inflammatory properties as well as some that can neutralize the capsaicin in hot peppers.



The leaves have a strong fragrance.

By the way, this plant is also included in yet another of my previously cited upcoming books in that it has folk medicine uses. It's said to treat coughs, infections, stuffy noses, sore throats, rheumatism and flatulence. In Indonesia, it is incorporated in soup to stimulate lactation a month or so following childbirth.

Let's wrap this up amid a bit of confusion in my usual, as I think the French might say it, *état du jour*. Contrary to its name, it is believed, by no few botanists, that *Plectranthus amboinicus* originated in India while others contend southern and/or eastern Africa. (I, for one, am holding out for good old Kansas, in the midwestern United States. Well, not really!).

Wherever it's origin, it is a great herb!

Get your copy of The Civilized Jungle: Tropical Plants Facts and Fun From Ola Brisa Gardens [Volume I](#), and now [Volume II](#) is here!!

For back issues of "Roots", gardening tips, tropical plant book reviews and videos of numerous, highly unique eco/adventure/nature tours, as well as memorable "Ultimate Experiences" such as Tropical Garden Brunches

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you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com

Huevos Divorciados

Ingredients

- ✓ 8 large EGGS
- ✓ 8 small corn tortillas, 6-inch diameter
- ✓ 4 tsp. butter, divided
- ✓ salt and pepper
- ✓ 2 cups prepared refried pinto beans, warmed
- ✓ 1/2 cup tomatillo or green salsa
- ✓ 1/2 cup tomato or red salsa
- ✓ 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
- ✓ 1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro

Directions

BAKE tortillas in a single layer on a large baking sheet in pre-heated 400°F oven for 7 to 10 minutes or until crispy.

HEAT half of the butter in large non-stick skillet set over medium-high heat until just melted. For sunny-side up, over-easy or over-hard eggs: BREAK 4 eggs and SLIP into skillet one at a time. Immediately REDUCE heat to low.

COOK eggs for about 5 minutes or until whites are completely set and yolks begin to thicken but are not hard. SERVE as is or FLIP eggs carefully with a spatula and COOK the second side to desired doneness.

SPRINKLE eggs lightly with salt and pepper. (Repeat method with remaining butter and 4 eggs, or prepare all 8 at once in two large non-stick skillets or on one large flat griddle.)

SPREAD warm refried beans evenly over tortillas.

SPOON tomatillo salsa over half the tortillas and tomato salsa over remaining tortillas.

TOP each tortilla with one fried egg.

TRANSFER one of each salsa-topped tortilla to four plates and

GARNISH with red onion and cilantro.

SERVE immediately.

Tips

- ✓ Mix 1/4 cup sour cream with juice from one fresh lime and drizzle on top of eggs right before serving.
- ✓ Garnish with chopped avocados and lime wedges.
- ✓ Prepare recipe with refried black beans instead of pinto beans if desired.

Source [article](#) and [image](#)



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.

Rates:

\$2,100 USD monthly (3-6 months)

\$1,800 USD per month (7-12 months)

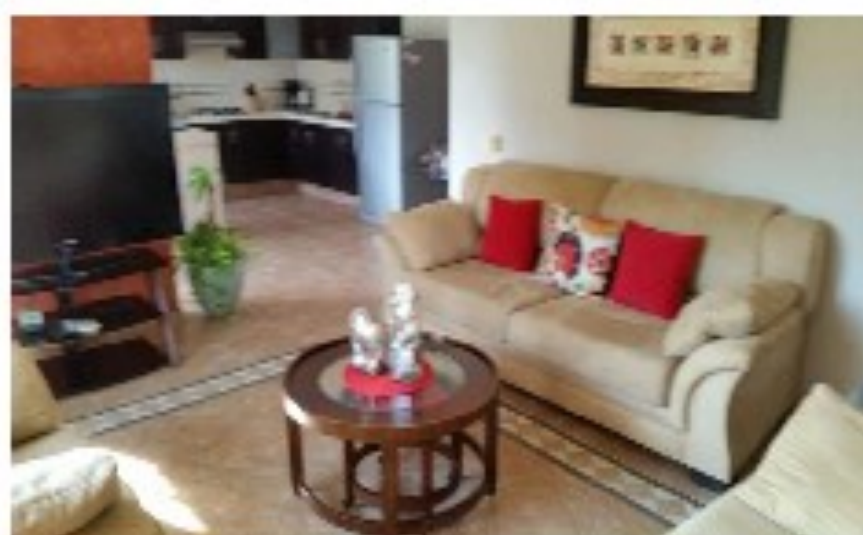
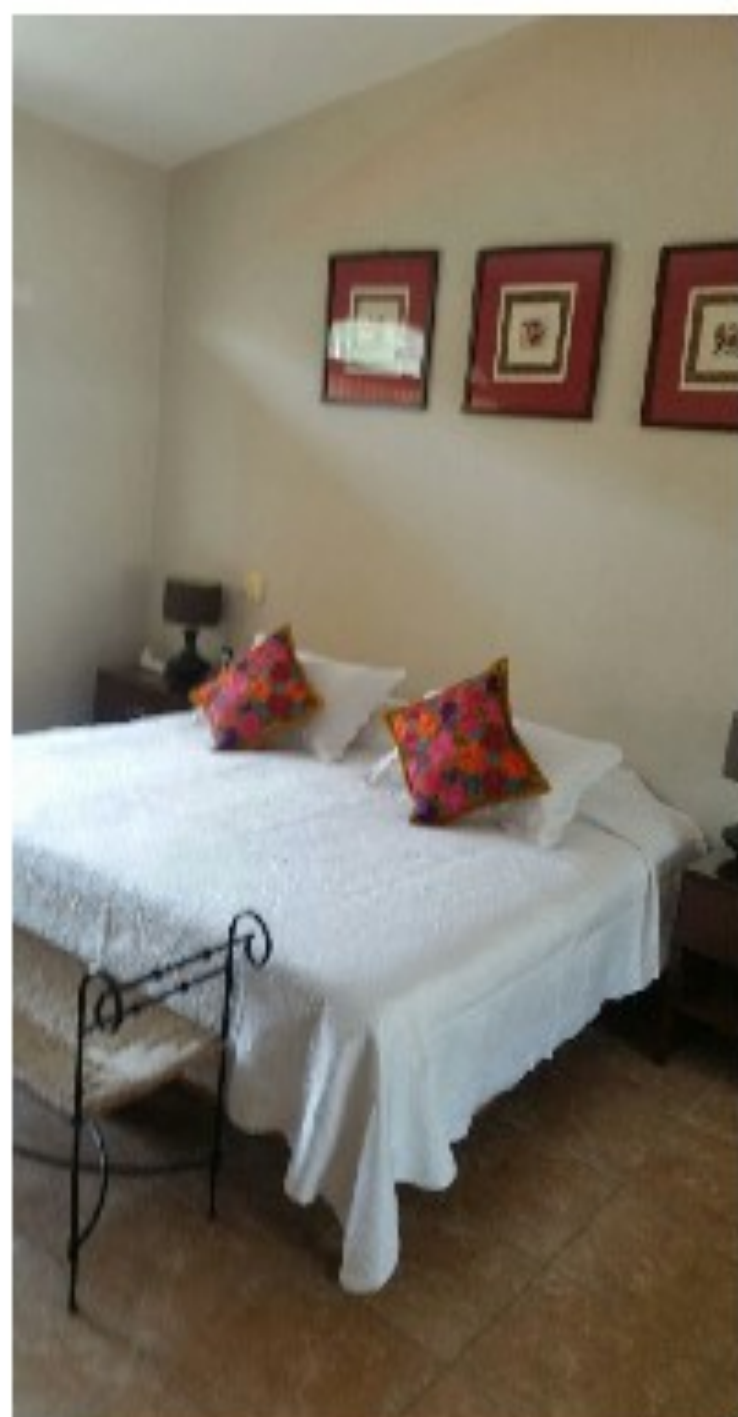
Ask about our rates for other lengths of stay.

Contact Yamil Achcar

yamil.achcar@gmail.com

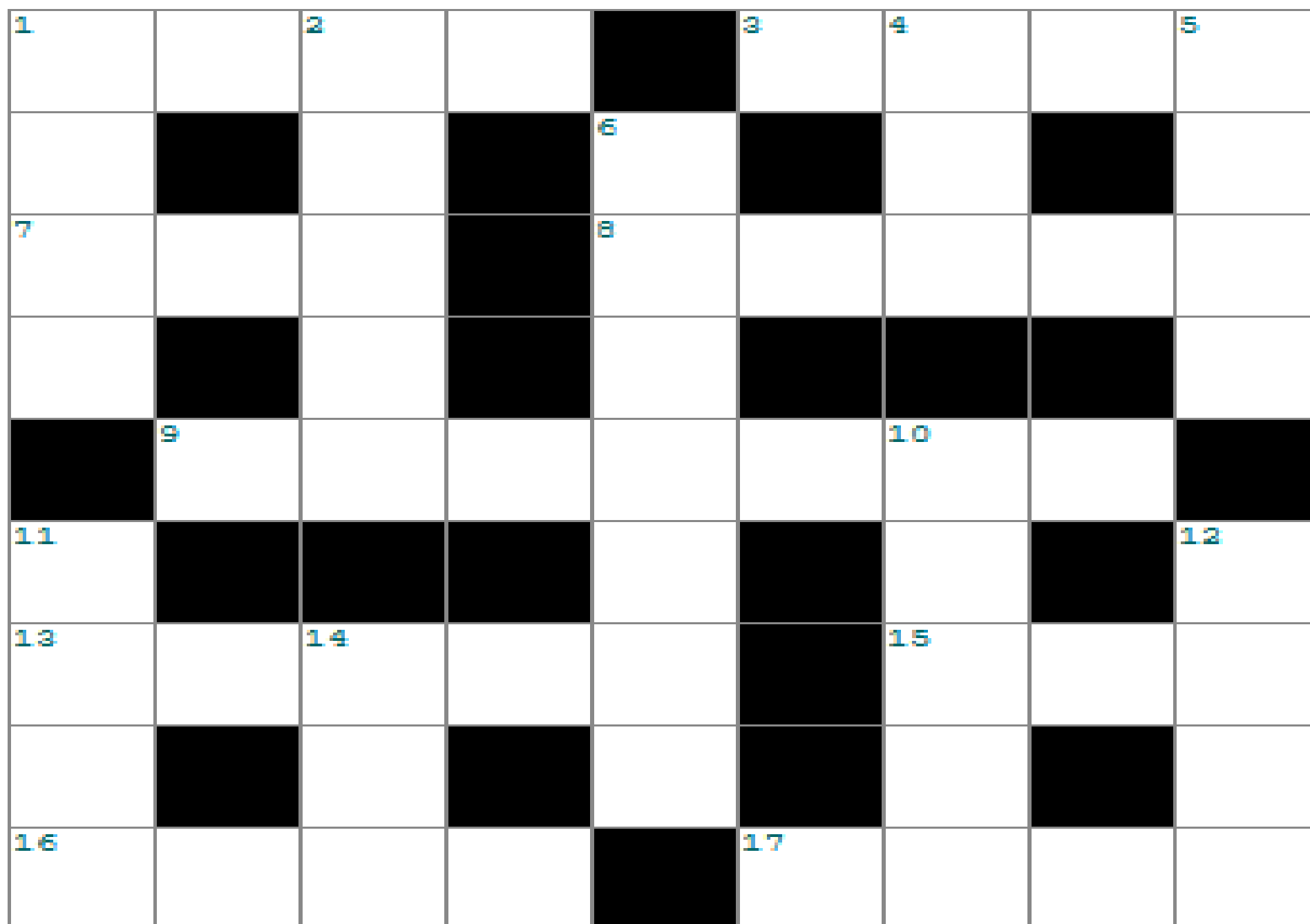
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Landline (+52) 314 138 2725



Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 (I) swam
- 3 (I) do
- 7 two
- 8 to bring
- 9 (you/tú) will damage
- 13 night
- 15 anger
- 16 yesterday
- 17 (I) caught

Down

- 1 knot
- 2 (she) wishes
- 4 wing
- 5 other; another
- 6 again, another time (4,3)
- 10 attic
- 11 wave, undulation
- 12 (I) licked
- 14 (it) falls

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

Reform War

from the Path to Citizenship series

The War of Reform (Spanish: *Guerra de Reforma*) in Mexico, during the Second Federal Republic of Mexico, was the three-year civil war (1857-1860) between members of the Liberal Party who had taken power in 1855 under the Plan of Ayutla, and members of the Conservative Party resisting the legitimacy of the government and its radical restructuring of Mexican laws, known as La Reforma.

The Liberals wanted to eliminate the political, economic, and cultural power of the Catholic church as well as reduce the role of the Mexican Army. Both the Catholic Church and the Army were protected by corporate or institutional privileges (*fueros*) established in the colonial era. Liberals sought to create a modern nation-state founded on liberal principles. The Conservatives wanted a centralist government, some even a monarchy, with the Church and military keeping their traditional roles and powers, and with landed and merchant elites maintaining their dominance over the majority mixed-race and indigenous populations of Mexico.

This struggle erupted into a full-scale civil war when the Liberals, then in control of the government after ousting Antonio López de Santa Anna, began to implement a series of laws designed to strip the Church and military—but especially the Church - of its privileges and property.

The liberals passed a series of separate laws implementing their vision of Mexico, and then promulgated the Constitution of 1857, which gave constitutional force to their program. Conservative resistance to this culminated in the Plan of Tacubaya, which ousted the government of President Ignacio Comonfort in a coup d'état and took control of Mexico City, forcing the Liberals to move their government to the city of Veracruz.



Mexico Civil War Division in 1858

The Conservatives controlled the capital and much of central Mexico, while the rest of the states had to choose whether to side with the Conservative government of Félix Zuloaga or Liberal government of Benito Juárez.

The Liberals lacked military experience and lost most of the early battles, but the tide turned when Conservatives twice failed to take the liberal stronghold of Veracruz.

The government of U.S. President James Buchanan recognized the Juárez regime in April 1859 and the U.S. and the government of Juárez negotiated the McLane-Ocampo Treaty, which if ratified would have given the Liberal regime cash but also granted the U.S. transit rights through Mexican territory.

Liberal victories accumulated thereafter until Conservative forces surrendered in December 1860. While the Conservative forces lost the war, guerrillas remained active in the countryside for years after, and Conservatives in Mexico would conspire with French forces to install Maximilian I as emperor during the following French Intervention in Mexico.

For the full story, see the source (images and [article](#)):