



ManzanilloSun.com

# Manzanillo SUN

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine

December 2017



Colours of Mexico  
Nature's Wonders  
Mighty Nature  
Entertainment  
History and Mythology  
Finance  
Technology  
RV Travel  
Recipe  
Learn Spanish  
Path to Citizenship

Town Square in Salagua  
by Yaomautzin Ohtokani Olvera Lara

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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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## Beachside Living

### What I've Learned the Hard Way

by Suzanne A. Marshall

#### *Part One*

The dream came true. Here we are retired in a beautiful tropical paradise, smack on the beach in our small, but lovely, second floor condo. The port of Manzanillo is the busiest in Mexico now. We love to sit on our terrace and watch the ships come and go (sometimes a cruise ship). At night, those vessels that await unloading, anchor in the bay and are lit up like Christmas trees.

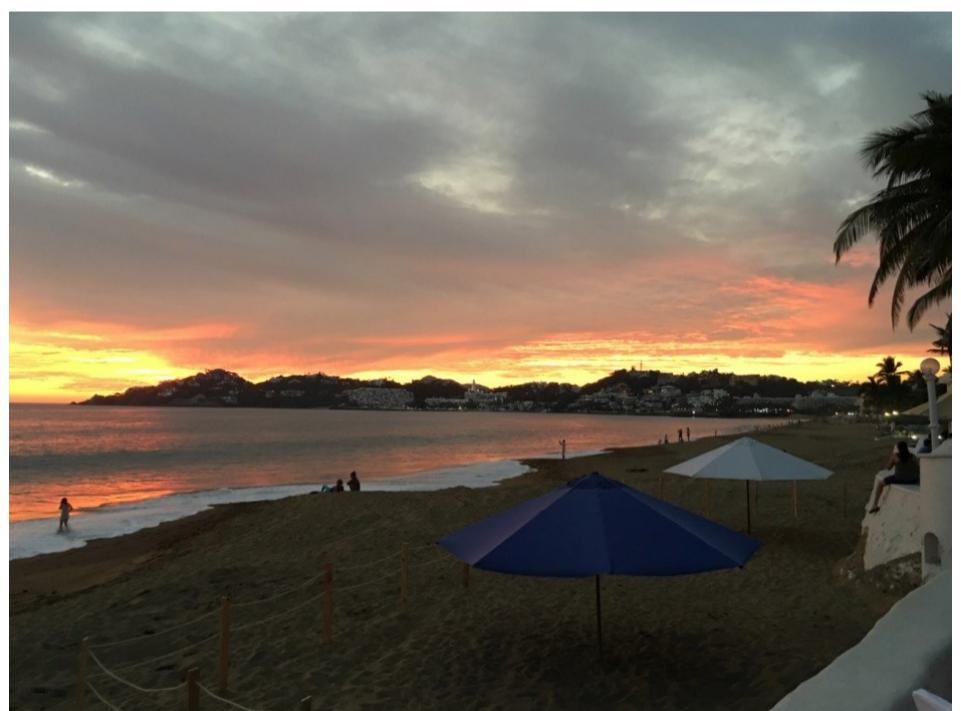


Pelicans dive in frenzies at schools of fish in the bay



During the days, we can walk the beach, watch fishermen casting rods or nets and pelicans diving like darts straight into the sea. The sunsets are spectacular as our westward view has the sun setting on the horizon of the sea or behind the mountainous peninsula, depending on the time of year. Breathtaking.

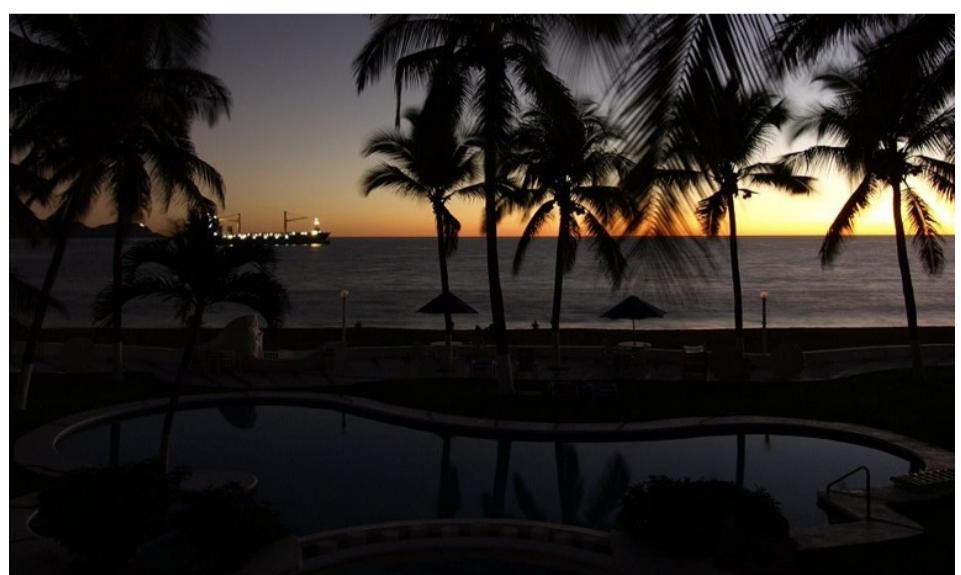
With the deep bay and open access to the Pacific Ocean, the surf that pounds the shores daily is magnificent to watch. When storms are out at sea, they send in such forceful waves that they actually 'boom' when they hit the shores. The waves literally rearrange the beach into piles of sand and cliff-like structures. Windows rattle and you can feel the force of the vibrations under foot. At times one can also feel the mist of sea water carried in the air.



In December, the sunsets down our beach are stunning behind the Punta, Las Hadas area



Once in a while cruise ships dock in Manzanillo Bay along with the hordes of container ships





**From our terrace, the surf sends ocean mist into the air right in front of the gate.**

There are many benefits to seaside living. A person relaxes and decompresses from life's stresses, blood pressure lowers, your skin clears and your nasal passages are bathed with moisture and salt air. If you've ever seen an aerial view of the earth at night from space, it demonstrates man's desire to be by water as the lights of cities cluster to the edges of the great continents. Presently, about 40% of the world's population lives within 100 kilometers of the coast.



Initially, the purchase of our condo gave us the opportunity to make improvements and personalize our nest with fresh paint, new window coverings, pieces of art and upholstery, etc. When

you are finally in retirement, this can be a lot of fun as opposed to a 'chore'. You're not working anymore so you may as well enjoy the process. And so we did.

With absolutely no comprehension of the corrosiveness of the sea air, we forged ahead making choices I would reconsider now.

#### **Window coverings and upholstery**

If you are choosing curtain rods, you might want to consider wood headrails with perhaps wooden decorative finials. Try to avoid metal rods if at all possible. On the beach, metal rods are going to oxidize over time and rust. Some types of wooden headrails have an imbedded metal track behind them where curtain slides and hooks are placed. Some of these already existed in our condo and I rather liked the look of them. I had to do some sanding and smoothing on the imbedded metal tracks (wall side) so that the hook glides would move smoothly.



**These wooden or wood-like products work well seaside, similar styles have an imbedded track facing**



Since then, I have learned to apply petroleum jelly to the track every now and then. I just rub it along the track with a rag. It also creates a barrier from the salt air. The small track glides



I have yet to find these types of curtain hooks in a PVC or plastic style material in Manzanillo, though from research they do exist. Perfect for sea-side living if you can find them.

that can be slid on at the open end of the curtains headrails can be purchased in plastic. Avoid the solid metal ones. The small hooks that are attached to the curtains are only found in metal by my experience, though plastic hooks do exist. Therefore, I am replacing them randomly as needed. I just keep a box of new ones in storage. Back in the dry climate of Canada, these metal products would last forever. Not so by the sea.

We wanted our two bedrooms well darkened for sleeping. When we took ownership of our unit, there were curtains with rubber backed linings and high-quality materials already hung by the previous owners. We decided to work with these in one of the rooms. This reusing worked well for our 'pocket book' and only now, ten years later, I am considering replacements. Astonishingly, the rubber backing on these high-quality curtains will also succumb to the sea air and the rubber is now crumbling and peeling off the material facing.

So the lesson learned is that the life cycle of even these well-made curtains is limited when you live on the beach. You will face replacement in future at some point. I estimate that these survived about twenty years! Not bad! I have completely given up on any ideas involving the latest home fashions as a creative outlet. Better to stick with high quality products and really make sure you like your original choices!

In the guest room, I had originally decided to cover the two windows with some lovely woven curtains brought from Canada. They looked great and worked beautifully with the ceramic tiled floors. But, they did not provide enough darkening at night so we opted for installation of some good quality, pull



These plastic (PVC) curtain glides are ideal for seaside living and available in most stores

down blinds behind them which fitted nicely within the window frames.

We enjoyed these for one year and then on the next return trip for our winter stay, I walked into the guest room and could see that the salt air had faded the curtains by about 50%. The weave and the dyes were apparently no match for the seaside air. I can't even blame the problem on sun bleach either since these windows do not receive direct light and the blinds were pulled down. Nope, it appears the culprit is definitely the salt air and humidity.

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...Beachside Living

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The blinds have become an issue now, too. It seems we left them rolled up too long. When we attempted to pull them down one day with the side chain (made of plastic) the PVC material of the blinds had stuck to itself and when we forced the blinds to open, large areas just peeled away as it unrolled. They had stuck together in the roll. I was mortified and struck again by the effects of humidity.

Now, when we close the blinds and curtains, you can see large blotches of light beaming through the damaged blinds and curtain materials. I am becoming a much wiser consumer now and hope I'm saving some of the readers from similar hassles. At this point, I'm assuming that the blinds perhaps need to be a different weave or material or at least raised and lowered regularly each day to avoid moisture collection. It's hard to know until experience tells us.

I have also investigated venetian blinds, both horizontal and vertical. Some of them are quite lovely but unfortunately the headrails are made of steel or aluminum and we are faced with the same oxidation issues.

So now that I've shared that experience, you may be able to surmise what also happened to our newly upholstered living room seating cushions and the matching dining chairs and bar stools! Yup, the beautiful upholstery, complete with 'scotch guarding', was simply no match for the sea air and humidity. Within 3-4 years the fading was so bad we were shopping for materials again.

I would not normally endorse a brand name in an article but, since it happens to be the best solution to the problem, I'm going to recommend the indoor/outdoor materials brand called Sunbrella. I cannot say enough about the quality of these fabrics and textiles. Yes, you may spend more but they are going to wear well for eons. Some fabrics are even bleachable for cleaning and the colors remain.

There are a number of upholstery and fabric stores in Manzanillo. Make sure you look at the Sunbrella samples or if not, that you live miles away from the beach if you choose alternatively. Even at a distance, the humidity could still be an issue and for outdoor furnishings you cannot go wrong with this recommendation. Our newest coverings are still looking brand new six years later.

I have so much more to share regarding seaside home living but it's just too much for this one article. In the next issue I'll provide information in Part Two about artwork, woodwork, ceiling fans and some more notable and helpful products. In the meantime, enjoy your tropical winter and the Christmas and New Year celebrations. Hasta luego.

*you can reach Suzanne A. Marshall at [suzanne@manzanillosun.com](mailto:suzanne@manzanillosun.com)*



by Tommy Clarkson

### **Toddy Palm *Caryota urens***

Family: *Arecaceae*

Also known as: Solitary Fishtail Palm, Wine Palm or Jagery Palm

*"OK Tommy, I'll admit to having had a toddy or two in my life, so what's up with this palm's name?"*

Appropriately enough, beyond its sap being boiled down to make syrup or sugar, the inner tissue being used as sago (food starch), its leaves' fibers being twisted and braided into ropes, brushes and baskets, various construction applications in timber form and even ornamental uses, it is perhaps best known for the alcoholic beverage that can be derived from its fermented sap!

This fermentation process is rather intriguing as there is virtually no alcoholic content when the sap is collected. But within a couple of hours it's at 4%, after two more hours it's at 8% and then, not long after that, *woops*, you have vinegar! A rather, amazingly, accelerated fermentation process I believe. *I'll drink to that!*

Those who have toured *Ola Brisa Gardens* have heard me say that most palm trees are pinnate or palmate. Well, the *Caryota* species are unique with bipinnate leaves (meaning they are divided into leaflets that divide a second time). As the name infers, these leaflets are shaped somewhat like the tail of a fish - thus, Fishtail Palm! The fronds of the Solitary Fishtail are bright



Beautiful, but a harbinger of its demise as, once they flower, they die not too long thereafter

to deep green, up to eleven and a half feet (3.5 meters) long and holding onto twenty-three and a half inches (60 cm) long petioles (leaf stalks). Each of these leaflets is around one foot (30 cm) in length with one pointed and one jagged edge.

All told, there are only twelve varieties in the *Caryota* genus with its special bipinnate or doubly pinnate leaves. As a result of these unusual leaves, all of this genus are easily recognized and each of these dozen species are called Fishtail Palms. They range from Tropical Asia through the Solomon Islands to northeastern Australia and most parts in between.

The *Caryota urens* is a solitary-trunked palm - not to be confused with some clustering kin - that grows up to 39 1/2 to 65 1/2 feet (12 - 20 meters) tall with a gray trunk which is covered with widely-spaced leaf-scar rings. The *urens* epithet is Latin for "stinging" or "burning" and alludes to the oxalic acid crystals contained in the fruits and which can, potentially, irritate our skin.

...**Toddy Palm**

A unique aspect of these palms is that they flower only once in their lifetime and then they die. This flowering process, however, is a bit unusual. It, normally, begins at the top of the trunk and then proceeds downwards. Sometimes this process takes several years. These, nearly ten foot (3 meters) long inflorescences, emerge at each leaf node producing pendent clusters of white, unisexual flowers which remain open for about six weeks.



**Each leaflet is nearly one foot long with one pointed and one jagged edge**

Wine/toddy notwithstanding, the fruit itself is not something into which you wish to sink your teeth. Remember, the fruit of all fishtail palms contains those oxalic acid crystals. Each of these fruits matures to a round, red drupe (that is one with an outer fleshy skin surrounding a hard shell with a seed inside - *think of a date*). They are about one centimeter wide. In the wild, these seeds are dispersed by critters like fruit bats and palm civets (also called a Toddy Cat). One source noted that in Sri Lanka the fruits are eaten by - *rather tough palated* - polecats! (*Animals, heretofore, I'd heard little of other than in old Yosemite Sam cartoons!*)

While the exact origin of Toddy Palms is unknown, today they can be found in clearings up to nearly one thousand feet (304.80 meters) above sea level throughout India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar (*that was Burma, for all us old folks*) and down the Malaysian Peninsula. As is the case for no few species of palms, a major threat to the Toddy Palm are disturbances resulting from logging and forest clearance, as well as human overuse



The *Caryota* species are unique with bipinnate leaves comprised of leaflets that are shaped somewhat like the tail of a fish

for its benefits as described earlier. Such has severely affected its natural regeneration. As a result, in some of its native locales, mature individuals are rarely seen. To grow your own, it needs abundant - and regular - water and humus in well-draining soil. A moderately fast grower, it can handle both partial shade to full sun.

*Around here, there are several entities that strive to help stray dogs. I think perhaps I should create a similar not-for-profit, volunteer organization for saving palm trees. We could call it the Save a Palm Society (SAPS)!*

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## Interesting Local Creatures

### Part 2

by Terry Sovil

In Part 1, we talked about Christmas Tree Worms, Tube Blennies, Sea Cucumbers and Tiger Snake Eels. Those are critters I look for and enjoy watching on every dive. Manzanillo has a very extensive and diverse sea life. I have my favorites and love to visit with them every chance I get. This week, we meet another three characters I really enjoy, the Yellowline Arrow Crab, Octopus and Sea Horses. For all of these, you need to swim slow and search carefully. Kick less, glide more! Most of the photos here are taken by Nathan Peach.

#### **Yellowline Arrow Crab**

The Panamic arrow crab is an invertebrate. It is named because of its head and body which looks like an arrow head. They have extremely long legs. It is known to feed on bristle worms as well as feather dusters. It inhabits small caves or crevices. I see them regularly in a symbiotic relationship with spiny sea urchins, hiding among the spines.

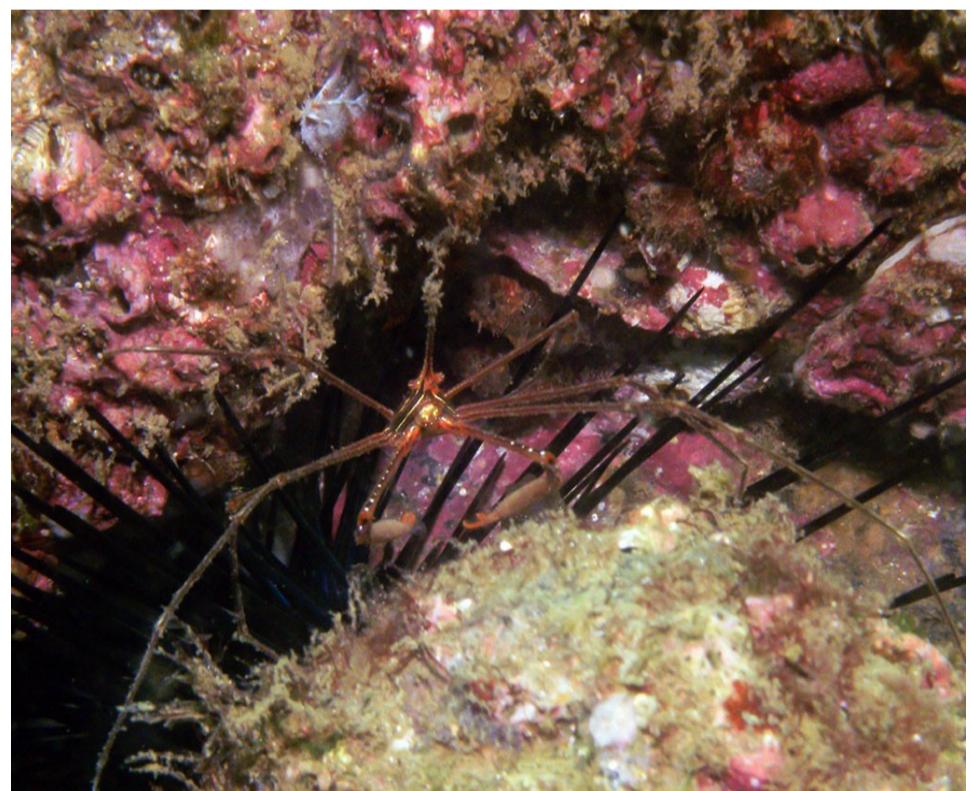


Their pointed nose is long and slender; eyes protrude on stalks and they are a Decapod with 10 legs, eight for walking and two pincers. The carapace, protective upper shell covering a crab, can reach lengths up to 2.4 inches (6 cm) and the legs can be more than three times its body length. Males are larger than females.



They are nocturnal, searching for their food at night. They scavenge the reefs for algae, worms and other invertebrates and dead organisms.

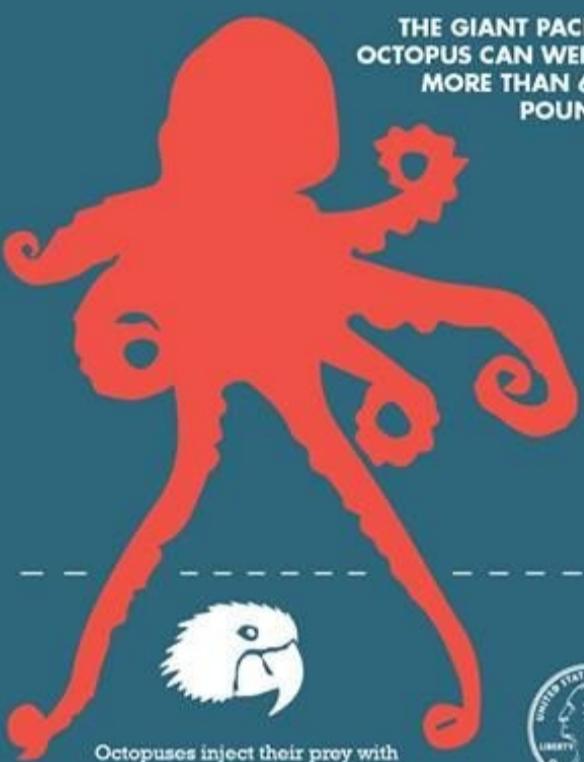
When mating, the male places a sperm packet into the female by holding her against his belly. The eggs are carried under the female's abdomen until they hatch. The newly hatched young are called zoea and will retain this name throughout their larval stage of growth. During this time, they have rounded, transparent bodies and live in open water, feeding on small plankton. As they grow, they molt and enter a new stage, megalops. It is during this stage that their body and limbs begin to have a crab-look form.



...Interesting Local Creatures (part two)

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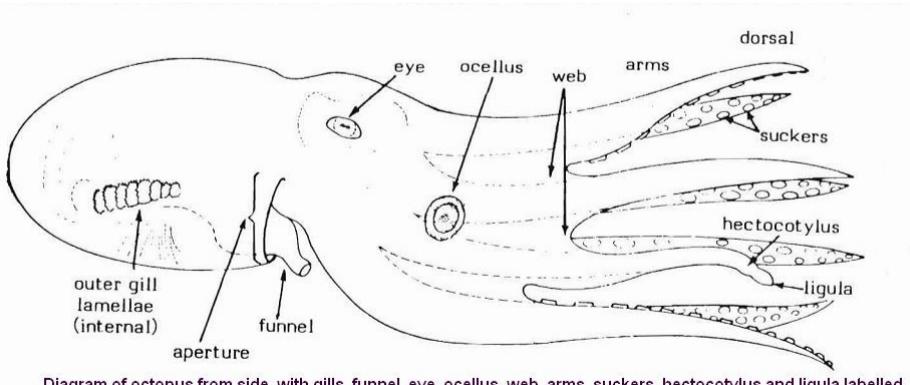
## Octopus

These incredible invertebrates often have an arm spread of about 300 cm (9 feet) with the average closer to 30 cm (1 foot). Range is the entire Pacific Coast. They are soft-bodied, have eight arms and are a mollusk from the class with squid and cuttlefish. There are about 300 species of them around the world.

They have arms, not tentacles, and can instantly change their color, brightness, texture, shape and pattern to match their surroundings. They can rapidly alter their shape, enabling octopuses to squeeze through small gaps. They trail their eight arms behind them as they swim. The siphon, or funnel, is used both for respiration and for locomotion, by expelling a jet of water. The texture of their skin and the siphon is often a way to

spot them. They can be very difficult to see but, once you've found one, it is easier to see more. Octopuses have a complex nervous system and excellent sight, and are among the most intelligent and behaviorally diverse of all invertebrates.

Most species grow fast, mature early and die early. When breeding, the male delivers a sperm "packet" into the female's cavity. After this, the male dies. The female deposits the fertilized eggs in a den and cares for them until they hatch. Once hatched, the female dies.



...Interesting Local Creatures (part two)



© Aquatic Sports and Adventures

They defend themselves by releasing ink, camouflage and threat displays. They can jet through the water quickly and have an incredible ability to hide. They are all venomous but the blue-ringed octopus is the only one known to be deadly to humans. It is always a great thrill to see one, especially if they are out in the open!



Simply talking about changing colors and textures doesn't do justice to actually watching this happen. So take a look here [at this video.](#)

### Sea Horses

Sea Horses are in the category of odd-shaped swimmers. We have only one type here in the Eastern Pacific, the Pacific Seahorse. Size ranges from 4-8 inches (10-20cm) or 12 inches (30cm) maximum. They inhabit depths from 10-60 feet (3-18m). Their colors vary from gray, brown, red and gold.



They are solitary and curl their tail around branches of gorgonians, coral and rocks. Sometimes they swim or float free. They do allow a close approach and rarely move, but when a diver comes near they turn their back and tuck their heads down making them difficult to spot.

Seahorses are truly unique. They are monogamous and mate for life! They are among the only animal species on Earth in which the male bears the unborn young! Male seahorses have a brood pouch on their front-facing side. The female deposits her eggs into the pouch and the male fertilizes them. He carries the eggs until they hatch, then releases fully formed, miniature seahorses into the water.

Because of their body shape, they are not good swimmers and, when caught in stormy seas, may die from exhaustion. They

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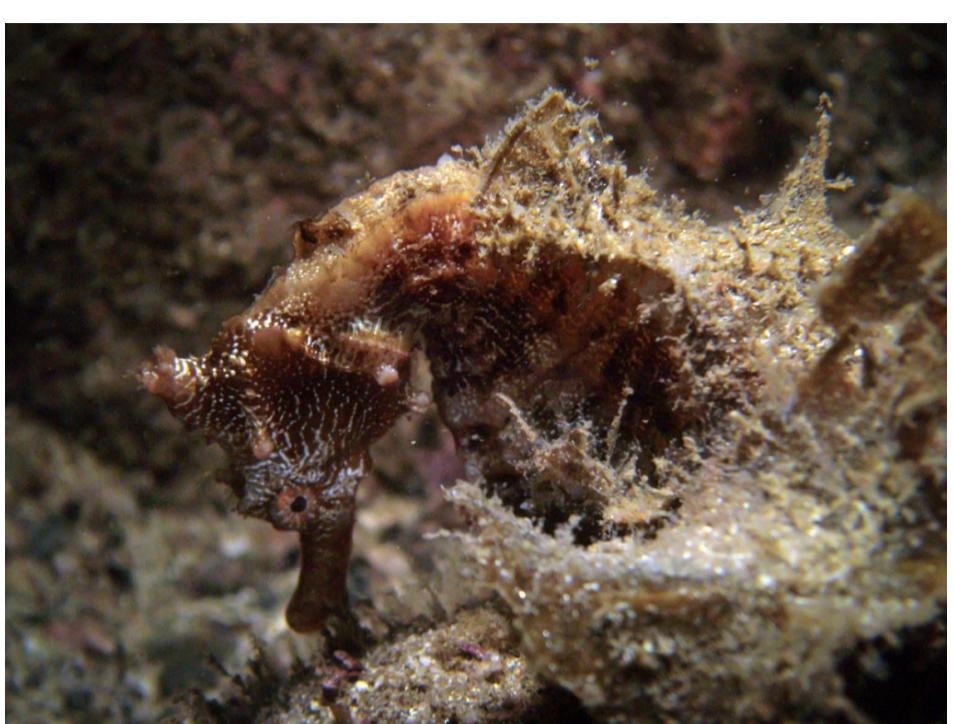
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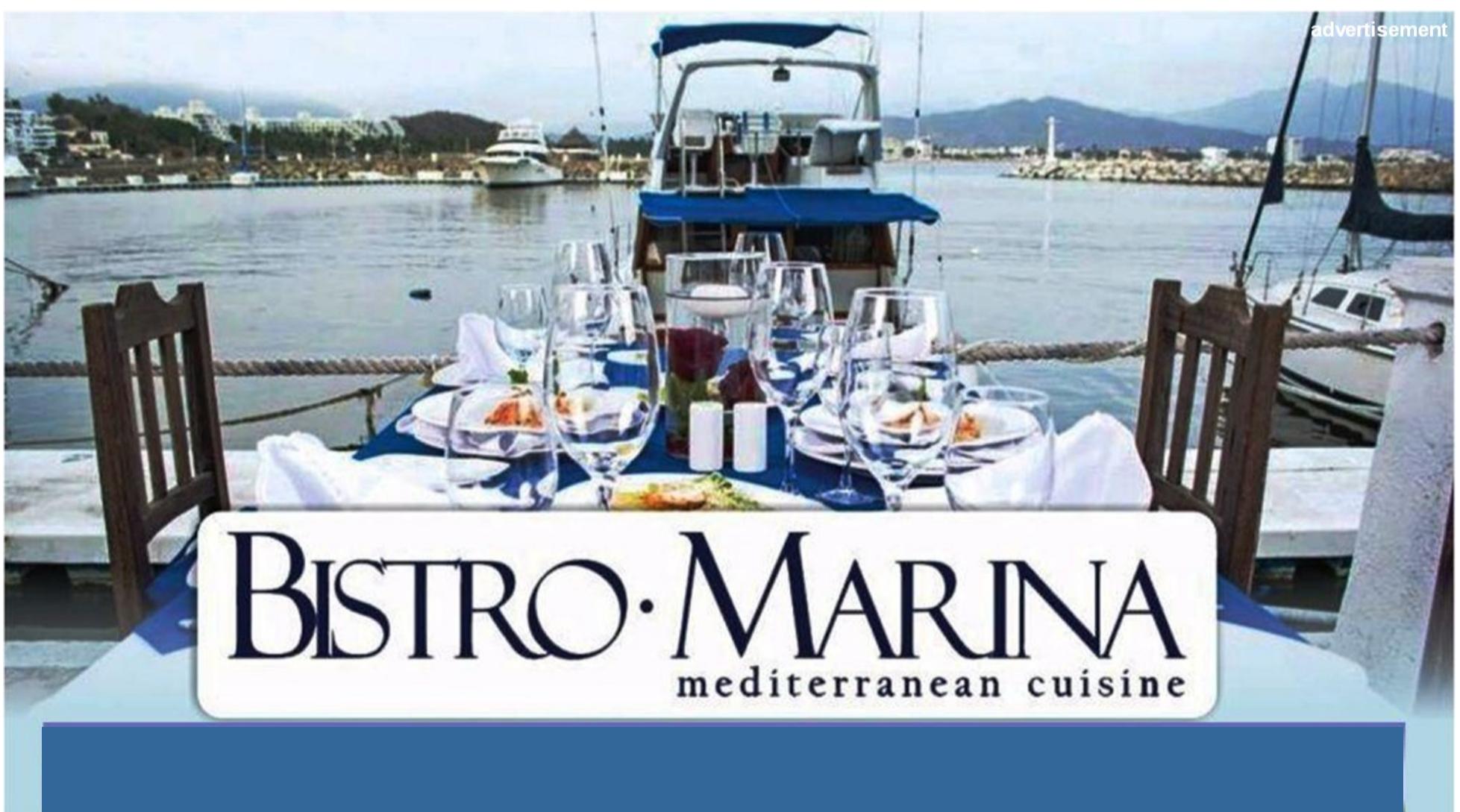
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...Interesting Local Creatures (part two)



propel themselves by using a small fin on their back that flutters up to 35 times per second. Even smaller pectoral fins located near the back of the head are used for steering. They tend to anchor themselves with their tail to sea grass, corals and rocks. They use their long snout to suck in plankton and small crustaceans that drift by. Big eaters! They can consume 3,000 or more brine shrimp per day!

*you can reach Terry Sovil at [terry@manzanillosun.com](mailto:terry@manzanillosun.com)*



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by Tommy Clarkson

### **Variegated Dwarf Umbrella Tree, *Schefflera arboricola* 'Variegata'**

 Family: *Araliaceae*

Also known as: Dwarf Schefflera, Hawaiian Schefflera, Umbrella Plant, Queensland Umbrella Tree, Octopus Tree or Arboricola

I acquired our initial Variegated Dwarf Umbrella Tree specimen several years ago, intending to research and write about it *"right away"*. That task remained unaddressed until - while searching for some large *macetas* (planter pots) at the *vivero* (nursery) of my friend Luis - I came across some plants of this species that were slightly different than those growing so well back in *Ola Brisa Gardens*.

Eagerly - I am sure - they fairly jumped into Sean (my faithful, nineteen year old truck) with the four large pots and three other new plants. Now - as I write - they are being happily ensconced in their new home, by our senior (*or is that Señor*) gardener José, near a Coffee Bush, some Bird's Nest Ferns, Dieffenbachias and two Dwarf Fishtail Palms!

As we've discovered with no few other tropical plants, this, too, is sometimes known by another name - *Heptapleurum Arboricolum*. But, regardless of what one calls it; this multi-trunked plant comes highly recommended. No less than the well-

respected botanical professional, Robert Lee Riffle, has authoritatively asserted that "There is nothing finer for adding tropical color to shady situations." I certainly concur with him. (*And, believe me, in the course of my many years traveling around the world, I've been in some really, shady situations!*)

The *Schefflera arboricola* is one of more than seven hundred species in this genus coming from the tropical areas of the Americas, Asia and Australia, as well as the Pacific Islands. This particular evergreen shrub is of oriental origin, coming from Taiwan and southern China. Growing, in the right environs, it can achieve an ultimate height of eight to even twenty feet (2.44 - 6.10 meters). So, at its fullest grown capacity, is it a large bush or a tree? Remember, Gertrude Stein said "A Rose is a rose is a rose." The choice is yours!

It likes full to partial sun and moderate watering in its well-draining *"root room."* It's not drought tolerant and requires moist, quality, friable soil (from rock that was easily crumbled



Some might, at first, misidentify these as Variegated Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*)

...Variegated Dwarf Umbrella Tree

and reduced to a more powder-like form) if it is to realize its full potential. As to how much *agua* you should give it, over-watering is more of a problem than lack of water. Just use some common garden hose sense!



"There is nothing finer for adding tropical color to shady situations." says Robert Lee Riffle

It has six to ten palmately compound leaflets of four to six inches (10.16 - 15.24 cm) long. Lose no sleep if you inadvertently get it confused with the - quite similar in appearance - smaller *Schefflera actinophylla*. However, the plant of which we speak here is the variegated species and has irregular, cream markings on its leaflets. These - like those of the solid green ones - are leathery and oblanceolate shaped, and one and a quarter to four and a half inches (3.18 - 11.43 cm) long. There are three varieties of Variegated Dwarf Umbrella Trees: 'Gold Capella' has variegated yellow or gold and green leaves, 'Trinette' sports variegated cream and green leaves and 'Dazzle' is variegated with some leaves almost completely creamy-white.

Flora on the *Schefflera arboricola* is seldom seen in cultivation. On its own, out in its native environment, it flowers intermittently throughout the year, not simply "born on the 4th of July!" Actually, they are on terminal panicles of up to fourteen inches (35.56 cm) wide that are dense with umbels. (These are inflorescences with stalked flowers radiating from the end of the

stalk in the form of an umbrella-shaped cluster of tiny yellow and orange flowers.) In turn, the fruits are small orange to black berries.

Beyond its uses as a border or accent plant, as Riffle states, "It also makes a beautiful espalier against semi-shady walls where its beautiful leaf form can be silhouetted, and there are few more beautiful large groundcovers." (For some of us who weren't quite - or at all - sure, an espalier is a structured means of controlling plant growth by pruning and/or tying its branches to a frame against a wall, fence, or trellis.)



Its six to ten palmately compound, cream and green colored leaflets are four to six inches long

The Variegated Dwarf Umbrella Tree is more sensitive to the cold than its wholly green kin. And as to feeding it, I'd suggest that you give it a bit of diluted fertilizer once a month during its growing season.

Lastly, "*Let the canine or feline diners beware*" as it is mildly toxic when ingested.

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

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## At the Movies

by Suzanne A. Marshall

### The Mountain Between Us

Starring: Idris Elba, Kate Winslet, Beau Bridges

Director: Hany Abu-Assad

"Stranded after a tragic plane crash, two strangers must forge a connection to survive the extreme elements of a remote snow-covered mountain. When they realize help is not coming, they embark on a perilous journey across the wilderness."

The movie was shot near beautiful Vancouver British Columbia, Canada in the glorious Rocky Mountains. To say the scenery is spectacular is an understatement. Though, in the dead of winter with lots of snow, there are vistas that are simply breathtaking. That being said, it's a good movie with a somewhat predictable plot line and even a decent ending. So I really enjoyed the change from the currently, ever-present, sci-fi productions that are in vogue these times.

You can look forward to engaging performances by Idris Elba and Kate Winslet and a story that is truly believable and realistic. If you're looking for something heart-warming and satisfying, I think you'll like this one.

The IMDB rating is 6.3/10 based on about 5,076 viewers.



### Geostorm

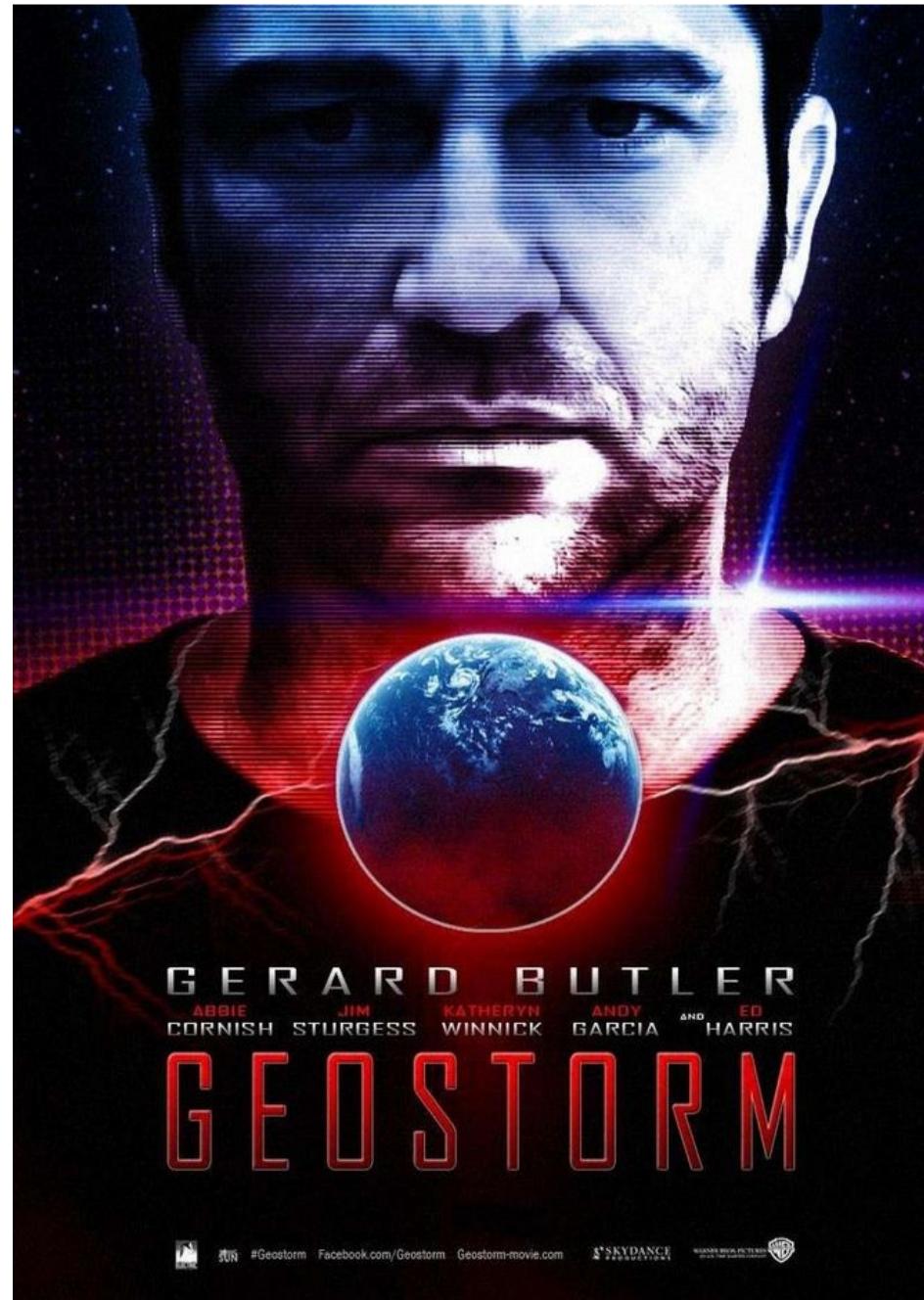
Starring: Gerard Butler, Jim Sturgess, Abbie Cornish

Director: Dean Devlin

"When catastrophic climate change endangers Earth's very survival, world governments unite and create the Dutch Boy Program: a world-wide network of satellites, surrounding the planet, that are armed with geoengineering technologies designed to stave off the natural disasters. After successfully protecting the planet for two years, something is starting to go wrong. Two estranged brothers are tasked with solving the program's malfunction before a world-wide Geostorm can engulf the planet."

If you like science fiction, 3D, amazing special effects and an attempt at high tension drama, this movie will fill the bill. There are plenty of complex sets and space travel images to keep you focussed on the screen. The story line for me was a wee bit 'sappy' and sloppy. There is the usual host of clichés and they attempt to pluck your heartstrings with inter-family relationships and the innocence of a young and brilliant daughter. Of course there is evil afoot and you must deliberate who and what might really be going on behind the quest to save the world from imminent disaster. You might enjoy this movie just for the production value and special effects; the story? Not so much.

IMDB rating is 5.7/10 based on 14,972 viewers.



## The Aztec Owl

by Kirby Vickery

Of late, I have been writing articles about animals and other objects and how each one of them fit into Aztec Mythology. I do this when I'm not in Manzanillo. While there, I enjoy telling about local happenings of culture and color and I find fulfillment in that. While away, I have extended my Aztec Mythology reading and reporting because I find it fascinating. There is so much known, and yet so much hidden from us, by a society that existed not so long ago.

I had told our illustrious editor that I would write about an Aztec Owl. Boy, did I mess up. I can't find a single story about an owl, other than one told about the last battle cry of the Aztec warrior during the invasion by Cortez. That story isn't mythology, but it did open a plethora of stuff about the owl and its relationship with their god of the underworld, the depth of the belief system the Aztecs had in their gods (as controlled very tightly by the priest class), and an actual in-depth look on how their religion controlled their lives into their deaths. For me, it was an education even after four years of writing this article series.

In our western world, and its theological studies, we learn that there is heaven and there is hell. Some look to the study of Dante and, for them, as with others, there is purgatory as well. I am not a biblical scholar and was raised to believe when a person dies their soul goes to heaven, hell or purgatory. This is based on each individual's actions during life, their faith and lifelong moral practices. Good, bad, or somewhere in between is to be decided by God. I kinda like the representation made by Dante. He envisioned several layers so your particular punishment would fit your particular sin. If you weren't that bad, then you were judged and sent into purgatory to atone before you were allowed into heaven.

The Aztecs had a whole different system in their belief in the afterlife. Where each person went after they died wasn't controlled by how they acted during their lives, what they believed or how strong their faith was, or even how well they performed their job in life. It was decided by the station they held or function they performed. There wasn't anything that could be done about it unless the station changed.



The spider

Those that made it all the way down to the lowest layer of Mictlan, or Hades, or hell, were those that died of natural causes. For them, then, an eternity of cleaning the halls of hell, so to speak, without light or rest. Dante's Inferno was one thing but it didn't hold a candle of what these Aztec people went through. These poor souls even had a treacherous four-year journey to get down there. First by boat, and then by agonizing trail into increasing darkness.

Another example, the Aztec afterlife placement was the place held for women who die giving child birth. Their forever task after death was to help push the sun across the sky to sunset. Not a bad way to spend eternity. They only had to work from noon to dusk. [I didn't make that up, by the way.]

No warrior ended up in the underworld's realm of Mictlan (Chicunauhmictlan) as ruled by its king, Micheltantecihuatl. They were all reincarnated as butterflies or hummingbirds. They came back this way to continue to help the gods create and improve life on earth. The warriors all knew this and subsequently were not afraid to die, even on someone else's alter as a sacrifice.

That fact probably accounts for the final battle cry of the warriors defending against Hernán Cortez in the final stages of the battle for the control of what is now Mexico City.

...Aztec Owl

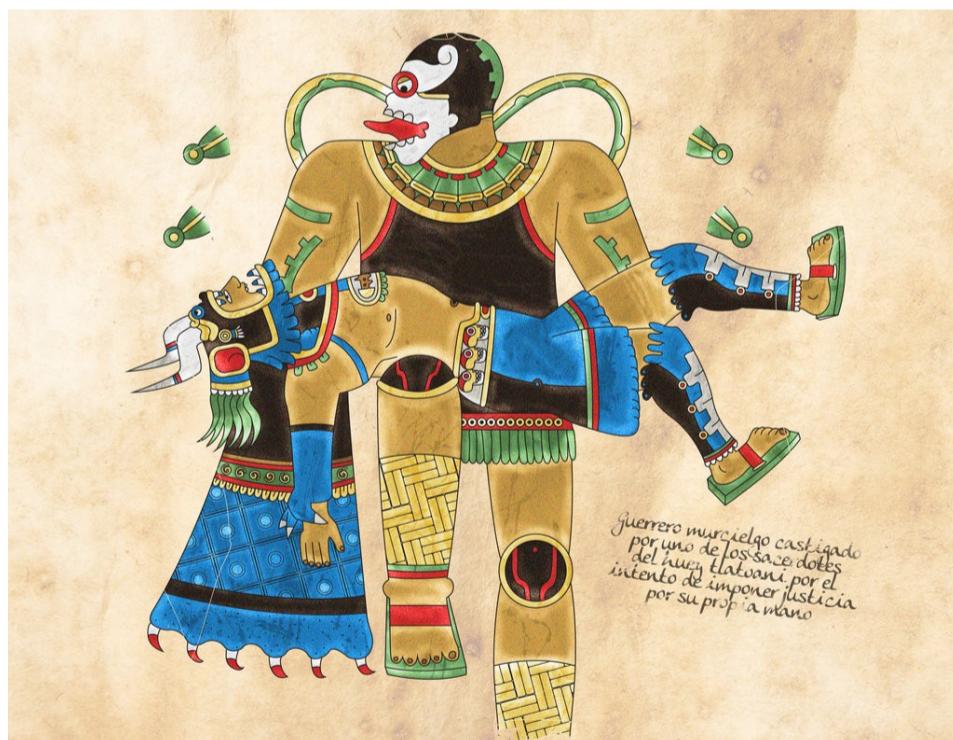


The bat

It's true that Cortez didn't lose that many of his men because he didn't have that many to begin with and with their 13 horses, armor, and weaponry they were hard to kill. The big reason he didn't lose that many was because of the 50,000+ Mesoamerican fighters he had with him from other hostile tribes to the Aztecs which went in first and followed out last to get killed.



The owl



This, of course, came after the death of Moctezuma. The entire campaign was three years long and one of deceit and lies everywhere and is well worth reading. The Aztec warriors took up the battle cry of 'The Owl' at the last and throughout the battles with the Spanish. The Aztecs still practiced the traditional ceremonies and customs.

A warrior named Tlapaltecatl Opochtzin was chosen to be outfitted to wear the quetzal owl costume. He was supplied with darts sacred to Huitzilopochtli, which came with wooden tips and flint tops. When he came, the Spanish soldiers appeared scared and intimidated. Then they chased the owl-warrior, but he was neither captured nor killed. The Aztecs took this as a good sign. Again, The Owl was a sign of the underworld and all the Aztec beliefs that went into their theology that they couldn't be killed, even by the smallpox which is what really did them in at the last.

Mictlantecuatl is always viewed with one or all of the creatures of the underworld. They are the owl, the bat, and the spider. He is normally presented as a skeleton or with a skull bone head with protruding teeth. Although I couldn't find any cute mythological stories about the owl, I did find a really nice one of the bat which holds a good place in the Aztec Mythology.

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

## Spending Money to Save Time May Make Us Happier

by Yann Kostic and Tom Zachystal

As free time shrinks, along with our tolerance for time-consuming, unpleasant household tasks, one recent study may have an answer: buy back your time.

Results of the study appeared recently in PNAS, a scientific journal devoted to "cutting-edge" research. It was a collaborative effort by researchers from Harvard University, the University of British Columbia (UBC), and two Netherlands research institutes.

The question: Would you pay someone to take over daily tasks you find disagreeable and a waste of time? The result: Those who paid others to save their own time were more satisfied with their lives than those who did not.

Interestingly, this was not a decision made only by those with high incomes who could easily afford to pay someone to take on these tasks. And it did not correlate with number of hours worked or size of family; satisfaction levels were high among people of all incomes, family size, and work responsibilities. However, the study also showed that few of us consider spending money this way. Why? One thought is that many of us believe that household drudge work, such as grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning, is something we need to do for our families. So when it comes to having an advisor helping you in the investment and retirement area, spending money to free up our time may be associated with guilty feelings.

In an npr.org report, Elizabeth Dunn, UBC psychology professor and a study author, suggested, "Contemplating paying somebody else to do something you're perfectly capable of doing yourself may provoke feelings of guilt." But for those without enough hours in the day (or for those dreading doing it themselves), it's a feeling they may be willing to accept.

Obviously, we cannot guarantee that talking to an advisor will automatically make you happier, but at least we can provide you with sound advice, which ultimately will save you time and money.

*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) 574-1529 or in Mexico, (376) 106-1613.

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## Do you really need a Travel Agent?

by Señior Tech

My wife and I live in Manzanillo year-round and wish to see more of Mexico.

Early this spring, a friend was trying to arrange a trip for a group of people to travel on "El Chepe", the train that goes through the Copper Canyon. The Copper Canyon is larger and deeper than the Grand Canyon. There is one train that leaves from Chihuahua to Los Mochis and another that leaves from Los Mochis to Chihuahua daily. The full journey takes 14 hours. That is if you travelled the whole journey in one day. A travel agent was contacted and prepared an itinerary, along with the cost for hotels, trains and transfers once we were at Los Mochis. The quoted price sounded a bit high, so I decided to try booking online and compare pricing.

The internet is a wonderful resource and, with the help of google.com, hotels.com, tripadvisor.com, and expedia.com, I got all the information I needed.

We decided to start on the Los Mochis side and travel to Chihuahua. The train starts at 6:00 am in Los Mochis, so I booked a hotel the night before in El Fuerte. I arranged to travel by taxi to El Fuerte, a 55-mile trip, to catch the train the next day at a more human 8:00 am. El Fuerte is a "Pueblo Mágico" ("Magical Town"), and is the birth place of Don Diego (aka Zorro).

I contacted [chepe.com.mx](http://chepe.com.mx) and information on the Copper Canyon experience was provided in full detail. [Chepe.com.mx](http://Chepe.com.mx) is the website for the train. The website listed hotels along the route

[View from Hotel el Mirador](#)



Balcony at Hotel el Mirador

as well as passenger fares for the train. If you have an [INAPAM card](#), the first-class prices are 50% off. First-class fare also entitles the bearer to 3 stops on the journey. I checked the hotel ratings on tripadvisor.com to get comments from other travellers who stayed those hotels. I booked a hotel located in a vineyard, a hotel built on the cliffs, and a rustic lodge, complete with in-room fireplaces. The train website also provided numerous activities available at each stop.

At hotels.com I could check room availability as well as book the rooms. All pertinent hotel and room information was there.

After booking all bus, airplane travel, train, and hotels, the cost of the trip was less than half that quoted by the travel agent. And that included the travel costs to and from the Copper Canyon.

My wife suggested that it would be easier to use a travel agent. She may be right, but I saved the 4 of us a total of close to CDN \$4,000.00 on this one trip alone.

...Do you really need a Travel Agent?



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## Mérida

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

**January 26-28, 2016 (Days 20-22)**

After three weeks into our 90-day "Mexican Adventure", our group was really in the groove and the gang was up and ready to say goodbye to Uxmal and hello to Mérida, the capital city of the Yucatán State, at the crack of 9 am. Grant and Anita were our caravan leaders for this leg of our journey, only 77 km. Some great scenery on the way for this short drive to our destination, the 50-site Rainbow RV Park on the east side of Mérida.



[En route to Mérida through Uman](#)

Jumping on the ring road (Periférico), we found the park easily enough, not far from the junction with Hwy 261, later after gathering in the Liverpool Mall parking lot across the street, we found the entrance. The fee was reasonable at \$250 pesos per RV which included water, power, sewer, clean washrooms and showers that included resident iguanas. After we got settled in

[Rainbow RV Park](#)



[RV Park owner with Rafael](#)

Patricio, the co-owner showed up to welcome us to Mérida. Next, we headed over to Liverpool Mall to do some shopping and banking, which included a Costco, Mega grocery store and, believe it or not, a skating rink! (also great wifi). Before the day ended, we made reservations for the double decker Turibus with an open-air seating on top.

Day 2 in Mérida, everyone loaded into the bus and we headed downtown for a 9am pickup at the Holiday Inn, with help from our GPS, Molly. The weather cooperated with some sunny

[Zócalo Turibus stop](#)



...Mérida

breaks but not too hot. Originally, we believed there were a few stops on the bus tour, turns out not really to be the case, only one, the Historic Centro Zócalo. Mérida has been the centre of commerce in Mexico for almost 500 years and you could tell.



[Zócalo in Mérida](#)

Mérida offers abundance of opulent mansions, manicured tree-lined streets and high-end shops. We were dropped off at the Zócalo and spent almost 2 hours seeing the sites in these 6 square blocks, including the San Ildefonso Cathedral, State Building and surrounding historic sites; so much to see. Lots of walking, photo taking and pricing items.

As expected, most goods were very expensive so close to the historic heart of the city. We met back up with the bus after lunch and arrived at the Holiday Inn where we had started, close to 1pm. We did see and enjoy much of downtown Mérida from our vantage point in the upper seats of this bus for only \$100 pesos per person. After returning to the campground, the guys headed out to refill bottles with purified water. Most of us headed out on foot that evening for pizza nearby the camp-ground.

Our 3rd day in Mérida, we had nothing special planned, folks are mostly taking a day off, the weather is changing, a little cooler and not so much humidity. We did organize a visit to a Mega grocery store not far away for supplies. I also had time to send the blog post from the mall. A few of us are heading down the road on foot in the afternoon to visit the recently completed El Gran Museo del Mundo Maya de Mérida (Museum of Mayan Anthropology). This was fabulous, with great exhibits that really told the story of Mayan history and culture. It also has a wonderful photography exhibit in an outside gallery and an art exhibit at an upper level in the museum.

Again the entry fee was minimal, perhaps 20 pesos (\$1 USD). This was a terrific way to end our time in Mérida, definitely a city worth visiting again in the future. Tomorrow all our Baja Amigos are off to Celestún with Roland and Janice in the lead, located on the west from Mérida on the Gulf Coast in the Parque Natural del Flamingo to take a tour of surroundings and see these birds.

#### Mérida background



[Bus tour of Mérida](#)

Mérida is the capital and largest city of the Mexican state of Yucatán as well as the largest city of the Yucatán Peninsula. Founded in 1542 by Francisco de Montejo y León ("el Mozo") and named after the town of Mérida in Extremadura, Spain. It was built on the site of the Maya city of T'hó, which was also called Ichkanzihóo or Ichcaanzihó ("City of Five Hills") in reference to its pyramids. **T'ho had been a center of Mayan cul-**

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...Mérida



**On the bus**

**ture and activity for centuries: because of this, some historians consider Mérida the oldest continually-occupied city in the Americas.** According to the 2010 census, the population of Mérida was 970,377, ranking 12th among the most populous Mexican metropolitan areas. The metropolitan area includes the municipalities of Mérida, Umán and Kanasín and had a population of 1,035,238 in the same 2010 census. It is the largest of the four cities of the world that share the name Mérida, the other three being in Spain, Venezuela, and the Philippines. The city, like much of the state, has heavy Mayan, Spanish, French, British and, to a lesser extent, Dutch influences. Mérida has the highest percentage of indigenous persons of any large city in Mexico with approximately 60% of all inhabitants being of the Maya ethnicity.

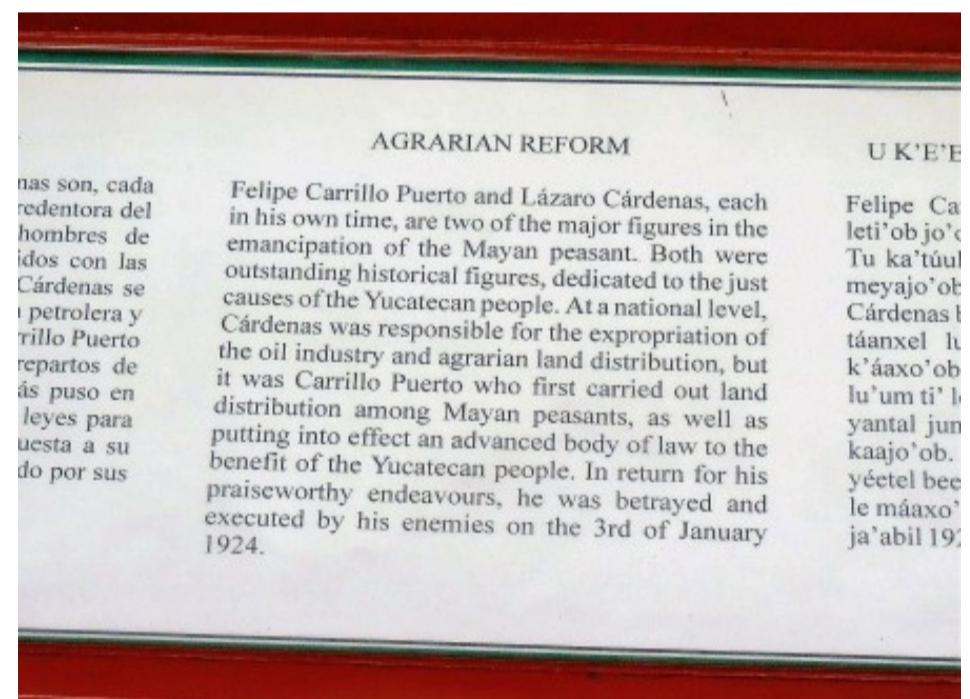


**Watch out for the wires!**

#### **History of Mérida (Summary)**

There were three Spanish conquistadors named "Francisco de Montejo": Francisco de Montejo "el Adelantado" ("The Lieutenant", the eldest); Francisco de Montejo y León "el Mozo" ("The Boy", his son); and Francisco de Montejo "el Sobrino" ("The Nephew"). As we mentioned earlier, Mérida was founded in 1542 by Francisco de Montejo y León ("el Mozo") and named after the town of Mérida in Extremadura, Spain. As Mérida was built on the site of the Maya city of T'hó, the carved Maya stones from ancient city were widely used to build the Spanish colonial buildings that are plentiful in downtown Mérida and are visible, for instance, in the walls of the main cathedral. Much of Mérida's architecture, from the colonial period through the 18th century and 19th century, is still standing in the centro histórico of the city. From colonial times through the mid-19th century, Mérida was a walled city intended to protect the Peninsular and Criollo residents from periodic revolts by the indigenous Maya. Several of the old Spanish city gates survive, but modern Mérida has expanded well beyond the old city walls.

ant", the eldest); Francisco de Montejo y León "el Mozo" ("The Boy", his son); and Francisco de Montejo "el Sobrino" ("The Nephew"). As we mentioned earlier, Mérida was founded in 1542 by Francisco de Montejo y León ("el Mozo") and named after the town of Mérida in Extremadura, Spain. As Mérida was built on the site of the Maya city of T'hó, the carved Maya stones from ancient city were widely used to build the Spanish colonial buildings that are plentiful in downtown Mérida and are visible, for instance, in the walls of the main cathedral. Much of Mérida's architecture, from the colonial period through the 18th century and 19th century, is still standing in the centro histórico of the city. From colonial times through the mid-19th century, Mérida was a walled city intended to protect the Peninsular and Criollo residents from periodic revolts by the indigenous Maya. Several of the old Spanish city gates survive, but modern Mérida has expanded well beyond the old city walls.



Late in the 19th century and the early 20th Century, the area surrounding Mérida prospered from the production of henequén. For a brief period, around the turn of the 20th century, Mérida was said to house more millionaires than any other city in the world. The result of this concentration of wealth can still be seen today. Many large and elaborate homes still line the main avenue called Paseo de Montejo, though few are occupied today by individual families. Many of these homes have been restored and now serve as office buildings for banks and insurance companies. Korean immigration to Mexico began in 1905 when more than a thousand people arrived in Yucatán from the city of Incheon. These first Korean migrants settled around Mérida as workers in henequén plantations.

...Mérida



Agrarian reformers

Mérida has one of the largest centro histórico districts in the Americas (surpassed only by Mexico City and Havana, Cuba). Colonial homes line the city streets to this day, in various states of disrepair and renovation; the historical center of Mérida is currently undergoing a minor renaissance as more and more people are moving into the old buildings and reviving their former glory. In June 2007, Mérida moved its city museum to the renovated Post Office building next to the downtown market. The Museum of the City of Mérida houses important artifacts from the city's history, as well as an art gallery.

#### **Early History of the Mayans**

One of the most advanced indigenous cultures of the ancient

Americas, the Mayans began as hunter gatherers and migrated into the Yucatán around 2500 B.C. During the pre-classic period (500 B.C.-250 A.D.) they appeared in Quintana Roo, where they established ceremonial centers at Coba, Dzibanche and Kohunlich. Quintana Roo was considered to be the gateway to the Mayan world. Between 300 and 900, the Mayans built several cities in the Yucatán region, two of the most spectacular being Chichén Itzá and Uxmal.

According to legend, when Francisco Hernández de Córdova arrived on the coast of Yucatán, he asked the natives where he was. They replied in their native tongue that they didn't understand what he was saying. Because Córdova thought their answer sounded like the word Yucatán, he gave that name to the region. In 987, the Toltec people—believing they were following their god Quetzalcóatl—arrived in the region. According to Toltec mythology, Quetzalcóatl demanded human hearts as sacrifice, and the Toltecs obeyed by conducting mass human sacrifices. The Toltec's cultural influence on the Mayans in Yucatán was profound, and their architectural influences are evident at Chichén-Itzá. Although the Toltecs mixed with the Mayans and other groups, their culture eventually dominated the area.

During the 12th century, the Mayan city-state of Mayapán waged war against and defeated the citizens of Chichén Itzá. Mayapán expanded its influence over the region, and the Ma-

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...Mérida



Casa Museo

yan Cocom dynasty ruled until the mid-13th century. When the post-classic Mayan period ended around 1250, most cities were abandoned. Those that remained continued to engage in inter-city military conflicts. **The disappearance of these great Mayan civilizations remains a mystery; had the Spanish not destroyed the majority of Mayan codices and other writings, the Mayan's fate might be known today.**



Art exhibit at the Gran Maya Museo



Ball court ring in the Gran Maya Museo

### Spanish conquest

In 1527, Francisco de Montejo set out to conquer Yucatán but was routed by the natives. Three years later, he returned with his son Francisco de Montejo y León but again failed to overpower the indigenous population. Finally, a third attempt in 1537 was successful, and de Montejo founded the cities of Campeche in 1540 and Mérida, the present capital, in 1542. Gaspar Pacheco, known for his cruel treatment of the Indians,

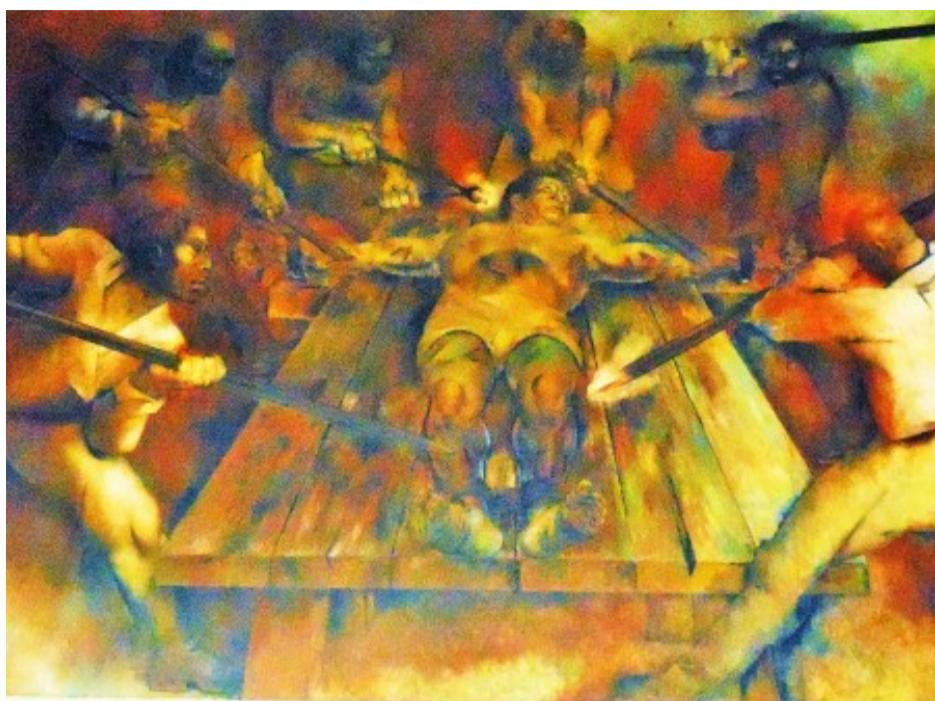
completed Spain's conquest of the area. In an effort to convert the indigenous people to the Catholic faith, Franciscan priests built more than 30 convents in Yucatán and tried to replace Mayan culture with Christianity. In 1562, Franciscan monk Fray Diego de Landa ordered that all handmade Mayan books and statues be destroyed. Few of these rare and important cultural artifacts survived. **In addition, Spanish oppression and diseases significantly reduced the native population from an estimated 5 million in 1500 to 3.5 million a century later.**

**Jacinto Canek**, a convent-educated Mayan, led an indigenous rebellion against the government in 1761. The fighting resulted in the deaths of thousands of natives and the execution of Canek in the city of Mérida. Other indigenous revolts during the colonial period gave Yucatán's natives the reputation of being fierce and difficult-to-conquer warriors.

### History post independence from Spain

When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in February 1821, Yucatán became part of the Independent Mexican Empire but remained a remote province until 1824 when it was divided into three states: Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatán. In 1835, a conservative unitary system of government was insti-

...Mérida



[Execution of 18th Century Mayan leader Jakinto Canek](#)

tuted in Mexico and given authority over Yucatán. An insurrection advocating Yucatecan independence erupted in Tizimín in May 1838; in 1840, the local Congress approved Yucatán's declaration of independence. Hoping to settle the differences, Mexico's President Antonio López de Santa Anna sent Andrés Quintana Roo to Mérida in 1841. Quintana Roo signed a treaty with the local government, which Santa Anna ignored. Hostilities resumed, and Governor Méndez ordered all Mexican flags removed from Yucatán buildings and ships in favor of the flag of the "Sovereign Nation of the Republic of Yucatán."



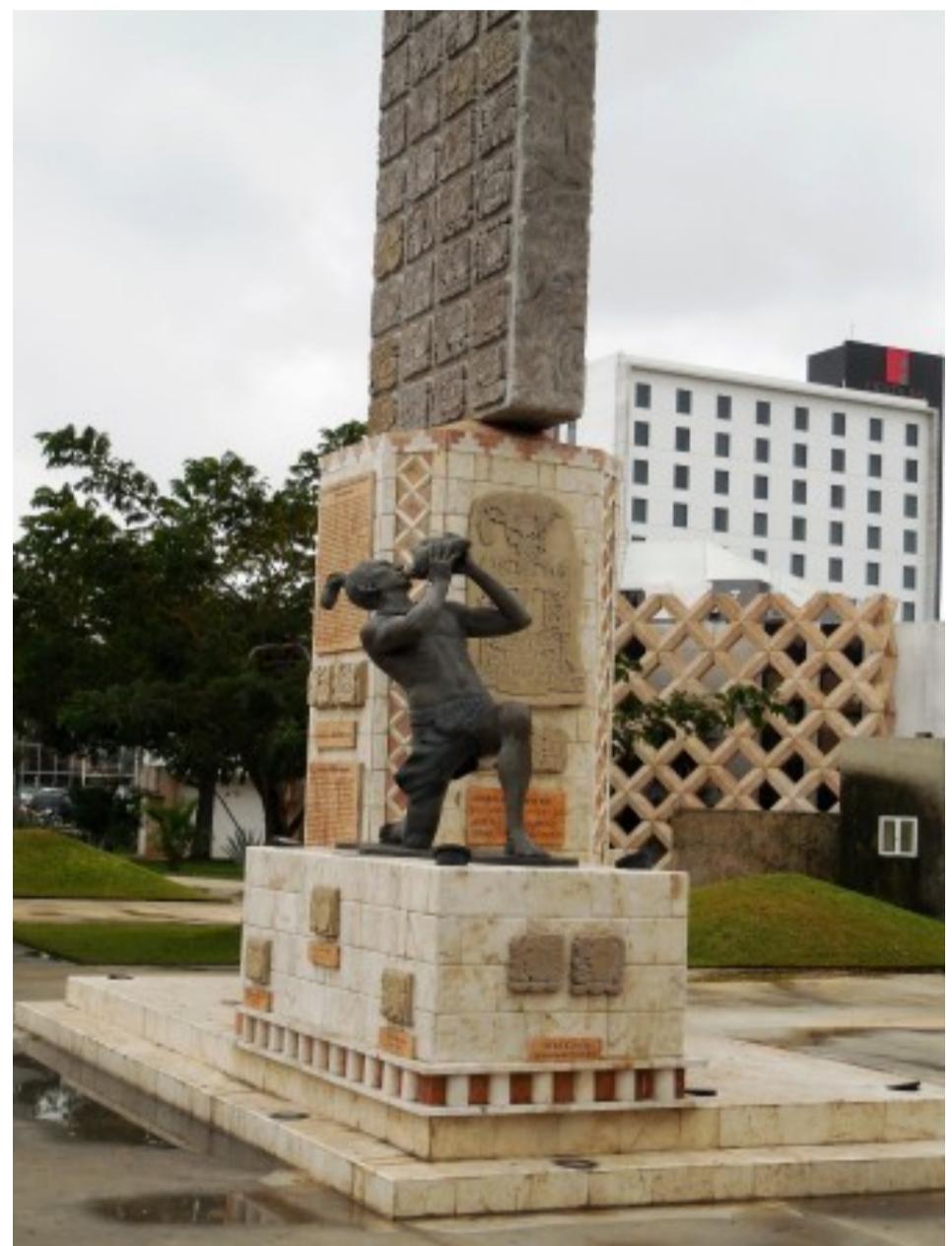
TEMPLO DE SANTO DOMINGO

UAYMA, YUCATÁN

[Photo exhibit at the Gran Museo del Mundo Maya](#)

Refusing to recognize Yucatán's independence, Santa Anna ordered that Yucatán's ports be blockaded. He also sent an army to invade Yucatán in 1843. The Yucatecans defeated the Mexican force, but the loss of economic ties to Mexico deeply hurt Yucatecan commerce. Yucatán's governor, Miguel Barbachano, decided to use the victory as a time to negotiate with Santa Anna's government from a position of strength. During the ne-

gotiations, it was agreed that Yucatán would rejoin Mexico, as long as their constitution and their right to self-rule were observed by Mexico City. The treaty reincorporating Yucatán into Mexico was signed in December 1843. However, the central government rescinded earlier concessions, and Yucatán again renounced the Mexican government in 1845, declaring independence on January 1, 1846.



[Gran Museo del Mundo Maya monument](#)

During the Mexican-American War (1846 to 1848), Yucatán, which considered itself an independent nation, declared its neutrality. However, in 1847, the Caste War (Guerra de Castas) broke out on the peninsula. This war was a major revolt by the Mayan people against the Hispanic population in political and economic control. By 1848, the revolt had driven all Hispanic Yucatecans out of the peninsula except for those in the walled cities of Mérida and Campeche. Hoping to suppress the revolt, Governor Méndez sent letters to Britain, Spain and the United States, offering sovereignty over Yucatán to whichever nation could help stop the Mayans. The proposal received serious attention in Washington, D.C., where the matter was debated in Congress. However, the only action taken by the United States

...Mérida

was to warn European powers not to interfere in the peninsula.



Mérida mansion

At the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, Yucatecan Governor Barbachano appealed to Mexican President José Joaquín de Herrera for help in suppressing the revolt. Mexico agreed, and Yucatán again recognized the Mexican government's authority, reuniting with Mexico on August 17, 1848. Fighting continued between the forces of the Yucatecan government and the independent Mayans through 1901 when the Mexican army occupied the Maya capital of Chán Santa Cruz. Some Mayan communities in Quintana Roo refused to acknowledge Ladino (Jews of Spanish origin) or Mexican sovereignty into the next decade.



Exhibit at the Gran Museo del Mundo Maya

#### **Yucatán today**

Until the mid-1900s, Yucatán's only contact with the outside world was by sea. As a result, Yucatán's trade with the United States, Europe and Caribbean islands was far more lucrative



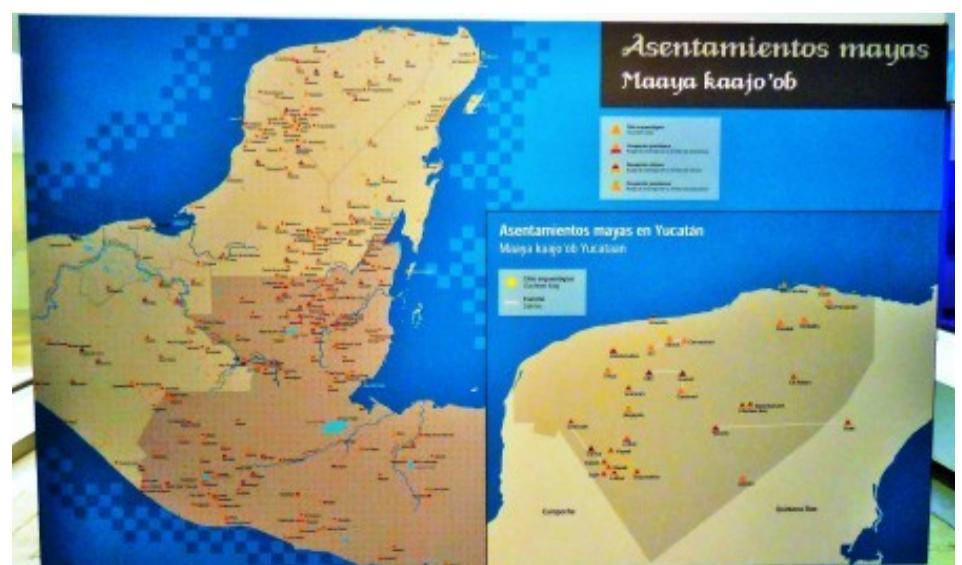
**Maya artifacts in the Gran Museo**

than that of all other Mexican states. Yucatán was linked to the rest of Mexico by railway in the 1950s and by highway a decade later. Today, Yucatán's culture remains unique from that of other Mexican states. In the 1960s, the first commercial jet airplanes arrived in Mérida. International airports were built in Cozumel and Cancún in the 1980s, bringing significant tourist income to the region. The Yucatán peninsula, which supports one of the largest indigenous populations in Mexico, also accommodates the state's largest tourist volume. For centuries, gubernatorial elections were based primarily on the purity of the candidates' Hispanic ancestry. However, this led to corruption and the oppression of Yucatán's majority population—those of indigenous ancestry. The first governor of Yucatán born of pure Mayan descent, Francisco Luna Kan, was elected in 1976. His victory represented a political break from tradition.

#### **Facts and figures of note about the region**

- The Yucatán Peninsula is home to North America's largest indigenous population, the Mayans. Yucatán has the highest percentage of indigenous language speakers in the country.
- Ría Celestún Biosphere Reserve near the fishing village of

**Mayan world 2000 years ago**



...Mérida

Celestún contains thousands of brilliant pink flamingos, a myriad of other bird species and exotic plants. During the winter months, as many as 30,000 flamingos can be seen there.

- The state is most famous for its Mayan ruins, which number between 2,600 and 2,700. Seventeen sites have been restored and are open to the public, the most famous being Chichén Itzá, Ek Balam and Uxmal.
- Yucatán has approximately 2,600 fresh water pools called cenotes, which the indigenous natives used for drinking water and sacrificial offerings. Today, the pools are popular tourist attractions.
- The state provides sanctuary for 443 of the 546 bird species registered in the Yucatán Peninsula. Along with Campeche and Quintana Roo, Yucatán is home to 50 percent of Mexico's bird species.
- Chichén Itzá and the Pyramid of Kukulcán were recently named among the new Seven Wonders of the World. Amazingly, the pyramid was built so that, on the spring and fall equinox (March 21 and September 21), the movement of the sun creates the illusion of a giant snake of light gliding down the pyramid's main flight of stairs. To the Mayans, this symbolized the return of Kukulcán, the Plumed Serpent.
- Around 600 A.D., the Mayans migrated toward the northern regions of South America and established some of the earliest-known cocoa plantations in Yucatán. The cocoa beans, which were reserved for the elite members of Mayan society, were ground and mixed with water to make an unsweetened drink.

*More pics follow...*

[Former Governor's residence](#)



Classic Mérida mansion



Inside the Gran Museo del Mundo Maya

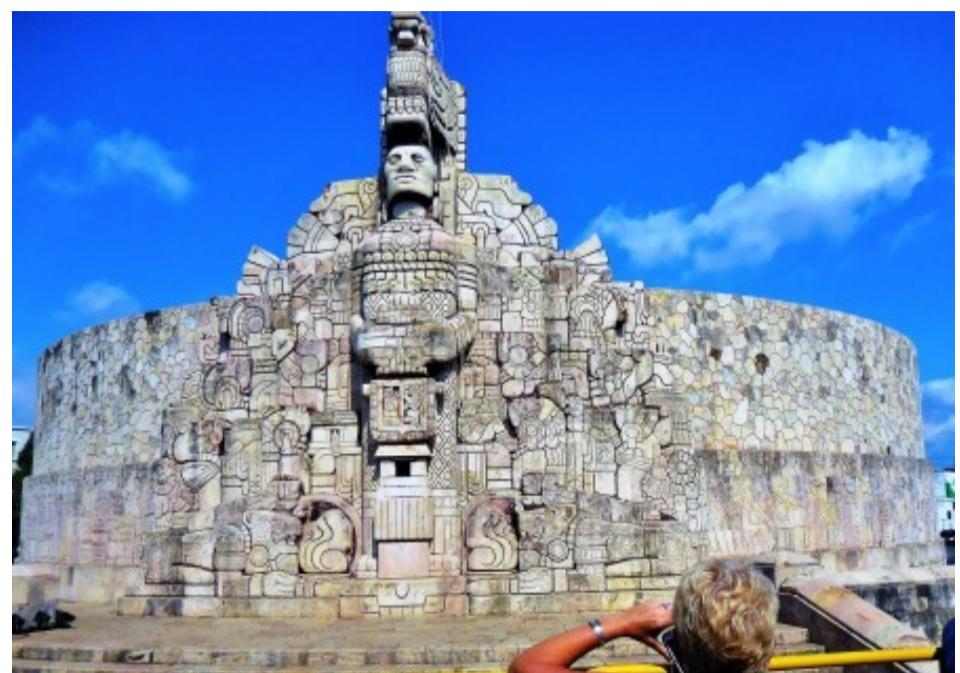


Mayan artifacts

...Mérida



San Ildefonso Cathedral



Mayan monument at the roundabout



Staircase murals at the state capitol building



Downtown streetscape



Heritage mansion



City park

...Mérida



Home of the UNAM in Mérida



Guys buying water



Mérida is the centre of commerce



Happy hour back at the RV park



Outdoor photo at the gallery of the Gran Museo


 Grant and Anita  
at the exhibits  
of the Gran  
Museo


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)

### **Christmas Salted Cod**

*Bacalao Navideño*



#### **Ingredients**

- 1 pound dried salted cod
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 white onion peeled, halved, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic finely chopped or pressed
- 1 1/2 pounds ripe tomatoes chopped, or a 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 2 red bell peppers roasted, sweated, peeled and diced
- 1 pound baby potatoes peeled, halved if larger than 1-inch
- 2 teaspoons white distilled vinegar
- 1/4 cup fresh Italian parsley chopped
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds
- 1/4 cup manzanilla olives stuffed with pimientos thinly sliced
- 8 to 10 pickled pepperoncini peppers or chiles güeros plus more for serving
- French baguette to slice and toast

#### **Directions**

48 hours before you wish to make the dish, begin preparing your salt cod for cooking. Place in a bowl, cover with water and place in the refrigerator. The next day drain, rinse and cover with water again. Place it back in the refrigerator for 10 to 12 hours. Drain, rinse and cover with water again. Refrigerate for another 10 to 12 hours, drain and rinse. Shred the fish and it is ready to use.

Heat the olive oil in a large casserole over medium heat. Once hot, add the onion and cook for 5 minutes, stirring often, until softened and beginning to brown around the edges. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about a minute. Stir in the tomatoes and roasted red bell peppers, cover partially and cook, stirring from time to time, for 10 minutes, or until the mixture has thickened and darkened in color. It should look somewhat chunky.

Meanwhile, in a separate, medium saucepan, boil the potatoes in salted water for about 10 minutes, until just tender; when you insert the tip of a knife it should go all the way in, but the potatoes should not fall apart. Drain and set aside.

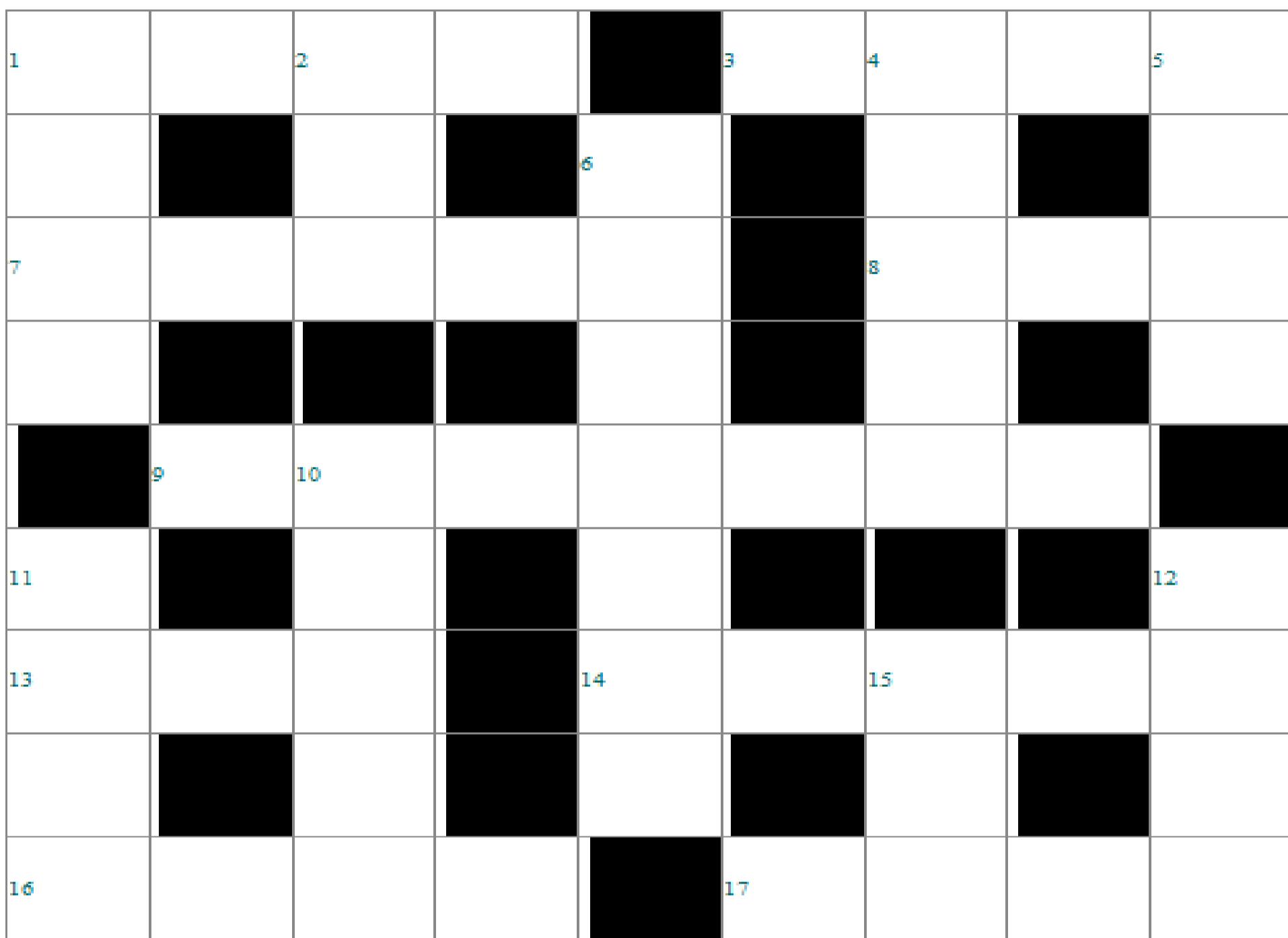
Stir the shredded cod into the tomato mixture. Add the vinegar, parsley, almonds and olives, stir together and continue to cook, partially covered for another 10 to 12 minutes, stirring occasionally and scraping the bottom of the pan, until the ingredients are well amalgamated and the sauce has thickened even more.

Reduce heat to low, stir in the cooked potatoes and the pickled pepperoncini peppers, cover the casserole and simmer for 5 more minutes. The mixture should be very moist and juicy, but not soupy. No need to add salt. Serve with additional pickled pepperoncini, and if you'd like, white rice on the side.

Recipe and photo patjinich.com

**Crossword**

solution posted in next month's edition

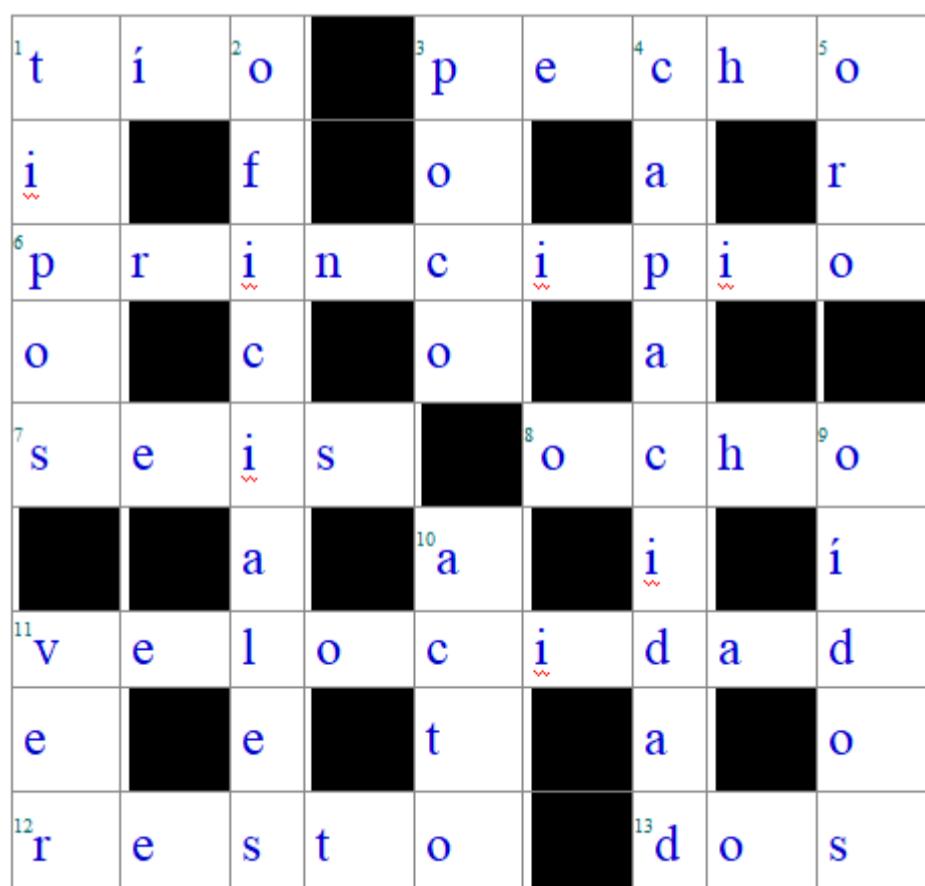

**Across**

- 1 flat, floor
- 3 feet
- 7 beams, rays
- 8 law
- 9 to put on, wear, to set (sun)
- 13 thirst, second-person positive imperative of ser
- 14 tower
- 16 but (on the contrary, but rather)
- 17 clothing, clothes

**Down**

- 1 pure, clear, cigar, puro
- 2 (I) am
- 4 islands
- 5 His, hers, its., Theirs.
- 6 appearance, look, aspect
- 10 order
- 11 uses
- 12 theme
- 15 river

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

### Criollos

from the Path to Citizenship series



The Criollo is a term which, in modern times, has diverse meanings, but is most commonly associated with Latin Americans who are of full or near full Spanish descent, distinguishing them from both multi-racial Latin Americans and Latin Americans of post-colonial (and not necessarily Spanish) European immigrant origin.

Historically, they were a social class in the hierarchy of the overseas colonies established by Spain beginning in the 16th century, especially in Hispanic America, comprising the locally born people of Spanish ancestry.

Although Criollos were legally Spaniards, in practice, they ranked below the Iberian-born Peninsulares. Nevertheless, they had preeminence over all the other populations: Amerindians, enslaved Africans and peoples of mixed descent.

According to the Casta system, a criollo could have up to 1/8 (one great-grandparent or equivalent) Amerindian ancestry without losing social place. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, changes in the Spanish Empire's policies towards its colonies led to tensions between Criollos and Peninsulares.

The growth of local Criollo political and economic strength in their separate colonies, coupled with their global geographic distribution, led them to each evolve a separate (both from each other and Spain) organic national personality and viewpoint. Criollos were the main supporters of the Spanish American wars of independence.

Source: photo and article, Wikipedia

To see more about this article series, visit us at [Path to Citizenship \(P2C\) online](#)

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