

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

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Article submissions:

- Preferred subjects are Manzanillo and Mexico
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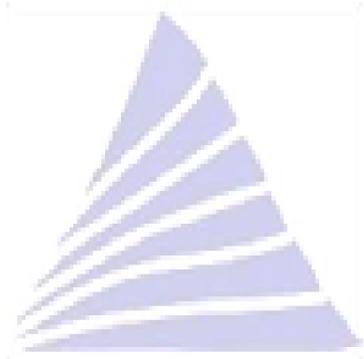
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Mexico City, Beyond Expectations

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Finally, after much talk and many good intentions we nailed down our trip to Mexico City at the end of August. Like most travellers to Mexico, we'd seen the airport numerous times as we made connections on other journeys to many beautiful locations in the country. Approaching the city from the air, the sheer size is mind boggling as you realize you've been flying over it for 30 minutes. It is one of the largest cities in the world by population ranking 6th with roughly twenty one million residents. (Tokyo is #1 at 38 million).



Chapultepec Park lake (above) and the skylines beyond the neighbourhood of Polanco (below) were all in walking distance from our hotel



Though I'd heard from friends who made the journey in the past and expressed having had a great experience, I still had some trepidation about smog, traffic and general jitters about a huge new place in a foreign country. Obviously, I really didn't know what to expect. As it turns out, my husband (our resident and efficient 'planner') pegged it all down very well and our stay was truly wonderful.

Following an hour-long flight from Manzanillo, we landed in Mexico City and took a taxi to our hotel destination. We had chosen a lovely small hotel "Suites Contempo" in the neighborhood of Polanco which is notoriously safe and walkable. It also happened to be a short walk from the magnificent Chapultepec Park...and I do mean magnificent! This area is in the 'downtown' core of the city where the population is about 8.8 million. This is the corporate and business sector and teems with high-rise office buildings, traffic and people in suits heading to and from work.

We could have spent the entire 9 days in Chapultepec Park. It is huge and quite a bit larger than Central Park in New York. Once we were unpacked, we hit the streets and walked the few blocks over to the park. There was an outdoor children's theatre group performing inside on the grounds and lots of raucous laughter and antics could be heard as we made our way into the first exhibit of fine art by Leonora Carrington. Little did we know how much more there was to see in the park and we ultimately returned for at least 5 full days of pure delight and first-class exhibits.

By this time, I had a pretty good handle on the lay of the land, so to speak. My initial misgivings disappeared as we found our way around the neighbourhoods. I'm happy to report that I experienced a super-clean, organized place.

The greenery was abundant everywhere, with tree-lined streets, fabulous park-like walkways down the medians of most streets, with paving stones and benches everywhere. People were walking with their dogs, having lunch on a nearby bench or just ambling around the restaurants and shops. I could probably call it quite cosmopolitan. Mexico City is working on its green spaces with roof-top gardens and even towers complete with living 'green' panels enveloping the walls of the buildings. Quite a sight indeed. In addition, I noticed a lot of English being spoken in most places. Thanks to that, and our constant efforts to learn and speak Español, we navigated about quite nicely.

I should mention here to all you seniors with INAPAM cards that all the exhibits, museums, galleries and touring buses are deeply discounted for seniors and many are free or 'gratis' when the card is presented. As the week sped by, we realized what a great benefit this card turned out to be. I might also add that we used the 'Uber' taxi service for our entire stay.

...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations

It was efficient and very professional. Once called, we never waited more than 5 minutes and we were picked up from anywhere we happened to be. Some days, we used Uber 4 or 5 times. The savings to our expenses is remarkable. We calculated the entire time in Mexico City, including trips to and from the airport, at a total value of 78 dollars CAD for taxi service. One city taxi quoted a ride at 180 pesos. The Uber ride cost us 40 pesos. Need I say more?

Chapultepec Park made me feel like Alice in Wonderland. It is the largest urban park in the Western Hemisphere. It's the green lung of Mexico. The things to see are continuously unfolding as one moves from one site to another. More seems to always be waiting beyond every door and plaza.

For art lovers and history buffs, things to do include Museo Tamayo, Museum of Caracol, Museum of Modern Art and the National Museum of Anthropology (the most visited museum in Mexico City, and with good reason, it's spectacular.) There are no fewer than 22 salon exhibits to see. Thus, we returned three times in an attempt to capture as much about them as we could. We couldn't do it all, so we chose some favourite themes such as the Maya Groups and the Introduction to Anthropology. You will need to pace yourself to see these amazing exhibitions. This is a world-class facility.

We also walked our way up the lane to Chapultepec Castle, the National Museum of History, complete with ancient artifacts, rooftop gardens and amazing vistas of the surrounding park and city. Since our return, we found out that there are two giant pandas we missed. They were given to the park by China and reside in the park zoo, which we never made it to...we'll do it next time.

On the weekends and holidays, we found markets set up on the pathways in the park offering all sorts of Mexican crafts and fast food. This is always fun to do. We did happen to catch the Mexican pole dancers as they spun their way down from atop a 60ft pole, in traditional costumes, to the sounds of ancient flutes. It's lovely to see and quite ceremonial. There are numerous restaurants in the park and a lake area that provides other entertaining activities.

Sunday is an interesting day in the park. The museums are filled with students and tourists trying to soak it all up before the work week begins again. The park areas in between are enjoyed by families picnicking and playing catch with the family



The Castle in Chapultepec Park offers phenomenal views and a look at antique furnishings and the lifestyles of past royalty, such as Mexican Emperor Maximilian 1 and Empress Carlota



dogs, many of whom loved to dive into the water features and fountains. In one area, there were people swinging in hammocks between the trees, with numerous vendors around to sell you a hammock, too, if you felt like a nice nap.

I just loved the tranquility of the scene and the joy of the people savouring such a wonderful place. I have barely scratched the surface of this wonderful venue. I should also mention, before moving on, that you can take advantage of the rent-a-bike services if you just want to ride about the park pathways.

On several days we had great fun riding the double-decker tour buses called Turibus. We 'Ubered' to the main loading zone and boarded the double deckers from there. There is a variety of basic tours wherein you can hop on and off in order to look around a bit or grab a bite. The basic tours are the Historic Centre tour, South City tour, Polanco Chapultepec tour, Basilica tour and the Mexican park tour.

...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations

I noted that other themed tours were also available such as bar tours, night tours and museums to name a few. We simply couldn't fit it all in.

Our first, and most exciting, tour was the Historic Centre Tour. From atop the bus, we had a birds-eye view of the magnificent architecture, monuments and surrounding areas. The buses offer free ear buds and wall plugins at every bench, with language selection and recorded guided tours as you make your way around the circuit. My husband especially enjoyed being able to quickly stand up and grab some terrific photos from the higher perspective.

I highly recommend this adventure. We met some lovely people and just relaxed while the bus navigated the traffic and streets. Absolutely perfect. Following that particular tour, we returned to the historic area the following day in order to tour the Bellas Artes Museum of fine art, the architecturally famous post office, and mingle amid the throngs and enjoy some excellent and engaging street buskers and sidewalk artisans. We loved every minute.

We've been told that there are approximately 600 museums in the city. Now we knew for sure we'd be coming back because we still want to visit the pyramids and Puebla city. So we made a few choices and took ourselves to the famous home of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. They call it the blue house as it is bathed in a brilliant blue colour. It's not a palace or a mansion, and you can feel what it would have been like to live there. Certainly, it provided ample space for living and working, as well as entertaining.

There are lovely interior garden spaces, with ancient stone carvings, and evidence of the 'artful' couple is everywhere. I enjoyed seeing art pieces, photographs and the studio where Frida worked, complete with art supplies and brushes. It all felt so

personal and gave us an opportunity to relate to the lives of these important contributors to the world of art. Some of their pieces can also be seen at the art exhibits in Chapultepec Park.

I really could go on for much longer but I hope the photos with this article will speak the words for me. I would be remiss however, if I didn't say something about the food and restaurants. There are thousands of restaurants in Mexico City. Whatever cravings we had, we managed to satisfy with the helpful background searching of my 'resident' planner. We enjoyed a fabulous meal at Contramar, listed in the top 10 and found our way to a terrific little Thai restaurant which satisfied our cravings for a 'noodle bowl' complete with fish consommé; grilled meats, crunchy veggies and a semi-sweet sauce that you can pour over the dish. Excellent. The owner's wife and chef is from Thailand so the authenticity was real.

We also found ourselves munching on Szechuan ribs, won ton soup and Portuguese dishes. We didn't suffer, that's for sure. So, no matter your palate preferences, a little searching on the internet beforehand will pay off.

Regarding foods and drink, I offer one caution. Stay away from the tap water in Mexico. Do not brush your teeth with it and be sure that you are served ice made from purified water. The water supply there is not potable and you could easily find yourself battling a gut bacteria that is very unpleasant and a trip 'downer'.

As I indicated in this story several times; Mexico City is an exciting and vibrant place that I would recommend to anyone. We had a fabulous vacation, filled with historical information and the cultural riches of Mexico; spectacular architecture, glorious greenery, friendly people and tourist services beyond expectations. We will be returning in the not-too-distant future and pick up where we left off.



Visitors enjoy activities on the lake in Chapultepec Park where food is also available nearby



... more pics follow

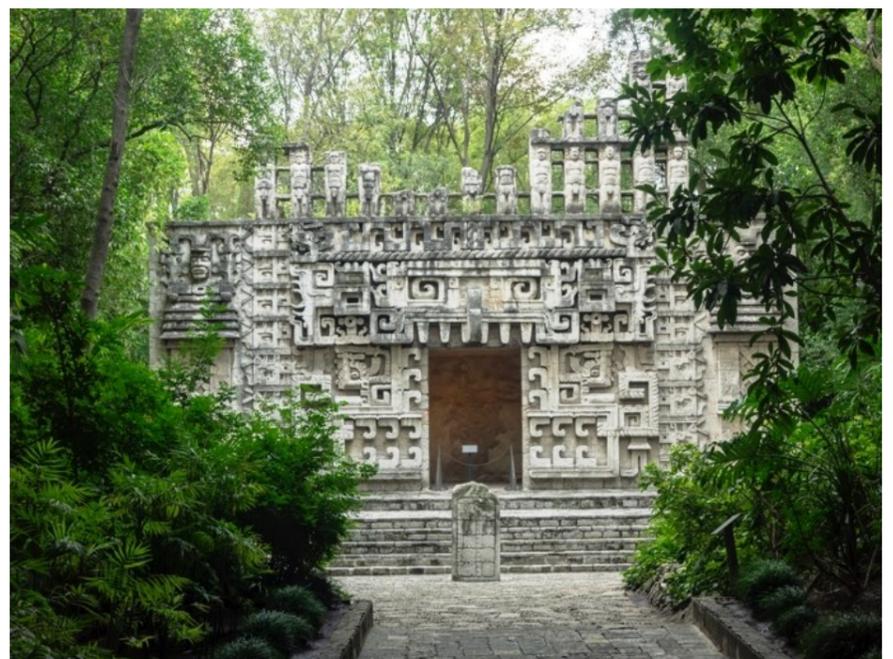
...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations



Chapultepec Park - a busy gathering place



Central Mexico City offers many green pathways and is dealing with new ideas for clean air such as with the buildings that are enveloped in living green panels of various plants



Some pieces from the Museum of Anthropology including a building positioned nicely outside in the trees and, *left*, a Mayan rain god

...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations



These photos show some of the exhibits from the Mayan salon



An amazingly life-like depiction of hunters taking down a mastodon

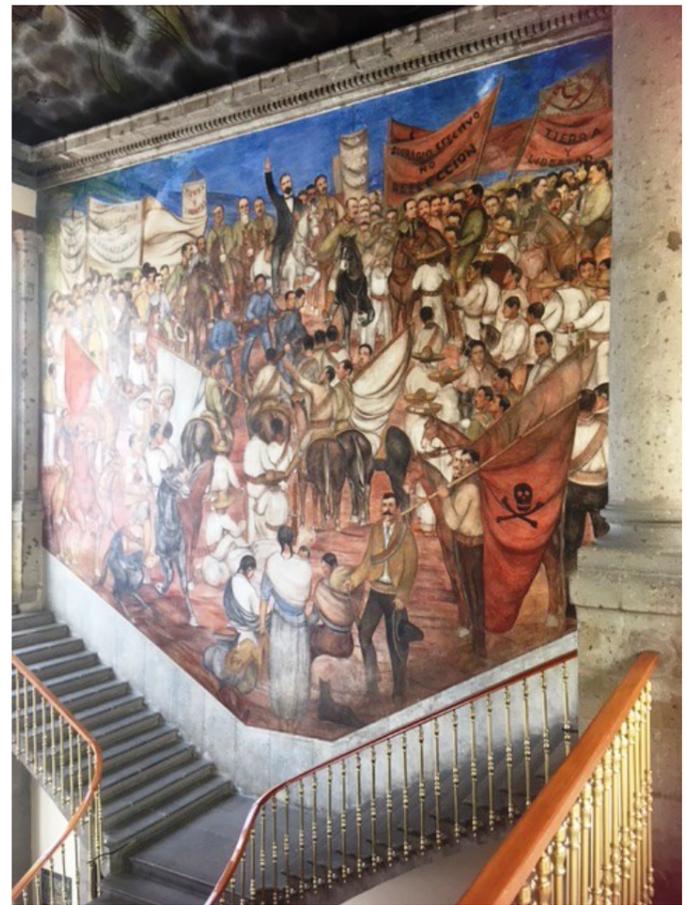
The exterior and central area leading to the Museum of Anthropology where twenty two salons flank both sides of this water feature and the walkways



...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations



Left - A wide pathway takes you gently up the rise to Chapultepec Castle



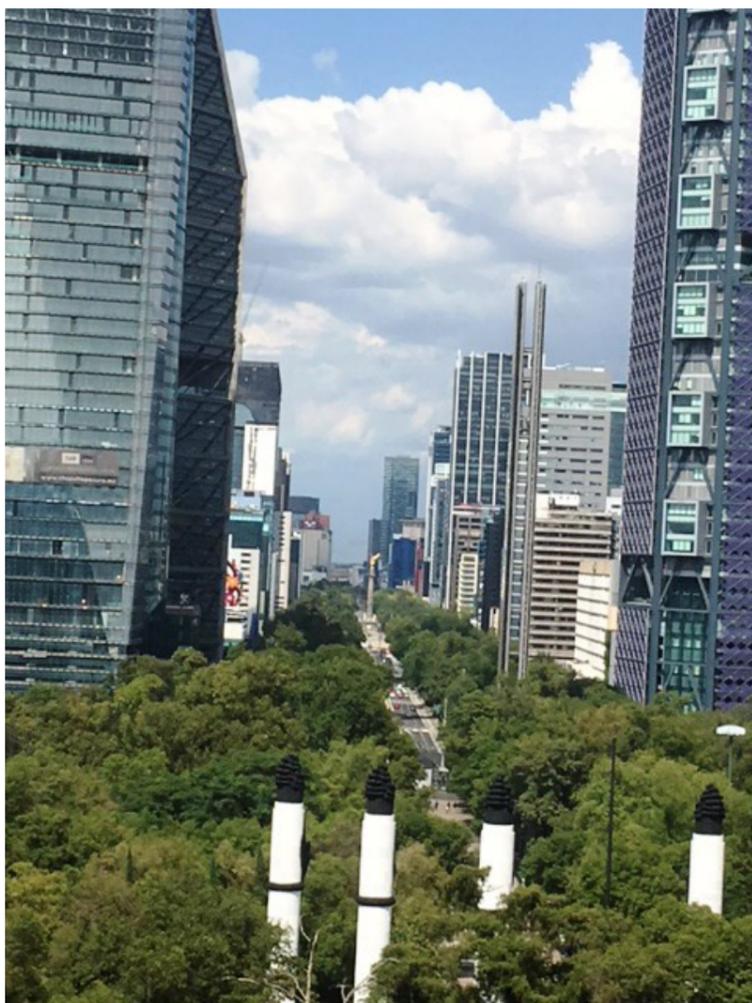
Right and below - Gigantic murals depict Mexican history in the staircases of the castle



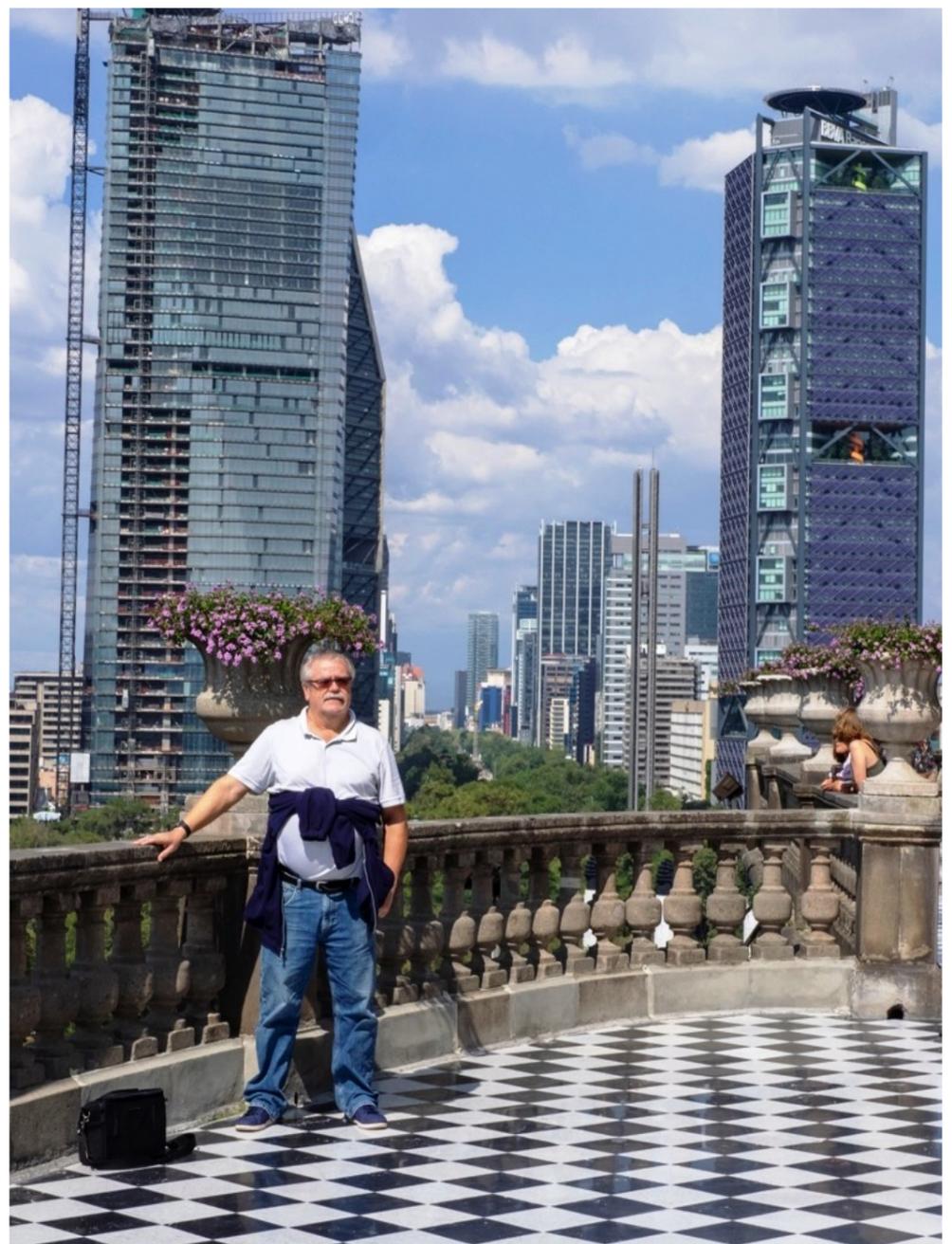
...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations



Chapultepec Castle is surrounded by forest in the park



Chapultepec Avenue as seen from the upper level of the castle



...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations

South view from the castle in Chapultepec Park



Left - Castle dining room

Below left - one of the royal bedrooms

Below right - an ornate carriage in the castle



...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations



Left and right - Gorgeous gardens at the castle rooftop

Below - Rooftop tower and gardens at the castle



Above, below right - Sundays are lively in the park

Below left - This group of buskers played jazz and were great and the young man is singing Fly Me To the Moon for Aretha Franklin



...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations

Right - An interior garden at Frida Kahlo's house and museum "The Blue House"

Below - An altar and artifacts can be seen at the Frida Kahlo museum



Above left - One of the loveliest portraits of Frida Kahlo
Above right - A painting in the Blue House by Diego Rivera
Bottom right - Oils and brushes in Frida Kahlo's studio



...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations



Above - The tourist "Turibus" takes you all over the city to see the sites



Right - The Museo Soumaya as seen from the Turibus



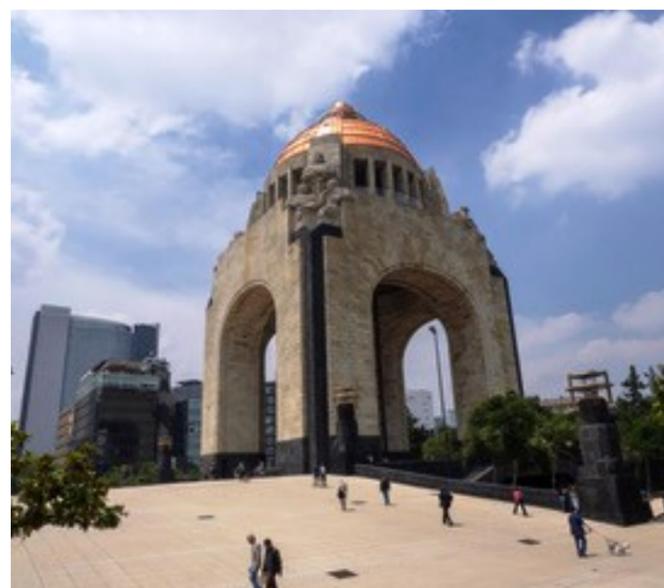
Left - An artistic mural on a highrise



Above - The Palacio de Bellas Artes museum

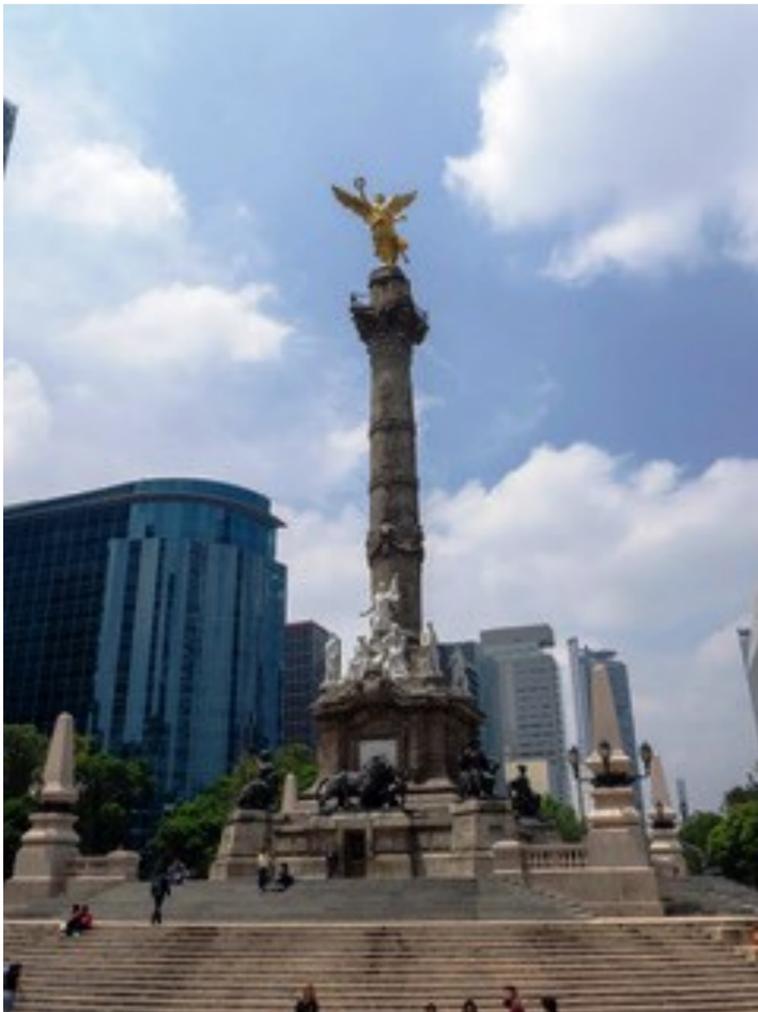


Above - Monument to Benito Juárez



Right - Monument to the people of the Revolution

...Mexico City, Beyond Expectations



Left - The Angel of Independence

Right - Amazing buildings are seen from the Turibus

Below - a mural in the Mexico City Palacio de Bellas Artes by Diego Rivera depicting his socialist leanings



Left - An extra special treat for our anniversary at the Casa Portuguesa

Below - Authentic Thai food, what a treat!



you can reach Suzanne A. Marshall at suzanne@manzanillosun.com



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**Thursday
February 21st**



The Children of the Were-Jaguar People

by Kirby Vickery

Last month, I wrote about the Olmecs that were called the rubber people because that's what their name translates into, although, no one really knows what they called themselves. Archeologists know they had a preference for depicting the jaguar in their art and so they are also known as the 'Jaguar People.' A more popular name for these people is 'The Mother Culture,' for good reason. They were the first culture in Mesoamerica to leave behind significant evidence of themselves, things like statues, art, weapons, very large ceremonial areas and the largest pyramids ever constructed in the world – by anyone.

The Olmecs built the Great Pyramid of Cholula which today has a Catholic Mission on top of it. Now, this pyramid is 450 meters

per side, which is much larger than anything the Egyptians built. I heard something on television the other night about archeologists finding another in the jungle which sports sides that are 5 miles long. I don't want to say anything more, though, because I can't substantiate that which I think I heard. These pyramids are at the center of some fairly large ceremonial complexes, which were areas in the middle of towns which consisted of about thirty to fifty thousand people. The Olmecs transitioned from hunter-gatherers to a stratified culture which didn't move around a whole lot, so how's this possible and why did it happen? We're not sure as few clues have been left behind.

Great Pyramid of Cholula
or
Tlachihualtepetl



...The Children of the Were-Jaguar People

The Olmecs left about 600 pyramids, with over 2,000 other living and workshop complexes, and they didn't have any beasts of burden. I don't have the education to start worrying about how they did what they did. I look at why they did it. Ms. Gisella Canto Aquilera, while working at Zazacatla said, "When their society became stratified, new rulers needed emblems to justify their rule over people who used to be their equals."

Last month, I eluded to the fact that these Olmec tribes had been able to settle down and devote more time to things which weren't part of the necessities of life. Hence, they worked on other things from jewelry, to fashion, to; "The guy down the path makes really good hammocks, I wonder what he would trade for one. I have a few extra jade knives I'll bet he would like." And, in any society, you have to have someone to tell everyone else what's fair and what's not fair and if you don't comply with society, then the governing demons, or deities, or just plain gods will strike you down.

This is called changing from an egalitarian society to a more complex, hierarchical one. And when that happens, those in charge need backing up from something larger and stronger than themselves.

It is believed that the top ten gods of the Olmecs were: The jaguar-monster, fire god or maize god, a god with a maize symbol on his head, a bird god, the jaguar-baby, a being with a human-feline face, a figure representing Xipe Totec (a god of agriculture, fertility, the birth of springtime, and the transition of young men from childhood into manhood and being a warrior), the Plumed Serpent, a death god, a bearded figure, and

God X.

These were posted by an Olmec scholar, Peter David Joralemon.

Other archeologists have come up with names for these gods such as Bird Monster and Maize – Rain Spirit and Fish or Shark Monster. And with this, the people started to do for others what they only had done for themselves. Couple that with the guys that spoke for the gods and you have the start of a hierarchical society. In this case, the first in Mesoamerica.

I thought the Olmecs lived on a plain in Central Mexico. Actually, they chose the rich bottom land, where the climate was tropical, and easy to live in, with a simple lean-to which sported a storage locker.

Life was good and the priests really didn't bother people very much, except when they started to trade outside their own culture. Even then, with a small tax and an occasional trip up the local pyramid for religious re-affirmation, and the ritual bloody payment to the gods for their protection, while keeping the trade routes open, life was good.

Life was very busy for the priest class. They had to keep the population interested in the national goings-on and keep the apparent fear of the gods working. They worked out a solar year and a means to track it with their calendars.

These calendars have survived to become the model for those Mesoamerican societies that came after them. They worked out the moon cycles to time all their activities, and to guide the farmers in their planting, growing and harvesting activities.

...The Children of the Were-Jaguar People



Humans, and the lords of the underworld, battled it out by playing the game, according to the creation story the known as the Popol Vuh. In this way, the ball court was a portal to Xibalba.

As the discoverers of rubber, they played a game with a ten pound rubber ball which forbade the use of hands. I also read that they would use a head of a sacrificed individual, covered in rubber, as a ball.

But, here again, I can't qualify that statement and I don't know the size of the rings the players would guide the 'ball' through.

I have read some speculation that the Aztecs played the game with the heads of their vanquished enemies but there is a lot of doubt about that really being true, too.

The Olmec priests have left some pretty strong evidence that

they had a working knowledge of how gravity and magnetism work.

Although the Olmecs gave us cotton, tobacco, cocoa, vanilla, and corn or maize, and some of the grandest sculptures and art in the world, it still isn't known if they had a written language.

However, as modern man continues to search through the jungles, finding more and more artifacts left by these wonderful people, possibly we'll find their Rosetta Stone.

And we may find out that owe them a lot more.

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



by Tommy Clarkson

Yellow Alder *Turnera ulifolia*

Family: *Turneraceae*

Also known as: *Yellow Buttercups, Bahamian Buttercup, Cuban Buttercup, Cinnamon Buttercup, Buttercup Flower; False Damiana, Banker's Flower, Holy Rose, Sage Rose, Yellow Bells, Yellow Elder, Yellow Turnera, West Indian Holly or Ramgoat Dashalong*

Ramgoat Dashalong? (*Honest, I don't make these names up!*) Actually, that's what it is generally called in Jamaica. Here in Mexico, it's known as *calendula*. And a couple of those names – Yellow Bells and Yellow Elder – are what others call the clustering yellow-flowered *Tecoma stans*. *I agree with you, it's befuddling and think some botanical folks do that just to confuse the likes of you and me!*

Actually, if one looks at the Yellow Alder's family tree – *e'rrrrr, make that a bush* – one finds that it is wholly unrelated to the alder genus, *Alnus*. Beyond that, it's really what's considered a subshrub, as a rule growing to no taller than five feet (1.52 meters) tall. With a pair of glands at the leaf base, its margin-toothed leaves (This is called a dentate margin if you'd like to impress your friends, alternate and are simple (*which, hastening to avert assertions of defamation*) *does not imply that this species is not smart!*) being lanceolate or ovate to elliptic – *some plants just can't seem to make up their minds as to what to wear on their branches!*

Its leaves grow clustered toward the tips of the branches. Plants in the full sun branch more and stay fuller than those in partial shade. But the plant, by its very na-



The leaves of the Yellow Alder have a dentate margin.

ture, tends to often look leggy.

One way to address this challenge is to thicken the plant by cutting back its stems which will force new branches to pop out and grow closer to the ground.

The family, *Turneraceae*, consists of just over 200 species of flowering plants in ten genera. All members of the genus – of which there are somewhere between fifty to one hundred - originated in Mexico, Central America and several islands in the West Indies. The *Turnera ulifolia* is best known for its attractive, solitary, funnel-like, up to two inches wide (5.08 cm), yellow blooms comprised of five-parted, obovate petals. These blossoms close for floral business in the afternoons and, of course, all recognized international flower holidays!

I've often seen them used as a solitary specimen, but they are great in mixed borders, in rock gardens, as foundation specimens, in combination plantings and they grow well in containers and can be brought indoors for the winter in cold climates. They are drought-tolerant and, hence, quite suitable for xeriscaping.

But, to be totally candid, it grows like - and is often considered - a weed throughout its natural growing region. In fact, several countries and a number of Pacific islands, to which it has been introduced, now consider it an invasive species. All on its own, it would appear, it'll pop up in unlandscaped coastal areas, sandy fields, in roadsides, disturbed sites and abandoned farms. (*Some*

...Yellow Alder

folks just have no appreciation for a plant seeking only to be its own "wild child" self!)

Generally easy to get along with, what really bugs this plant are Whiteflies which, if a severe infestation, can indeed injure the plants substantively. Aphids and scales might also be drawn to its foliage but, generally, this is not all that serious. Its primary leaf herbivore is the caterpillar *Euptoieta hegesia*, which will evolve to become the Mexican Fritillary Butterfly. But not all insects are bad for it as *T. ulmifolia* spreads through dispersal of its seeds by ants!

This character has applications beyond mere flowerdom! A tea made from Yellow Alder leaves is used in traditional South American and West Indian cultures to treat gastrointestinal problems – such as constipation or diar-



Even on a healthy specimen, the leaves are a bit sparse.



This plant's pride is its attractive, solitary, funnel-like, up to two inches wide (5.08 cm), yellow blooms.

rhea – in addition to colds, flu, circulatory problems such as heart palpitations, menstrual spasms and dermatological difficulties. It is used in Brazilian folk medicine as an anti-inflammatory and I've read of other cultures also employing it for treating hair loss and thrush as well as anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial and antiulcerogenic activities.

Which all goes to show that (sung to the tune of the 50's song) "You can't judge a plant by looking at its flower!"

Should you wish more Yellow Alders, allow its pods to dry on the plant, then simply break them open to collect seeds.

And yes, these bushes will attract butterflies – even beyond the earliest form of the Mexican Fritillary!

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Tequila

by Terry Sovil

Tequila has been with us for a long time and has an interesting history. For one, not every drink made from cactus or agave can be called "Tequila". Tequila has a Denomination of Origin which, according to the "Appellation de Origin Controlee" (AOC), means it can only be produced in Mexico and only in the areas of those states indicated.



Agave tequilana commonly called blue agave

Tequila would be called mezcal if produced outside of the named areas and with the right ingredients, originally, in Jalisco and the town of Tequila. Only liquors made from Blue Agave grown in the state of Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Guanajuato and Tamaulipas can be labeled as Tequila. In the wine and spirits industry, there are five drinks recognized with the Denomination of Origin, they are: sherry, cognac, champagne, mezcal and tequila.

Tequila is not made from cactus. It is made from a sap that is distilled from the hearts of the agave plant. This plant is related to the lily and amaryllis with its own genus, Agave. It is a succulent and, even though it shares a common habitat with many cacti, it is not one itself. Real Tequila is made from the Blue Agave. Only the Agave Azul Tequilana Weber (Blue Agave) variety can be used for Tequila.

Distilling agave syrup probably came from a native drink called "pulque", a distant cousin to Tequila. Someone in the early 16th



Blue agave piñas

century realized the potential for agave. If it made a low-alcohol drink, it could be made into something stronger. Distilling in Europe goes back to the 13th century. It may have started in Mexico as early as 1520. Most agree it started within 20 years of the arrival of the Conquistadors. Credit is given to Philippine sailors that helped kick it off. Their process used more local resources and did not require the big copper stills.

Alcohol was essential. The Spanish were used to drinking alcohol with meals. The water was often unpurified and teeming with bacteria. Drinking a weak wine or beer helped kill off the parasites. April 15, 1530 the colonial township of Santiago of Tequila was established. In 1531, a crude mud still known as an "alquitarra" was used to distill agave nectar to produce the first mezcal. These ovens were located near water to help with the distillation process.

In 1651, Spanish doctor, Jerónimo Hernández, wrote that tequila (mezcal) was used for medicinal purposes, including rheumatic cures by rubbing tequila on the affected parts of the body.

The first official, licensed, distiller was José Antonio Cuervo. He

...Tequila

was the first to produce Tequila, obtaining the land from the King of Spain in 1758. Cuervo tequila is made in the town of Tequila, in the state of Jalisco. He acquired the property from Vicente de Saldivar who was already distilling from a private distillery (taberna) on the land. It was later moved to the hacienda de Abajo. Cuervo's ambition soon had a distillery producing about 800,000 liters of mezcal a year. Taxes on tequila helped fund construction of the University of Guadalajara in the mid-18th century.

The 1880s saw the development of railroads across North America. This growth spread tequila to many more locations. During this period, the tequila industry matured and became more stable due to the 35-year rule of Porfirio Diaz.

The rising popularity of tequila created challenges. Until the late 19th century, the piñas (heart of the plant) were roasted in stone-lined pits in the ground using wood fires.

Blue agave piñas ready for production



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...Tequila



Harvesting the blue agave piñas

As the demand grew, producers found they were running out of wood and agave. As the hills of Jalisco were losing forests due to the need for wood, the land used for forests became new land for agave planting. It became obvious to producers that their methods of producing were no longer sustainable. An above-ground horno, or oven, was developed to replace the in-ground pits. By the end of the 19th century, all producers were using the above-ground oven.

By 1895, presses, grinding equipment and power mills became widely used to crush the cooked agave heads and replaced the traditional methods.

By the end of the century, exports were growing slowly but steadily. In 1899, they were worth 3,062 pesos but a year later had grown 20% to 5,664 pesos. Tequila became a drink that represented rebels and gun toting heroes. It was smuggled to American troops guarding the border and spread to nearby USA states.

As Pancho Villa's rebel forces approached Guadalajara, many men from Jalisco joined the rebel forces. Villa entered Guadalajara on December 17, 1914, forcing Manuel M. Diéguez to flee. Villa gathered the richest men in Jalisco and Guadalajara to produce a 1,000,000 peso loan which he passed out to the poor. He became very popular but had to leave the city. By April, Diéguez' forces once again controlled Guadalajara. The revolutionary troops occupied Guadalajara and took loads of tequila for themselves. The popular drink was the Torito de Jalisco made with tequila and fruit juice.

In 1928, there was an effort to organize a group to represent the distillers, but it failed due to bickering before it got started. By 1929, there were only about 8 distillers and they held on during the Depression. The country leadership like Victoriano Huerta and Diaz gave up tequila for French cognacs, but the popularity among the people grew.

...Tequila

The Prohibition period in the USA (1920-33) boosted tequila's popularity as it was smuggled across the border. But the Depression (1929) came swiftly on the heels of the Prohibition, making it short-lived.

In 1930, Spanish influenza spread in Northern Mexico. Doctors were prescribing tequila as the best medicine to resist it. From that point forward, tequila was served with lime and salt as that was what the doctors were suggesting.

The agave shortage in 1930 forced the government to relax regulations on tequila and allowed it to be made from only 51% agave sugars. This was the start of the mixto trade.

For many years only, Herradura was producing 100% agave tequilas. It was also the only 100% agave tequila available in the

USA for the next 30 years. The new mixtos were blander than 100% agave tequilas, increasing their appeal to American consumers.

It was in 1935 that the margarita was invented. The bartender at Rancho La Gloria, Carlos 'Danny' Herrera, created it for a young new actress, Marjorie (Margarita) King.

In 1948, European spirits were again available to Americans and exports of tequila fell while national markets grew. The positive image of tequila as the macho drink of ranchero heroes in Mexican movies helped it grow from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Assorted types and brands of tequila



you can reach Terry Sovil at terry@manzanillosun.com



by Tommy Clarkson

Blue Agave, *Agave tequilana*

Family: *Agavoideae*

Also known as: *Tequila Agave*

The Greek word for these interesting succulents is *agauos*, meaning "of kings and heroes, illustrious, hence noble" and, good full-time residents of Mexico that we are, we'll drink to that! (*Have you ever had one of My Patty's Mango Margaritas? If so, you'll understand and concur!*)

The - up to - three hundred varieties of Agave are native to the whole of Mexico, Central America and the Southwestern US desert. But, as Mexico's most iconic plant, it is most often thought of as being from the land of the Aztecs, Mayans and Toltecs. (Interestingly, all of the species in this genus are more closely related to lilies than to cacti!) But now, a bit of history.

Arriving in "New Spain" in 1529, Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún described these succulents as looking like giant artichokes and cited how the local farmers planted rows of them to anchor terraced farming fields. He was especially interested in the Agaves' medicinal properties.

In the 1843-published "The History of the Conquest of Mexico", by William H. Prescott, he referred to the Agave with great admiration. He cited how "the miracle of nature was the great Mexican (Agave), or maguey, whose clustering pyramids of flowers, (towered) above their dark coronals of leaves (funnel-shaped).

Its bruised leaves afforded a paste from which paper was manufactured. Its juice was fermented into an intoxicating beverage, pulque; its leaves further supplied an impenetrable thatch for the more humble dwellings; thread, of which coarse stuffs were made, and strong cords, were drawn from its tough and twisted



As taken at an Agave family reunion, a small Variegated Agave Americana stands by a larger, older Blue Agave.

fibers; pins and needles were made from the thorns at the extremity of its leaves; and the root, when properly cooked, was converted into a palatable and nutritious food. The agave, in short, was meat, drink, clothing and writing materials. Surely, never did nature enclose in so compact a form so many of the elements of human comfort and civilization!" Now, there was a man who admired Agave!

The twentieth-century Mexican historian, Fernando Benítez, described the Agaves in this way, "Like a horse of the plant-world, it is capable of retaining a great quantity of water and making it through the worst of droughts. So as to not let go of a single drop, it armors itself like medieval warriors, with an impermeable shield, and numerous thorns, to keep its enemies at bay."

...Blue Agave



Just like a kid. Just as I snapped the shot of this beautiful Blue Agave, a young cousin leapt in from of my camera! (Anyone buying into this?)

Rather obviously, today's best-known Blue Agave product is tequila—most of which is made in the State of Jalisco. Generally speaking, one can get two to five liters of tequila from each plant. By law, the Blue Agave plant is the only agave that can be used in the production of tequila. Conversely, mezcal—which is mainly produced in Oaxaca—can be made from up to thirty different agave species. However, both of these modern drinks are produced through a European distillation process. Of a more basic nature, the early Mesoamericans simply fermented the agave sap to produce pulque. This is a liquor with an alcoholic content similar to beer - a tradition still maintained today. But, in that the fermentation never stops, one can't bottle pulque.

So, if one has the space how might one grow their own Blue Agave? They're undemanding plants, and can well handle well-draining soil, rocky or sandy soil, without fertilization but require at least six hours of sun per day. Mature plants are very drought tolerant, but when first establishing one outdoors, water it every four to five days for the first month, then once a week, ultimately every other week. But at no time does it want any part of sustained wet feet (Read: roots)!

In that your *Agave tequilana* will reach an imposing size within a short time, keep an eye to where you plant it as those stiff, needle-like spines on the stem tips are lethal! Also, in that it is not long-lived, choose a location where it will be convenient to remove when it dies. Beyond water, give it a soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer only to help them get established. Fertilizer encourages flowering, which signals the end of the Blue Agave's life.

While the Blue Agave is the most recognized, some of the other well-known species are *Agave Americana*, *Agave Americana 'Variegata'* – sometimes called the Century Plant, *Agave parryi* (Mescal Agave) and *Agave Victoria-reginae*, or called by one of two common names, the Queen Victoria Century Plant and Royal Agave. Another is the Green Agave, *Agave salmiana*, 'Green Giant'.

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The Emergence of Emerging Markets

by Yann Kostic and Tom Zachystal

Given their potential volatility, emerging markets are not for fainthearted investors and many people avoid them. But, emerging markets aren't the vast unknown they used to be.

What are they? Emerging markets are countries that are still developing, usually by means of rapid industrialization. It may surprise you to hear that some economic powerhouses - such as China - fall into this category. Others, such as Thailand and Indonesia, are less surprising.

The primary reasons to consider emerging markets are diversification and growth potential. Emerging-market stocks may perform well when developed-market stocks are performing poorly. And in some cases, emerging markets offer unique growth opportunities. For example, China is transitioning from an industrial economy into a digitally led economy, with a high number of graduates in technology fields, significant venture-capital funding and tax credits that support innovation. Mexico is another one, with its president-elect declaring that he is ready to tackle NAFTA directly and immediately. This could create quite an opportunity in several sectors of the Mexican economy.

Of course, emerging markets aren't for everyone. The main risk is volatility. Any political or currency-related crisis in an emerging market could devastate its stocks. Another concern is the potential impact of US interest-rate hikes, which can lead to a stronger US dollar. In such an environment, conventional wisdom holds: emerging markets underperform. Others point out that emerging markets have outperformed developed markets during most rate-tightening cycles since 1969, with exceptions occurring only when the rate increases came sooner than the market anticipated or were stronger than the market anticipated.

That said, a bout of volatility in the first quarter of 2018 stressed emerging markets, and they held up fairly well, as evidenced by flows. In other words, investors kept investing. If you would like to discover the potential for portfolio diversification and growth through emerging markets, schedule a conversation with your financial professional. He or she can point you in the right direction, based on your individual financial circumstances and goals.

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, in the US at (321) 574-1 529 or in Mexico, (376) 106-1613.



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At the Movies

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Mission Impossible - Fallout

Directed by: Christopher McQuarrie
 Starring: Tom Cruise, Henry Cavill, Alec Baldwin, Rebecca Ferguson, Simon Pegg

“Ethan Hunt and the IMF team join forces with CIA assassin August Walker to prevent a disaster of epic proportions. Arms dealer John Lark, and a group of terrorists known as the Apostles, plan to use three plutonium cores for a simultaneous nuclear attack on the Vatican, Jerusalem and Mecca, Saudi Arabia. When the weapons go missing, Ethan and his crew find themselves in a desperate race against time to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands”.

Well, it’s your usual action/thriller adventure on steroids. The plot line twisted and turned every which way to the point where you weren’t sure who the bad guys really were. The movie delivers a tremendous array of special effects and amazing stunts and doesn’t slow down for a moment. When you decide to see a Mission Impossible sequel, you are expecting it to be consistent with past productions. This one certainly delivered that and more.

IMDB rated this movie currently at: 8.2/10.



The Meg

Directed by: Jon Turteltaub
 Starring: Jason Statham, Bingbing Li, Rainn Wilson

“After escaping an attack by what he claims was a 70-foot shark, Jonas Taylor (Jason Statham) must confront his fear to save those trapped in a sunken submersible.”

The film is based on the book “Meg: A Novel of Deep Terror” by Steve Alten. Certainly, the advertised storyline has kept it very simple. Actually, there is an attempt to give the movie more of a ‘scientific’ air, with a billionaire financier and a research vessel filled with various marine biologists. The story really revolves around a floating research lab and a sub vessel that submerges to unexplored depths in the ocean. There it encounters prehistoric animals and of course the Megalodon and



a giant octopus which incapacitates the vessel and leaves them stranded at the bottom of the sea.

Now the story begins when Jonas Taylor ignores his fears and ventures down to save them. He’s been there before, and no one, thus far, has truly believed his tale of the giant shark.

There are so many faults in the plot I won’t go into them all.

Suffice it to say, when you’re at the bottom of the ocean, and a field of lights is turned on to allow the crew to observe the sights, it’s going to attract a whole lot of creatures that are used to living in total darkness. And believe me, it did.

Anyway, I knew this was a summertime movie escape, with loads of special effects, in an air-conditioned theatre and I enjoyed it for what I knew it was.

It’s rated PG and I think young children could be very frightened by the progressively aggressive shark attacks.

The movie has been rated 6.2/10 based on 17,136 viewers.

Loving Pablo

Directed by: Fernando Leon de Aranoa
Starring: Javier Bardem, Penelope Cruz,
Julieth Restrepo, Peter Sarsgaard

"The film chronicles the rise and fall of the world's most-feared drug lord, Pablo Escobar and his volatile love affair with Colombia's most famous journalist, Virginia Vallejo, through a reign of terror that tore a country apart."

When you hear the name Escobar, your mind immediately hones in on the words drug lord and trafficking. This crime drama, as told in the movie, lays out the lustful and violent life of Pablo Escobar; not only his affair with the famous television journalist, but his rise to immense wealth from nothing.

Why a woman of her stature would get involved is a question many would ask. But fame, money and passion seem to be at the heart of it. Aside from that part of the story, we also see Pablo rise from the slums and become a favourite with the people for his generosity in providing homes and even moving into a short-lived stint as a political figure, that of a governor in Colombia.

But, of course, his crimes and activities begin to unravel, and a story of revenge, murder and hideous behavior become his constant state of being.



In the midst of this, the story involves the work of the US government and Colombian officials to extradite and try Escobar for his crimes in drug trafficking and the trail of death he leaves behind him. No one is safe.

I thought the characters in the movie were really well portrayed. The one annoying drawback for me was the 'voice over' story-telling by Penelope Cruz and Bardem as their accents were so thick as to lose track of what was being said now and then and it was a struggle to listen, interpret and watch at the same time. Otherwise, I found it quite engaging.

The movie has been rated 6.3/10 based on 6,126 viewers



Planning a trip, if you want something done right....

by Señor Tech

A few months ago, some close friends told us about an exciting trip they had planned, a visit to China. It included a four-day river cruise up the Yangtze River and various tours around Shanghai.

A month before they were to leave, they received the news that their tour operator had gone bankrupt and that their trip was cancelled. Since they had paid for their trip with a credit card, they were told they would get their money back, eventually. But the trip they had gotten so hyped up about, was no longer an option on the dates they planned.

I may be a rebel, but I have found that I would rather do my own planning and booking. Recently, we spent ten days in Mexico City. For this trip, I used a number of online services to plan, book and arrange transportation. Prior to our trip, I used TripAdvisor.com, Hotels.com, and OpenTable.com to research restaurants, hotels and points of interest in CDMX (Mexico City or Mexico, DF (Distrito Federal)).

TripAdvisor is an excellent resource to get information on hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions. TripAdvisor users provide ratings that can help narrow down choices while planning. If you still have questions about any hotel, restaurant or attraction, leave a message on any review and you will usually get a response within a few days.

Two to three weeks before flying into CDMX, I spent a couple of hours reading reviews on restaurants in the area close to where we were going to stay. I prepared a list of close to twenty restaurants, including menus, pricing, telephone numbers and addresses. TripAdvisor lists over 5,000 restaurants in CDMX. I concentrated on those rated within the top 200. I refined the search to only include those in our immediate area.

I wanted to book high-rated restaurants on certain nights to ensure we would get a table. OpenTable.com is an online table booking service. I was able to book a table at about 80% of the restaurants we wanted to try. OpenTable lets you book the time and date; if a table is not available, the app will offer the next available time/date. A confirmation is emailed.

If you have the app on your phone, your reservations will be stored. The app also has the restaurant's menu, map and other pertinent information including photos and pricing.

We didn't want to spend our vacation time looking for good restaurants, so the other restaurants on the list were to be used if a craving for a certain style of food needed to be satisfied.

I used TripAdvisor to select a hotel, then booked through Hotels.com. I like their loyalty program. But you can use any of the other services such as Trivago, TripAdvisor, Priceline, Expedia or any one of hundreds of online booking sites.

The hotel we booked was close to Chapultepec Park in the Polanco area of CDMX. See Suzanne Marshall's article on Mexico City in this issue. TripAdvisor provided invaluable information on numerous points of interest such as museums, bus tours and other tourism activities.

If you have an INAPAM card, museum admission is free. The only museum we had to pay admission for was Frida Kahlo's Blue House which was \$15 pesos instead of \$200 pesos. The double decker tour buses were 50% off with INAPAM.

(see INAPAM discounts here - in Spanish)

I looked at flights on Expedia, but for some reason it was 8% cheaper booking direct on AeroMexico's site.

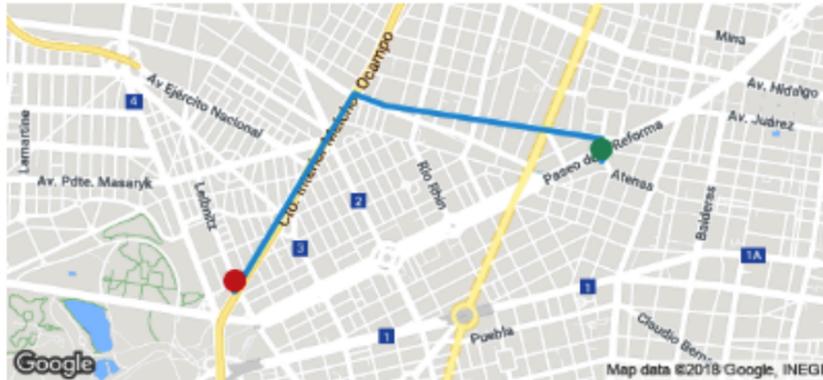
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Fare Breakdown

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ADD AN EXTRA

When we arrived at Terminal 2 in Mexico City, I went to the taxi service desk. They quoted me a \$350 peso fare to our hotel. I opened the [Uber](#) app on my phone and the fare quoted was \$172 pesos. I clicked on the confirm trip button and I was directed to a point in the taxi pick-up area. I was given an approximate pick-up time and the driver's auto and license number. It was a 5-minute wait.

We used [Uber](#) for the rest of our visit. The app is super easy to use. To call for an [Uber](#) car, open the app and enter your destination. Remember the restaurant list I made? I input the restaurant's name and a route map and fare information was displayed.

On clicking the confirm button, a number of [Uber](#) cars close to us was displayed; the closest car was automatically selected. At the end of the trip, the fare is automatically billed to my PayPal account and I am asked to rate the driver. Of course, the driver also rates you as a passenger.

The [OpenTable](#) app has an [Uber](#) button on the confirmed res-

ervations page. To give you an idea how affordable this service is, our taxi fare to/from our condo in Manzanillo was \$900 pesos, the total of all [Uber](#) fares for ten days in CDMX was \$1,182 pesos (that includes tips for good service and fares to/from our hotel and the airport).

In the USA and Canada (Toronto only so far), there is a competing service to [Uber](#) called [Lyft](#). There are hundreds of online booking sites. The ones discussed in this article are ones I use. They all have apps that will work on your smartphone.

If you don't want to spend the time pre-planning and booking your trips, travel agents and tour companies will be happy to do it for you. But, if you want to control and select the best flight connections, and be assured that your vacation will not be spoiled by tour companies that go out of business, then doing it yourself is the best option. Booking hotels online also gives you the choice of booking and paying at the hotel. This can save you stress if your plans change.

Send your questions or suggestions about technology topics or issues to Señor Tech at seniortech@manzanillosun.com

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Escárcega

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

February 15, 2016 (Day 40)

Escárcega, Campeche, MX

We had originally planned to drive straight to San Cristobal de las Casas from Chetumal but decided to break it up into two days. It's always better to plan on driving less than more and not get caught in unfamiliar terrain in the dark. Hence Escárcega in Campeche was the destination at the intersection of Hwy 186 and Hwy 261. This was still a 272km (183 mile) drive from Chetumal, although the road was much straighter. The gang organized to fill up with water and dump before departure, all set up by Rafael. It took a while but, by 10:00 AM, we were off to Escárcega, led by Mike and Kelly.



Hwy 186 to Escárcega

The roads were in very good shape, with only a couple of potholes to dodge, really excellent pavement and plenty wide. Our journey was uneventful, passing through a couple of smaller towns in the heart of the Yucatan Peninsula. For those interested in spending more time in this region, and visiting lesser-known Mayan Ruins, there are several that can be accessed along this section of Hwy 186.

We arrived at Rancho Casado that we found in the Church's Mexico Camping Book. Priced reasonably at \$100 pesos per RV, we accessed a large field set up for dry camping, with some water and electrical access, including rudimentary showers and toilets. We were greeted by howler monkeys on our arrival and, after set-up, Kelly brought out a game not dissimilar to Apples

to Apples, but for adults. This was fun, and we had lots of laughs, to add to the amusement, Bruce demonstrated an acrobatic move rarely seen when his \$5 special chair collapsed. Fortunately, he was uninjured. We slept well in the jungle and were ready to go soon after first light the next morning.



Lots of open space

Escárcega

The city serves as the administrative centre for the surrounding municipality of the same name. Escárcega is at the junction of Mexican Federal Highways 261 and 186, crossed by the railway that runs from Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz, to Campeche, Campeche. It is a new city that grew up in the 20th century with the arrival of the railways and roads. It is named after Francisco Escárcega, a native of Tlaxcala, who fought in the Mexican Revolution and oversaw the construction of much of the rail network in the country's southeast. Engineer Francisco Escárcega Márquez died in 1938.



Colourful residence on Hwy 186

...Escárcega

Mexican Howler Monkey

The Mexican howler monkey is primarily located between southeastern Mexico and northeastern Peru. As of 2008, this subspecies was determined to be critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, due to the loss of its natural habitat as a result of deforestation. It is now located only in patches of forestry within these regions because loss of habitat has been so extensive. Characteristic of mantled howler monkeys, the Mexican howler monkey has a prehensile tail, a deep-set jaw with small incisors and large canines and a large vocal box to make deep howls. Mantled howler monkeys are known for forming unusually large cohorts averaging 14 members and sometimes extending to 40 members.



A special howler monkey crossing on Hwy 186

There are five subspecies of the *A. palliata* which are *Alouatta palliata aequatorialis*, *Alouatta palliata coibensis*, *Alouatta palliata palliata*, *Alouatta palliata trabeata* and *Alouatta palliata mexicana*. Compared with members of the howler monkey genus, the Mexican howler is sympatric with the Guatemalan black howler, *A. pigra*, in Tabasco, Mexico. The Mexican howler differs from the golden-mantled howler, *A. palliata palliata*, primarily in aspects of skull morphology, and in some differences in pelage. The golden-mantled howler's range includes parts of Guatemala and Honduras and it is not clear if the Mexican and golden-mantled howler's ranges currently are in contact.

The Mexican howler can eat a remarkable variety of foods including leaves, flower, buds, petioles, and fruits. This subspecies of howler monkey is known to be a frugivore and a behavioural folivore. Their digestive system is slow, and they have significantly fewer enzymes for protein and fiber digestion than other frugivores, but they compensate for this by selectively eating leaves with less fiber. Consequently, much of the Mexican howler monkey's activity is dedicated to foraging for fruit and young leaves which it can easily digest. Frugivory is typically observed in New World monkeys instead of Old World monkeys, but howler monkeys are an exception to this categorization.

The Mexican howler exhibits limited interaction with members of its species and very minor aggressive behavior. There is evidence of physical aggression between members of the species during migratory periods or changes in dominance. Males, when fighting for dominance, have been observed to target juveniles, sometimes even killing them and physically injuring older males. For a younger male to take control of a group, he must first kill the dominant male, exhibiting extensive aggression. Females also show aggression when asserting dominance, though this is usually limited to harassment behavior like hair pulling and biting. Physical fighting among group members is infrequent and generally of short duration. However, serious injuries can result. Both males and females rarely fight with each other, but physical aggression is even rarer between sexes. Group size varies by species and by location, with an approximate ratio of one male to four females.



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...Escárcega



Dry camping in the jungle

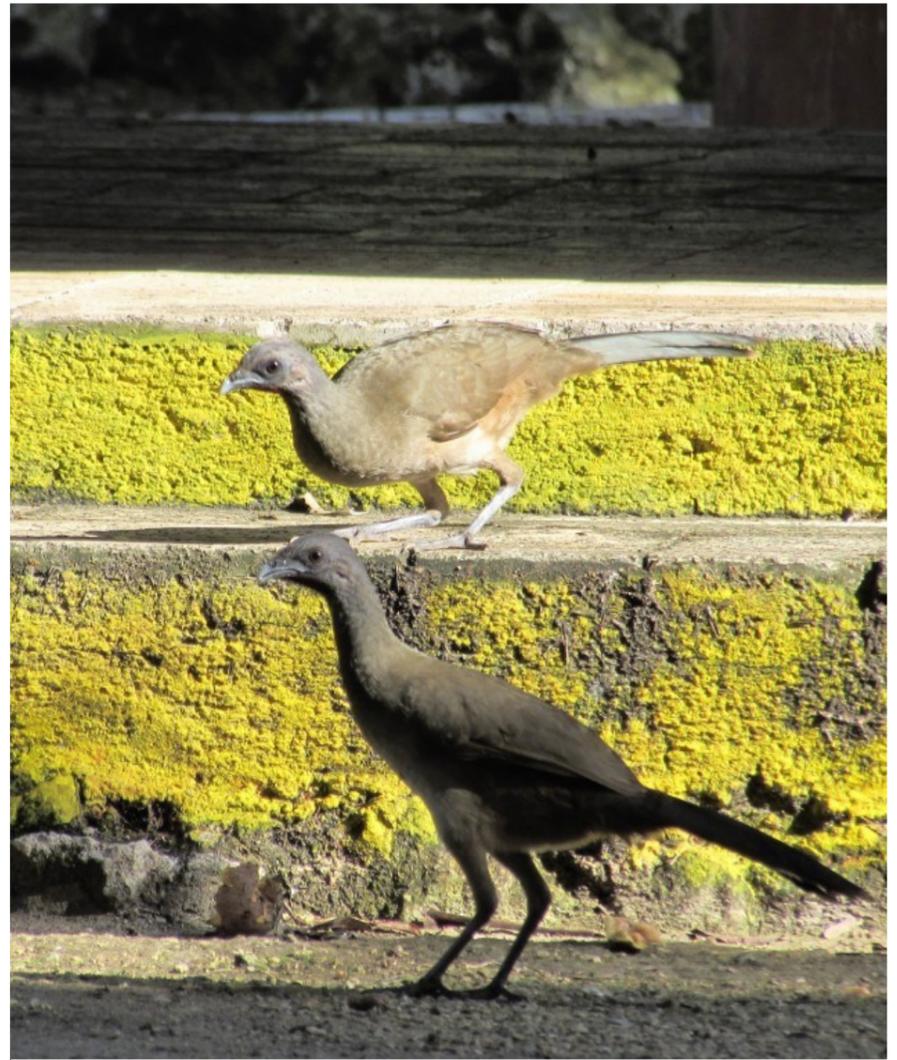
Howler monkeys (genus *Alouatta* monotypic in subfamily Alouattinae) are among the largest of the New World monkeys. Fifteen species are currently recognized. Previously classified in the family Cebidae, they are now placed in the family Atelidae. These monkeys are native to South and Central American forests. Threats to howler monkeys include human predation, habitat destruction and being captured for pets or zoo animals. These monkeys are famous for their loud howls, which can travel three miles through dense rainforest.

As their name suggests, vocal communication forms an important part of their social behavior. They each have an enlarged basihyal or hyoid bone, which helps them make their loud vocalizations. Group males generally call at dawn and dusk, as well as interspersed times throughout the day. The main vocals consist of loud, deep guttural growls or "howls".



Effective signage!

Howler monkeys are widely considered to be the loudest land animal. According to Guinness Book of World Records, their vocalizations can be heard clearly for 3 mi (4.8 km). The function of howling is thought to relate to intergroup spacing and territory protection, as well as possibly to mate-guarding.



Roadside birds on Hwy 186

John Lloyd Stephens described the howler monkeys at the Maya ruins of Copán as "grave and solemn, almost emotionally wounded, as if officiating as the guardians of consecrated ground". To the Mayas of the Classic period, they were the divine patrons of the artisans, especially scribes and sculptors.

They were seen as gods in some tribes, and the long, sleek tail was worshipped for its beauty. Copán, in particular, is famous for its representations of howler monkey gods.

Two howler monkey brothers play a role in the myth of the Maya Hero Twins included in the Popol Vuh, a widely feared tale of soul and passion.

... more pics follow

...Escárcega



Be bat-aware when driving



Campground shower



Driving to our camping spot



Dan and Lisa on the caravan tail

advertisement

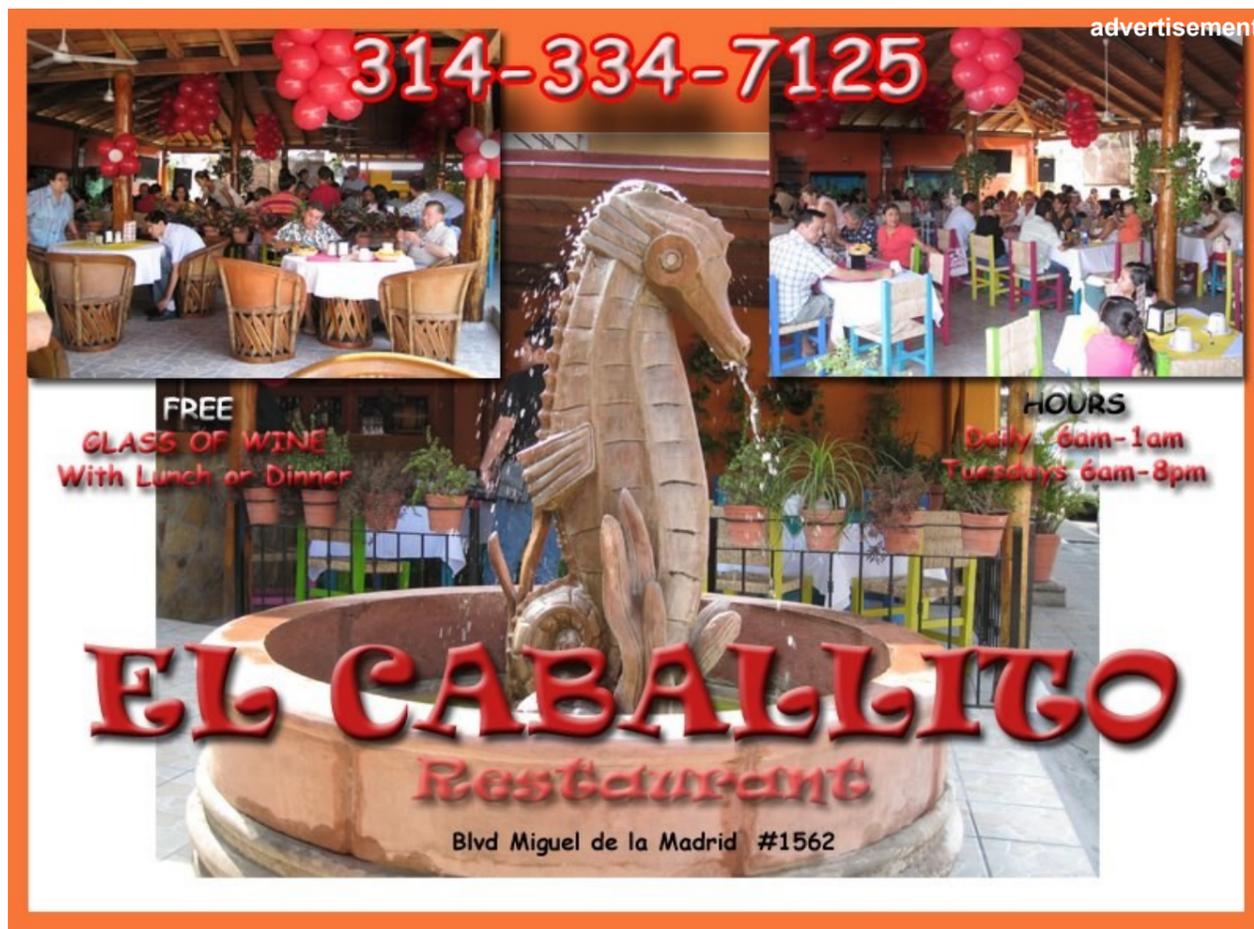
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...Escárcega



Group playing cards



Entering Xpujil, Hwy 186



Gang is settled in at Centro Silvestre



Lago Rosa



Leaving Chetumal, heading for Escárcega



Leaving Quintana Roo, entering Campeche Hwy 186



Outbuildings on site



Making the turn into our camping spot

...Escárcega



Military checkpoint on Hwy 186



Interesting monument close up



Roadside shop



Monument in Xpujil



Very basic dry camping



Road to Escárcega campground

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

Day of the Dead Sugar Skulls

Calaveras de Azúcar

by Hungry Happenings

Traditional Day of the Dead Sugar Skulls are decorated with a rainbow of colored royal icing.

Ingredients to make sugar skulls (makes 4 medium 3-D skulls)

- ✓ Betty Crocker™ gel food color
- ✓ ¼ cup meringue powder
- ✓ 6 cups granulated sugar
- ✓ 1/3 cup water
- ✓ 7 ½ teaspoon meringue powder
- ✓ 6 teaspoons water
- ✓ 1 pound powdered sugar
- ✓ Skull molds

Directions

1. Mix the sugar, meringue powder and water together until all the granules of sugar are wet. Pick up a handful of the mixture and squeeze in your hand. If it holds together, it's ready. If it falls apart, it will need a tiny bit more water.
2. Fill your skull mold with the wet sugar, pressing down on the sugar, compacting it as you go. Fill both the front and back skull cavities with the sugar. Scrape off the excess sugar.
3. Cut a piece of parchment paper and a piece of cardboard just a bit bigger than your mold. Set the parchment paper down on top of the mold. Set the cardboard on top of the paper. Grab onto the mold and cardboard and carefully flip the whole thing upside down. Set it on the counter, then carefully lift the mold up off the sugar skulls. The mold should pop right

off. If the sugar sticks, it's too wet. Scrape it out of the mold, clean the mold, and add some more dry sugar to the mixture and try molding it again. If your sugar skulls do not hold together, the mixtures needs more water.

4. Your sugar skulls now need to dry. Midway through the drying cycle, you need to carefully flip them over so the back sides can dry out at well. They should be ready to decorate in 12-24 hours.

5. Make royal icing. Beat together powdered sugar, meringue powder, and water until it's shiny and will hold stiff peaks.

6. Once your skulls are dried, spread a thin layer of royal icing on the flat part of the back side of each skull. Press the front and back sides together. Use your finger to wipe off the icing that oozes out from in between the two pieces. Allow the skulls to dry for at least an hour.

7. After your skulls are dry, they are ready to decorate. Color small bowls full of royal icing using food coloring. If you won't be using the icing right away, be sure to cover each bowl with plastic wrap.

8. Pipe royal icing onto the skulls using any simple or elaborate designs. Get as creative as you'd like and use lots of bright colors on each skull for a dramatic appearance.

9. Allow your sugar skulls to dry for several hours before using them as decorations for your Day of the Dead event.

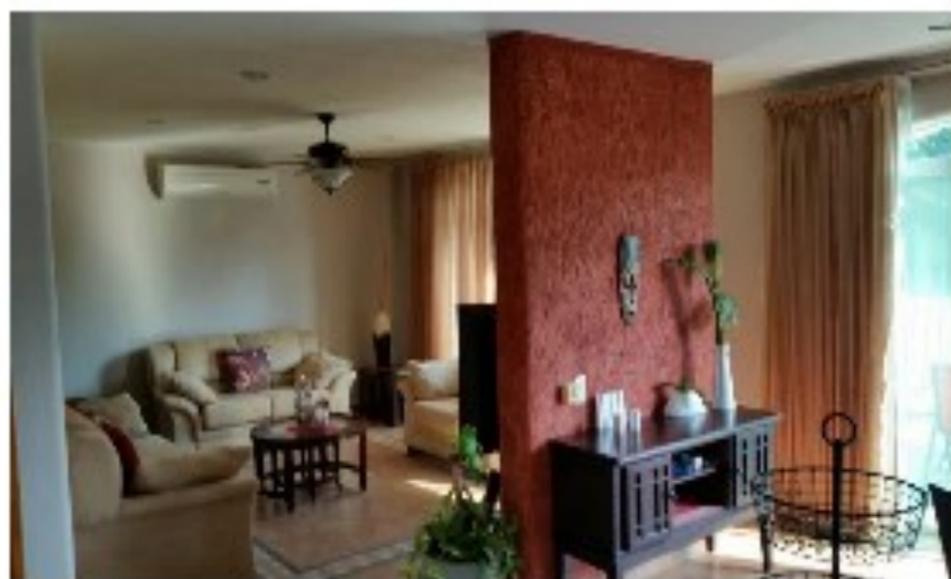
Recipe and images from Tablespoon.com



House for Rent

Golfers, take note!

Beautiful furnished home for rent, well situated in Real del Country next to the golf course.



The home has 3 bedrooms (each with air conditioning), 2 full, large bathrooms. One of the bedrooms is on the main (lower) floor and adjoins the downstairs bathroom. It comes with a fully equipped kitchen, a washer and dryer.



In addition to 2 patios, and an amazing view of hole 3 of the golf course, a third terraced deck overlooks the social area of the complex that offers a pool, tennis court and a palapa for your enjoyment.

This home comes with 24-hour security, wifi, cable TV and includes water, maintenance fee and covered, off-street parking for 1 car.

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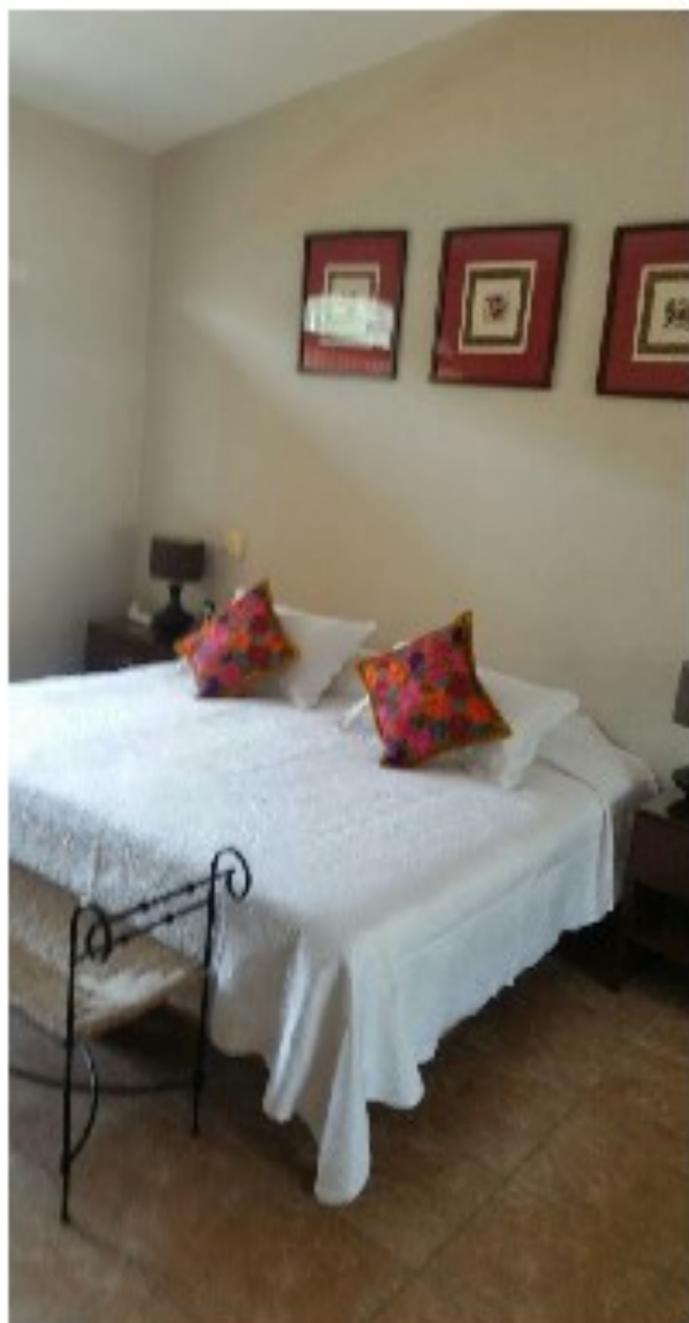
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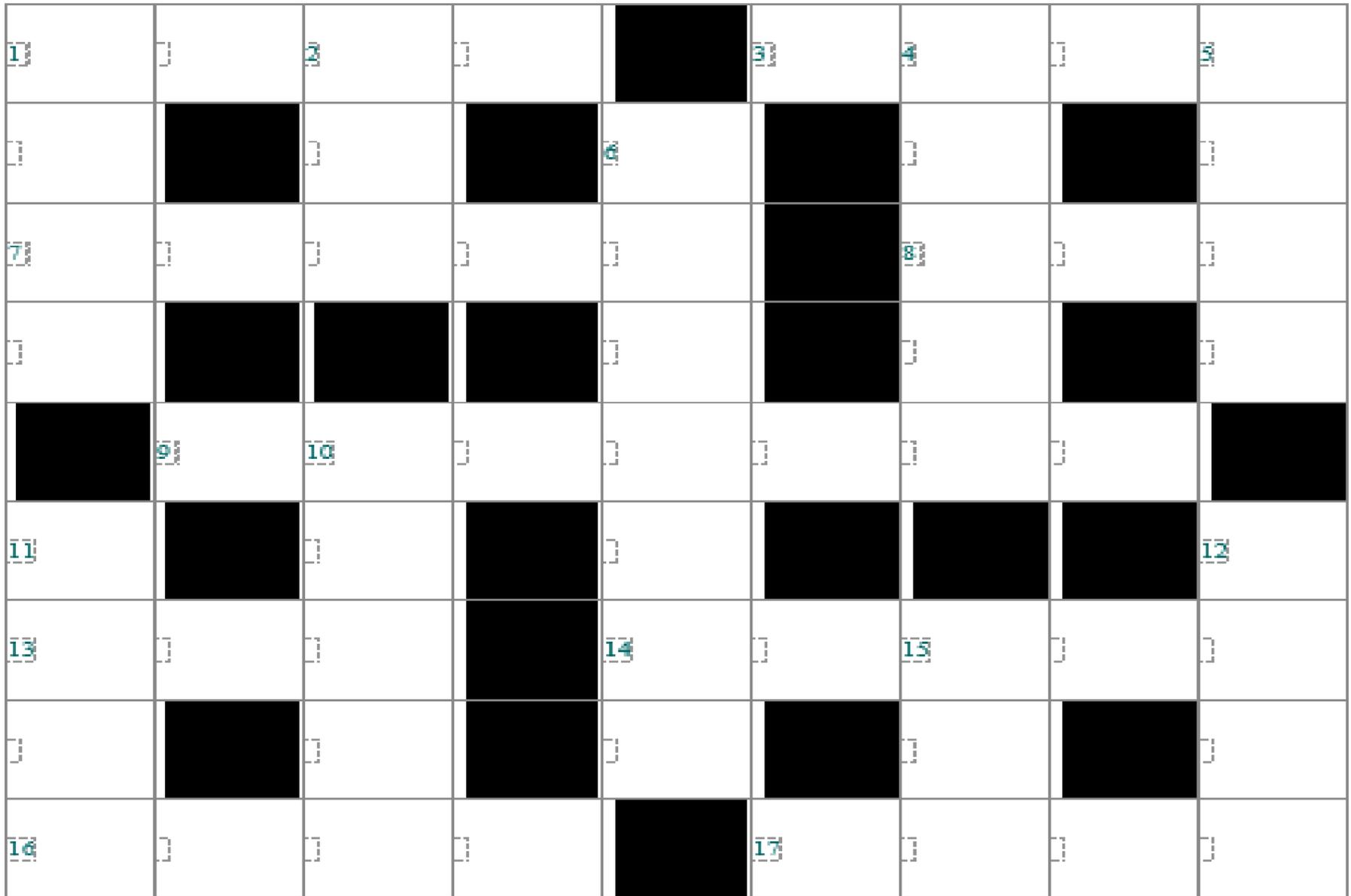
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Landline (+52) 314 138 2725



Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 lime, file
- 3 (you/usted) leave (behind), let, (he, she) leaves (behind), lets
- 7 zeros
- 8 (you-usted) gave, (he, she) gave
- 9 immense
- 13 actually, even, indeed
- 14 hatreds
- 16 (you/ustedes) used to be, (they) used to be
- 17 (he, she) will do, make, (you/usted) will do, make

Down

- 1 crazy
- 2 sea
- 4 asunder, in two (2,3)
- 5 love
- 6 mirrors
- 10 never, ever
- 11 (he, she) goes out, leaves, (you/usted) go out, leave
- 12 (he, she) is, (you/usted) are
- 15 (I) was going, (he, she) was going

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

La Catrina

from the Path to Citizenship series

History

Originally called La Calavera Garbancera, the etching was created sometime between 1910 and 1913 by José Guadalupe Posada as a broadside, and was published from the original plates in 1930 by Frances Toor, Blas Vanegas Arroyo and Pablo O'Higginia: *Las Obras de José Guadalupe Posada, Grabador Mexicano. Calavera (Dapper Skeleton)*. This image can be found on plate 21 of Posada's Popular Mexican Prints.

The image made from zinc etching captures the famous calaveras or skull/skeleton image that had become popular at the turn of the 20th century. The original leaflet describes a person who was ashamed of his/her indigenous origins and dressed imitating the French style while wearing lots of makeup to make his/her skin look whiter. This description also ties to the original name garbancera, which became a nickname given to people of indigenous ancestry who imitated European style and denied their own cultural heritage.



Cultural importance

"La Catrina has become the referential image of Death in Mexico, it is common to see her embodied as part of the celebrations of Day of the Dead throughout the country; she has become a motive for the creation of handcrafts made from clay or other materials, her representations may vary, as well as the hat." – J.G. Posada

While the original work by Posada introduced the character, the popularity of La Calavera, as well as her name, often referred to as La Catrina, is derived from a work by artist Diego Rivera in his 1947 completed mural, *Sueño de una Tarde Dominical, en la Alameda Central* (Dream of a Sunday afternoon along Central Alameda).

...La Catrina



Today

Today, we see the Calavera (skull) as well as the Calaca (skeleton) take on many folkloric forms that include La Catrina and seemingly a growing host of whimsical companions. La Catrina has been depicted as generally very happy and colorful. The movie, "Coco" did a nice job of bring the skeletons to life.

and comfort the Mexicans have with death and especially the identity of a Lady of the Dead, harking back to the heritage of the Aztec goddess Mictecacihuatl. As explained by curator David de la Torre from the La Plaza de Cultura y Artes, a Mexican-American museum and cultural center in Los Angeles, California, USA, Catrina has come to symbolize not only El Día de los Muertos and the Mexican willingness to laugh at death itself, but originally Catrina was an elegant or well-dressed woman, so it refers to rich people, de la Torre said. "Death brings this neutralizing force; everyone is equal in the end. Sometimes people have to be reminded of that."

Culture

The culture of La Calavera has ties to political satire and is also a well-kept tradition as the original was inspired by the polarizing reign of dictator Porfirio Díaz. Díaz is lauded for modernizing and bringing financial stability to Mexico, but he also led his government in repression, corruption, and excess, and had an apparent obsession with European materialism and culture. Christine Delsol writes: "Concentration of fantastic wealth in the hands of the privileged few brewed discontent in the hearts of the suffering many, leading to the 1910 rebellion that toppled Díaz in 1911 and became the Mexican Revolution."



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

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