



# Manzanillo SUN

July 2017

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine

Beach boys  
by Marg McKenna



Colours of Mexico  
Nature's Wonders  
Finance  
Mighty Nature  
Mexico Living  
At the Movies  
Technology  
RV Travel  
Path to Citizenship

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Publisher/editor: Dana Parkinson

**Contact:**

General info@manzanillosun.com

Dana Parkinson dana@manzanillosun.com

For **advertising** information in the magazine or web pages contact:

ads@manzanillosun.com

Regular writers and contributors:

- Suzanne A. Marshall
- Allan Yanitski
- Tommy Clarkson
- Dana Parkinson
- Terry Sovil
- Señor Tech
- Kirby Vickery
- Yann Kostic
- Dan and Lisa Goy
- Ruth Hazlewood and Dan Patman
- Ken Waldie
- John Chalmers

**Writers** and **contributors** may also be reached via the following email:

info@manzanillosun.com

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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**¿Habla Usted Español?  
(The Benefits of Bilingualism)**

by Suzanne Marshall

Do you speak Spanish? I am asked this question by family and friends when I return from paradise to visit them in Canada each year. Sometimes when we're gabbing on the telephone they will hear me saying a few phrases to my 'Amiga' who comes in to clean our condo regularly. They seem quite amazed to hear my Spanish and think that I sound quite proficient. This is truly a compliment. But, the truth is I am still a beleaguered student who labors over regular internet lessons and tries, in all sincerity, to achieve a level of fluency that I have made my objective. I'm finding it more difficult than I had hoped.

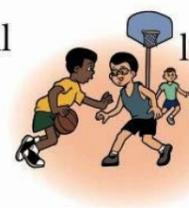
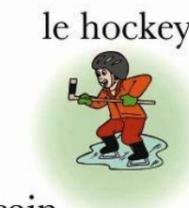
It doesn't hurt that Canada is a country with two official languages; English and French. And, of course, our educational system includes a core curriculum necessitating French as part of our requirements for diplomas. It definitely does not make us fluent in the language. That being said though, it does help stave off the fear of conjugating verbs as there is definitely a

similarity between French and Spanish in this regard, as well as some of the root vocabulary, which is Latin based. On the other hand, to some degree, it can also cause some confusion as I find myself using the odd French word that burps up from some subconscious level. I can also imagine that conjugation may well have certain people holding their breath with trepidation since conjugation is much more complicated in Spanish than it is in English. That, of course, is my opinion.



Lifelong learning is key

**Quel est ton sport favori?**

 le base-ball	 le basket	 le football
 le football américain	 le hockey	 le volley
 le tennis	 le golf	 la natation
 le karaté	 le patinage	 le ski

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I am a believer that, as a foreigner living in another country, I should make a serious effort to speak the local language. We certainly expect this in our countries of origin and anticipate that the immigrated populous will learn English. It's rather humbling to find myself in the same situation, and suddenly understanding how difficult this can be, especially in retirement, and with a 'not-so-flexible' senior brain.

I now understand why foreign communities seek each other out. And there might even be a bit of shame in there for being a bit judgmental. We want and need to be understood, share our commonality and enjoy the familiarity of our common 'tongue'. Many of the expat community here in paradise are also finding themselves challenged with the goal of speaking Spanish. But, we labor on and, I do have to say that the effort has certainly improved my ability to speak and listen in Spanish. Something concrete must be happening at a subcon-

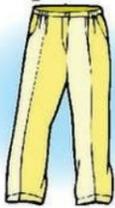
...¿Habla Usted Español?

scious level so I soldier on and hack my way through one lesson after another. I also continuously return to the beginning to refresh the basic tools.

I believe one of the obstacles to real fluency is the fact that we are not immersed in the world of daily jobs and raising our young families anymore. We are somewhat cocooned. We are also allowed to bypass the Mexican television and radio channels with our fancy satellites and internet technology so readily available pretty much anywhere in the world now. I am told by our Mexican neighbors that this is one of the better ways to learn the language. Especially telenovelas (soap operas)! I do listen to local radio and Spanish music almost every day and I must admit that I understand much more of the lyrics and radio commercials than I used to. I have hinted to my husband that we should try to pick a couple of Spanish television programs that we can watch regularly, perhaps twice a week, for an hour or so. I'm still working on that.

guage of commerce. Manzanillo is a port city, and though not as 'tourism' oriented as other centers, there are resorts, hotels and restaurant jobs that will pay far better wages if people are bilingual in Spanish and English. Most of our Mexican neighbors in the building where we live come regularly from Guadalajara to relax on weekends and enjoy the resort atmosphere. I would say that 90% of them speak English. I am very impressed by this fact. It only serves to make me more determined to learn their language as well. And when I say that they speak the language, I mean they speak it beautifully. And so, of course, having wintered here for many seasons and now having been here permanently for the last year, their expectation is pretty much as mine was in Canada. When are you going to speak the local language? I'm feeling the pressure a little.

### ¿Qué ropa llevas?

unos pantalones 	 una camisa	un vestido 
 una falda	 unos calcetines	unos jeans 
unos zapatos 	 una camiseta	un cinturón 
 una chaqueta	 una bufanda	una gorra 

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### Saludos y despedidas

Hola. 		Buenos días. Buenas tardes. Buenas noches.	
	¿Cómo estás? Estoy _____.	bien mal más o menos	
	¿Cómo te llamas? Me llamo _____.		
	Adiós.	¡Hasta luego! ¡Hasta mañana!	

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Another issue for us is the fact that these wonderful Mexicans are learning to speak English in school now. English is the lan-

But there are some serious issues to deal with. I explain. No opportunity for practice. In so many activities of our daily lives, like shopping, restaurants and cinemas, I boldly venture out with my tentative Spanish and immediately receive a response in English. They want to practice, too! But I shall persevere and can only hope that I can achieve some real proficiency before I

...¿Habla Usted Español?

kick the bucket! I have been told, now and then, by a Mexican local, that my Spanish is good and I certainly am encouraged by the appreciation. Even if you make mistakes, they respect the effort. You can always ask them if your phrasing is correct and they will usually be ready to assist you immediately. They are so gracious.

There are several ways to ask about the weather. The most common is:

**¿Qué tiempo hace?**

You can also try some of these:

**¿Qué clima hace?    ¿Cómo está el clima hoy?**

**¿Cómo está el tiempo?    ¿Cómo está el clima / tiempo en... (place)?**

Hace...	(verbs)	Hay...
<b>Hace frío.</b> It's cold.	<b>Llueve.</b> It's raining.	<b>Hay nubes.</b> It's cloudy.
<b>Hace mucho frío.</b> It's very cold.	<b>Llovizna.</b> It's drizzling.	<b>Hay niebla.</b> It's foggy.
<b>Hace calor.</b> It's hot.	<b>Nieva.</b> It's snowing.	<b>Hay humedad.</b> It's humid.
<b>Hace sol.</b> It's sunny.	<b>Truena.</b> It's thundering.	<b>Hay neblina.</b> It's misty.
<b>Hace fresco.</b> It's brisk.		<b>Hay lloviznas.</b> It's sprinkling.
<b>Hace viento.</b> It's windy.		<b>Hay lluvias torrenciales.</b> It's pouring.
<b>Hace buen tiempo.</b> It's good weather.		<b>Hay granizo.</b> It's hailing.
<b>Hace mal tiempo.</b> It's bad weather.		<b>Hay relámpagos.</b> There's lightning.
		<b>Hay un vendaval.</b> There's a windstorm.
	<b>Está...</b>	<b>Hay sol.</b> The sun is shining.
	<b>Está nublado.</b> It's cloudy.	<b>Hay luna.</b> The moon is out.
	<b>Está lluvioso.</b> It's raining.	
	<b>Está oscuro.</b> It's dark.	

Years ago, I had a Spanish tutor who claimed that English-speaking people learning Spanish often use it much more readily than the reverse, because we are not afraid to make total fools of ourselves. I think that may apply to me, as I barge out there and have a good laugh with them when caught in a language quandary. Mexicans are a little more timid, I understand, as they are embarrassed by mistakes.

There are a number of positive side benefits to be gained by making the effort to learn another language. I am honestly experiencing them; including improved memory and recall, as well as listening skills and concentration. It's exercise for the brain. Here are some reasons to take the challenge now that I've shown you that many of us struggle with it and that we're all in the same boat.

**Benefits of Bilingualism<sup>1</sup>**

- You become smarter. "Speaking a foreign language improves the functionality of your brain by challenging it to recognize, negotiate meaning, and communicate in different language systems."
- You build multitasking skills. "Multilingual people, especially children, are skilled at switching between two systems of speech, writing and structure." This makes for better multitasking.
- You stave off Alzheimer's and dementia. "For monolingual adults, the mean age for the first signs of dementia is 71.4. For adults who speak two or more languages, the mean age for those first signs is 75.5."
- Your memory improves. "According to a study from the University of Chicago, bilinguals tend to make more rational decisions. Any language contains nuance and subtle implications in its vocabulary and these biases can subconsciously influence judgement."
- You become more perceptive. "A study from Spain's University of Pompeu Fabra revealed that multilingual people are better at observing their surroundings. They are more adept at focusing on relevant information and editing out the irrelevant."
- Your decision-making skills improve. "According to the University of Chicago, bilinguals tend to make more rational decisions. Any language contains nuance and subtle implications in its vocabulary and these biases can subconsciously influence your judgement."
- You improve your English. "Learning a foreign language draws your focus to the mechanics of language: grammar, conjugations, and sentence structure. This makes you more aware of language and the ways it can be structured and manipulated. These skills can make you a more effective communicator and a sharper editor and writer. Language speakers also develop a better ear for listening, since they are skilled at distinguishing meaning from discreet sounds."

<sup>1</sup>Anne Merrit. <http://annemerritt.com>

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



by Tommy Clarkson

**Begonia Deliciosa** *Begonia deliciosa*

Family: *Begoniaceae*

Also known as: No other names, common or botanical

*(Why do I seem to have this perverse proclivity to find, admire, acquire and then endeavor to grow plants - like this one - about which there is scant, published information? But, great and grand glutton for punishment that I seem to be, I have striven to persevere. And, following no little rummaging through numerous botanical tomes, publications and articles, coupled with recollection of personal experiences with my specimen, have been able to assemble the following.)*

Let's start out in a somewhat broad scheme, regarding the family-whole, and work to more specifics regarding this particularly attractive species.

The *Begonia deliciosa* comes from a very large genus, which is comprised of almost 1,000 different species. Most of these plants are endowed with asymmetrical – and quite showy – leaves that complement large clusters of often, long-lasting flowers. Those blossoms are unisexual – meaning that there are both male and female on the same plant.

Generally speaking, Begonias are – honest to goodness – edible! Now this fact may have an exciting culinary allure for some and be outright appalling to others. But, by way of re-enforcement of fact, I have read that, during World War II – what with the

food deprivation resulting from U-Boat attacks on supplies crossing the Atlantic Ocean – numerous Britons were forced to eat their Begonia houseplants.



Its unique leaves are - simply put - beautiful!

Beyond these "food by necessity experiences", I recently read an article which stated that this particular begonia was reputedly being grown, today, as food in Asia!

*(So, relative to this consumption of begonias as a mealtime experience . . . .)* In that I strive to not write about anything unless I have personally experienced it or have confirmed it manifold times through professional authorities that I trust implicitly, I decided to take this task, personally, to hand. *(Or, I guess, that should, more correctly, read "to tongue".)*

Accordingly - actually twice now - I have munched upon a leaf clipped from my *Begonia deliciosa*. *(Suffice it to say, it did not share my enthusiasm in the experience!)* With epicurean aims fully intending to be totally addressed, I vigorously chomped into said leaves only to find the taste quite bitter and wholly unsatisfactory to my palate.

So, that fact stated, let's directly address this poor plant upon which I strove to dine. It was discovered by Jean Linden in 1881, amid the steamy climes of Borneo.

As small plants go, it's really a rather charming specimen, what with its cleft dark leaves generously spotted with silver. Add to that, its delicate, fragrant, light pink flowers that bloom, usually, around springtime. Horticulturally, it is classified as

...Begonia Deliciosa

"rhizomatous, rhizome erect, jointed at or below soil level". From its odd bulbous growths, at soil level, shoot up stems, reaching skyward. Given the right conditions, it can grow to be a medium-sized shrub.



The *Begonia deliciosa* is really a rather charming specimen, what with its cleft dark leaves generously spotted with silver.

In less tropical areas it will require winter protection and additional humidity will help. Accordingly, place it near a water source, don't let the soil dry out, and do all you can to keep the humidity high.

*Begonia deliciosa* is often compared to the somewhat similar species *B. diadema* - also "common nameless" - but, probably, easier to grow. The botanical equivalent of Master and Johnson have meddled, tampered and fussed with its sex life. As a result, it is now a parent of numerous hybrids. (If you'd like to know more specific details check the American Begonia Society site.)

Should you find that you like your *Begonia deliciosa*, or related plant, there are a few ways to get new plants:



One is hard-pressed to say which is more attractive, the top or the bottom.

**Leaf cuttings** Cut off a leaf and leave it in a jar of water until small roots appear, then plant; or, with a razor or sharp knife, cut out a one and a quarter inch (3.18 cm) circle of leaf around the stem. Place the stem and approximately one-third of the leaf in coarse seed-raising mix or perlite/vermiculite.

**Wedge cuttings** Using a sharp implement, cut the leaf along either side of the main vein before and placing the bottom third of the leaf wedge in one of the previously identified sprouting media.

**Root cuttings** Cut a small piece of tuber with each stem cutting to increase the chances of it successfully rooting.

**By seeds** With a very great deal of careful attention they can be surface-sown on a moist, but free-draining, seedling medium. This is rather challenging as these seeds are exceedingly tiny. (*Imagine minute, miniscule dust motes?*)

Or, simply go buy one!

Get your copy of *The Civilized Jungle: Tropical Plants Facts and Fun From Ola Brisa Gardens (Volume 1)* Paperback – December 2, 2016 on [Amazon!](https://www.amazon.com)

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## Small-Cap Stocks: Are They Right for You, Right Now?

by Yann Kostic and Tom Zachystal

Small-cap stocks appeal to some investors because of their potential for strong growth. But are you in the right position to invest in them?

What are small-cap stocks? The market capitalization of a company is its stock price times the number of shares it has outstanding. Small-cap stocks typically include companies with market capitalizations of \$300 million to \$2 billion (versus \$2 billion to \$10 billion for mid-cap stocks and greater than \$10 billion for large-cap stocks).

Why consider small-cap stocks? Small-cap stocks typically have greater growth potential than larger-cap stocks, for a number of reasons. Generally speaking, many believe smaller companies may be more nimble than larger companies, so decisions about new products and services, and solutions to problems, can be made and implemented quickly. This helps smaller companies perform well at critical times.

When do small-cap stocks perform well? Conventional wisdom holds that small-cap stocks can perform better than larger-cap stocks when markets have been down and are improving. Indeed, some economists consider small-cap stocks a barometer for the overall health of the US economy. Small-cap stocks also tend to perform well in rising-interest-rate environments - and today, we are in a rising-interest-rate environment.

Is the time right for small-cap stocks? Trying to time the market is not usually advisable; it is generally better to choose an appropriate asset allocation for your risk tolerance and financial goals and stay the course. However, if you and your advisor believe they are right for your portfolio, you may decide now's the time to add some small-cap stocks.

*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) 574-1521 or in Mexico, (376) 106-1613.



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by Tommy Clarkson

### Downy Thorn Apple *Datura fastuosa*

Family: *Solanaceae*

Also known as: Horn of Plenty, Thorn Apple, Metel Thorn Apple, Angel's Trumpet or Hindu Datura

The *Datura* genus - comprised of both annual and perennial herbs and shrubs - has between eight to ten varieties that are all - called by some - Devil's Trumpets. While most of them originate in tropical America, this five-foot (1.5 meters) tall species is an Asian native from southern China.

An evergreen in the sub-tropics, in temperate zones these plants can be grown as annuals. A tenacious survivor, I moved - and then virtually forgot about - a couple of specimens below our compost bin across the street. Recently, while building a pathway to several new terraces in that area, Juan pointed out that not only were they blooming and doing well, but, lo and behold, below them - all up and down the hill - were a score or more volunteer plants that had sprung up from the green, somewhat round shaped, 1 1/4 - 1 5/8 inch (three to four cm), short, blunt spine covered, seed pods that had dropped off, rolled down, sprouted and taken root!

(We've since transplanted six to be with several other wonderful tropical flowers that grow on and around our pergola. And I've since learned that they can also be propagated by cuttings.)

A year round - albeit intermittent - bloomer, the funnel-shaped flowers of the Downy Thorn Apple are simply magnificent with, perhaps, the most attractive of all being the double-flowered ones. These flora are hermaphrodite (having both male and female organs) and are pollinated by insects.



The funnel-shaped flowers of the Downy Thorn Apple are simply magnificent!

Their stunning, solitary, eight to ten inch long (20 - 20.5 cm) blooms are somewhat difficult to describe, but I'll try. They ascend, with five, fused petal, fluted lobes, that have somewhat spurred edges with white to eggplant purple coloration outside and white inside. . . . probably, it's better if you simply look at the pictures!

Oh! One other interesting aspect of these flowers is that they are pollinated at night by sphinx moths.

However, like no few beautiful flowering plants, all parts of this one are toxic. In fact, the *Datura fastuosa* contains the alkaloids hyoscyamine, hyoscine and atropine as well as scopolamine and other chemicals - some that can be used medicinally while others are patently, "not good for you", hallucinogenic drugs.

That having been said, the internet site "Plants for a Future" states that, " *It has a wide range of applications in India, including in the treatment of epilepsy, hysteria, insanity, heart diseases, fever with catarrh, diarrhea, (and) skin diseases. A poultice of the crushed leaves (can be) used to relieve pain. In*

...Downy Thorn Apple



The somewhat round shaped, 1 1/4 - 1 5/8 inch (three to four cm), short, blunt spine covered, seed pods are certainly interesting.

*China, the plant is used in the treatment of asthma. In Vietnam, the dried flowers and leaves are cut into small chips and used in anti-asthmatic cigarettes."*

Elsewhere I've read that "*Cigarettes made (from) the leaves are also used to treat Parkinson's disease. Widespread is also the use of different plant parts in various preparations for sedating patients with mental disorders. In Africa, other traditional uses of the leaves include the treatment of hemorrhoids, boils, sores, skin diseases, rheumatism, headache, toothache, cholera, parasites such as ringworm and guinea worm, and as an abortifacient and anesthetic. In Senegal, Guinea, Ghana and Nigeria crushed leaves are applied as poultices on inflammatory swellings and rheumatic joints. In Ghana, a decoction of the leaves is used as eye drops to cure conjunctivitis and other eye complaints. In Nigeria dried leaves are mixed with salt and pepper and burnt to treat asthma. In Ethiopia the seed oil is used for massaging painful body parts. In Asia Datura metel has similar*

*medicinal applications, and it is used additionally to treat hydrophobia, epilepsy, convulsions, syphilis, inflammation of the breasts, smallpox, mumps and leprosy."*

By contrast to its spectacular flowers, the leaves of the Downy Thorn Apple are somewhat pedestrian. They are obvate, three to ten inches (7 – 25 cm) long with toothed margins. One source says that, along with the seeds, these leaves are "*anaesthetic, anodyne, antiasthmatic, antispasmodic, antitussive, bronchodilator, hallucinogenic, hypnotic and mydriatic.*" Now, all things considered, this – and the preceding two paragraphs – should, most certainly, get your attention!



The plant, itself, is unimposing, unimpressive and one that generally would not turn your eye for attention.

While "the pros" state that they prefer well-drained soil in partially shaded areas - not grow in full shade - my first transplanted two were in almost complete shade nearly the entire day and the "volunteers", conversely, seemed to thrive in bright sunshine without ever being watered!

All this from a forgotten-about plant!

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you can reach Tommy Clarkson at [tommy@manzanillosun.com](mailto:tommy@manzanillosun.com)

## The Green Flash

by Terry Sovil

The Green Flash should not be confused with the DC Comics "Flash" and/or mixed with the TV show "The Green Hornet". Manzanillo has a reputation for deep-sea fishing and a certain quality of sunsets that can display The Green Flash. Being on the same latitude as Hawaii and the Cayman Islands puts us in good company for this phenomenon. It is said that once you've seen a green flash, "you'll never again go wrong in matters of the heart".

Some will tell you that it isn't real. But the green flash can be seen in many different places. Our problem, in our sub-tropical zone, is that the sunsets don't last as long as locations farther north or south where the sun takes longer to set. Key West, Florida is a famous place to observe a green flash. I watched for one in Key West once. I didn't see one but I did see Leon Russell standing there looking for it too.

The Green Flash is a green flash because more green light gets through and therefore is more clearly seen. Sometimes, when the air is especially clear, enough of the blue or violet light rays make it through the atmosphere, causing a blue flash to be visible. However, green is the most common hue reported.

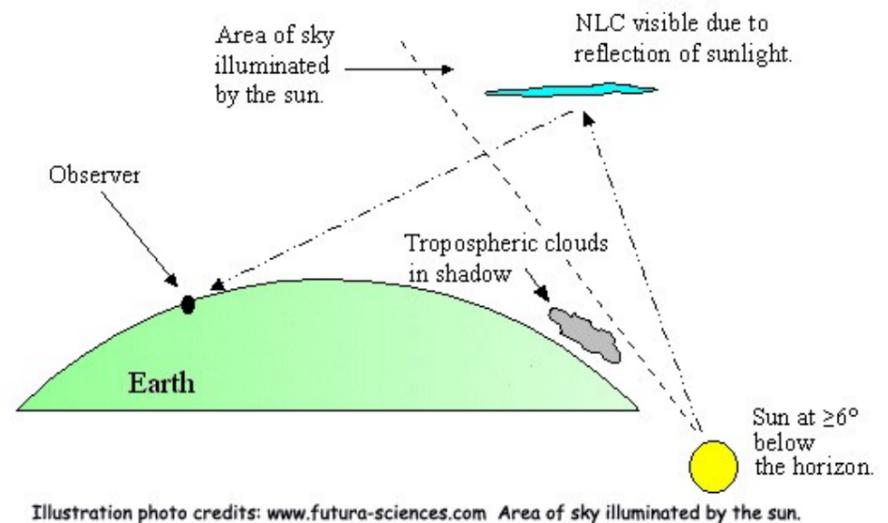
What is a green flash? As the sun sinks into the horizon, the light passes through our thick atmosphere, which scatters blue and green light, making them disappear. This makes the sun appear an orange-red. As it sinks farther, the atmosphere refracts (changes the direction when it enters at an angle) the sun's light that is below the horizon.

When you see the sun just above the horizon at sunset, the sun has already set. What you are seeing is an image refracted from below the horizon.

As the sun sets, we see only a sliver of light above the horizon. Air bends the colors and red disappears first since air bends



...Green Flash



green, blue and violet light more than it does red. So colors disappear in this order; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and then violet. This is the essence of the green flash which lasts only a second or two as the sun changes color.

People talk about a blue flash, which you may be able to see if the horizon is very clear. If the air isn't very clear it spreads the blue and violet light out leaving only green as the most common color that will make it to your eye when you watch the sun set.

What should I look for? The green flash happens when the sun has almost set entirely below the horizon when the slightest edge of the sun – the upper edge – is still visible. Just for 1 or 2 seconds the upper edge will appear green in color. The legendary green flash is brief! It would be a great reward, especially if you were specifically looking to see one.

How can you see one? There is never a guarantee! You need a clear day with no haze, pollution or clouds in the sky. You need a distant horizon and a distinct edge to the horizon. You are more apt to see one if the visibility is several miles, almost to the curvature of the earth.

You may be able to see one from a mountaintop or a high building, out on the open, flat prairie, or desert but the ocean is where they are most often seen. The ocean makes most of the atmosphere visible and your line of sight is parallel to the horizon.

Be careful! Don't stare at the setting sun or you will surely suffer eye damage. Instead, wait until the sun is almost down.

Glance towards the sun briefly with your peripheral vision. And when you sense the sun has nearly set, take a careful look for this rare and beautiful sight.

Popular culture has a few references to The Green Flash. Jules Verne's 1882 novel "The Green Ray" has a heroine searching for that phenomenon. Admiral Richard Byrd, a polar explorer, and crew claimed to have watched a "green sun" for 35 minutes on an expedition in Antarctica.

The easiest way to see one is to watch someone that has searched and photographed or filmed an event! YouTube has such a video, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iwus2nqU0SY> by [Juan Guerra](#), published on Mar 4, 2013, he says "No editing or tricks; this was shot in San Diego, California; using a Canon 60D @ 800mm (1280 - 35mm equivalent)." Enjoy! You can see the sky, the sun and the horizon across a great distance. This video has a very distinct green ring that forms. Hit the pause button a few times! There are two "flashes" the first at 1:21

This example, also on YouTube, combines several different sunsets and includes some on-screen text describing what you are seeing, showing examples of color refraction etc. It covers much of what I have mentioned above in a video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxTLzAToXfo>

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

**The Healer**  
**(Lo Que de Verdad Importa)**  
**(Netflix)**

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Starring: Oliver Jackson-Cohen, Jonathon Pryce, Camilla Luddington

Director: Paco Arango

Storyline: Alec Bailey is a gambling, womanizing bankrupt electrical repairman who is still traumatized by the death of Charlie, Alec's twin brother. Living in Britain with large debts and almost in the poorhouse, Alec is visited by a long-time estranged uncle Richard Heacock, a brother of his mother who lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. His uncle offers to solve Alec's money debts with one condition: that Alec moves to Halifax for a year. When he arrives in Halifax he discovers that the local villagers believe he is 'the chosen one'.

The movie is billed as a comedy. That, thankfully, allows some leverage for how silly and sappy it is at times. In spite of this, it can be considered light entertainment if you just go along with it and bury any expectations of a plot line that has some reality or believability in it.

What I truly enjoyed were the set locations in Canada's beautiful east coast province of Nova Scotia. There are settings in Halifax as well as Lunenburg (of the famous Tall Ships) where the beauties of this gorgeous province unfold. That made the movie worth seeing for me.

The IMDB rating is 6.4/10 based on about 344 viewers.



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



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## A Manzanillo Fish Story

by Kirby Vickery

Oh Hear Ye, Hear Ye! I have finally had the most successful fishing thing happen in Mexico since 1991 when I went down along the Baja California coast (just south of Tijuana) and pulled in a 25 pound snapper that the US Border Patrol wanted to take from me but didn't because I invited the agent to a grilled fish supper that night.

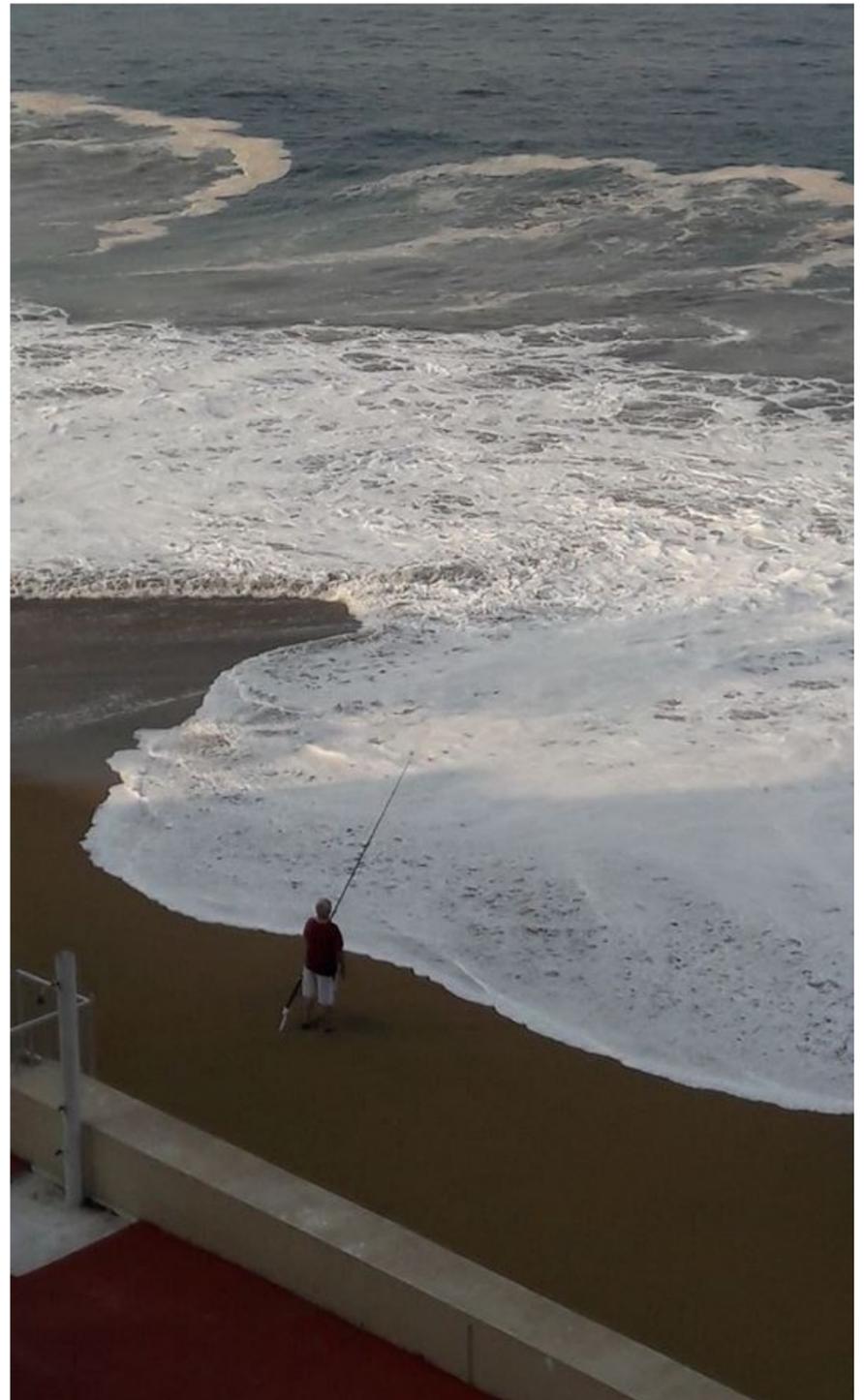
To me, fishing is something I enjoy and, if I get to catch some fish, then that's all the better. The only times I ever go out and really want to come home with fish, I take a San Diego Party Boat for a half day and come home with anything up to 40 pounds of filleted fish. But then they have fish finders on board. No, surf casting, to me, is my favorite fishing. Not because of the fish I catch, but what is always going on around me. One time, several years ago, on a very foggy and quiet beach in southern California, I was able to meet and talk with President Richard Nixon. I found him to be fascinating.

My first two attempts of fishing on this beach here were thwarted, first by an old pole falling apart, and then some old line which had gone brittle and kept breaking. But, finally, even though the surf was rather high, I put my new pole together with some new fishing line and stuff. I grabbed my five semi-frozen shrimp bait and hit the beach (or what was left of it) just after 8 AM. The morning breeze hadn't picked up yet, but the wave pattern really sucked.

I remember hearing somewhere that everything in the oceans run in cycles of seven. That may be true in Hawaii or minimally on the coast of Florida (Greece didn't have any). But, here in Manzanillo someone lost count. Then they forgot that they lost count and lost it again and again and again. I hit the beach with my 22 foot pole, my 40 year old, aluminum and plastic sand spike (I put that in here because I love to hear Ewa pronounce the name of that metal), my beach slippers and freshly cleaned glasses. Julio opened the gate to the beach for me and I stumbled down a two-foot drop from the final step onto the beach and was immediately hit by about six inches of rapidly moving water first one way and then another. Finally it drained back down the beach, leaving me holding on to the gate I had just gone through, trying not to drop anything.

I am plagued with Diabetic Neuropathy and have little or no feeling from about my mid-calf down and into both feet. I rely mostly on sight for my balance as my feet feel like I'm walking around in heavy foam all the time. On Whidbey Island, when I

first moved up there, my family used to play a game of catching Granddad crossing the barn yard at night, switching off the lights and hearing him fall over. Anyway, I found myself in swirling water, just a few inches deep, but running very fast with foam all over it and I couldn't see the bottom. I quickly learned just to stand there and not move as the water flowed by for a few moments. Then I could take few steps. And, after it receded, I found myself buried past my ankles in that sand.



After a bit, I found myself on a small, sandy promontory which I could plant my sand spike in and walk out on a fairly slight gradient of sandy beach so I could cast out. Now, in California, I would look at the surf and start counting because I want to walk out as far as I can, cast out over the breakers and get back before the next set of big ones start rolling in. Here, in the middle of this beach, the great god of the ocean saw me setting up and knew I was there and laughed. All of a sudden I was faced with one big breaker after another. And they were without rhythm too. I went from an ankle-deep run back to wa-

...Manzanillo Fish Story

ter slapping at the top of my waist. This is while I was staring at the drop-off I hadn't gotten to.

You do what you have to do. I dug in and shifted my feet a little, as the water tore by my feet, trying to bury me. I casted and was pleased to see my new pole worked just fine. My weight, hook and bait sailed far out over the break line. It was too bad that there was a faulty swivel involved and the line which was attached to the reel didn't go with that set-up. Oh well, I'll have to dig down into my right pocket and pull out my spare set-up. It's the one with the new swivel and I attached shrimp number four which had thawed, along with its buddies, in my left pocket.

I casted out again and noted that my bait still cleared the surf line and this one was still attached to the line. I forced my way back up the narrow beach through all that running water and noted something I hadn't paid any attention to before.

On the sidewalk side of our building, you will see a really good amount of foot traffic most all the time, but thickening just after the sun sets. There is a street bum covered with dirt and tattoos that saunters by occasionally while he sneers at my little dog. Young to middle-aged couples, usually interested in only themselves, and sometimes you will see entire families out for a walk by. Other people drive up to park only to walk across the street headed to one of the two taco stands or the Kiosko there. The traffic on the street doesn't die off until well after 1 AM.

I see mostly joggers on the beach, and most of them are with dogs. I can understand all that, having been a runner before and knowing that there isn't a dog park anywhere in this city. One lady without a dog came up to me when I was out before. She had a cell phone glued to one ear and told me to talk to her mother while shoving that phone in my face. She got really mad when I told her I didn't speak Spanish. I suppose I shouldn't have done that in Spanish. But . . . there are better beaches for bathing and surfing farther up the coast. Everyone has at least a friendly smile and a nod as they go by. And those that don't have dogs have cell phones and iPads stuck to them somewhere.

I fished until I was down to one shrimp while I noticed the evidence of man in the water. There was a plastic cup and a small chunk of foam that just sailed up the beach. I saw a chunk of wood trying to make it to dry land. At first, it was coming through the surf on my right. Then I lost sight of it for awhile only to see it later way off to my left.



My attention was diverted to a number of little coconuts all floating around in the fast-moving soup.

One guy came by with his large dog on a leash and was pulling on it to keep the dog from digging something out of the sand. It turned out to be an eel like fish roughly fifteen inches long. I grabbed it to take it up just to have something to talk about. It was a Pacific snake eel (*Ophichthus triserialis*). I was going to tell Ewa to cook it up but came clean when she decided to take a picture of it.

Manzanillo is the Sailfish capital of all Mexico and I understand that the boats are reasonable. I like to surf fish and no one needs a license down here to fish off the beach. So when I go out, I have a good time without any expectations.

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

**A Family Man**

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Starring: Allison Brie, Gerard Butler, Willem Dafoe, Alfred Molina

Director: Bill Dubuque

"A Head-hunter whose life revolves around closing the 'deals' in a survival-of-the-fittest boiler room, battles his top rival for control of their job placement company—his dream of owning the company clashing with the needs of his family."

This movie is billed as a drama. I had no idea the world of head-hunters could be so 'smarmy'. Or, perhaps that is the brutal environment the director has chosen to portray in order to create such a huge conflict between the protagonists working personality and the man who returns home to the family nest.

Personally, I found some of his tactics hard to swallow and would really like to believe that there is more integrity out there than this movie offers. That said, the actors are good and the movie is well produced.

The IMDB rating is 6.4/10 based on 860 viewers.

GERARD BUTLER    GRETCHEN MOL    ALISON BRIE    WITH ALFRED MOLINA    AND WILLEM DAFOE    INTRODUCING MAXWELL JENKINS



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

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## Facebook privacy demystified (part five)

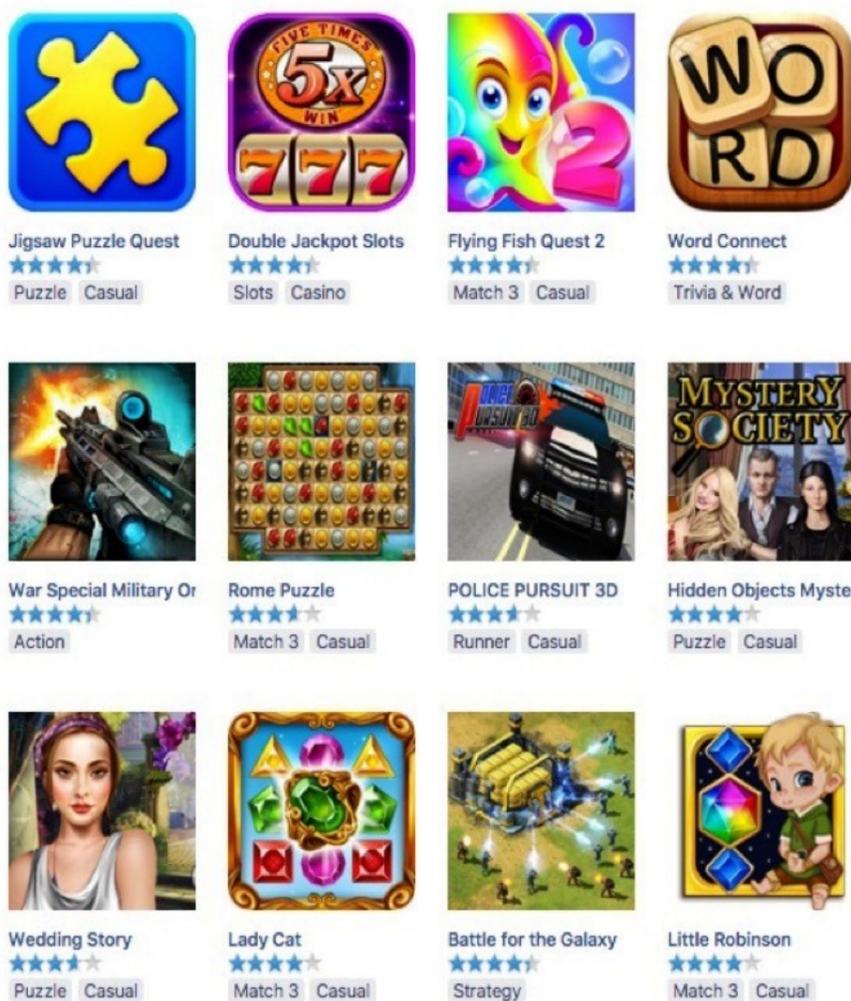
### Gotcha! Games and Facebook Apps

by Señor Tech

If you have read and followed instructions to set-up your Facebook account detailed in the previous four articles, you are ready to explore.

There is, however, one other thing to inspect before your data and personal information are safe. In the Facebook universe, in addition to posting and staying current with friends and family, there are apps and games to entertain you, the user. They are time wasters, to be sure, but fun.

As the photo shows, there are all types of games available. This is a small sample of the thousands available.



The games are free, but usually have 'in-game' purchases for items needed to achieve game goals quicker. Facebook offers an option to keep your payment method on file; I do not recommend this, because if you inadvertently click 'purchase', you are billed.

After selecting a game, it will initiate the install to your profile. This is where you also must read the fine print. The game authors want as much information about you as they can get.

Make sure to read about what information they will collect before you agree. The 'Candy Crush' photo shows what information they will try to get you to freely provide. All they are entitled to collect is your public profile.



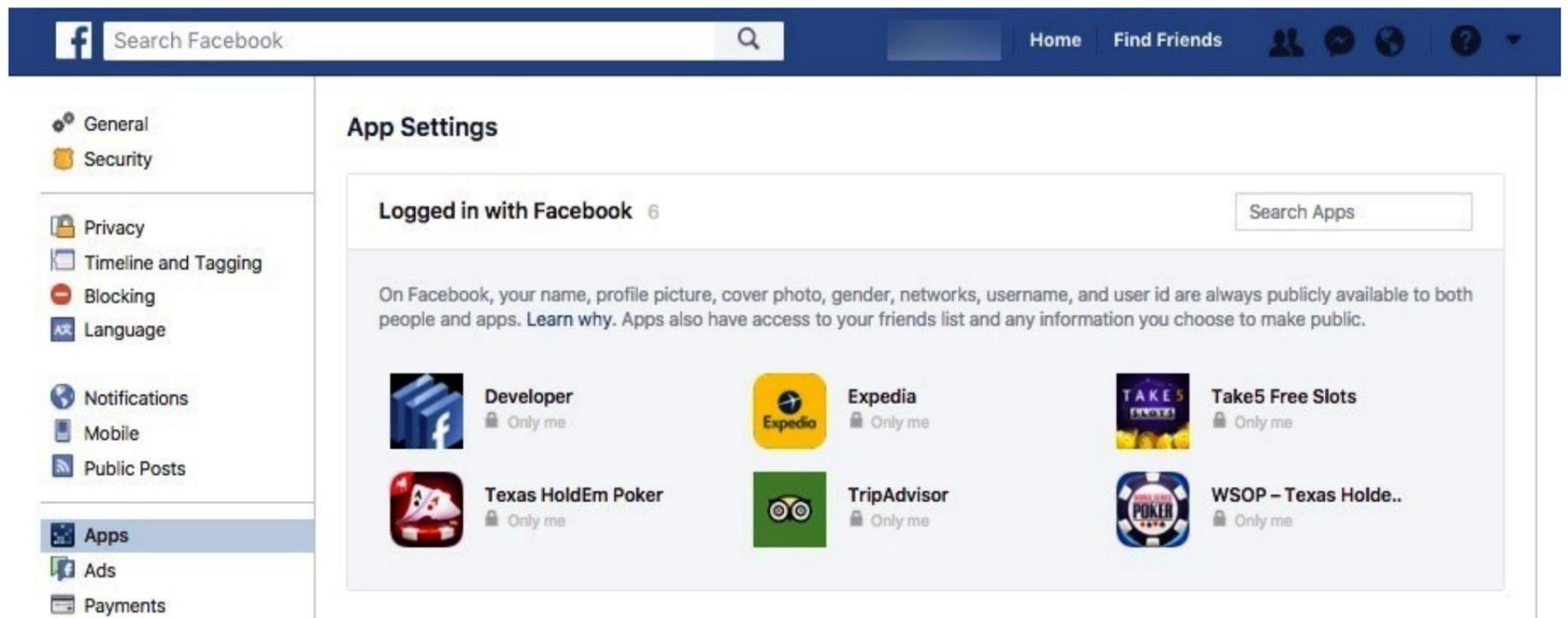
As you can see from this screen shot, this game also wants your friend list and your email address. If you want to play this game, make sure to un-check Friend list and Email address.

If you do not un-check, the game will constantly ask you to send items to friends, or worse, it will post game advertising to your friends' feeds (your friends will probably not appreciate this and remove your posts from their feeds).

Each game app is different, so ensure you inspect the 'Edit the info you provide' on the game setup page (in the example, I have already done so, to display the screen shot).

If you want to check what information the Facebook apps you have installed are collecting, go to Settings.

...Facebook Demystified



Then select Apps to display the App Settings. Click on each of the apps to see what information that App is collecting. I recommend that only the Public Profile be checked.

I have found that even, though you have selected 'not to share your friend lists', the app will try to trick you into clicking your approval, so be wary and check your settings occasionally.

If you like to play games online, do so, but ensure your personal information is protected.

*if you have questions or suggestions about future technology topics, email [seniortech@manzanillosun.com](mailto:seniortech@manzanillosun.com)*

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## Camping in Catemaco, Veracruz

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

January 15 and 16, 2016 (Days 9-10)

We leave Veracruz and continue the southward journey along Hwy 180 to Catemaco and the Tepetapan RV Park. It was Mike and Kelly's turn to take the lead and they did just fine. This was a very scenic drive, lots to see and not that busy.



En route to Catemaco, Hwy 180

Catemaco is a tourist destination with its main attractions being Lake Catemaco, remnants of the region's rainforest and a tradition of sorcery/witchcraft that has its roots in the pre-Hispanic period and is mostly practiced by men. We arrived at our destination before lunch and settled the RVs into the Tepetapan RV Park. Great campground with many amenities and very reasonably priced at \$250 pesos per night.



On the road to Catemaco

First order of business was to find a lavandería (laundromat) which we had not done since we entered Mexico. The gals collected everything and the guys headed out to see what we could find. Only a few blocks from Tepetapan we found Juanita's, 16 pesos per kilo and they would deliver it to the park before we left.

Who could beat that, eh?



Boys in charge of laundry

On our second day in Catemaco, we all walked into town to lakeside. The gang went on a boat (lanchas) tour to Monkey Island and took a look around the lake which included monkeys and crocodiles. Monkey Island is named after the non-native red-cheeked changos, monkeys brought here by the University of Veracruz from Thailand and used for study. Lisa and I stayed back and walked up to the very ornate Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church which was not completed until the 60s. The Zócalo and Municipal Hall (Municipal Palace) in Catemaco are also worth a stop.



Lisa enjoying the pool at the RV park

Later we headed back to the RV Park for a siesta and a dip in

...Catemaco

the pool. The rest of the group returned in the afternoon. From all reports, they had a fun time on the tour and, after arriving back to town, spread out for lunch.

We learned about live entertainment in town tonight but de-



Eileen, Kelly and Anita poolside at the Catemaco RV park

ecided to wait for the laundry which arrived at 8:30 pm, vacuum-packed, it seemed, then most walked into town for the reopening of malecón celebration that included a band and dancers from Mexico City. There were literally thousands of people, shoulder to shoulder and yes, the entertainment was loud. On the way back to the campground, we stopped for a drink at a bar on the lake that included a singer who clearly had been performing for many years. Lots of fun, for sure!

#### Other Catemaco attractions

The main plaza is popular with both residents and visitors. The main structure here is the Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Veneration of this version of the Virgin Mary, the patroness of the municipality, began in the early colonial period, as a substitute for the local worship of Chalchiuhtlicue, the goddess of water and fishermen.

This basilica contains an image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which has been credited with miracles. It is rivaled in devotion only by a shrine on an island in Lake Catemaco called El Tegal, where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared. The current structure was begun in 1799 but was not finished until 1961.

The church is a combination of Baroque and Neoclassical, with a cupola 21 meters high. The surrounding stained-glass windows depict the lives of Jesus and Mary. Each year, Our Lady of Mount Carmel is celebrated at this basilica, with a launching of

boats in procession to Agaltepec Island and traditional music including danzón, Son Jarocho and other tropical music, using guitars, violins, the vihuela and double bass.

Other landmarks in the city include the Statue of the Fisher-



Municipal Palace (City Hall)

man, the Torre del Reloj (Clock Tower), the Brizuela Absalón House, the Gasca Blanco House and the Herrera García House. The Casa de los Tesoros is a large gift shop, which offers bagels, bizcochos and Mexican handcrafts and folk art. There is a bus station principally connecting the city with the ports of Veracruz and Coatzacoalcos.

Hwy 180 thru this region is a very scenic drive as the municipi-



Hwy 180 is a good route for RVs

pality is located in the Los Tuxtlas mountain region in the south of Veracruz, a rugged area of recent volcanic origin. It is located in a valley between the San Martín Volcano and the Santa Marta mountain ranges, extending from Lake Catemaco to the Gulf of Mexico shore, with an average altitude of 340 meters above sea level.

Most of the wild vegetation has been destroyed, with 391.6 km<sup>2</sup> used as pasture for animals, 50.8 km<sup>2</sup> used for agriculture and 39.4 km<sup>2</sup> with secondary vegetation. Only 84.8 km<sup>2</sup> re-

...Catemaco

mains as rainforest and 81.2 km<sup>2</sup> is covered by water.

The remaining natural vegetation is high tropical perennial rain-



Lakeside Catemaco

forest, giving way to wetland vegetation and mangroves near and on the Gulf coast. Native tree species include cedar, royal palm, palo de agua, ojite (*Brosimum alicastrum*), ojueta, marayo and rabo lagarto (*Equisetum arvense*). The Nanciyaga Ecological Reserve preserve most of what is left of the rainforest that enveloped Lake Catemaco. Wildlife include small mammals such as squirrels, armadillos, rabbits, weasels and raccoons. Many bird species inhabit the lake area including herons, owls, cardinals and more. Numbers are highest in December with the arrival of migratory species. Spider monkeys were extinct but have been reintroduced in the Lake Catemaco area.

For most of the year, the climate is warm and humid. The aver-



Fisherman having a siesta

age temperature ranges from 20 to 26C, with the coolest months from November to January and the warmest in the summer. Our visit in January was warm enough for us.

It rains all year because of warm humid winds from the Gulf of Mexico, but annual totals vary from 1900 mm to 4600 mm. The quantity of rainfall also varies by season, with a relatively dry season from March to June, when totals are half that of the rest of the year.

Winds are predominantly from the north. From February to October, most winds are from the northeast, which are warmer. From November to January, cooler winds from the north dominate due to cold fronts from the north called "nortes."

The lake and its twelve islands have been designated as a fed-



The gang on the boat tour

eral, natural park. The largest of these islands is Agaltepec, 750 meters long and 150 at its widest, covering 8.5 hectares. This name is from Pipil and Nahuatl and means "stone canoe" or "canoe hill." It is also called Crocodile or Dragon Island in reference to its shape which resembles the animal when seen from certain perspectives.

Its vegetation remains intact with over 1,600 trees of 63 species. In 1988 and 1989, two groups of howler monkeys, which are in danger of extinction, were brought to the Agaltepec Island as an attempt to preserve the species. Since then the animals have multiplied to over 100 and their cries can be heard in the nearby city.

The island is federal property and is maintained by the Universidad Veracruzana. There is also an archeological site on the island. Tanaxpillo, better known as the "Island of the Monkeys." This name and fame come from a colony of stump-tailed macaques that live there, introduced as part of a research project in the 1970s. They are maintained by the university although they are also fed by local boat operators. One other popular island for visitors is the Heron Island (Isla de las Garzas), a

...Catemaco

sanctuary of the species, which cover the trees and have painted them white from their excrement.

The other major body of water within the municipality is the



Basilica of our Lady of Mount Carmel

Sontecomapan Lagoon. It is a large, shallow estuary, which opens to the sea, covering 900 hectares in a very irregular shape. Its average depth is only two meters with the deepest part at five meters. The lagoon is fed by various rivers and streams with the salinity of the water increasing the closer one is to the Gulf of Mexico.

It is mostly separated from the Gulf by the Barra de Sonteco-



Monument to the fisherman - Hwy 180

mapan, a stretch of beach and offshore reefs. Canals also stretch from the main body of water, and both these canals, and the edges of the lagoon, contain mangroves. The town of Sontecomapan, which the lake is named after, has docks for fishing and tours to see the area's vegetation, especially its

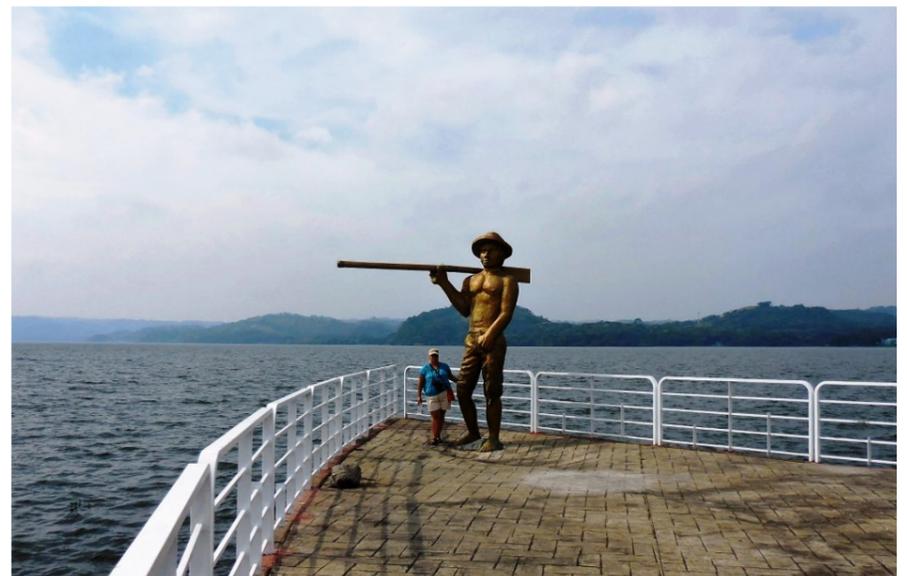
mangroves.

Lake Nixtamalpan is located in a crater filled from underground. Its depth is unknown, but is estimated at fifty meters, and covers and area of about twenty hectares.

The municipality has a coastline on the Gulf of Mexico. The most visited beaches here are Peña Hermosa in Tatahuicapan de Juárez, La Perla del Golfo in Mecayapan and Playa Escondida, most popular with foreign tourists.

The most important commercial activity in the region continues to be tourism, mostly centered in the city of Catemaco. The area attracts mostly Mexican visitors, with the busiest times being traditional vacation periods such as Holy Week, some parts of summer and long weekends.

Most come to see the lake, including boat tours to the various



Lisa with fisherman monument

islands, and visit the sorcerers. The area has also attracted the film industry, with films such as Medicine Man with Sean Connery and Apocalypto, filmed by Mel Gibson.

Ecological tourism has grown in the municipality, allowing rural communities such as Ejido Lopez Mateos and Ejido Miguel Hidalgo to offer cabins and access to attractions such as rainforest, rivers and waterfalls, like the Cola de Caballo and Poza Reina. There are also archeological sites such as Las Margaritas and a pyramid on El Cerrito just outside of Catemaco city.

### The "witches" of Catemaco

Catemaco is known in Mexico for its community of "brujos," which can be translated as "witches" or "sorcerers" as most are men. The history of magical practices here extends back to the pre-Hispanic period and may have survived because of its relative isolation, but Lake Catemaco is said to emit a kind of energy, along with the Mono Blanco Mountain that rises above it.

...Catemaco

These magical practices are an uneasy mix of Catholic rite, especially the invocation of saints, and pre-Hispanic beliefs and rituals. There are practitioners of both "white" and "black" magic, with the white version being more acceptable. Those who practice the black version charge more.

Sorcery is one of the main attractions of Catemaco. The belief



Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

in magical practices has attracted people from all walks of life, from waiters and taxi drivers to national-level politicians. Veracruz governor Fidel Herrera Beltrán even pushed for a national school for sorcery in Catemaco, without success and is a regular at the annual event. Visitors usually seek limpiezas (ritual cleansings), healing or something to give them an edge in business. These magical practices have also migrated out of the Catemaco area as residents move to other places such as Ciudad Juárez to work.

Although the sorcery is a main attraction, it is not promoted as



Mike and Kelly's RV

part of Halloween or Day of the Dead. The main event for practitioners is the annual Congreso Nacional de Brujos de Catemaco (officially called the Ritos, Ceremonias y Artesanías Mágicas because of objections from the Catholic Church). The main event is the opening, on the first Friday of March.

This begins with a "black mass" on the edge of Lake Catemaco by the "brujo mayor" (loosely translated as "high witch or sorcerer"), which attracts up to 5,000 people. The event was founded in the 1970s by former brujo mayor Gonzalo Aguirre and today attracts around 200 shamans, healers (curanderos), herbalists, psychics and fortune tellers. It also brings in as much as three million pesos to the local economy.

The popularity of the brujos and the event has created prob-



Lots of room at the Tepetapan RV park

lems as well. Many con artists have taken advantage of the situation, making the finding of genuine practitioners difficult. There have been disputes among the practitioners over clients, tourism and who leads the rites at the annual gathering. There has also been controversy related to those who sacrifice animals or petition Santa Muerte or the Devil.

### History

In the early pre-Hispanic period, the area was dominated by the Olmecs, but the name is derived from Nahuatl, meaning "place of the burned houses." This name is probably in reference to an eruption of the San Martin Volcano.

From the 16th century, the area was part of the province of Santiago Tuxtla, which became a municipality after Independence. The city itself was founded in 1774. In 1881, it officially became a town and in 1966 was declared a city.

Submitted by Dan and Lisa Goy  
 Owners of Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours  
 Experiences from our 90-day Mexico RV Tour: January 7-April 5, 2016  
[www.BajaAmigos.net](http://www.BajaAmigos.net)

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

more images follow...

...Catemaco



## Impossible Cake Chocoflan/Pastel Imposible

Ingredients for the cake itself:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup Cajeta or Dulce de Leche
- 1 package of chocolate cake mix (340 g)
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup oil (240 ml)
- 1 can evaporated milk (373ml)
- 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped; make sure shells are gone

Ingredients for the flan

- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (300 ml)
- 1 more can evaporated milk (370 ml)
- 5 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Preparation

Preheat the oven to 400 °F (we will reduce this setting just before baking)

1) Heat up the Cajeta to make it more liquid; take your time to grease with the butter the mold you are about use, then sprinkle some flour to help with unmolding later on; pour the cajeta at the bottom of the mold, making sure it is evenly distributed.

2) Prepare the cake dough as indicated on the package. Pour the cake mixture into the prepared mold over the cajeta, pouring gradually, little by little. Alternatively, you can use your own favorite recipe for chocolate cake rather than using a commercial box.

3) Prepare the flan: first pour the sweetened condensed milk to the bowl of your blender and pulse a few times at low speed,



then put the other ingredients in and blend, making sure your mixture does not have too much foam.

Pour the flan preparation over the cake preparation in the mold, very gradually once again; here we are trying to avoid too much mixing between the cake and the flan but a little mixing is unavoidable and its ok.

4) Cover the filled mold with foil to prevent the cake from spilling out by its sides. We will be using a bain marie in the oven to bake this cake; so place the mold we have filled with the chocoflan preparation in another larger pot, with 1 inch water in it; the level of water must not be higher than half the height of the mold so that the water won't mix with the cake preparation while baking.

5) Put both pan and mold in the oven together and lower oven temperature to 350 °F, then bake for 1 hour approximately; do not open the oven before this time has passed! When the Chocoflan is ready, pull out of the oven and let it cool down for 20 minutes; cut with a knife around the mold then carefully flip the mold to a serving platter and unmold.

Source: MexicanRecipes.me



Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition

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

Across

- 1 to give
- 3 floors, stories
- 6 to meet
- 7 I mean, that is to say (1,3)
- 8 moon
- 11 early morning
- 12 list, stripe
- 13 gold, first-person present indicative of orar

Down

- 1 owner, proprietor, landlord
- 2 memories
- 3 (he, she) puts (you/usted) put
- 4 human being (3,6)
- 5 to be (in essence, identified as)
- 9 down
- 10 cure
- 11 bad, badly

Last month's crossword solution:

1	b	o	2	d	a		3	v	4	a	n	5	o
	o		o			6	a		m			l	
7	c	a	s	a	s			8	i	b	a		
	a				e			g			s		
		9	a	10	m	i	s	t	a	d			
11	a		a			i						12	n
13	r	e	y			14	n	o	15	v	i	a	
	m		o			o			e			d	
16	a	i	r	e			17	t	o	m	a		

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## La Malinche

from the Path to Citizenship series

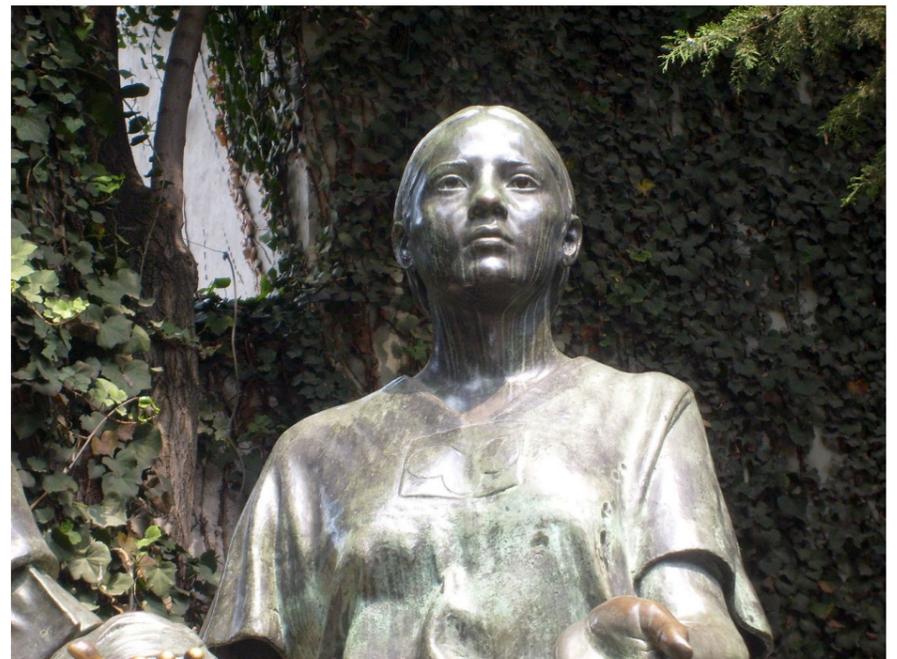
La Malinche (c. 1496 or c. 1501 – c. 1529), known also as Malinalli, Malintzin or Doña Marina, was a Nahuatl woman from the Mexican Gulf Coast who played a role in the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire, acting as an interpreter, advisor, lover and intermediary for the Spanish conquistador, Hernán Cortés.

She was one of 20 women slaves given to the Spaniards by the natives of Tabasco in 1519. Later, she became a mistress to Cortés and gave birth to his first son, Martín, who is considered one of the first Mestizos (people of mixed European and indigenous American ancestry).

The historical figure of Marina has been intermixed with Aztec legends (such as La Llorona, a woman who weeps for her lost children). Her reputation has been altered over the years according to changing social and political perspectives, especially after the Mexican Revolution, when she was portrayed in dramas, novels, and paintings as an evil or scheming temptress. In Mexico today, La Malinche remains iconically potent.

She is understood in various and often-conflicting aspects as the embodiment of treachery, the quintessential victim, or simply as symbolic mother of the new Mexican people. The term "malinchista" refers to a disloyal countryperson, especially in Mexico.

For the conquistadores, having a reliable interpreter was important enough, but there is evidence that Marina's role and influence were larger still. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a soldier who, as an old man, produced the most comprehensive of the eyewitness accounts, the *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España* ("True Story of the Conquest of New Spain"), speaks repeatedly and reverentially of the "great lady" Doña Marina (always using the honorific title Doña). "Without the help of Doña Marina," he writes, "we would not have understood the language of New Spain and Mexico."



Rodríguez de Ocaña, another conquistador, relates Cortés' assertion that after God, Marina was the main reason for his success.

The evidence from indigenous sources is even more interesting, both in the commentaries about her role, and in her prominence in the codex drawings made of conquest events. In the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* (History of Tlaxcala), for example, not only is Cortés rarely portrayed without Marina poised by his side, but she is shown at times on her own, seemingly directing events as an independent authority. If she had been trained for court life, as in Díaz's account, her relationship to Cortés may have followed the familiar pattern of marriage among native elite classes. The role of the Nahuatl wife acquired through an alliance would have been to assist her husband achieve his military and diplomatic objectives.

Today's historians give great credit to Marina's diplomatic skills, with some "almost tempted to think of her as the real conqueror of Mexico." In contrast with earlier parts of Díaz del Castillo's account, after Marina's diplomacy began assisting Cortés, the Spanish were forced into combat on one more occasion.

Source: Wikipedia

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