



# Manzanillo SUN

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine

November 2017

Arroyo in Club Santiago  
Manzanillo  
by Marg McKenna



Mighty Nature  
Nature's Wonders  
History and Mythology  
Finance  
RV Travel  
Recipe  
Path to Citizenship

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

Article submissions:

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

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## Interesting Local Creatures

by Terry Sovil

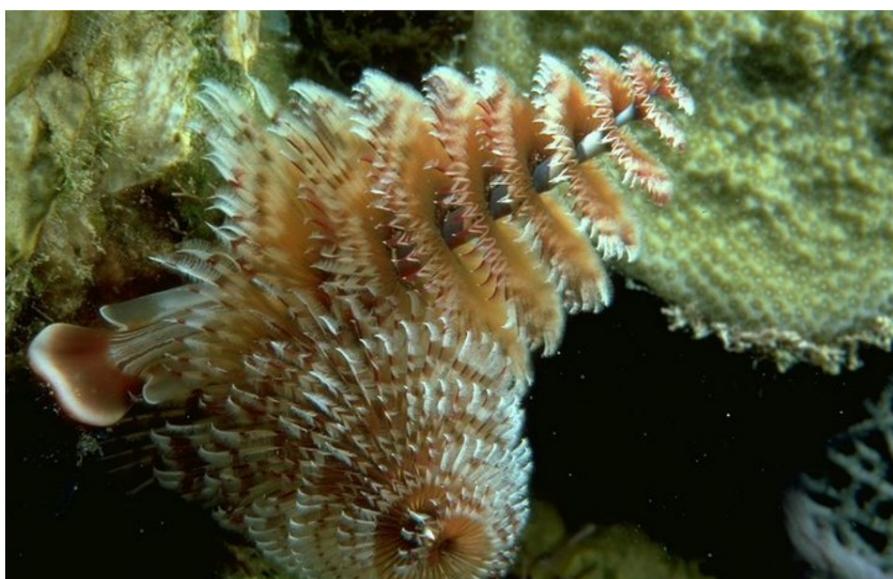
Manzanillo has some incredibly interesting, and different, creatures that are all around us. As a diver, I see all kinds of incredible things regularly. I don't take them for granted. When I'm diving, everything around me is my friend because most everything is alive! Here are 4 examples:

### Christmas Tree Worms

The Christmas tree worm is a Christmas tree-shaped, tube-dwelling worm with magnificent twin spirals of plumes used for feeding and respiration. The colorful plumes, or tentacles, are used for passive feeding on suspended food particles and plankton in the water. The plumes are also used for respiration. Though the plumes are visible, most of the worm is anchored in its burrow that it bores into live coral. Christmas tree worms are very sensitive to disturbances and will rapidly retract into the burrow at the slightest touch or passing shadow. They typically re-emerge a minute later, very slowly, to test the water before fully extending their plumes. About 1" / 25mm in size.



Christmas Tree Worms



Christmas Tree Worms

### Tube Blennies

There are many in this family, over 22 different types with 19 here in Manzanillo. They are found in depths of 3-200' .9-61M. They are solitary fish mostly, common in shallow rocky areas where they live in mollusk tubes (worm tubes that have been abandoned). They extend their heads from their holes. They will sometimes dart out to grab food. They tend to ignore divers and will allow a close approach. They grow from 1 ½ - 2" / 3.8-5 cm with a maximum of 2 ½" / 6.3 cm. Their eyes make me smile every time I see them.



Tube Blennies



...Interesting Local Creatures

**Sea Cucumbers**

The one I find most fascinating is the Orange Sea Cucumber (*Cucumaria miniata* or Vermillion cucumber). We also have a black type that is common here. There are six types common to the Eastern Pacific Manzanillo area. This one has multi-branched tentacles with the color usually orange but can range from white to almost red. They live on rocky reefs in crevices to a depth of about 80 feet / 24.4 M. They do not move about like some of the larger sea cucumbers. Rather than moving and finding food, they use their tentacles much like the Christmas Tree Worm. Once their tentacle is covered with food, they put it into their mouth where the food is removed. They can grow up to 25cm or 9" in length! If you move your hand back and forth, and create a current, the tentacles will be pulled back inside the cucumber!



Cucumaria Miniata - Orange Sea Cucumber



Black Cucumber

**Tiger Snake Eel**

These are the most common eel seen in Manzanillo along with the Jeweled Moray. Many people that see them identify them as a snake but they are, in fact, a very harmless eel. They do not have teeth like Moray eels, but have grinding plates. They are wary of divers but you can get pretty close to them to observe their habits. The most fascinating part is that, if they are truly afraid, they can bury themselves totally in the sand. Usu-

ally going tail first, they can wiggle and back right into the sand and move beneath the surface of the sand! They are found in the Gulf of California and southern Pacific Coast of Baja to Panama. They inhabit sand flats and rocky areas with boulders and gravel rubble. Average size is 28" / 50 cm but most are a bit smaller than that.



Tiger Snake Eel



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...Interesting Local Creatures



**Video on YouTube**

There is a [video on our YouTube](#) page that shows all of these critters in real life. It starts with the Christmas Tree Worms, where you can see how skittish they are and they will quickly retract and then very slowly come back out again. Next are the tube blennies, another favorite of mine. I get really excited to these little buddies and I will always stop to say "hello" and watch them. Next is the sea cucumber, Orange Sea Cucumber. At 1:41 in the video you will get a very good look at his mouth. There was a current the day we shot this video and so the tentacles are moving around a lot. But if you watch that mouth you will see tentacles moving in and out! Check out the screenshot from the video, I put a colored arrow pointing to the mouth.



Mouth of the Sea Cucumber (from the YouTube video)

[Link to the YouTube video](#)

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by Tommy Clarkson

**Amaryllis** *Amaryllis belladonna*

Family: *Amaryllidaceae*

Also known as: Belladonna Lily, Jersey Lily, Naked Lady, Amarillo or March

The Amaryllis has only one species in its genus. All those we see around the holidays called 'Amaryllis' are actually *Hippeastrum*. There has long been confusion in the botanical community regarding the Amaryllis and *Hippeastrum*. Plants of the latter are an entire South American genus of which there are about 90 species and over 600 hybrids.

Additionally, this is one of numerous genera with the common name "lily" due to its flower shape and growth habit. However, the Amaryllis is only distantly related to the true lily. But, they are tenaciously long lived (*as opposed to a short spleen, I suppose*) with a single bulb living up to 75 years.

Per Greek myth, the Amaryllis is named for a shepherdess who struggled with unrequited love for Alteo, a gardener. (*This story can't be all bad then!*) For a month, striving to impress him, she is said to have strolled the path past his door, piercing her heart with a golden arrow each time she passed. (*Love must have been a bit more extreme in those days!*) The blood which flowed from her breast, purportedly, created the beautiful flowers that bloomed in hues of scarlet along the pathway.



The Amaryllis has large, lily-like, trumpet-shaped blooms atop tall, straight stems.

(Trivia time: It's sometimes called The Jersey Lily as a result of a painting of the beautiful, late 19th century English actress, Lily Langtry, holding the flower, entitled 'A Jersey Lily' as she was from the Isle of Jersey in the English Channel.)

With its large, lily-like, trumpet-shaped blooms atop tall, straight stems, it does look exotically tropical. This beauty grows green, leafy growth in the spring which give way to several thin, but strong, stems. Each of these has a cluster of buds from whence come pink blossoms on slender stocks throughout the summer months. These pink blossoms have a delightful, sweet fragrance. Their name, somewhat obviously, arises from the fact that they bloom on leafless stalks.

Warmth is needed for blooming with the ideal temperature being 68° to 70° F (20°-21.11° C). Water sparingly until the stem begins, then as the bud and leaves appear, gradually water more. Avoid getting water on the nose of the bulb. Keep the potting medium moist, but don't over-water!

...Amaryllis



Is this from the *Amaryllis* and *Hippeastrum* genus? As I understand it, it's probably from the latter but some may disagree!

The stem will grow rapidly and flowers will develop after it has reached full potential, flowering in seven to ten weeks. If it is planted in a pot, remember to turn it every few days to get uniform exposure and help it grow straight. If it doesn't bloom, it is because of not having been given the proper rest period, insufficient light during its growing period or poor soil nutrients.

Bulbs which are older than two years will produce offset "bulblets". These may be left attached and repotted that way. Or, they can be very carefully, removed from the mother bulb immediately before it is replanted. These little bulbs will take two or more years of growth before they will produce their first flower.

When flowering stops, cut the old flowers from the stem and, when it starts to sag, cut it back to the top of the bulb. Continue to water and fertilize as normal for at least five to six months, allowing the leaves to fully develop. When leaves begin to yellow, cut them back to slightly above the top of the bulb and remove it from the soil.

If your Amaryllis won't go dormant, remove the remaining leaves and repot. Clean the bulb and place it in your refrigerator crisper drawer for a minimum of six to eight weeks. But do

not store amaryllis bulbs in a refrigerator that contains apples as this will sterilize the bulbs. (*Maybe that's why we never heard of Johnny Appleseed having children!*) After that, you may plant them when you wish - but eight weeks before you would like them to bloom.



A cluster of *Amaryllis belladonna* is a treat indeed!

You know how your garden looks in mid and late summer. Most of the big glamour is gone, and everything is looking tired and hot. Well, beautiful Belladonnas love just that situation-hot dry weather - and they bloom to liven the late season show. Their leafless stems, and the fact that they're perfectly happy in partial shade, make them great for planting among hostas, daylilies, violets, hardy geraniums or anything else that has nice foliage all summer long. They'll just bloom up through the ground-covering foliage, and everyone will think you're a master gardener.

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by Tommy Clarkson

**Red Ginger, *Alpinia purpurata***

Family: *Zingiberaceae*

Also known as: Ostrich Plume, Jungle King, Fire Ginger, Red Cone Ginger or Tahitian Ginger

Nellie Neal, who waxes almost poetically about our common botanical interests, writes in her book, a *Gardener's Guide to Tropical Plants*, "Red Ginger is a romantic plant, conjuring up leafy tropical groves where fantastic flowers wait to be discovered among dense stands of leafy stalks . . . bring[ing] the same allure to gardens worldwide."

These great plants are often seen, amid other dense foliage, by tropical travelers racing hither and yon. But, unless purposeful attention is given them, they may not register in one's consciousness in the here and now. They are splendid plants worthy of more attention than we sometimes take from our hectic, "helter skelter," day-to-day existence. So, in this case, I suggest that, rather than "stop and smell the roses" you "pause and ponder the Ginger!"

The Ginger family, in its entirety, is comprised of over 200 species of perennial, clumping, Asian herbs. Virtually all are water lovers, enjoying full sun to partial shade, rich, well-draining soil and protection from strong winds. The fragrance of their blooms can best be enjoyed when the blossoms are bruised. Interestingly, the rhizomes, leaves and stalks are also aromatic. After flowering has run its course, cut the entire stalk down so as to encourage new cane growth.



No, this is not the species of Ginger ones buys at the supermarket for incorporating into oriental recipes

The Red Ginger is a South Pacific native - ranging from the Malaysian peninsula through Melanesia and yet, more specifically, through Moluccas, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Solomon Islands, Bougainville and Yap Islands Archipelago. It can grow up to twelve feet (3.66 meters) or more in height and four feet (1.22 meters) in width with long, glossy, dark green, lanceolate leaves. These are three feet (91 cm) long and six inches (15 cm) wide. These leaves have slight ridges along their veins and a strong, lighter-colored midrib.

Red Ginger requires a year of undisturbed growth for the rhizomes to properly mature and produce those beautifully unique flowers.

Its colorful flower spikes are more than a foot (30 cm) long. Generally, they are among the earliest bloomers in the spring-time. The whitish flowers are actually quite tiny. Therefore, only the most patient of observers may really see the true flower which lies buried inside the brilliant bracts. It is those bold, bright, burgundy-red bracts - looking somewhat like the large, heads of maize (or, sometimes called milo) from my Kansas youth - that grab one's attention.

Enjoying organically rich, well-draining soil in full sunlight, to that of a filtered shadowy nature, they are often found, naturally, on stream, river, and lake banks.

...Red Ginger



The Ginger family is comprised of over 200 species of perennial, clumping Asian herbs.

Commonly developing from the older inflorescences are multiple flower spikes and viviparous (meaning to produce seeds that germinate on its plantlets) offspring. Those seeds, by the way, are extremely small. So, actually, propagation can perhaps be accomplished best by root division.

They make wonderful container plants, colorful hedge screens or fillers. And if those weren't in themselves good enough reasons to have some Red Ginger, the nectar of its flowers is attractive to bees, birds, and butterflies!

But, like so many plants, there is a degree of different opinions regarding *Alpinia purpurata*. For instance, while it's the national flower of Samoa - known there as "*teuila*" - in Hawaii, it is considered an invasive species with some claiming that it is taking over the forests.

Other than, potentially, mealybugs, the Red Ginger has few natural enemies . . . *well, unless you count those who come down, with shears in hand, in search of flowers for indoor vase display?*

It is important to remember that they really appreciate high humidity. They are heavy drinking characters and require regular watering. They will love you to the bottom of their roots if you mulch two inches (5.08 cm) deep all around them. Even potted, do so to a depth of around one inch (2.54 cm). If taken care of, they will really spread rapidly.

Two very attractive cultivars are the 'Tahitian Ginger' whose

plumes are often six inches (15.24 cm) in diameter and the 'Jungle Queen' which is a light-pink variety.



I suggest that rather than "stop and smell the roses" you

What with their attractive, deep-green leaves and multiple, brazenly, brilliant, bright bracts, these are nice to have. As Nellie correctly notes - once again from her book - its "dozens of rich, red, silky bracts shield tiny white flowers, creating a curvy cone of astounding color depth. The power of red as an attractant gives the bracts a sure lure for insect pollination, as effective as a bullfighter's cape."

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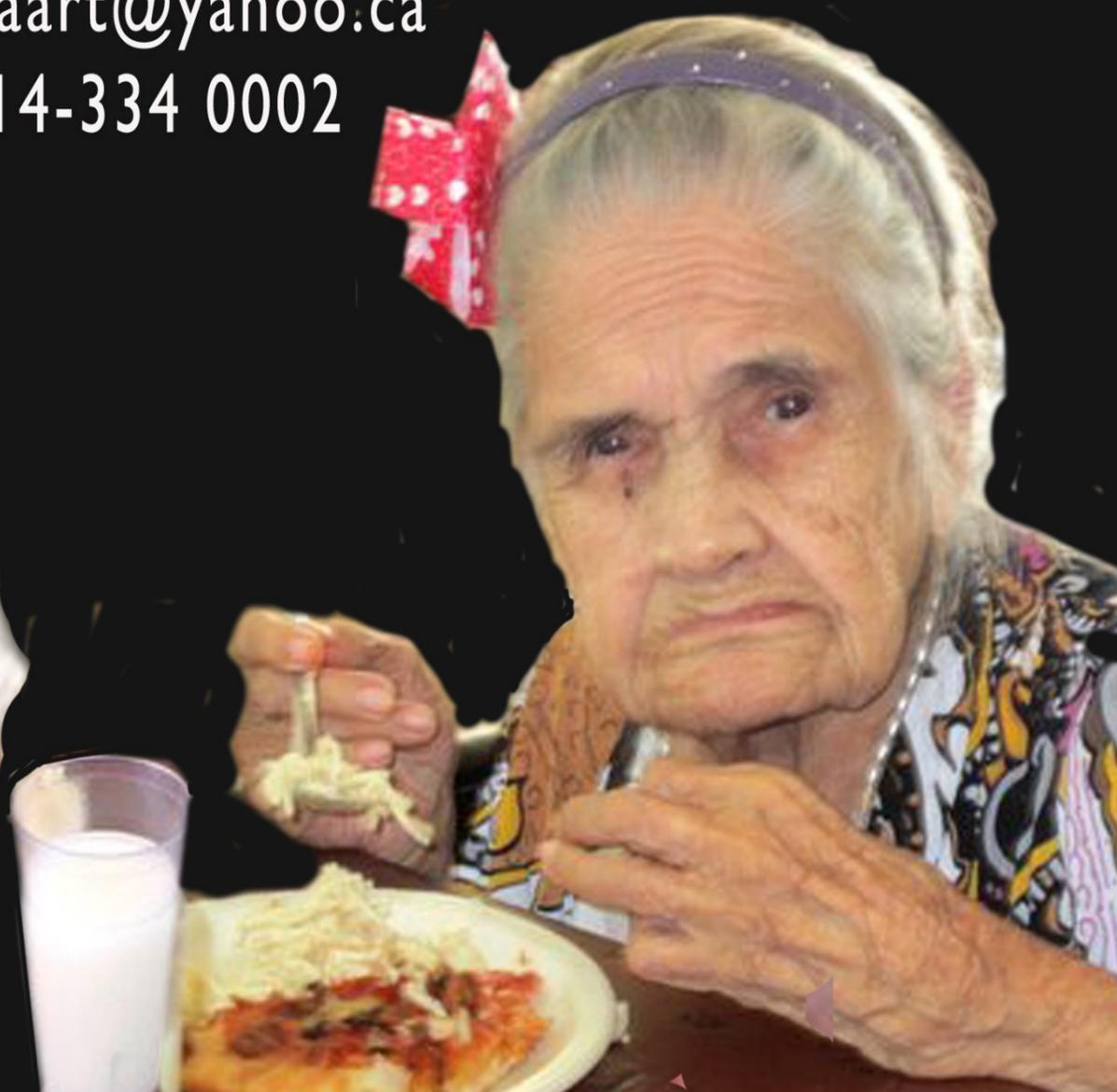
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## Mexican Marigolds

by Kirby Vickery

Have you ever looked into a marigold flower and wondered just how many petals it has? The Aztecs did and discovered that there are anywhere up to 280 of them in a single blossom. The colors of that bloom are so intense that they remain bright and stand out even after the flower dies and dries up. The Aztecs noted that and they ended up with a fable about the flower of the Cempasuchil plant which is what they call it. Translated it means 'Twenty Flowers.'

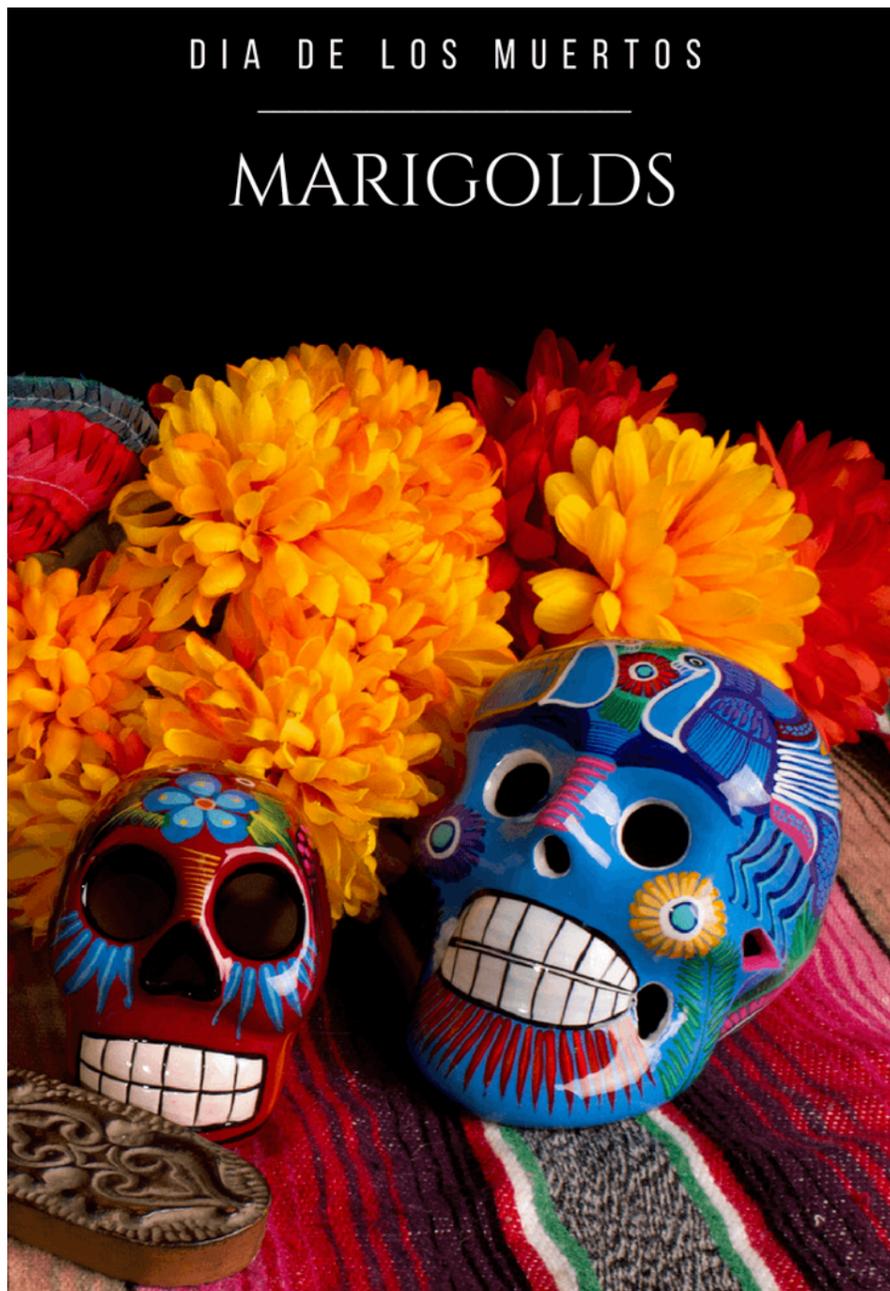
You can't really say it was ever written out although that could have happened. Most likely, the story was made up by some quick-witted woman and spun out to her children and then it grew from there. From Aztec times to present, the plant has had several medicinal and commercial uses. Personally, I like the fact that the flower, when dried and powdered, is then added to the feed and used to color the yolks of eggs for some species of chickens. This stuff is also used to color the skin of boiler chickens.

A modern-day person can ponder the origins of that story, and a host of others, with the fiery beginnings of the Aztec culture. Although they existed in a state of going to war with one neighbor after another, and used their captives in bloody rituals, there is a softer side to their pantheon of Gods which the Aztecs believed in and prayed to. Remembering that stories and epics of this type often use extreme emotion to get the point of the story across to the listener, one can then sit back and start to really enjoy the art of Aztec story telling.

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a holiday celebrated in Mexico mostly in the central and southern parts of the country and throughout the world on October 30 and November 1 and 2. It's a celebration of life, honoring friends and family who have died. The Mexican people have a different outlook on death and choose to celebrate it rather than fear it.

Colorful altars are erected in homes and public spaces featuring favorite foods, drinks (most notably, tequila) and personal me-





mentos of the deceased. Altar decorations include hand-cut paper and marigolds because of their vibrant colors.

Why marigolds? It is believed that the spirits of the dead visit the living during the celebration. Marigolds guide the spirits to their altars using their vibrant colors and scent. Marigolds also represent the fragility of life and they have their own Aztec fable to tell of their beginning.

The name of our hero in this little story is Huitzil, which is derived from the Aztec God of War's name of Huitzilopochtli, which is an onomatopoeic word representing the sound of a hummingbird's wing in flight.

#### **The Creation of the Marigold or Cempasuchil (in Aztec)**

In very early times, at the start of the fifth world, there lived a young boy, Huitikin, and his best friend, a young girl of his age, named Xochitl. They lived next door to each other and played together every day since they were let out into their yards as crawling babes.

As they grew older, they would go further from home to explore and play. First it was the town which they just had to

learn all about. They explored it playing their childhood games of tag and hide and go seek. Although Xochitl was very fair and delicate, her family would let her continue to play with Huitikin.

As time went by, and they grew older, they particularly enjoyed hiking to the top of a nearby mountain where they would offer flowers to the Sun god, Tonatiuh. The god seemed to appreciate their offering and would smile from the sky with his warm rays. On a particularly beautiful day, at the top of the mountain, they swore that their love would last forever.

One day, while they were at the top of their mountain, Huitikin told Xochitl of his impending departure to fight in a war and help defend his homeland and village. There wasn't anything she could say or do that would change his mind about his civic responsibility. They both knelt and made offerings and prayed to Tonatiuh for his safe and speedy return to this idealistic world they lived in.

It was some time later when Xochitl received word that her childhood friend and lover had been killed. Her world fell completely into pieces, and her heart was utterly torn apart. She wanted to volunteer to be a sacrificed at the blood alter run by the local priests, but they wouldn't have her because she was unmarried and wasn't a virgin.

In desperation, she ran to the top of their mountain, fell to the ground and wept her sorrow of Huitikin's death. She pleaded to Tonatiuh to return her lover to her and bestow enough magic on her and Huitikin so he would be brought back to life, returned to her, and that they would never be separated again.

The sun god felt very sorry for this young girl and was aware of her love and that of Huitikin's love for her. Tonatiuh was moved by her prayers and gathered up a ray of sun and threw it at her. This one was a gentle thing and as it touched Xochitl's cheek. As soon as it touched her, she became a beautiful flower, rich in the intense fiery colors of a sun's morning ray.

At that very instant, a hummingbird was flying in a hover over this beautiful flower and probed his beak deep into the very center of the petals. It was Huitikin reborn as a hummingbird fulfilling the request of his lover Xochitl, never to be separated again as long as there are both hummingbirds and marigold flowers in the world.

*you can reach Kirby Vickery at [kirby.vickery@manzanillosun.com](mailto:kirby.vickery@manzanillosun.com)*

### How Should You Invest an Inheritance?

by Yann Kostic and Tom Zachystal

You have inherited a sum of money but have some concerns about how to invest it, as there are many options available to you.

Traditional wisdom would be to invest any large sum of money using a method called dollar-cost averaging, which simply means investing it a little at a time. The idea is that you take on less risk by trickling your money into the market rather than dumping it in all at once.

If you like this option, you would put your entire inheritance in a savings account or money-market fund, and then, over the course of a year or so, invest an equal amount each month in a portfolio of stocks and bonds.

But there is another option for those who would like to get their money working faster. This is to determine an appropriate asset allocation—a mix of stocks, bonds, and other investments—that meets your risk tolerance and helps you achieve your financial goals.

With this option, you would invest the entire inheritance at once based on that mix of assets. Proponents of this approach say your money starts working for you quickly, while not leaving you too conservatively invested for a period of time, as dollar-cost averaging might.

More importantly, and regardless of the approach you choose, your assets, ideally, should be divided between different types of investments, based on your financial goals and your risk tolerance.

Your advisor can help you determine the appropriate asset allocation—one that takes into account the fact that, sadly, no one knows how the market is going to perform.

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

Yann Kostic, MBA and Tom Zachystal, CFP, are Presidents of their respective Assets Management firms, both US-Registered Investment Advisors (RIA). Tom is the San Francisco Financial Planners' Association President. Tom and Yann cater to US expats in Mexico and worldwide. Comments, questions or to request his newsletter, "News you can use" contact him at [yannk@atlantisgrp.com](mailto:yannk@atlantisgrp.com), in the US at (321) 574-1 529 or in Mexico, (376) 106-1613.



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## San Cristóbal de las Casas

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

February 20-22, 2016 (Days 45-47)

Our drive from Agua Azul to San Cristóbal de las Casas was led by Rafael and Eileen, mostly on Hwy 199, with all the turns and topes, ups and downs, climbing to 7000 feet, over 2000 meters, was nothing short of spectacular! In addition to the amazing vistas, our journey took us through the towns of Ocosingo, Abasolo, San Sebastián, Rancho Nuevo, just prior to joining Hwy 190 and the final leg to San Cristóbal. Unfortunately, we picked up a screw in a rear truck tire however Roland had an air compressor and generator and we had canned sealant that stopped the leak until a more permanent repair could be made.



Lots of green on the way Hwy 199 to San Cristóbal

We had phoned ahead and found a Hotel that could accommodate our RVs in their parking lot. The remaining campground in town was too small, with access challenges for our group, hence the need to find an alternative. It was only when

GPS (Molly) read out on the road to San Cristóbal



Tire repair in San Cristóbal \$100 pesos (\$5 USD)

we arrived at the hotel that we realized that the parking arrangements would not work. Luckily the PEMEX gas station 5661 across the street was able to accommodate us at \$40 pesos per day, no wifi or showers, just ice cream bars.

After we got set up in the PEMEX, Rafael and I headed off to find a repair shop and the mission was accomplished for \$100 pesos. Later, some of us went across the street to a restaurant for dinner. The next day, we made our first foray into San Cristóbal de las Casas Centro and the city lived up to the hype. What a beautiful place! We were able to find parking near the Zócalo for our explorations and headed out to see what the town had to offer. We made our way up to Guadalupe Church on a low rise for a better view of the city. It was a very impressive church inside as well. On our walk around, we encountered many indigenous women wearing traditional Tzotzil dress. Good thing we did not bring the RVs into town. The streets are narrow and many closed to traffic.

We did lots of poking around in many shops and purchased more calcomanías (bumper stickers) for the Tango trailer. Later we had lunch with many of the gang on a roof top restaurant on the main square; there was a celebration going on so lots of fireworks were banging above. After lunch, the group met at the van and we headed back to the RVs for a siesta and then at 5:30 pm out for some groceries. Our last day in San Cristóbal was busy and we spent most of our day downtown at the

...San Cristóbal de las Casas



Welcome!

Santo Domingo Dominican Convent at an open air textile market that surrounded the business. This was an unforgettable experience, so many goods, so much colour, so many merchants, just fabulous. After walking the entire outdoor market, we headed off for lunch and found a small taco restaurant where as it happens the gang had also collected for lunch. Inexpensive, tasty and plenty to eat. We met at the 2:00 pm rendezvous time and headed back to our campground. Later, Mike and I resupplied for agua purificada and Rafael and Eileen found some wifi not too far away. A visit to San Cristóbal de las Casas is a must for any Mexico traveller. We could have spent many more days in this town.

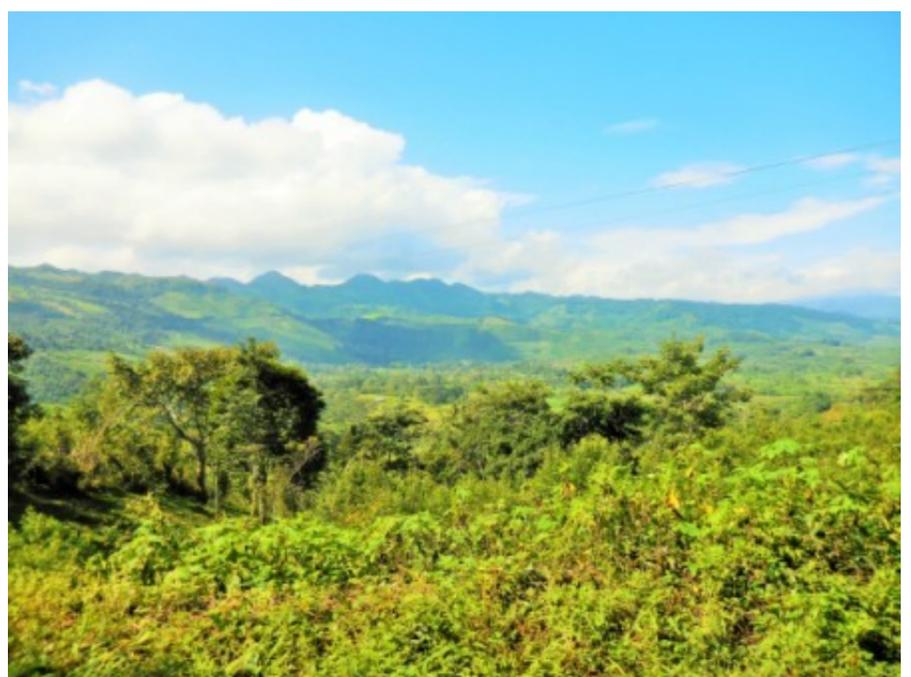
### Background

San Cristóbal de las Casas, also known by its native Tzotzil name, Jovel, is located in the Central Highlands region of the Mexican state of Chiapas and was the capital of the state until 1892. San Cristóbal is still considered the cultural centre of

Chiapas. This region is mostly made up of mountainous terrain, but the city sits in a small valley surrounded by hills. The city's center maintains its Spanish colonial layout and much of its architecture, with red tile roofs, cobblestone streets and wrought iron balconies, often with flowers. Most of the city's economy is based on commerce, services and tourism. Tourism is based on the city's history, culture and indigenous population, although the tourism itself has affected the city, giving it foreign elements. Major landmarks of the city include the Cathedral, the Santo Domingo church with its large open-air crafts market and the Casa Na Bolom museum. Unfortunately, the municipality has suffered severe deforestation, but it has natural attractions such as caves and rivers.

The city, especially the historic center, continues to maintain its

Beautiful scenery on the road to San Cristóbal



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...San Cristóbal de las Casas



Anita, Lisa and Grant at San Cristóbal viewpoint from Church Guadalupe

Spanish colonial layout, with narrow cobblestone streets, roofs covered in red clay tile and wrought iron balconies with flowers. The facades of the buildings vary from Baroque to neoclassical and Moorish, painted in various colors. Milk delivery from local dairy farms still use canisters on donkeys, and farmer's typically still use horses and donkeys for hauling wood and farmed goods within their own properties. The city subdivides into three sections but the majority of the population lives in the central section near the city center. Many of the surrounding hills have lost their native trees, in part due to cutting firewood and logging operations which feed the local manufacturing and construction industries.



Do not drive the RVs into the historic centre of San Cristóbal

Although the political capital of Chiapas was moved to Tuxtla at the end of the 19th century, San Cristóbal is considered to be the "cultural capital" of the state. **Designated a "Pueblo**

**Mágico" (Magical Village) in 2003**, it was further recognized as "The most magical of the Pueblos Mágicos" by President Felipe Calderón in 2010. Much of this culture is associated with the cities' and municipalities' large indigenous population, which is mostly made up of Tzotzils and Tzeltals. One aspect of traditional culture associated with these indigenous groups is the making of textiles, with amber another important product. Ceramics, wrought iron and filigree jewelry can be found as well. The best known area for crafts is the tianguis at Santo Domingo. The city hosts an annual Amber Expo at the Centro de Convenciones Casa de Mazariegos. The event exhibits and sell amber and amber pieces from the state. A more traditional Mexican market is located just north of the Santo Tomas Church. It is open each day except Sunday, when its vendors go to the surrounding communities in the municipality to sell at their markets. On the days that it is open, the large building, which mostly houses traditional butcher shops, is surrounded by stalls that crowd the nearby streets. There are very few tourists here, except for the occasional backpacker. Markets like this serve traditional dishes such as saffron tamales, sopa de pan, asado coletto, atole de granillo and a drink called posh made from sugar cane.



Busy market in Ocosingo on Hwy 199

The city's attraction for tourists has also led to a number making San Cristóbal their permanent home, which has had an effect of the local culture, especially in the historic center. Many foreign residents have opened up restaurants with Italian, French, Thai, Indian, Chinese and more options, such as vegetarian available. An older foreign influence is the city's noted cured meat tradition, which can be traced back to both the

...San Cristóbal de las Casas

Spanish and the Germans. These are featured in a number of dishes including chalupas. Foreign influence can also be seen in the city's nightlife which offers reggae, salsa, techno and more.



Fabulous outdoor market

We can attest to the fact that fireworks are common as there are many religious festivals which use them. Important celebrations include those dedicated to the Dulce Niño de Jesús, the Señor de Esquipulas, Saint Anthony, Corpus Christi, San Cristóbal and the Holy Family. This is in addition to the various neighborhood saint celebrations in their respective churches around town. However, the most elaborate rituals are performed during Holy Week. Holy Week processions include both silent and chanting marchers. A number are dressed in pointed



Grant at Church Guadalupe overlooking San Cristobal green space

hoods and carry a heavy platform with religious figures. They go from home to home, stopping at those homes that have erected small shrines. There they say prayers and bless the house and its occupants before moving on. They finally come to rest in a gigantic open house where an inner shrine has been erected, lit by thousands of candles and have a large pot-luck supper. All, even passersby, are welcome to partake. Passion plays depicting the crucifixion of Jesus are common events, with one large one centered in the open plaza behind the municipal palace. After dark, there is the Burning of Judas. These Judas figures are plentiful and include government bureaucrats, Church officials, the army, the United States, Spanish conquistadors, celebrities as well as Judas. The figures are lit by local firemen who try to keep people back at a safe distance, but fireworks fall among the crowds anyway.

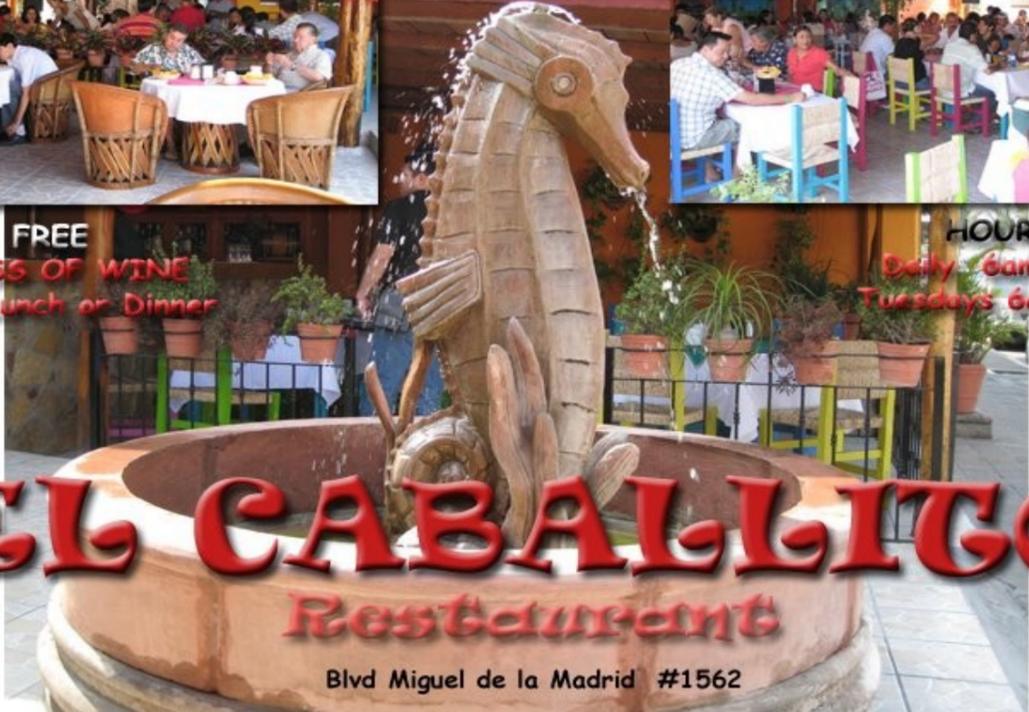
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In the mountains on Hwy 199 near San Cristóbal

**The Feria de la Primavera y la Paz** (Spring and Peace Fair) run concurrent with Holy Week, especially on Holy Saturday, with music and costumes. It terminates with the burning of Judas. A queen is elected to be crowned the next day. Bullfights are held.

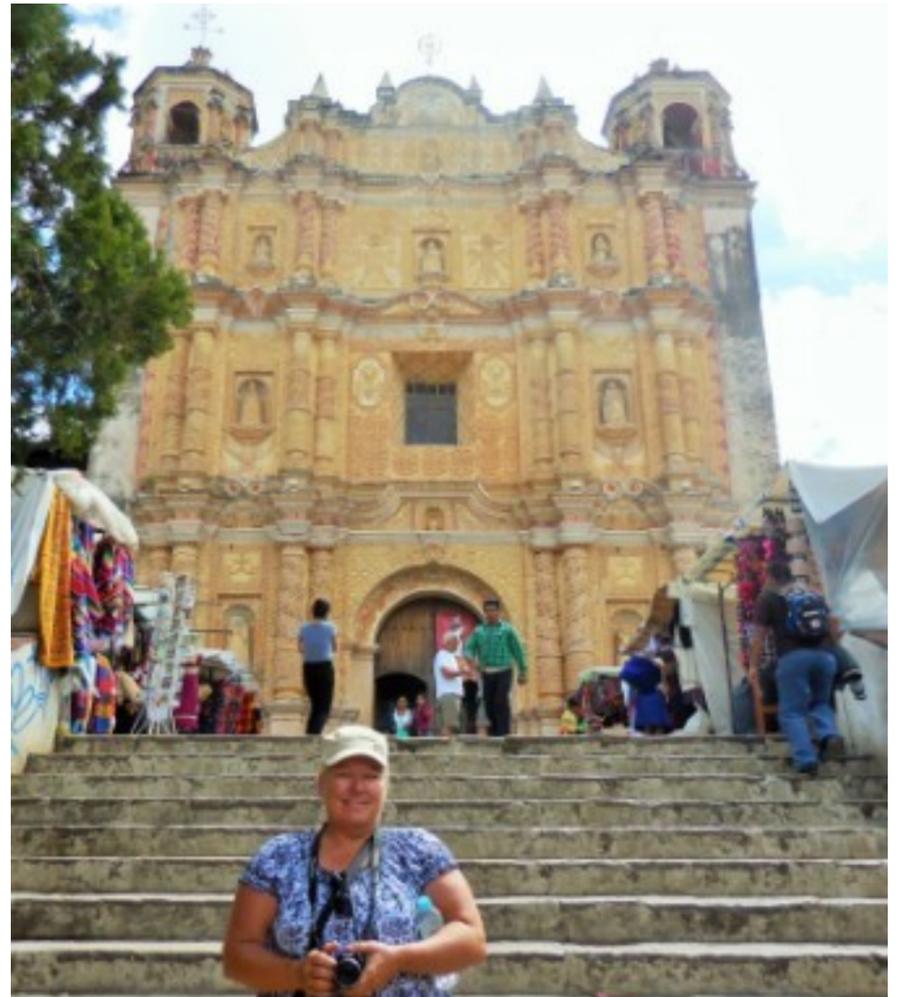


Kelly and Irene enter outside market in San Cristóbal

**The Festival Cervantino Barroco** is held each year in the historic center, featuring invited artists from various parts of Mexico and abroad. It is held in various forums in the city and includes concerts, plays, exhibitions and conferences.

### Historic Sites

The main town square is a marked copy of La Florida (park) of Álava, Spain, due to local euphoria with the last name "Ortés De Velasco". **The center of the city is its main plaza. This plaza's official name is Plaza 31 de marzo, but it is more often simply called the Zócalo.** In the colonial era, the city's main market was here, as well as was the main water supply. Today, it is centered on a kiosk which was added in the early



Lisa at San Cristóbal Church Market

20th century. The corners of this structure have inscriptions marking the major events of San Cristóbal's history. The rest of the plaza is filled with gardens and surrounded by the most important buildings and finest homes from the history of the city. Surrounding this plaza are the city's most important buildings such as the Cathedral and the city hall.

**The Cathedral is to the north of the main plaza and it is the most emblematic symbol of the city.** However, the main facade does not face the Zócalo, rather it faces its own atrium

Chicken anyone?



...San Cristóbal de las Casas



Gang at lunch

which is called the Cathedral Plaza. The Cathedral began as a modest church dedicated to the Virgin of the Assumption built in 1528. When Chiapas became a diocese in the 17th century, with San Cristóbal as its seat, this church was torn down to build the current structure, dedicated to Saint Christopher, the patron of the city. The overall structure contains European Baroque, Moorish and indigenous influences. The main facade was finished in 1721 and some final touches were added in the 20th century. The main feature of the church is its main facade, which was finished in 1721. It is Baroque, painted yellow, with ornamental columns and niches in which are various saints. It is divided into three horizontal and three vertical levels marked off by pairs of Solomonian columns and meant to resemble an

RV caravan navigating through the village



altarpiece. It is further decorated with intricate raised stucco work, mostly in white, which show Oaxacan and Guatemalan influences. The layout of the interior shows Moorish influence. The main altar is dedicated to both the Virgin of the Assumption and Saint Christopher. The wood pulpit is from the 16th century and gilded. The side walls have two Baroque altarpieces, one to the Virgin of the Assumption and the other to John of Nepomuk. There is also a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe on the north side. The sacristy has a large colonial era painting of Jesus in Gethsemane by Juan Correa, as well as paintings by Miguel Cabrera and Eusebio de Aguilar. It is common to see older indigenous women in the Cathedral, with some even traversing the entire nave on their knees to approach the large image of Jesus hanging above the Baroque altar.



San Cristóbal De Las Casas Historic Centre Neighbourhood

**At the back of the Cathedral, there is an affixed church called the San Nicolás Temple.** It was constructed between 1613 and 1621, in Moorish design, by Augustinian monks, for use by the indigenous population. It is the only church in the city which has not been significantly altered since its construction. The roof is pitched and pyramid shaped, built with wood and tile, and its facade is made of stone and brick with little ornamentation. Two of its images, the Señor de la Misericordia and the Virgen de los Dolores, are both from Guatemala.

**The city hall, often called the Palacio de Gobierno, is a neo-classical construction which was built in the 19th century by architect Carlos Z. Flores.** It contains a series of arches supported by Tuscan columns. In front of the city hall at night,

...San Cristóbal de las Casas

young men and women promenade past each other in opposite directions around the gazebo. The city hall is scene to fairly frequent protests, some directly associated with the Zapatistas and others are held by student activists from UNAM in Mexico City. These protests are generally accompanied by lines of riot police.

**When Dominicans came to San Cristóbal from Seville, Spain, they were given an area of land to construct their church and monastery.** The first stone was laid in 1547 by Francisco Marroqui, then Bishop of Guatemala. The monastery was finished in 1551. It is one of the most ornate structures in Latin America, both due to the stucco work on the main facade and the gilded altarpieces which completely cover the length on the church's interior. The facade of the main church is Baroque with Salomonic columns, heavily decorated in stucco forms to mimic an altarpiece.



San Cristóbal De Las Casas Historic Zócalo

The interior has a pulpit carved of wood and covered in gold leaf. The walls are covered in Baroque altarpieces including those dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The La Caridad Temple was constructed on the site in 1712, established as part of the first hospital for the indigenous. The main facade of this church is designed as an altarpiece with two levels, a central bell tower and Tuscan columns and pilasters. Its design is derived from the Baroque that developed in Lima, Peru. There is an image of the Virgen de la Caridad (Virgin of Charity) carrying a baton like a military general. There is also a notable sculpture of Saint James on horseback. The complex contains two museums. The Museo de la Historia de la Ciudad covers the history of the city



Lots of shops at this outdoor market

until the 19th century. Of this collection, the two most important pieces are some petals of a pomegranate flower, from a receptacle for the Host in the Cathedral. It is one of most important works of Chiapas silver smithing. The rest of the piece has been lost. The other is a part of the original choir seating of the same Cathedral. The Centro Cultural de los Altos has a collection of some of the area's textiles from each ethnicity and exhibits on how they are made. It has a store associated with it called the Sna Jolobil, which means house of weaving in Tzotzil.

**Casa Na Bolom (House of the Jaguar) is a museum, hotel and restaurant located outside the city's historic center.** The structure was built as part of a seminary in 1891, but it became the home of Frans Blom and Gertrude Duby Blom in the 20th century. Franz was an explorer and archeologist and Gertrude was a journalist and photographer. The couple spent over fifty years in Chiapas collecting tools, crafts, archeological pieces

Lots of walking in San Cristóbal



...San Cristóbal de las Casas



Outdoor patio for lunch in the Zócalo

and clothing, especially related to the Lacandón Jungle and people. The museum is dedicated to this collection along with keeping some of the old household rooms intact, such as Franz's study. It also contains a library with more than 10,000



Tesha-ma Hotel Courtyard



volumes dedicated to the history, culture and anthropology of the region. There are magazine and sound libraries as well as the old chapel which contains colonial-era religious art. The back of the structure contains a botanical garden.



Campground at the gas station

**The La Merced monastery was the first in the city founded by the Mercedarians from Guatemala in 1537.** It was built as a fortress with barracks for soldiers and space for citizens in case of attack. The church entrance has a massive wooden door with wrought iron hinges and fastenings. There are very few windows and those that exist are built to allow muskets to fire on attackers. The entire structure is built with extensions and abutments to provide for interlocking fields of fire. Entry to the fortifications is denied as too dangerous. The church still functions as such. It consists of a single nave, with interior remodeled in neoclassical design during the Porfirio Díaz era. The oldest part of the structure is an arch and columns located in the interior of the sacristy, which is decorated in stucco of various colors with floral and vegetative motifs. At the foot of the column, there are two lions to symbolize Spanish domination. In the latter half of the 19th century, it was used as a military barracks and, in 1960, it was converted into the city jail which it remained until 1993. In 2000, this monastery was converted into the Museum of Amber. It has a collection of over three hundred pieces and is the only one of its kind in the Americas.

**The Carmen Temple and the Arco Torre, both in Moorish style, are located on Andador Eclesiastico.** The Carmen Temple is all that remains of the former La Encarnación convent which was founded in 1597 with the first nuns arriving between 1609 and 1610. The complex includes the old cloister, nuns' cells and other structures. The original church building burned and it was restored, conserving its simple facade. One unusual

...San Cristóbal de las Casas

feature of the church is that its layout is "L" shaped, covering the south and west sides of a small plaza. Inside, the walls have carved wood panels and a neoclassical altar which has been recently restored. In the colonial period, the convent and church served as one of the main entrances into the city. An arch with tower was constructed next to the convent in 1680, now simply called the Arco del Carmen. This arch is in pure Moorish style, with three levels of decoration. It is the only one of its style in Mexico. This arch, with its accompanying tower, has been adopted as one of the symbols of San Cristóbal.



So much to see at the San Cristóbal Church Market

**The San Cristóbal Church is atop a long staircase up the hill.** It is often closed but it offers panoramic views of the city. At the San Cristóbal church, the patron saint is celebrated on July 25 with marimbas, food and fireworks. For ten days previously, each of the main neighborhoods has a pilgrimage to the top of the hill.

**The San Francisco Church was built by the Franciscans in 1577 as a monastery but only the church survives.** The current church was built in the 18th century with a single nave covered in a wood and tile roof. The main facade has three levels and two side towers. Inside, it has six Baroque altarpieces. The upper part of the nave has fourteen oil paintings. The atrium has a sculpted stone baptismal font.

**The Guadalupe Church is located on the Cerro de Guadalupe.** It was constructed in 1834. To reach it, there are seventy nine stairs up the hill. The church has a single nave with a side chapel. The main altar has an oil painting of the Virgin of Gua-



San Cristóbal Zócalo



The Zócalo has public wifi

dalupe and the side chapel contains a sculpture of the virgin from 1850. The atrium affords panoramic views of the city. The feast of this Virgin is celebrated annually with a parade on the main street with fireworks, rockets and candlelight vigils.

**The Santo Tomás Church is just north of the historic center.** It has a museum in the back, in a building which was the barracks and parade grounds built when the city was founded.

**The Santa Lucía Church was constructed in 1884 by architect Carlos Z. Flores over what was a dilapidated chapel.** It consists of a single nave with pilasters on its walls and pointed arches. The main altar is Gothic with Neoclassical and Art Nouveau elements.

**The Museo Mesoamericano del Jade has jade pieces from the Olmec, Teotihuacan, Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya, Toltec and Aztec cultures.** There is also a life-sized replica of the burial chamber of Pakal of Palenque as it looked when the king was buried. The Maya Medicine Museum is dedicated to the various techniques and practices of indigenous medicine, many of

...San Cristóbal de las Casas

which are still practiced today. The Museo de las Culturas Populares de Chiapas (Museum of Popular Cultures of Chiapas) is located on Diego de Mazariego Street. It is mostly dedicated to the indigenous cultures of the state with the aim of recuperating, valuing and promoting knowledge of these cultures in Chiapas and beyond. The museum has exhibits of many of these cultures and also sponsored live events related to its mission as well.

**Casa de las Sirenas is one of the most notable domestic structures from the colonial era.** It was built in Plateresque style and dates from the 16th century by Andrés de la Tovilla. It is named after a mermaid that appears on its crest on one of the corners.

**The Antiguo Colegio de San Francisco Javier today houses the Faculty of Law of the state university.** It was originally founded by the Jesuits in 1681 for the education of the Spanish elite. Its current facade is two levels in neoclassical style. The interior contains murals about the Spanish conquest of Mexico.

### History

**The city was founded as Villa Real de Chiapa in 1528 by Diego de Mazariegos in what was called the Hueyzacatlán Valley, which means "pasture" in Nahuatl.** From then on, the city went through a number of name changes: to Villa Viciosa in 1529, to Villa de San Cristóbal de los Llanos in 1531, and to Ciudad Real in 1536. It was changed to Ciudad de San Cristóbal in 1829. "de las Casas" was added in 1848 in honor of Bartolomé de las Casas. There were some modifications in the

San Cristóbal Hotel Courtyard



early 20th century to the name but it returned to San Cristóbal de las Casas in 1943. In the Tzotzil and Tzeltal languages, the name of the area is Jovel, the place in the clouds.

**The area did not have a pre Hispanic city.** After defeating the Zoques in the Northern Mountains and the Chiapans of this area, Diego de Mazariegos founded the city as a military fort. This city, and much of what would be the state of Chiapas came under the Captaincy General of Guatemala in 1532 headed by Pedro de Alvarado. San Cristóbal received its coat of arms in 1535 from Carlos V and it was officially declared a city in 1536. The city gained the rank of Alcaldía Mayor in 1577 which gave it authority over much of Chiapas north of it. The intendencia of Chiapas was created in 1786 combining San Cristóbal's territory with that of Tuxtla and Soconusco, with the government in San Cristóbal. In 1821, the city followed Comitán de Domínguez' declaration of independence from Spain and the Captaincy General of Guatemala. **However, the city and the rest of Chiapas would become a part of Mexico in 1824, with the capital established here.**

**In 1829, the name Ciudad Real was changed to San Cristóbal.** In the 19th century, the state government would shift back and forth between San Cristóbal, in the highlands dominated by Conservatives and Tuxtla, which favored the Liberals. Independent tendencies arose again in 1853, when the Plan of Yalmús was announced declaring the then Mexican Constitution null. Conservative forces attacked the city in 1857 but were dislodged shortly thereafter by Liberal Angel Albino Corzo. The last of French forces were expelled from the city in 1864. The state government was moved from San Cristóbal to Tuxtla for good in 1892 by the Liberal government. There was a failed attempt in 1911 by Conservatives in San Cristóbal and neighboring San Juan Chamula to force the capital to return.

**In 1915, the state went to the municipality system with San Cristóbal becoming a municipality.** Originally, it had jurisdiction over communities such as San Lucas, Zinacantán, San Felipe Ecatepec, Tenejapa, San Miguel Mitontic, Huixtan and Chanal, but these would later separate to become municipalities in their own right. In the 20th century, the outskirts of the city become filled with open pit mines for gravel and sand. There was even one opened on a hill in the San Diego and La Florecilla neighborhoods, near the historic center called Sal-sipuedes. These prompted environmental and local community

...San Cristóbal de las Casas

organizations to protest, stating that the valley is a closed water basin and the mining negatively affects potable water supplies. Salsipuedes was closed in the 2000s. **The city was declared a national historic monument in 1974.**

### History of Political Activism

San Cristóbal became the center of political activism with the election of Samuel Ruiz as bishop of Chiapas in 1960. In the 1960s and 1970s, the traditional Catholic Church was losing indigenous adherents to Protestant and other Christian groups. To counter this, Ruiz supported and worked with Marxist priests and nuns following an ideology called liberation theology. **In 1974, he organized a state wide "Indian Congress" with representatives from the Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Tojolabal and Ch'ol peoples from 327 communities as well as Marxists and the Maoist People's Union.**

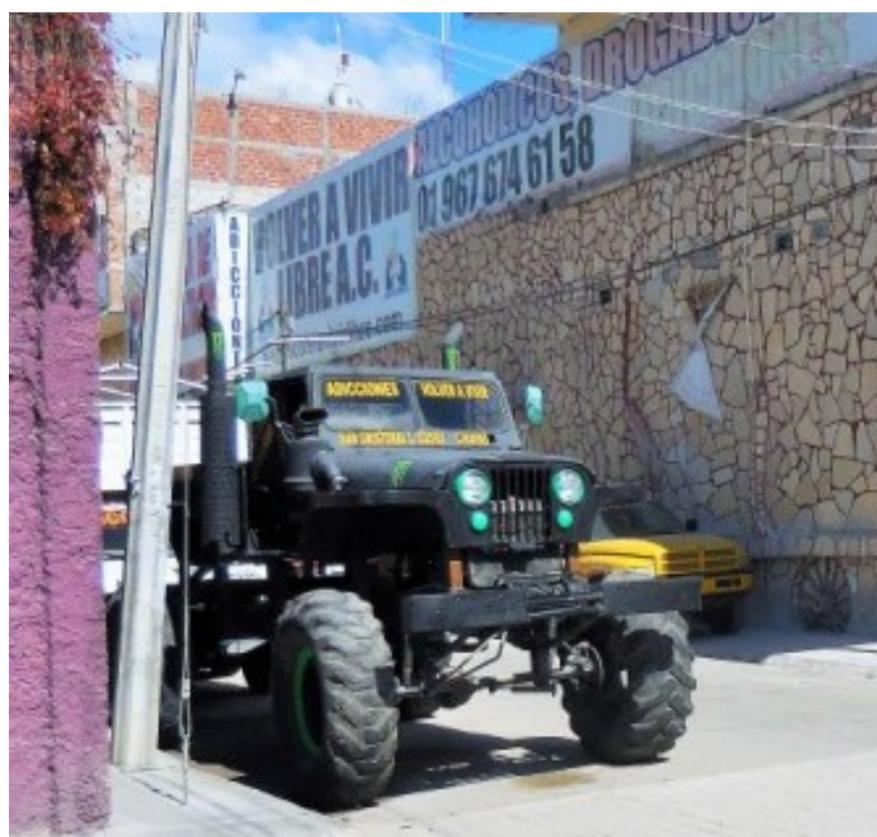


The outdoor market is popular

This congress was the first of its kind with the goal of uniting the indigenous peoples politically. These efforts were also supported by leftist organizations from outside Mexico, especially to form unions of ejido organizations. **These unions would later form the base of the EZLN organization.** These efforts would also create a "new" type of Catholic in the state called "Word of God" Catholics. These would shun the "traditionalist" Catholic practice mixed with indigenous rites and beliefs. It would also create a split in many communities as the "Word of God" Catholics were loyal directly to the bishop in San Cristóbal, with traditionalists loyal to local cacique leaders.

Activism and resentment continued from the 1970s to the

1990s. During this decade, the Mexican federal government adopted neoliberalism, which clashed with the leftist political ideas of liberation theology and many of the indigenous activist groups. Despite the activism, economic marginalization among indigenous groups remained high, and resentment was strongest in the San Cristóbal region, along with migrants living in the Lacandon Jungle. **These grievances would be taken up by a small guerrilla band led by a man called only "Subcomandante Marcos."**



The San Cristóbal version of Bigfoot

**This small band, called the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN), came to the world's attention when on January 1, 1994, the day the NAFTA treaty went into effect.** On this day, EZLN forces occupied and took over the towns of San Cristóbal de las Casas, along with six other Chiapas communities. They read their proclamation of revolt to the world and then laid siege to a nearby military base, capturing weapons and releasing many prisoners from the jails. Ruiz negotiated between the EZLN and authorities even though his leftist activism made him suspect to many authorities. This would undermine efforts and eventually the Catholic Church would split from the Zapatista movement. However, the negotiations would lead to the San Andrés Accords and ended the rebellion peacefully. **By the time he died in 2011, he was locally given the name of "Tatic" which means "father" in Tzotzil, and received numerous distinctions including the Simon Bolivar Prize from UNESCO and the International Human Rights Award in Nuremberg.**

...San Cristóbal de las Casas



No-go zone for RV caravans



The outdoor market is large

Since the Zapatista uprising in 1994, the city has developed a type of cult tourism focusing around the EZLN. This tourism attracts those interested in both leftist political beliefs and indigenous activism that come to see where the events of the 1990s happened, as well as what is going on now. This tourism has spurred the creation of Zapatista-themed shops which sell EZLN shirts and other souvenirs. This tourism has been given the name of "Zapaturismo" or "Zapatourism." The term originally was derogatory and referred to the large number of leftist activists that converged on the city after the EZLN uprising began. Since then, the term receives mixed reviews with some finding humor in it.

### Demographics

Indigenous Mayan languages are spoken by about half of the city's population. As of 2010, the municipality had a total population of 185,917. As of 2010, the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas had a population of 158,027. Other than the city of San

Cristóbal de las Casas, the municipality had 110 localities, the largest of which (with 2010 populations in parentheses) were: San Antonio del Monte (2,196), La Candelaria (1,955), Mitzitón (1,293), and San José Yashitín (1,109), classified as rural. As of 2010, 59,943 people in the municipality spoke an indigenous language. The two most important ethnic groups in the area are the Tzotzil and Tzeltal. About 85% of the municipal population lives in the city proper with the rest in rural communities. Most of the population is young, with about 68% under the age of thirty and an average age of twenty. **The population is expected to double within twenty years.**



Submitted by Dan and Lisa Goy  
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*you can reach Dan and Lisa Goy at [thegoys@manzanillosun.com](mailto:thegoys@manzanillosun.com)*

## Marigold Mint Tea



### Ingredients

- 10 cups water
- 3 green tea bags
- 2 star anise
- 1 cup fresh mint leaves
- 1 cup edible marigold
- 1 cup sugar

### Directions

#### Step 1

In a medium-sized pot, add 4 cups of water, green tea bags, and anise stars. Bring to a boil at medium-high heat. Once the water boils, remove from the stove and allow the green tea bags and star anise to steep for 10 minutes. Then add in the mint leaves and marigolds, and continue to steep for 1 hour. Remove the green tea bags and star anise.

#### Step 2

While the tea is steeping, in a small saucepan over low heat add one cup of sugar and one cup of water, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Remove and allow to cool.

#### Step 3

In a large pitcher, add the remaining water, sugar syrup, and

steeped tea. Place in the refrigerator overnight. Serve over ice. Garnish with fresh marigold flowers and fresh mint leaves.

Photo and recipe source: Qué Rica Vida



Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition

|    |  |   |  |    |   |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|--|----|---|----|--|---|
| 1  |  | 2 |  | 3  |   | 4  |  | 5 |
|    |  |   |  |    |   |    |  |   |
| 6  |  |   |  |    |   |    |  |   |
|    |  |   |  |    |   |    |  |   |
| 7  |  |   |  |    | 8 |    |  | 9 |
|    |  |   |  | 10 |   |    |  |   |
| 11 |  |   |  |    |   |    |  |   |
|    |  |   |  |    |   |    |  |   |
| 12 |  |   |  |    |   | 13 |  |   |

Across

- 1 uncle
- 3 chest
- 6 beginning, start, cause, origin
- 7 six
- 8 eight
- 11 pace, speed, velocity
- 12 rest, remainder
- 13 two

Down

- 1 types
- 2 officials
- 3 little, not much, few
- 4 capacity, volume
- 5 gold, first-person present indicative of orar
- 9 ears
- 10 act, action
- 11 to see

Last month's crossword solution:

|    |   |   |   |    |   |    |    |   |    |   |   |   |    |   |
|----|---|---|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|----|---|
| 1  | m | i | 2 | r  | a |    | 3  | t | 4  | e | m | 5 | a  |   |
|    | a |   |   | e  |   | 6  | e  |   | s  |   |   |   | l  |   |
| 7  | l | e | y | e  | s |    |    | 8 | m  | i |   |   | l  |   |
|    | o |   |   |    | p |    |    |   | á  |   |   |   | í  |   |
|    |   | 9 | c | 10 | a | s  | a  | r | s  | e |   |   |    |   |
| 11 | l |   | h |    | l |    |    |   |    |   |   |   | 12 | l |
| 13 | u | s | o |    |   | 14 | d  | u | 15 | l | c | e |    |   |
|    | n |   | r |    | a |    |    |   | e  |   |   |   | e  |   |
| 16 | a | l | a | s  |   |    | 17 | a | y  | e | r |   |    |   |

## Encomiendas and Visitadores during Colonial Times

from the Path to Citizenship series

During the era of the conquest, in order to pay off the debts incurred by the conquistadors and their companies, the new Spanish governors awarded their men grants of native tribute and labor, known as encomiendas. In New Spain these grants were modeled after the tribute and corvee labor that the Mexica rulers had demanded from native communities.

This system came to signify the oppression and exploitation of natives, although its originators may not have set out with such intent. In short order the upper echelons of patrons and priests in the society lived off the work of the lower classes.

Due to some horrifying instances of abuse against the indigenous peoples, Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas suggested bringing black slaves to replace them. Fray Bartolomé later repented when he saw the even worse treatment given to the black slaves.

The heart of encomienda and encomendero lies in the Spanish verb encomendar, "to entrust". The encomienda was based on the reconquista institution in which adelantados were given the right to extract tribute from Muslims or other peasants in areas that they had conquered and resettled.

The encomienda system in Spanish America differed from the Peninsular institution. The encomenderos did not own the land on which the natives lived. The system did not entail any direct land tenure by the encomendero; Indian lands were to remain in the possession of their communities. This right was formally protected by the crown of Castile because the rights of administration in the New World belonged to this crown and not to the Catholic monarchs as a whole.

The first grantees of the encomienda or encomenderos were usually conquerors who received these grants of labor by virtue of participation in a successful conquest. Later, some receiving encomiendas in New Spain (Mexico) were not conquerors themselves but were sufficiently well connected that they received grants.

In his study of the encomenderos of early colonial Mexico, Robert Himmerich y Valencia divides conquerors into those who were part of Hernan Cortes's original expedition, calling them "first conquerors", and those who were members of the later Narváez expedition, calling them "conquerors". The latter were incorporated into Cortes' contingent. Himmerich designated as pobladores antiguos (old settlers), a group of undetermined number of encomenderos in New Spain, men who had resided in the Caribbean region prior to the Spanish conquest of Mexico.



The crown sought reliable information about New Spain and dispatched José de Gálvez as Visitador General (inspector general), who observed conditions needing reform, starting in 1765, in order to strengthen crown control over the kingdom.

Source: photo and article, Wikipedia

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