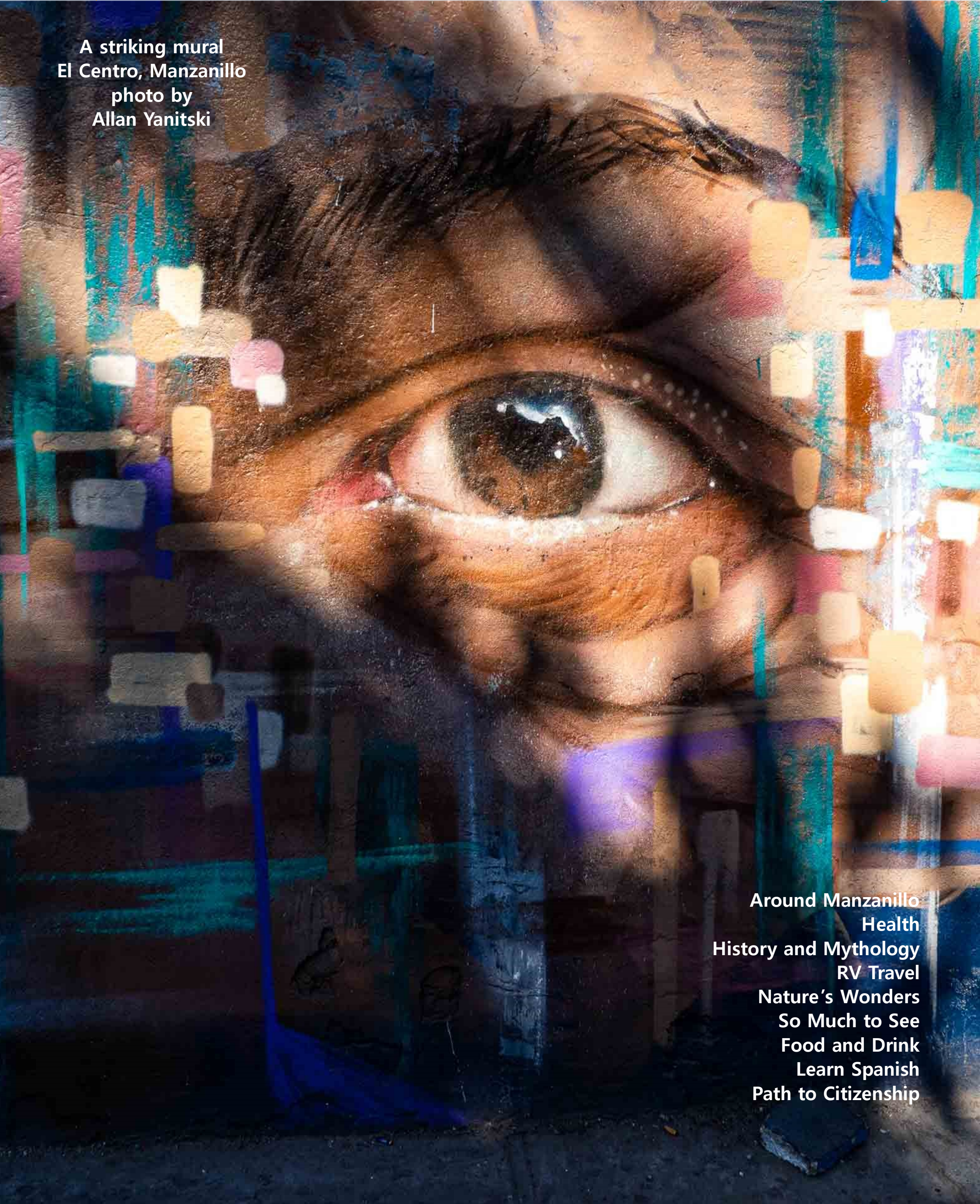




A striking mural
El Centro, Manzanillo
photo by
Allan Yanitski



Around Manzanillo
Health
History and Mythology
RV Travel
Nature's Wonders
So Much to See
Food and Drink
Learn Spanish
Path to Citizenship

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E-MAGAZINE

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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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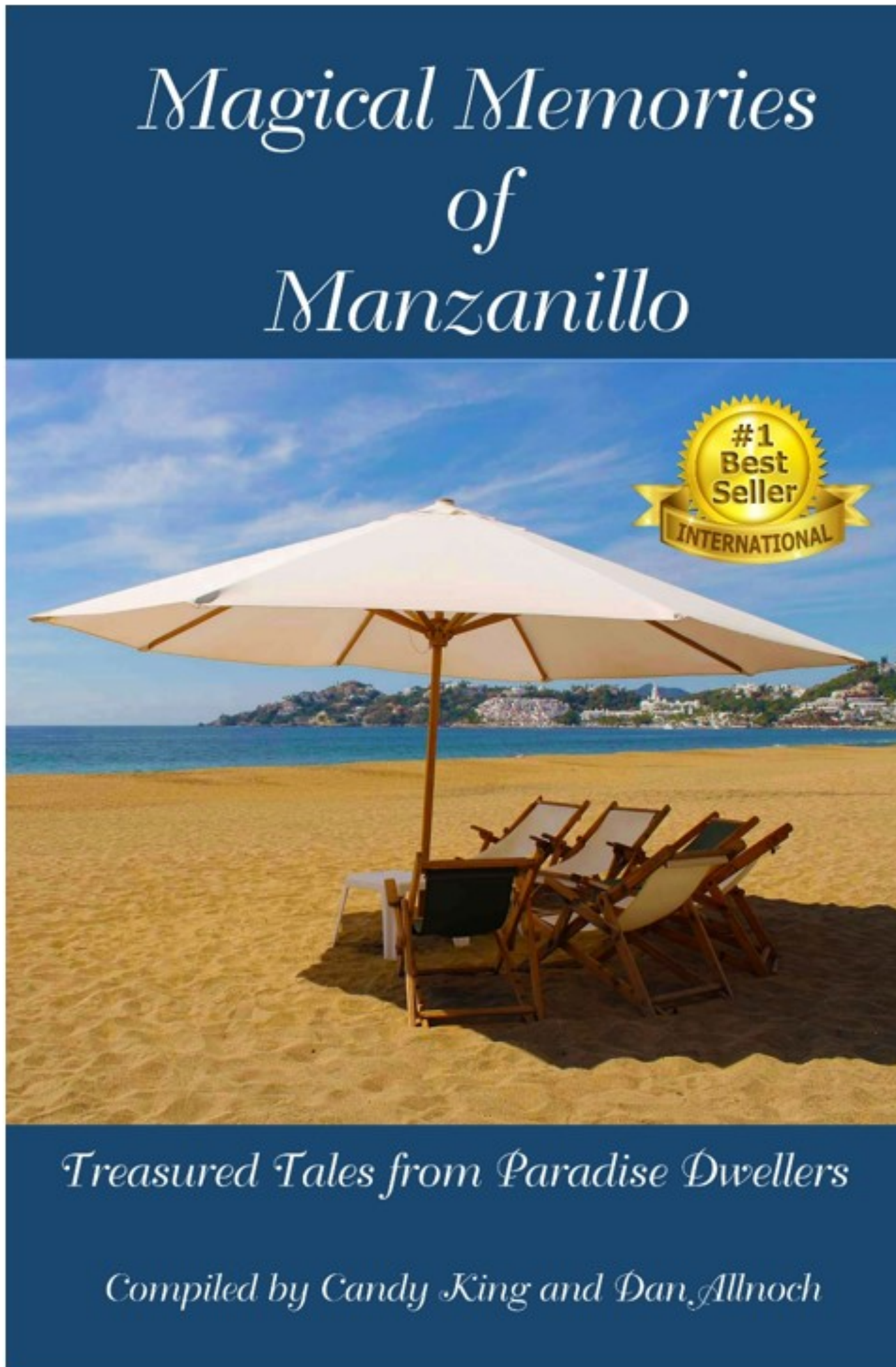
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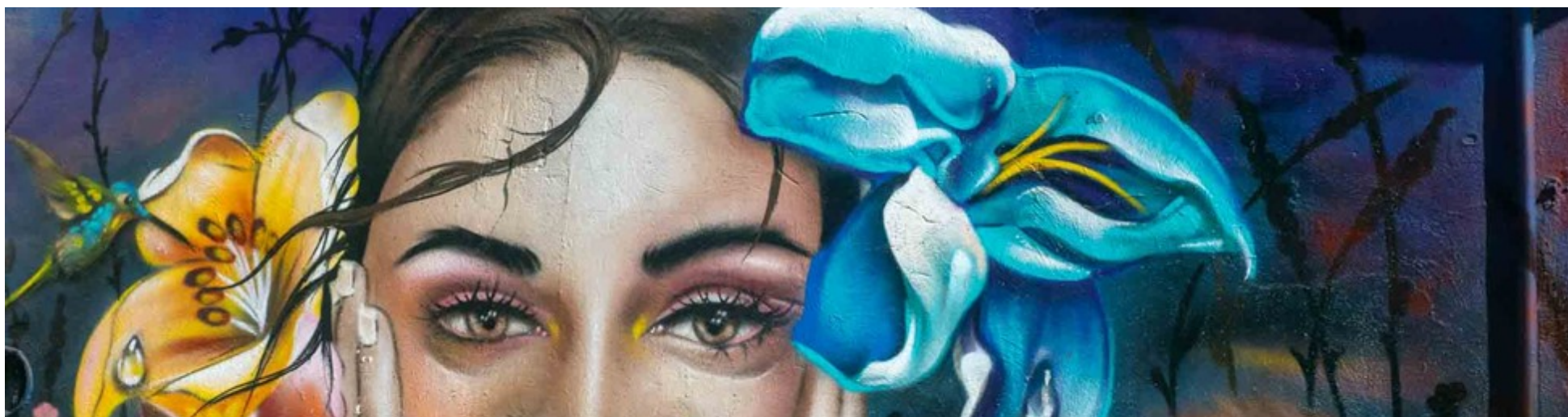
The beautiful Bo Derek put Manzanillo on the map in 1979's box office hit, "10."

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Manzanillo Murals: Art from the Heart

by Suzanne A. Marshall with photos by Allan Yanitski



To say it has been a tough year in 2020 is a serious understatement. Those of us living in Manzanillo could at least enjoy the climate, humid air and a few safe activities such as walking, and the odd safe meal somewhere breezy and open-air, of course while trying to adhere to social distancing measures and wearing face masks.

The fact that many Mexicans had trouble complying with this is no secret. You could see them without masks everywhere. I came to notice that, slowly, many began to wear them. It is certainly not helpful when the President insisted it was not serious and did not comply, himself. Nevertheless, soon enough, the spreading numbers began to make the situation apparent. When you see and hear of people sick all around you, the message is finally driven home for some, though not all. Lately, there has been a barrage of information on COVID-19, recommendations and statistics that have been most helpful, especially as it is in both Spanish and English.

In the El Centro district of Manzanillo (downtown), like the entire area, the pandemic really took its toll on the livelihood of the population and many businesses closed. Those that did not, suffered tremendous decreases in sales and income.

For one thing, there have been no cruise ships docking. A much-needed economic boost used to occur, when hundreds who were sailing disembarked the ship to go shopping for trinkets and enjoy the tours that were available, in abundance, at the time. In better times, there were several cruises arriving per week.

As Allan and I like to take walks for exercise along the port Malecón, we noticed that big tankers and container ships in the bay were noticeably few and far between. Trade, in general, has been severely impacted.

As a result, there was an important decision made to try and reactivate the El Centro tourist zone. Manzanillo City Council sponsored the 'Graffiti Titan League' and urban artists from Mexico (70) and Colombia (2) were requested to paint murals in the heart of the city. On November 21 and 22, they began to paint 100 murals, with different themes, highlights and realism. This is to generate a sense of belonging, identity and pride of the natural resources through the expression of urban art.

If you are a walking buff and don't mind trundling up and down the various streets and avenues, you'll find delightful artistic renderings around many corners. We decided to drive up and down the streets as it was hot, and we did not want to miss anything. I suspect that we may have anyway and will have to take another drive around to find more surprises.

What a delightful and fulfilling idea this whole project has been. I wonder if someone will develop a driving tours for all our guests. It would also be a great idea to develop a map/brochure that names, numbers and the locations of these art pieces throughout El Centro.

We are pleased to present a sampling of the murals as well as a link to all the works we were able to find. Enjoy and take a visit when you can. Start at City Hall and up the sides of the multi-level parkade nearby.

*you can reach Suzanne A. Marshall at suzanne@manzanillosun.com
... more pics follow*

...Manzanillo Murals: Art from the Heart



The artists begin preparing the walls for their paintings
El Centro, Manzanillo

Plasma mural "Pedro Páramo" in the center of Manzanillo.

Personnel from the Instituto de la Cultura Manzanillense organized this interesting event.



See many more photos of the beautiful murals in a complete photo gallery taken by Allan Yanitski [at this link](#) and at the web site below the photo.

<https://www.manzanillosun.com/murals-in-manzanillo/>

Manzanillo, A Challenging Place to Have Hair

by Ken Waldie

Manzanillo is a challenging place to have hair sometimes. When it gets hot, hair can get frizzy or oily and when it is humid, hair can fall limp and get frizzy or just limp. Hot, humid summers can leave you with oily hair and scalp. It's a challenge. The causes can be manifold and the answers differ depending on the type of hair you have and what you do to your hair, such as perming, coloring or highlighting. While each issue deserves an entire article, I think today the frizz issue deserves a shout out, so I'll try to smooth this one a bit.

Hair, comes in many varieties: Thick (known as coarse), normal or fine describe the various diameters of hair. Some of us have more hair than others, known as density and the density of hair can affect the way it behaves. Curly, wavy and straight hair types also react in different ways to the environment. Usually, coarse, straight hair will behave in humid and hot environments. Normal and fine hair types can give you grief because heat, sun and humidity are big contributors to grievously misbehaving hair.



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We all shampoo our hair. For many, it's a daily ritual. But what does shampoo do and how does it affect our hair? I'll try not to dive into the science too far, but let's take a look. Shampoo is made of simple ingredients, water, a surfactant to make it sudsy, coloring, and something to make it thick so it pours out of the bottle nicely. Everything else such as botanicals, proteins, and fragrance are added to help keep hair subtle and to keep moisture inside the hair fiber - and... well... to smell nice.

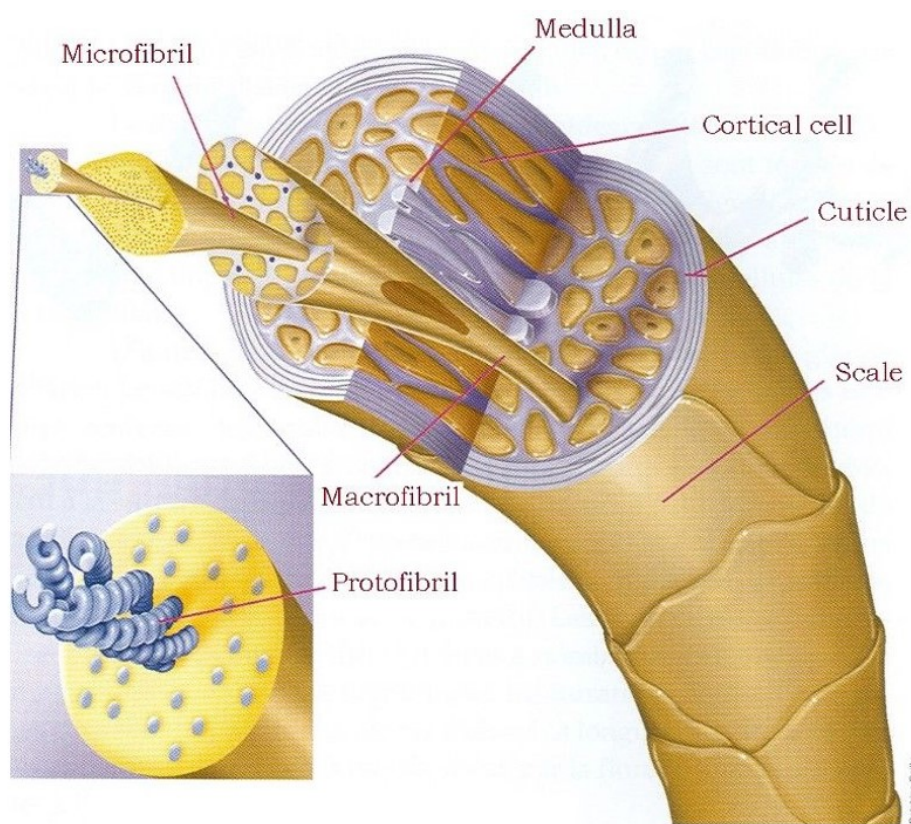
Surfactants, (surface acting agents) are found in dish soaps, laundry soaps and health products but also in many other products, from motor oils to herbicides and firefighting and fire extinguisher contents. Depending on the specific design, surfactants can provide slippery qualities, foamy qualities, such as in toothpastes, or they can act as wetting agents to facilitate water penetration. One important quality of surfactants is that some are designed to dissolve or strip away oils.

The beauty industry uses surfactants for two qualities combined, known as being ambiphilic, meaning they are attractive to more than one substance at the same time. In shampoo, they help wet hair and lift oil away from the scalp and hair strands, and then easily rinse the oil away with water. Unfortunately, this process can strip out the good stuff that keeps moisture in hair. So, manufacturers add ingredients that help to counteract this condition, ideally leaving your hair shiny and controllable.

One category of ingredients in shampoo is humectants. Humectants help hold moisture inside hair strands. So, when you see shampoos listed for dry hair, generally, they do help keep moisture in hair. I made a small, partial list of humectants, some that you may be familiar with. These are commonly used in hair products, specifically to help keep hair from drying out: Glycerin, Honey, Aloe Vera, Sorbitol, Panthenol vitamin B5, Acetamide MEA, Hydrolyzed wheat protein, Sugarcane, Mango butter, Agave nectar, Flaxseed, Algae extract, Hydrolyzed collagen, Ceramide complex, and Coenzyme q10.

Hair has a lot of things in it, like sulphur, but mostly it's made of long strands or strings of protein that spiral around each other in bundles like a rope. Strands, called protofibrils, wrap around one another forming a bundle, in turn these small bundles form larger bundles called microfibrils and these bundles spiral around one another forming macrofibrils, or big bundles.

...Manzanillo, A Challenging Place to Have Hair



The result looks like a rope but all of these many bundles are only about 1/10,000 of an inch thick. This rope structure forms what is called the cortex or inside; this spiral aspect allows hair to stretch.

The cuticle is a scale-like shell that overlaps and protects the cortex, like roof tiles giving hair an ability to bend. This outer covering is only 10-12 cells thick, but they are very hard and protect hair well. In fact, under extreme heat, the cortex will break down before the cuticle will. Water easily enters into the cortex by slipping past the cuticle's scales. Over time, the scales come loose or break, allowing more penetration of water or other materials.

Many of the things we do to hair such as blow drying, straightening, back brushing or teasing, break down the integrity of the cuticle, causing it to fray like a pine cone. These actions cause the hair to become caught against each other creating snarls or tangles, not to mention split ends (trichoptilosis).

All hair grows under the skin in the dermis or deeper skin layer. Cells form in the hair root or papilla where they form into those rope-like strands as they start moving up the hair follicle, a tube that extends to the surface of the skin. While most cells are forming fibril strands, some cells develop pigmentation called melanin which gives us our natural hair color. There are

actually three types of melanin in the body, two are found in hair, skin and eyes. As newly formed hair strands move up toward the skin surface, they dry out and harden.

Contrary to some beliefs, hair cells are dead by the time they arrive at the skin surface. That is to say, hair is not living and grows from the roots not the ends. Normally, a person will have between 65,000 and 150,000 hairs on their head at one time. We lose 90 to 150 hairs every day. That may sound frightening, but it is quite normal to lose that much hair.

When the weather is hot, your hair becomes like clothes in a hot dryer. Leave them drying long enough and even the sturdiest vestments become wrinkled and have to be ironed or steamed (add moisture) to make them presentable. In the same way, your hair in the hot sun becomes dried out and frizzy. It wrinkles.

As I mentioned, hair is actually very absorbent, like a sponge. It will absorb water and other substances very well. With heat, wind and sun, hair will expel moisture and when it does that, we end up looking like over-dried laundry.

The solution is to keep moisture in, which protects and keeps hair subtle and manageable, Humectants coat and penetrate into hair creating a protective barrier holding water inside. Moisturizing shampoos and conditioners are a viable treatment for dry hair and styling products with humectants can also help. I like products that are designed to protect or save color-treated hair because they have to be gentle and keep the cuticle tight together in order to keep color from seeping out of the hair.

I also like light oils, such as coconut or avocado oil. Moroccan oil, or Argan oil, is excellent for strong, heavy, coarse hair but if you have fine, blonde hair, stay away- it's too heavy. Usually when I'm in Mexico, I simply work a bit of coconut oil into my hair, leave it for an hour and then shampoo off with a light shampoo, so I get the greasiness out but leave a layer of protection on my hair.

...Manzanillo, A Challenging Place to Have Hair

The light oil treatment is very inexpensive, effective and will help most hair types stay hydrated and manageable. And coconut oil is easy to find locally in Manzanillo.

I teach hairdressing and barbering. At least once a week, my students and our clients ask me what are the best shampoos to use, or the best products for their hair. The very best answer I can give them, I now share with you. The best products are the ones that perform for you, individually. Once you find them, stick with them and don't vary.

The qualities that a shampoo/conditioner should give are: shiny smooth, brushable and bouncy. And your scalp should feel smooth and not dry.

If you are finding you have dry or itchy scalp, flaking, fly-away hair or an oily, dull, greasy feeling quality to your hair, then maybe you should try another product.

One sign that you may be using a shampoo/conditioner that isn't the best is resistance to hair color. The resistance is a sign that your hair may be coated with some of the ingredients from your shampoo that are keeping the color from properly penetrating in.

There are good shampoos and cheap ones, expensive ones and very reasonably priced but high performing ones. The trick is to find those shampoos and products that give you the good qualities that I listed above. It's a trial and error process unfortunately, unless you know a hair stylist, barber or other professional who can help.

Meanwhile, may all your days be good hair days!

Ken teaches hairdressing at Blanche Macdonald Center in Vancouver, BC. And has over 20 years experience as a hairdresser and barber. He also has a wife with frizzy hair, especially when enjoying the humid climate in Manzanillo.

you can reach Ken Waldie at ken@manzanillosun.com



Chachalaca

Photo by John Chalmers ©

Mayan Holidays

story by Kirby Vickery

Have you ever taken a step back when either attending (word used which is better than 'visiting' or 'climbing' or even 'driving by') a Mayan temple or ruin and wondered how the ordinary Mayan people lived? I've been writing about Mesoamerican cultures for several years now and have covered the mythological end of things pretty well if not just on the surface.

I've also written about their social and political stories that have come down from the various codices. The mythological stories center on the (mostly) children's version of the creation and the discovery of things used like alcohol and chocolate. I understand that these memories were those of the adults, too. But, how did these people live and what were their day to day activities?

In my history classes of years gone by, I tried to give the students a historical reference to help them understand the place in universal history our little stories were taking place. I've tried to do the same thing with these articles where a historical reference would settle comfortably in a westerner's mind. The Mayan Empire ran from about 600BCE to 1564CE when the Aztecs finally took over the failing empire. To say it fairly simply, their individual lives were simple and a little on the hum-drum side.

It was a classed society. As with most societies, the family was the center point, which carried the civilization. Unlike some American Indian and Canadian 'First' Nations cultures, this society could not be called a Madrigal Society (woman rule). Most of the men were on call for any war that happened with their particular city when not working in the communal agricultural fields or in the semi-trained artifact shops. Then there were the specialists in whatever shops for hardware and construction they had, along with all the other artisans and shop keepers. At the top of the heap were the kings, priests, and scribes.

I wouldn't call it a blood thirsty society but the 'needs' of the gods demanded human sacrifice and still beating hearts held above the donor's body while he watched it stop beating.

Mayan Temple



You might think that this was just totally barbaric and you would probably be right from our western man-kind and modern point of view. These people knew nothing outside of their own little worlds and what the priests told them to believe. In most of these Mayan communities, both men and woman would very easily line up and volunteer to be the next slain sacrifice.

They would do this with eagerness and enthusiasm. According to the priests and the teachings, being a sacrifice was an honor and gained a person a privileged position in the afterlife. Sort of a Klingon thing without the forehead thing.

It could be called a humdrum existence except the priests made sure that it wasn't. Their education to the populous on the needs and demands of the gods was complete and all about public activity. Included in all the ceremonies, with and without sacrifices, were games and celebrated holidays.

The most famous of all Mayan sports was, of course, the Mayan ball game, played by teams that had a ritualistic status in large ball courts built specifically for this game. However, they also played various other kinds of games such as Tlachtli, Jai Alai and board games like Bul and Patolli.

...Mayan Holidays

In the ball games, the teams tried to get a hard rubber ball through a high-placed hole without using their hands or arms. There were times when the losers were taken out to be sacrificed to the gods. Jai Alai is played today in most of Mexico. It is known to have the fastest ball speeds in the world.



Mayan village

Similar to handball or racquetball, it is played with woven baskets instead of paddles or racquets and the ball must be caught and thrown back against the far wall in one motion. It's a great gambling sport.

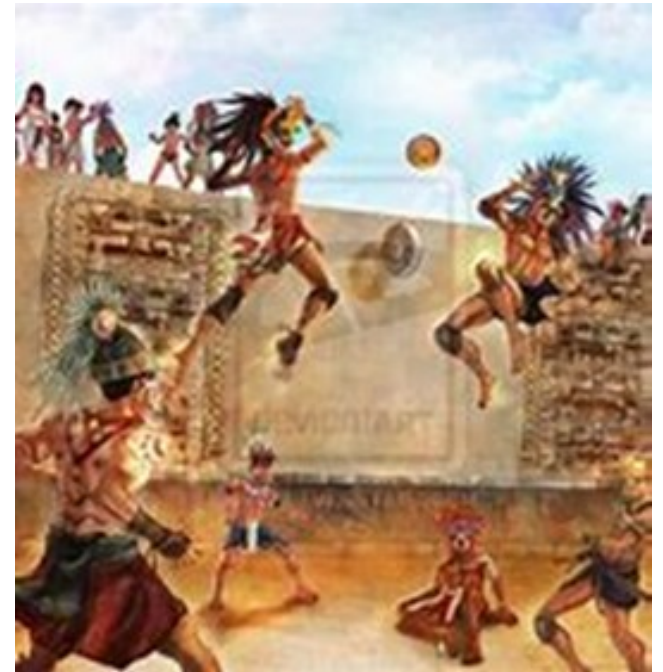
Patolli can be considered an early form of Parchisi. It was played mostly by the upper class and again, gambled upon. Bul was a board game that involved grains and some mathematical computation. Looking at it, I think it was something like the Japanese game of Go or Gomoku. The difference here is that Bul was a warlike game.

The Mayan people had their holidays as well. The two major holidays were The Day of the Dead, celebrated on the first and second day of our November, and the Winter Solstice. Please remember their calendar was a little different than ours. They had eighteen months of twenty days each.



Modern Day of the Dead skull

Mayan Ball game



When their Day of the Dead rolled around, they would party. Death, to the Maya, was just a change in life. Their Day of the Dead, known as "Hanal Pixan" (Food of Souls), was a celebration because it was when deceased relatives were allowed or "permitted" to visit loved ones.

Houses were cleaned from top to bottom to prepare for this visitation. The pet dogs were tied up so as not to run the spirits off while others were preparing for the feast. A black ribbon around the right wrist of the children prevented the spirits from taking them.

Tables and the graves of the deceased were covered with candles and flowers. And they would also set an extra plate at the table for the honored dead.

Special food and drink, public dancing, games and partying were the order of the day on the Winter Solstice which occurred on the 21st of December.

Even though we think of the piñata as being a native Mexican party activity, it did not originate in Mexico, as shocking though it might be. Marco Polo brought it to Europe from China in the 14th Century and it was introduced as a fun children's game in Mexico by the Catholic priests in the 1600s.

...Mayan Holidays

The Mayans didn't have the variety of food that we have but they did have: guacamole, corn tortilla, tamales, Poc Chuc, salsa (yes the tomato is traceable back through the Maya. But they didn't have the onion. That came out of present day Pakistan. Cochinita pibil, subanik, and South American quinoa were also enjoyed.



Mayan
calendar

Their diet was rich and full and they had more than one kind of strong alcohol beverage to go with it. All of this made for quite a New Year's celebration. Oh, I should tell you that the end of the world, according to that Mayan calendar, was the first of December last year.

It was actually the end of the Mayan 52 year century that got carried away by some slightly uneducated people.

Anyway, Happy New Year everybody.

you can reach Kirby at kirby.vickery@manzanillosun.com

sponsored



Why You Should Visit Baja

by Dan and Lisa Goy

Baja Mexico - Beyond the walls of the all-inclusive resort

Our first camping vacation in Mexico was in 1985 traveling in our camper van. Our children were small (2 and 4 years old) and our parents and friends thought for sure we would never be seen again. This 4-month adventure would be a life altering experience as we fell in love with Mexico.

We traveled down Baja, moving from beach to beach, then took the ferry from Cabo San Lucas to Puerto Vallarta on the mainland. We spent most of December just outside of Acapulco in Pie de la Cuesta and were invited to a Mexican family's home for Christmas in Mexico City before returning home to British Columbia.

There is no doubt this experience changed our lives forever as we have continued to embrace RVing in Mexico in winter when possible, routinely, since 2002. The Mexican camping experience is more than just tropical sun and fun. The culture and customs are truly unique and the people are wonderful, always willing to help and ready to make new friends that often last a lifetime.

Our love of Mexico was pivotal in the decision to start Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours in 2008. We have returned to the Baja and mainland Mexico continuously since 2005, every winter, with exception of this COVID winter. Whether you RV, hotel/motel or tent, Baja Mexico offers a plethora of experiences for any travel enthusiast with almost any interest. Our enthusiasm about Baja is not isolated. Read what other Baja authorities have to say.

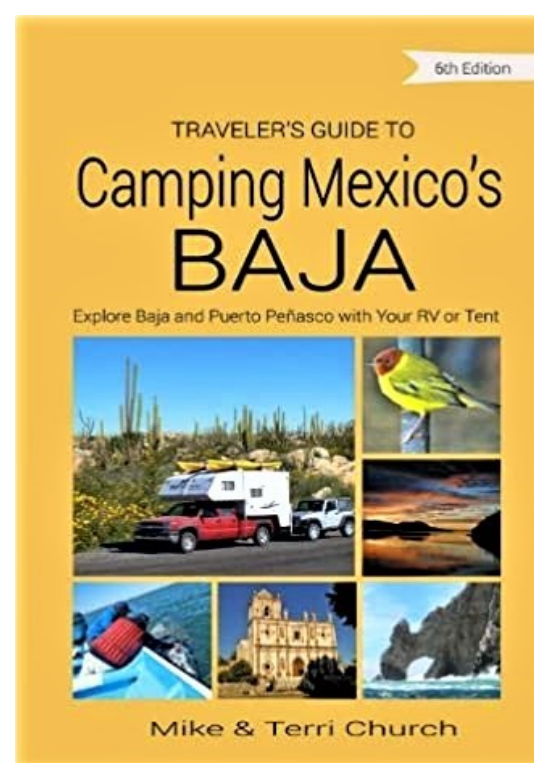


Why camp the Baja Peninsula?

"The border between the US and Mexico's Baja Peninsula is like no other border on earth. It divides two countries with huge contrasts in culture, language, wealth, lifestyle, political systems, topography and climate. Mexico is a fascinating place to visit and we think that driving your own rig and staying in campgrounds is the best way to do it.....People from north of the border have been exploring the Baja for years.

The trip became much easier in 1973 when the paved transpeninsular highway was built. Today this paved two-lane road leads to unparalleled camping opportunities."

Mike and Terri Church, Camping Mexico's Baja



What is Baja, Anyway?

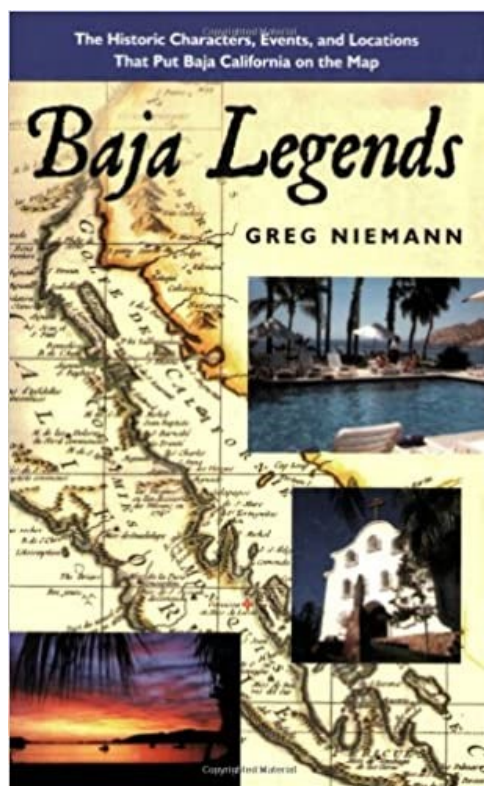
"Baja" means lower in Spanish, refers to an 800-mile long peninsula separated from Mexico's mainland by the Gulf of California, or the Sea of Cortez, if you prefer. The peninsula is comprised of two Mexican states, Baja California, with Mexicali as capital, and Baja California Sur, whose capital city is La Paz. To make it easy, "Norte" means north and "Sur" means south.

The peninsula is important, as it served as a stepping stone to the colonization of the US state of California. Once the Spaniards left the Baja California peninsula to expand their efforts northward, the remote and arid peninsula was left to languish, virtually unpeopled and almost ignored by Mexico and the United States alike.

...Why You Should Visit Baja

Baja California (norte) did not become a Mexican state until 1952. The southern half of the peninsula, Baja California Sur, entered statehood in 1974, less than a year after the first paved road linking north to south (Highway 1) was completed. "

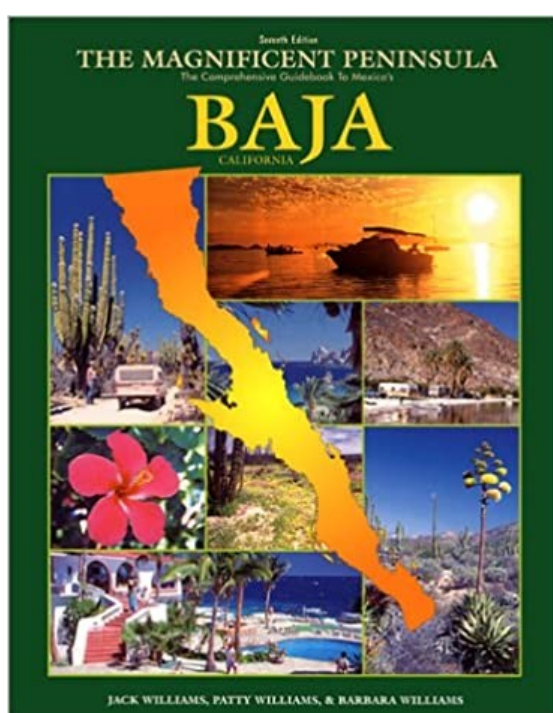
Greg Niemann, Baja Legends



Baja California

"Baja California is a unique recreational Paradise-in-the Sun dominated by its 2,000 mile coastline. It pampers the jet set in its cities, hotels and resorts, without the high-rise, high-tension setting common in other resort areas. Those craving outdoor adventures find a largely undeveloped, beautiful land where escape to another environment and culture is only a step away. Few visit Baja without knowing they have been in a very special place, truly a magnificent peninsula."

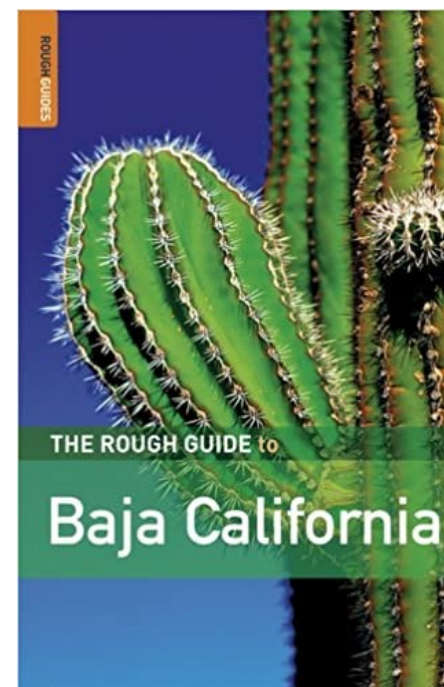
Jack Williams, The Comprehensive Guidebook to Mexico's Baja California



Introduction to Baja California

"Seventeenth-century Spanish explorers first thought the peninsula, now called Baja California, was an island and, despite over three hundred years of evidence to the contrary, it maintains a palpable air of isolation – from the rest of Mexico and from the other half of its original territory just north of the border with the United States."

Jason Clampet, The Rough Guide to Baja California



Mi Querida Baja California (My Beloved Baja California)

"Baja is more than a road trip – it's a journey into the great Right Now, where it's impossible to think about anything other than what's unfolding in front of your face. With the Pacific on one side and the Sea of Cortez on the other, Baja is the greatest ocean playground imaginable. Between its wildly contrasting shorelines lie deserts, mountains and plains dancing with spiny botanical oddities and crisscrossed by roads so isolated you'll think you've left earth."

Danny Palmerlee, Lonely Planet Baja California



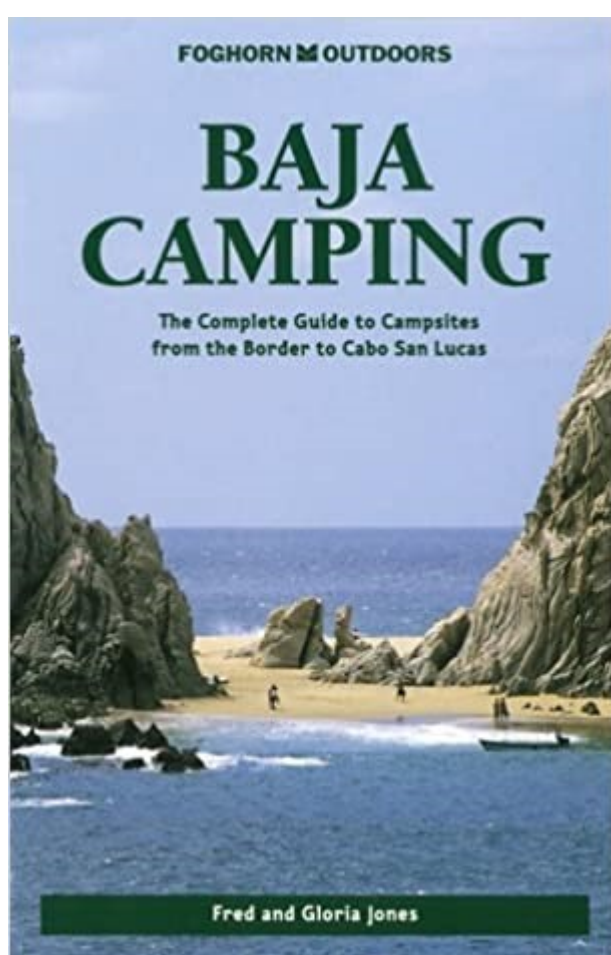
...Why You Should Visit Baja

Baja History

"The border between San Ysidro, California and Tijuana, Baja California, is the most frequently crossed in the world, with more than 100 million people passing through each year. It seems so much like an extension of California and the United States that visitors at first may not realize they have arrived in a foreign country. Indeed, at one time, it all was part of one country, Mexico.

In a popular Spanish novel published in 1500, "California" was the name of an island of women warriors who armed themselves with gold weapons. Since the Baja Peninsula was originally thought to be an island full of gold, the use of the name California appears to have been inspired by the novel in a spasm of wishful thinking."

Fred and Gloria Jones, Baja Camping



The Lay of the Land

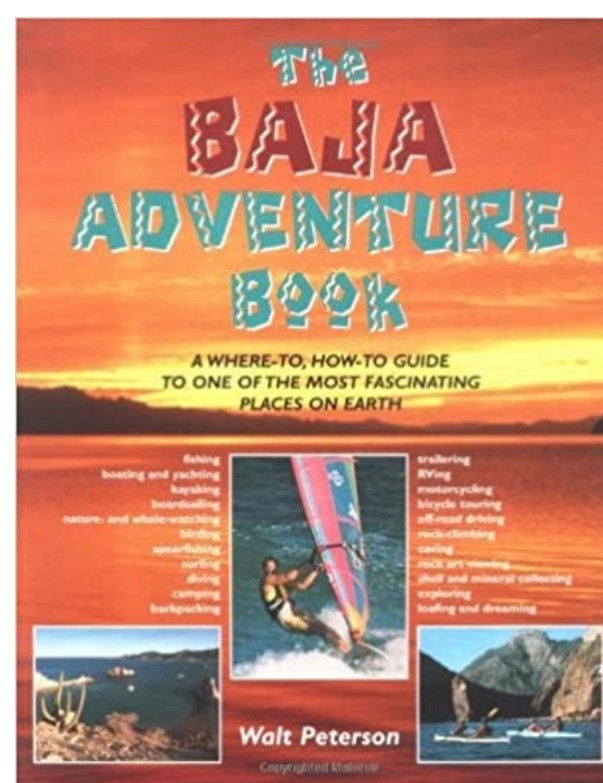
"Five million years ago the land mass of today's Baja California was firmly attached to what is now mainland Mexico. However, the Pacific Plate, on which Baja and all the land west of the San Andreas Fault lie, eventually separated from the North American Plate and began moving to the northwest. Today the peninsula and the deep gulf to the east are among the most strik-

ing geologic features on earth. The Kamchatka, Malay, and Antarctic peninsulas are longer, but none is so narrow in relation to its length.

Baja averages less than 70 miles in width along its 798 mile length, the narrowest part being 26 miles from the Pacific to the western shore of the bay near La Paz, and the greatest being 144 miles at the latitude of Punta Eugenia. Land area is 55,634 square miles, and the shoreline on both coasts totals 1,980 miles, excluding the interiors of large enclosed bays.

The southernmost extent of the peninsula is an unnamed and otherwise undistinguished point several miles west of Los Frailes, the famed rocks at Cabo San Lucas that are incorrectly granted that honor by many T-shirt and postcard artists."

Walt Peterson, The Baja Adventure Book



Baja Kayaking

"Baja has become one of North America's top sea kayaking spots, and for good reason. The peninsula, a crooked finger of land west of mainland Mexico, is tantalizingly close to the United States and yet still surprisingly wild and untamed.

Flanked by the Sea of Cortes (Gulf of California) to the east and the Pacific to the west, it is an 800-mile strip of desert bounded by over 2000 miles of stunning coastline.

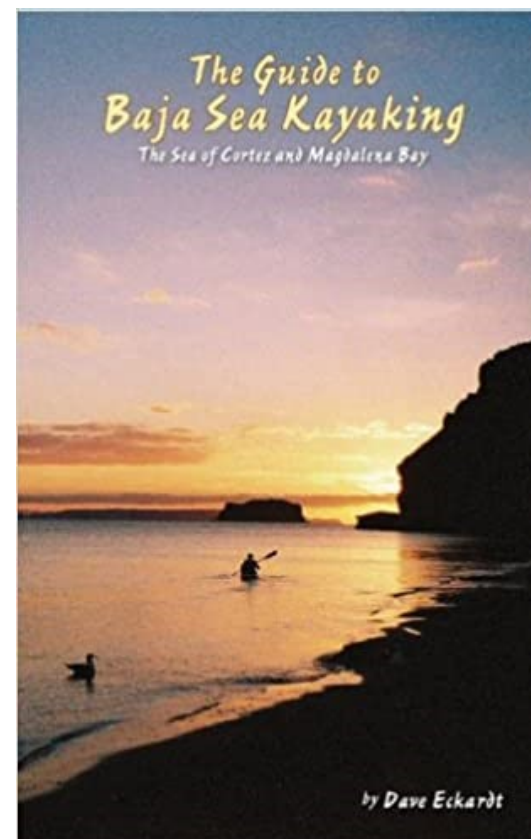
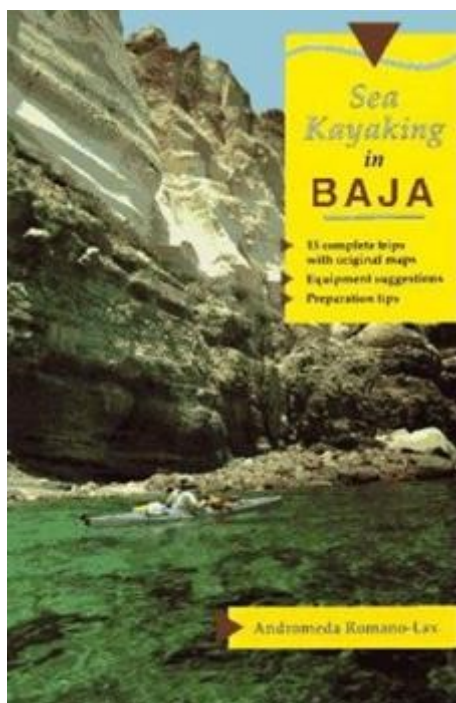
...Why You Should Visit Baja

Much of it remains inaccessible, except by boat. Despite its growing popularity, much of it remains unexplored, except by those adventurers willing to step (or paddle) off the beaten path."

You will camp under an impressive array of stars, amongst good people, with good food, and go to bed completely tired after another long day of chores, exercise and fresh air."

Dave Eckardt, The Guide to Baja Sea Kayaking

Andromeda Romano-Lax, Sea Kayaking in Baja



Welcome to Baja

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Time to say goodbye to 2020 and begin your Baja adventure!

... more pics follow

[The legendary Baja 1000 race](#)



...Why You Should Visit Baja



Bahía de Los Ángeles

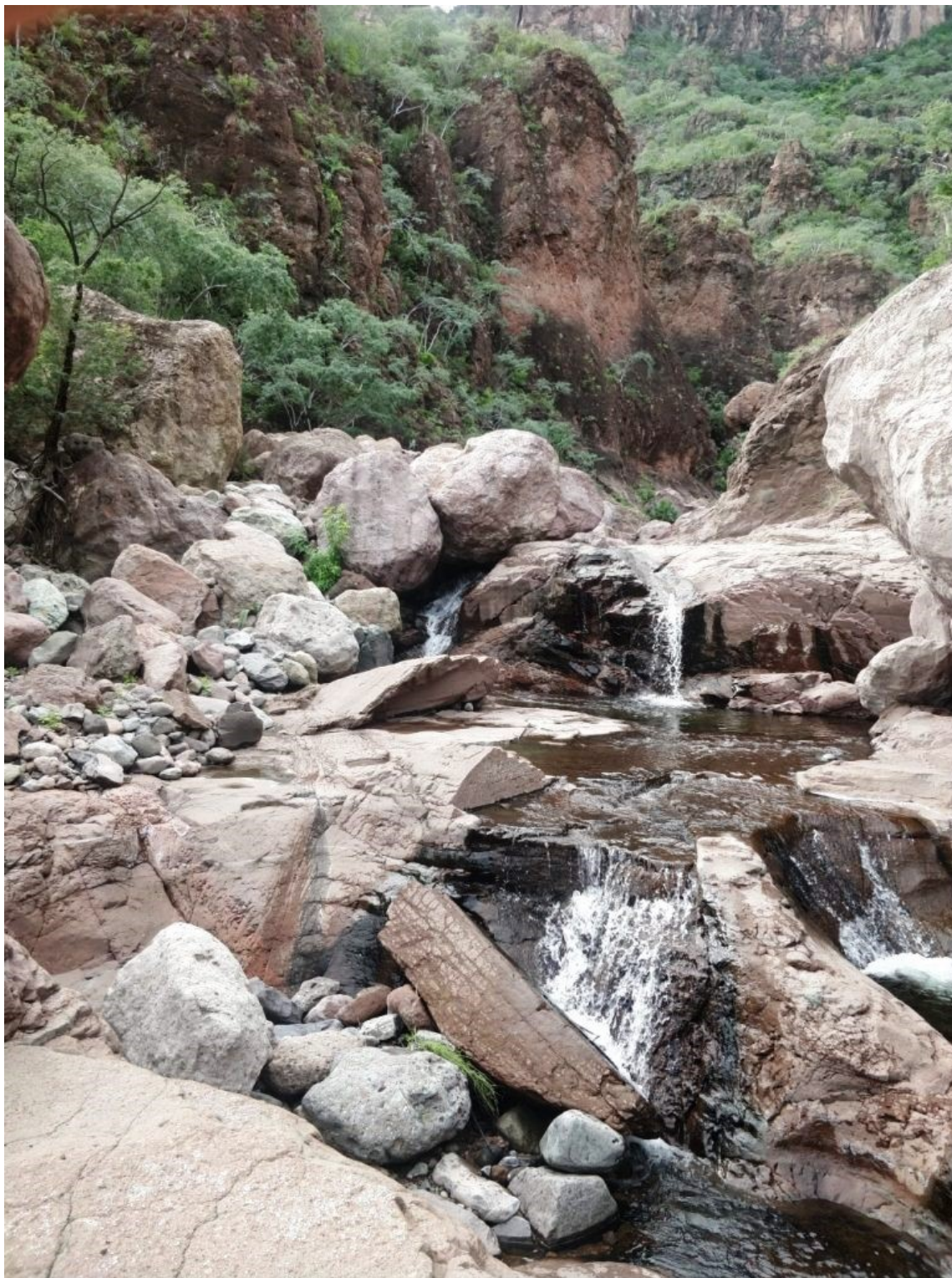


Artesanos in
Cabo San Lucas



Carnaval
La Paz

...Why You Should Visit Baja



Steinbeck Canyon
Loreto

Kayaking
Sea of Cortez



...Why You Should Visit Baja



Playa Santispac and Bahía Concepción



San Felipe
Baja California

Whale Shark
Sea of Cortez



...Why You Should Visit Baja



Above: Dan and Vicky
Ibarra's Pottery
La Paz

Right: Fishing in the Sea
of Cortez

Below: Kite boarding
and wind surfing
Los Barriles



La Bufadora, Ensenada



...Why You Should Visit Baja



Surf's up
Cerritos Beach
Pescadero

Right:
Whale watching,
always a highlight

Below:
Wine tasting at
LA Cetto
Valley of Guadalupe



Submitted by
Dan and Lisa Goy
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by Tommy Clarkson

Night Blooming Jasmine *Cestrum nocturnum*

Family *Solanaceae*

Also known as Lady of the Night, Night Queen, Queen of the Night, Night Jasmine, Night Jessamine, Dama de Noche, Night Syringo, Night Cestrum, Night-Blooming Jessamine or Night Blooming Cestrum

With some of those other names, one might confuse it with a magnificent late evening flowering cacti about which I have already written or some of the more well-known evening, "working girls" from downtown! Actually, it is a sub-tropical plant that was first discovered growing in the West Indies. Interestingly, there is a belief that, quite possibly, it was taken to Europe by Christopher Columbus in the 15th century.

Actually, it isn't a true jasmine. It's a tropical evergreen in the nightshade family which commonly grows wild in subtropical regions – and even temperate climates - around the world. It is aptly named, as its white-yellow, tubular flowers bloom only at night with them closing during the day.

Known for its sweet smelling blossoms, some assert that it may be the strongest scented plant in the world. When in bloom, the flowers release a scent of fragrant perfume that pervades the area around the plant year round. Often it is grown near a patio or an open window where its aroma can be enjoyed on summer evenings.



It is believed to, possibly, have been taken to Europe, by Christopher Columbus, in the 15th century.

Wrapping a lot of information up concisely was Dr. Art Whistler's description, from *Tropical Ornamentals*, that they are "distinguishable by alternate leaves, acute leaf tips, panicles of many tubular, pale yellow flowers with straight lobes, and (a) powerful nighttime fragrance."

In turn, he noted, "It differs from *Cestrum diurnum* most obviously by the time of fragrance and the corolla lobes that are erect rather than curved back." He closed citing that "*Cestrum elegans* Schlechter differs most obviously in having pink-purple flowers.'

...Night Blooming Jasmine



One means of recognition are its alternate leaves with acute leaf tips.

Some say the smell of this flower is the sweetest in the world.

These are seen in the day, unopened.



In addition, I quote Nellie Neal's comments in her book, *Gardner's Guide to Tropical Plants*. Clearly, an advocate of this plant, in it, she waxes, "Night Blooming Jasmine could be called the 'romance plant,' for all the courting couples it has sparked. One whiff of the distinctive, sweet but musky fragrance and every garden becomes a seductive tropical paradise Stroll the streets of the French Quarter in New Orleans on a late summer night (*as Patty and I have enjoyed*) for a total immersion experience in the dark charms of the night-blooming jasmine. The flowers glow, the fragrance enchants, and everyone falls in love with this plant."

And, at the sake of some manner of redundancy, Stirling MacOboy stated in *Tropical Flowers and Plants*, "They are easy to strike from cuttings. And any one of the 200 (*Cestrum*) species makes a really showy display. With careful selection, you can have one or another in flower all of the time in warm climates, either in the open garden or in tubs."

As a shrub or small tree, it can grow up to sixteen and a half feet (5.03 meters) tall and five feet (1.52 meters) wide. Its leaf blades are elliptic or ovate to lanceolate, two and a half to six inches (15.24 cm) long.

Its tubular flowers are five-eighth to three-quarters of an inch (1.59-1.91 cm) long and are borne in axillary panicles. Its white fruit is a sub-globose berry, one quarter to three eighth of an inch (6.35-0.53 mm) in diameter. But an important point to keep in mind is that, though the smell is wonderful, the fruit is poisonous to humans.

Regarding maintenance, trim its long scandent branches (characterized by a climbing mode of growth) regularly, to keep it attractively shaped. Attended to in this manner, they can be nicely employed as a hedge. They thrive in containers - as does ours - and propagate easily. About the only pest for which to watch are Whiteflies.

Cestrum nocturnum grows best in partial to full sun inasmuch as too much shade may cause a lack of blooms. It's not particular about the soil in which it is planted, but needs to be watered regularly. When first planted, it needs deep, weekly watering - though do ensure the soil is not soggy - and then, daily, check it carefully for dry soil, followed by appropriate watering.

Irish poet, Thomas Moore, who lived from 1779 - 1852, had it fully correct when he penned, "*From plants that wake when others sleep, from timid jasmine buds that keep their odor to themselves all day, but when the sunlight dies away let the delicious secret out to every breeze that roams about.*"

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Images by Fresnal Comala



by Tommy Clarkson

Shaving Brush Plant *Pseudobombax ellipticum*

Family *Bombacaeae*

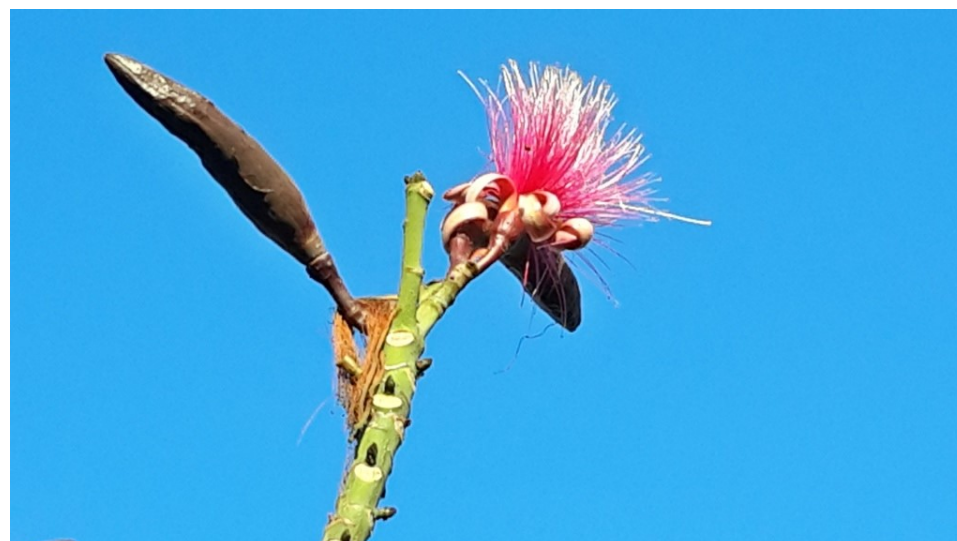
Also known as Pink Bombax or Wool and Cotton Tree

Upon seeing the flowers of the Shaving Brush Tree, one instantly comprehends how and why it got its name. But, beyond looking a great deal like what its name implies, they are quite unique and beautiful! In fact, those two descriptors apply to all manner of this plant, from its rather different trunk to its array of possible growth and presentation applications.

It is native to Southern Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras and, via its advocates, has found its way, in abundance, to the Caribbean and Southern Florida. It sports a stout, smoothish, sometimes swollen, dark green trunk, often with a tortoise shell pattern and fissured with gray bark. But don't let those wrinkles and gray fool you, the *Pseudobombax ellipticum* is a fast grower, attaining thirty feet (9.14 meters) or more, quickly.

I've read about - but never seen - specimens that, purportedly, have reached the sixty to seventy feet (18.28 – 21.33 meters) range in standup stature. But, quite interestingly, if grown in a pot and regularly trimmed, you have a wonderfully attractive, compact one of as small as three feet (.91 meters) tall.

As to body building, they're not particular. They develop multiple trunks - with that rather ornamental bark - as often as soli-



With a flower that certainly looks like its namesake, its seed pods have cigar shape to them.

tary ones (sometimes, with maturity, a bit bottle shaped) and what with its numerous stems, it's often described as octopus shaped. Its limbs are not so musclebound and are usually of a lighter color of green, with vertical striations stripping of greens, yellows, browns and white. Often, they are, in fact, what an old chum of mine who - as a football pulling guard - seemed to appear, wider than they are tall!

Its leaves are magnificent and reason enough to have this tree in your garden. They are long-stalked and comprised of five to seven, deep green, palmately arranged, leaflets. Each is elliptic to obovate and from six inches to a foot (15.24 – 30.48 cm) in length. These form a circular outline for the leaf whole. The freshly unfurled leaves often boast a beautiful reddish-bronze color. And, while the younger leaflets normally lay in a flat plane, the older ones become so large that they become pendent. They usually absent the tree in December or January with none to return until sometime in March.

Interestingly, the terminal flower buds begin to form in late autumn or early winter and in February expand from looking like brown toy tops to being six inches (15.24 cm) in length, velvety and cigar shaped. Riffle has described the ensuing process of them opening "at dusk to reveal five half inch-long (1.27 cm), recurved velvet brownish and white petals and hundreds of six to eight inch-long (15.24 -20.23 cm) white or pink stamens, very reminiscent of the vernacular name."

...Shaving Brush Tree

This opening process is even a bit quirky as, when these flowers unfold, they sometimes do so with an audible pop!



Its fruit fibers have been used to fill pillows as well as provide insulation.

Riffle also observed that "the pink flowered forms are more spectacular during the daylight hours, but the white-flowered form is astonishingly attractive in the moonlight and is said to have larger blossoms."

For quite some time, it was believed that these blooms were pollinated by bats. However, new research has divulged that they are pollinated by the wind or flower-feeding mammals. Additionally, they are regulars on the bees' and hummingbirds' busy floral social calendar!

The Shaving Brush Tree likes sun to light shade, fertile, moist and well-draining soil and is moderately salt, wind and drought tolerant. It is best propagated via cuttings or seeds. Its recommended landscaping applications include xeriscaping, on coastal areas, as a specimen tree, in street-side usage or for incorporation in public areas.

Folks long before us have been enamored by the Shaving Brush Tree as evidenced by its presentation in the artwork on Mayan ceramic pieces. Today, the Shaving Brush Tree wood is sometimes used for carving handicrafts. Its seeds can be toasted and eaten and, I've read that the fruit fibers have been used to fill pillows as well as provide insulation.



Beyond that, by way of third party, Jim Conrad reports in his online newsletter, NATURALIST NEWSLETTER, that "In *Las Plantas Medicinales de México* I read that the flowers can be cooked to make a tea for fevers and coughs, and the powdered bark can tighten the gums."

(I don't know about you, but tight gums has always been at the forefront of my daily concerns!)

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Pozole

Rather than waiting for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve, children in Latin homes await the arrival of the Three Kings on Jan. 6 for their holiday gifts. Families gather, not only to exchange gifts and food, but also to celebrate Día de los Reyes, associated with the Catholic celebration of Epiphany. For millions, Epiphany and Día de los Reyes still reign as king of winter holidays. And they arrive with their own set of flavors and festivities.

Slice your own piece of a Rosca de Reyes, the inspiration for Louisiana "King Cakes," or dip hot, cinnamon sugar buñuelos in piloncillo "honey" and start a new tradition. After the holiday, there's nothing that brings up your spirits like a hot bowl of pozole, appreciating the culture and light of Día de los Reyes and time spent with family.

Pozole is the winter comfort soup of choice in many Mexican homes, and it's easy to see why. This is one of the best soups I've ever had. Hearty, rich and bursting with flavor, it's a winter soup you will find yourself making all year long. Go out of your way to explore your local Mexican grocery market—the dried peppers are plentiful and affordable, and quality peppers are what make authentic Mexican cuisine sing.

Ingredients

- ✓ 1 ½ pounds pork shoulder (alternatively, chicken or turkey)
- ✓ salt
- ✓ 1 onion, chopped
- ✓ 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ✓ ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ✓ 1 tablespoon cumin powder
- ✓ ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ✓ 1/4 teaspoon oregano
- ✓ 2 tablespoons canola oil
- ✓ 2 whole fresh jalapenos, seeded and stemmed, minced
- ✓ 2 whole dried ancho chiles, seeded and stemmed, chopped
- ✓ 2 whole dried California chiles, seeded and stemmed
- ✓ 4 cups canned white hominy, drained and rinsed
- ✓ Guacamole
- ✓ Corn tortilla chips
- ✓ Radish and cabbage for garnish, if desired



Instructions

Lightly salt pork and place in a large pot. Fill with water until pork is just covered. Add half the onion, 2 cloves of garlic, black pepper, cumin, cayenne pepper and oregano.

Bring to a boil; lower heat and simmer for 45 minutes. Remove meat and broth from the pot and place in a large bowl.

Heat oil in the pot. Sauté the other onion half, 2 garlic cloves, jalapenos and ancho and California chiles in oil over medium-low heat for 10 to 15 minutes.

Shred or cube pork and return to pot. Strain liquid from pork and add to pot; there should be 3 to 5 cups of broth. Scrape the bottom of the pan to deglaze.

Add hominy to the pot and simmer, covered, for about 1 hour. Add 1 to 2 cups of water (or chicken broth) to add liquid, if needed.

Serve generously topped with guacamole and tortilla chips, if desired.

Source: Adapted from Genius Kitchen

¡Buen provecho!

Source [Tampa Bay Times](https://www.tampabay.com)

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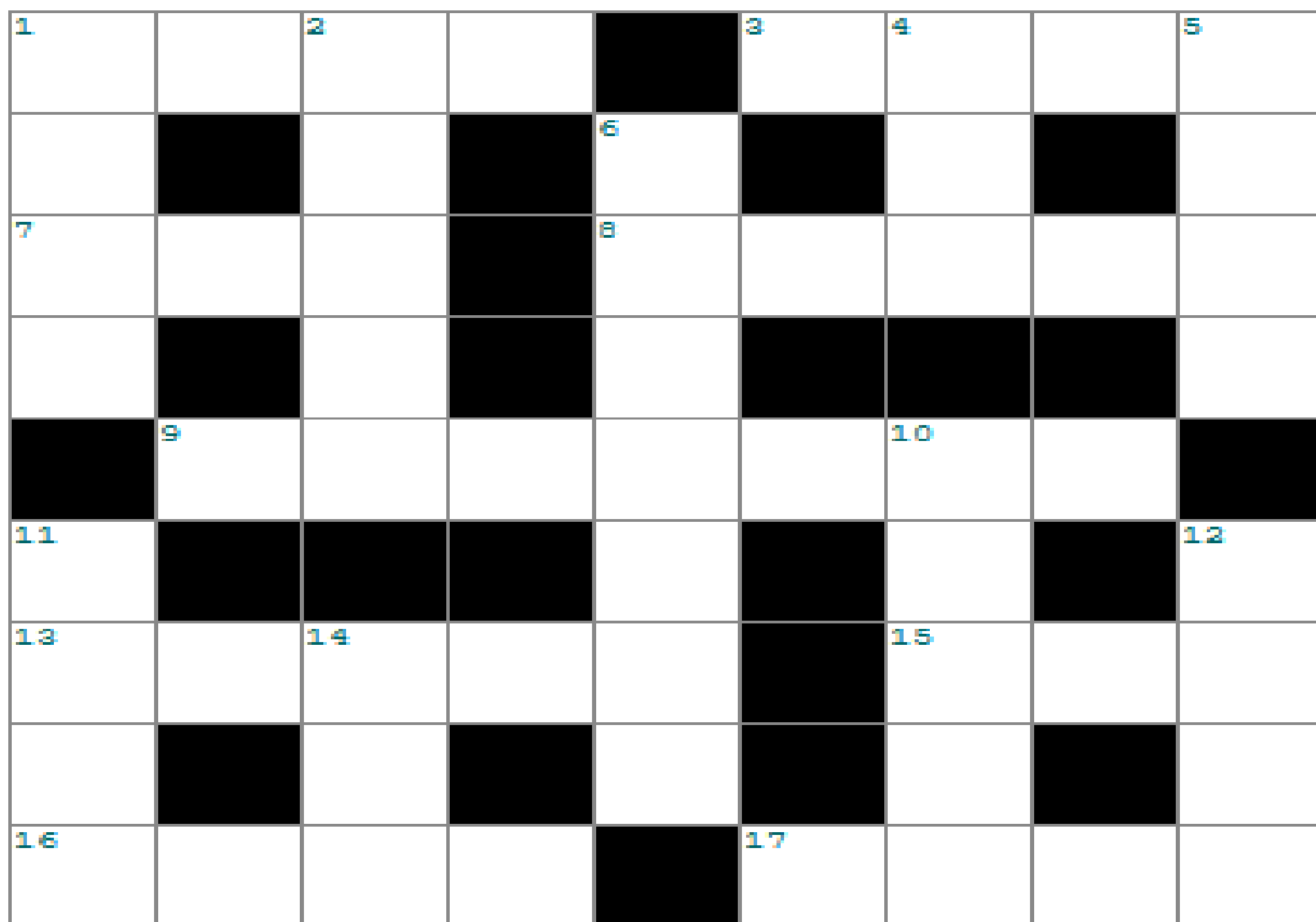
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Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 there
- 3 tuna
- 7 to give
- 8 west
- 9 bitten
- 13 to cough
- 15 thirst
- 16 weird, deviating from the normal; bizarre
- 17 leaf

Down

- 1 (l) burn
- 2 long; length
- 4 cough
- 5 nut, hard-shelled fruit
- 6 lamb
- 10 wish
- 11 to tie
- 12 (he) hates
- 14 south

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

Feast Day of Saint Anthony

from the Path to Citizenship series
article and images from [Events Los Cabos](#)

January 17

Feast Day of San Antonio de Abad, Saint Anthony Abbot



The blessing of the animals is the most famous element of this day, which is the only day animals are allowed into Catholic churches. Animals are adorned in ribbons and bows, and priests bless them.

January 17th is the Feast of San Antonio Abad, who is also known as San Antón in Spain. Although he was a hermit from Egypt, since Medieval times he has been the patron saint of domestic animals.

To celebrate his feast, the night before and the day of the actual feast on January 17th, the Spanish build huge bonfires or hogueras in the streets, especially in Andalucía, Castilla-La Mancha, the Community of Valencia and Aragón. In Cataluña and the Balearic Islands, there are mounted processions in the streets. The townspeople gather around the bonfires, visit, eat, dance and drink.

This religious holiday is marked by the blessing of animals, which are allowed to enter Catholic churches for the day. An interesting view into Mexico's dedication to religion, the day is marked by townspeople and farmers bringing pets and livestock to receive their blessings.

Following animal-friendly church services, congregations and visitors enjoy a feast to celebrate. The event, which also showcases a number of spectacular local Catholic churches, is free.

If you like animals, there is no entertainment quite like seeing hundreds of pets, dogs, cats, horses, and even iguanas, snakes, and roosters, all converging in one square to be sprinkled with holy water! January 17th, is yet another important Saint's Day in Spain, that of San Antonio Abad, patron saint of animals.



Naturally there's an important backstory to Antonio Abad, also known as Anthony the Great. He was a Catholic (Coptic) monk born in 3rd-century AD Egypt who was known for spreading monasticism.

He is now most famous for being the first to practice the asceticism of going into the wilderness to renew one's faith through nature. This is how he became associated with animals.

(Odd side note: He is also the Saint to whom you appeal to get rid of skin diseases, i.e. "St. Anthony's fire"!)



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The Foothills of Colima

Dry veins branch the dead gulch
cinder cone set on a marbled tan scape
fanning sands sketch ephemeral
fossil plates fold under columns of gray

Mountain back steep at the crevasse
sinkhole spots form on parallel nine
sulfur pipe stems from molten ash
withered shrubs and crumbling spines

Silt fields cover the foothills
swayback shed at the whipple tree barn
tumbledown shacks form the patchwork
from goat canyon ranch to big bison farm

Salt lake fractured in amber
sickle-bush cut at the bowline knot
half-moon traced by a viper
oxbow streams, and valley grot

By CK Baker, [All Poetry](#)