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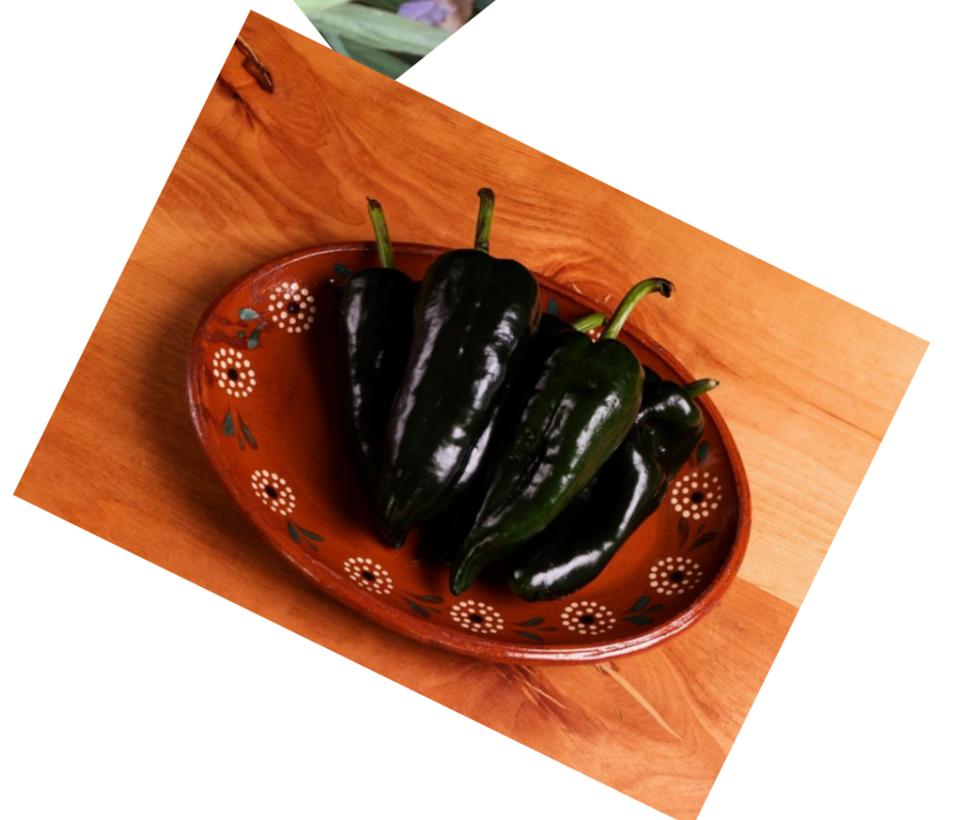
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To send submissions for possible inclusion in the magazine, please send to the editor by 15th of each month. We are always looking for writers or ideas on what you would like us to see as topics for the magazine.

Article submissions:

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

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**More Than a Paradise; It's a Lifestyle**

by Suzanne A. Marshall

We live here permanently now. The journey began almost eleven years ago, and we still believe it was the right move for us at the right time. Winding down our working careers, tired and worn out, we were looking for the big dream. You know, the stuff that movies are made of or maybe even fairy tales. (And they lived happily ever after...). I've written before about finding Manzanillo after many trips to Mexico and developing a 'must have' itinerary that would seal a deal for us. And here we are in Manzanillo: small coastal city, vibrant port economy, wonderful people, gorgeous oceanside vistas, inexpensive properties and a heavenly climate.

Are we used to it yet? Have we started taking it for granted? Well, you never get 'used' to something this beautiful or take it for granted. But you do begin to feel comfortable with it and, as time goes by, you begin to really see how much more there is than just a beautiful place and climate. It has become our home and, with that, the realization that the lifestyle here embraces so many wonderful elements that forethought had little to do with. There are so many conveniences and services available to us that we have slowly absorbed. We are well past the "if things don't go well here, we can always go home stage".

We've almost completely stopped making comparisons to how it was in Canada and the way things worked there. (Albeit, income tax season still bites!). So, let me randomly begin to tell you what this all means.



During Carnaval before Easter, the two-day parade displays some amazing costumes.

We live permanently in flip-flops, shorts, swimsuits, T-shirt's, loose dresses and less if possible. Frankly, it's a luxury I love. Total comfort. We dine out many days a week at eclectic Mexi-

can restaurants where the food is delicious and so inexpensive it doesn't kill your budget. Many of these locations we can walk to and driving is always a short distance. I have happily given up the long commutes of my former life to big box stores and various destinations. In Canada, we were constantly driving and filling up the gas tanks weekly. Here in Manzanillo we might fill the gas tank once a month or less, another savings for your pocketbooks.



One of the scenic cruises available. We call them the 'booze cruise'..

That isn't to say we don't have a few of the big super stores. We certainly do but they are nearby and integrated into the neighbourhoods. Everything we really need is here. In Canada and the USA, they are often building the big stores in far surrounding areas that force the residents into vehicles. The zoning laws seem to prevent integration of urban areas. Of course, Manzanillo is not a big metropolis in the first place. We huddle along the shorelines and are surrounded by green-topped mountains and plantations. So, in this vein, we've forgotten about winter parkas, down-filled comforters, heavy winter wear and boots and even winter tires. There are no more walkways and driveways to shovel and icy roads to navigate. Yipeeee! We need less space and live outdoors far more while soaking up the vitamin D and rich, humid air.

Let's talk health services. Initially, we thought we'd go home if the going got rough; not such a good idea anymore. I'm not talking heart transplants or brain surgery as all of that would be crisis driven and we do have options. But, if we are talking general care, general health practitioners and service availability, I was shocked by the speed with which we have been cared for. Almost no waiting, period. This is not the scene in Canada, where waiting weeks and months is an expectation or the norm for everyone. As wonderful as the medical practitioners may be, they can only handle so many patients a day and the wait lists are long and stressful. The cause? An aging population called 'the boomers' and a lack of infrastructure to support them all. I could go very deep into this subject but that's not the focus here.

...More Than a Paradise; It's a Lifestyle

With our permanent visas in hand, we are fully integrated into the Mexican health system. It is inexpensive by comparison to say the USA, and in Canada there is a cost for medicines aside from the waiting. The IMSS system assesses an annual fee depending on age. Being over seventy, I paid about 640.00 CAD for the year. In Manzanillo, our medications are free and picked up each month at the clinic pharmacy after our appointments with the doctor.



We asked for a reservation near the beach and ended up on the beach. How accommodating is that?

Need a doctor to come to the house? Yes indeed, we've enjoyed that privilege as well for a cost of about thirty-five dollars. There are private clinics that one can visit for minor scratches and bruises or for full-on emergency care. The choice is yours. Recently, a friend here opted for a hip replacement at a private hospital. The surgery went well and she is recovering at home. She has hired full-time help for local wage rates and is very thankful for all the care she is receiving. The surgery costs were 80,000 pesos. Sounds like a lot but in US dollars (where she is from) the cost equates to \$4,240.00. Were she in the US for this procedure, the costs would be over \$100,000.00 I am told.



During the busy winter seasons we often see people riding the 'banana' pulled by power boats.

This type of prompt service is true for all steps in the local health system. Talk about conveniences. Need an X-ray? You can have it taken today and you will leave the office with a copy in hand. They will even email it to you or as directed. Need laboratory tests? Done immediately with the usual allowance for fasting periods if necessary.

How about dental care? I'll try to control myself here as it is a pet peeve. Lovely people as they may be, dentists in Canada and the USA make out like bandits. There is a reason why foreigners flock to Mexico for dental services. They are top notch and cover every range of service from general care to implants and jaw surgery. A typical visit to a dentist here for a regular cleaning (which is usually done by the dentist) is a cost of approximately 50.00 CAD or less.



Having a lot of fun on Independence weekend, thanks to Pacifica del Mar restaurant and some crazy friends.

Leaving all this important but grim stuff behind, I'll move on to the fun stuff. First class cinemas with wide seats that are like lounge chairs are yours to enjoy. The cost? About 3 dollars Canadian. 😊 What a delight! The freshly popped caramel popcorn is always an irresistible delight as well. Most new movie releases are offered in English with Spanish subtitles the first week or longer, so we often enjoy our local movies. You can book your seats online as well.

Want to take a little excursion? Jump on the Mexican highway bus services. There are several companies to choose from. They are so sumptuous it's shocking at first. Bus lines here are affordable. They give you a sandwich and a drink when you

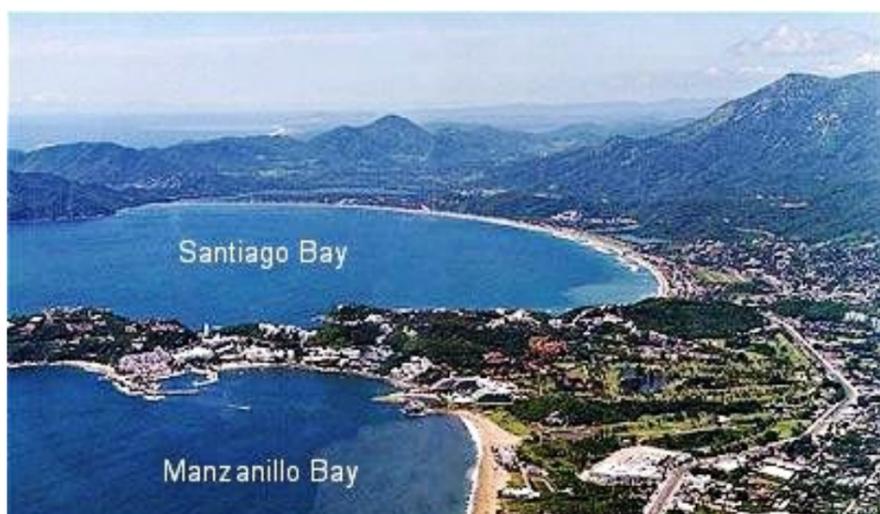
...More Than a Paradise; It's a Lifestyle



Weekly card games are fun for all. Many of us play the game Wizard. The accommodating restaurants allow us to play under their breezy palapa every week.

board for your first-class adjustable seat with foot rests, lap tables, television, wi-fi service and plug-ins for electronics. The entire bus has first-class seating. With our seniors' card, a return trip to Guadalajara (5 hours one-way) is roughly 50.00 CAD per person.

Because Manzanillo is evolving as a tourist destination, you will find a lot of English spoken here. This is a saving grace if you haven't dived into your Spanish lessons yet. We keep working on ours but it's very handy when often the person you are speaking with is bilingual English-Spanish. The children are taking it in school and English has become an important tool for employment and higher wages. Newcomers will no doubt find this a bonus feature in the area.



Manzanillo enjoys two magnificent bays.

Home services are readily available to residents in Manzanillo. This covers almost everything you can think of including, gardening, housekeeping, painting, boiler (hot water heater) repair, electrical upgrades, car repairs, car washes and so on. And again, the rates are extremely reasonable.

When the body ages, these services become more and more important. So, we retirees like to make use of many of them on a regular basis.

There is such a close social community here, that references for many services are available from friends and social media as well as referral lists that are often available through local organizations.



There's a ground swell of Mexican Train players in Manzanillo of late.

It is often said among our friends here that they've never been so busy or had such an active social life and I agree. We could be out every day of the week, especially during the 'high season', when dances and special events are frequent. Aside from enjoying the Mexican holidays, with their wonderful flare for fiestas and Mardi Gras, there are groups that play cards regularly such as Mexican train, bocce ball on the beach, local golf games, workouts at the local gyms, yoga sessions, beach walks, ladies' nights and yes, even poker night! There is so much fun to be had.

As I am needing to wrap this article up, I can only add that the local food is fabulous. An abundance of local fresh fish, fruit and vegetables is also supplemented by good cuts of beef and pork, and you can always pick up a rotisserie chicken, or one that has been barbecued on a spit over an open fire from a street-side vendor. It's time to jump in our pool and then start planning our next adventure since visiting Mexico City. Perhaps the Pyramids of the Sun or magical Puebla. Whatever it will be, I'll be writing about it in the future. Adios, from beautiful Manzanillo.

... more pics follow

...More Than a Paradise; It's a Lifestyle



Manzanillo has grown to be Mexico's busiest port.



Local flower shops provide gorgeous fresh flowers for a reasonable price, year-round.



Setting up for beach bocce ball, a regular recreation activity.

Kayaking is a favourite activity for some.

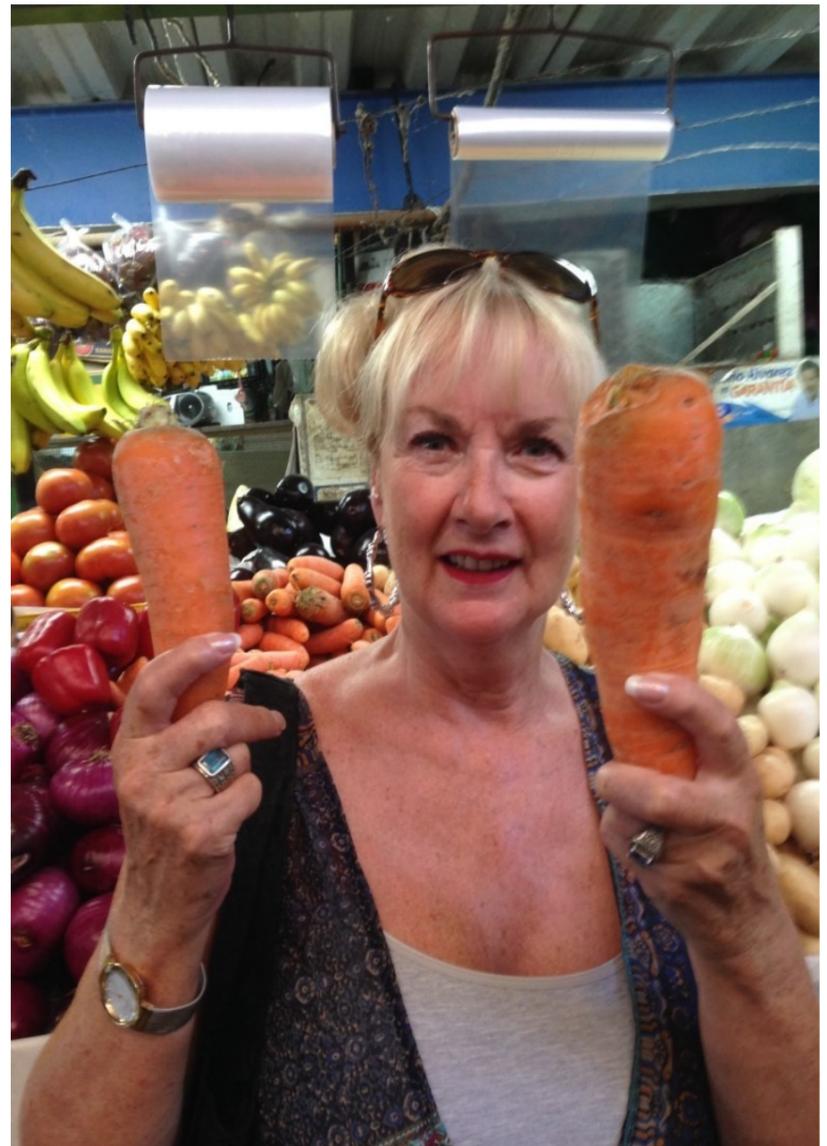


Paddle boarding, for some adventurous souls.

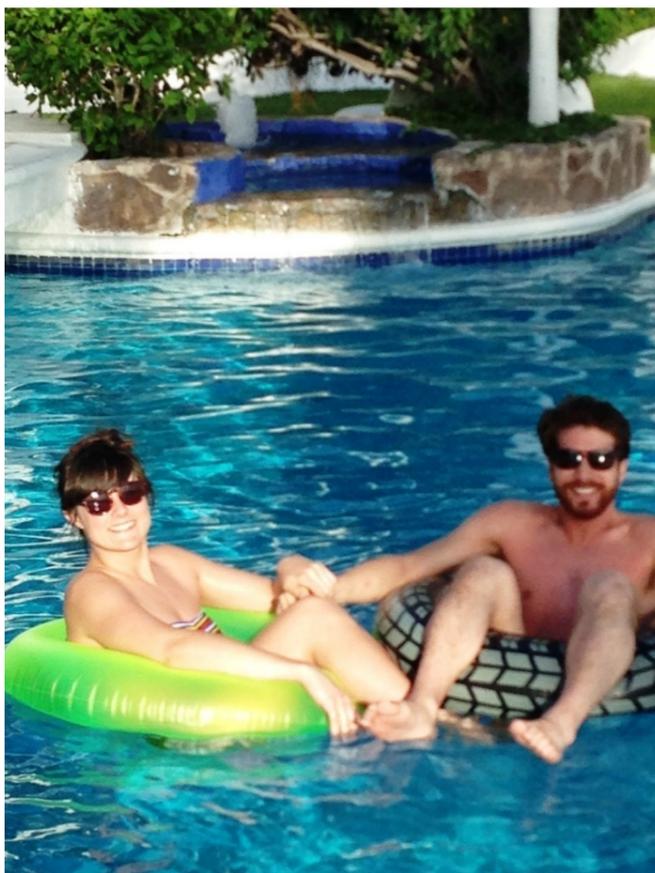
...More Than a Paradise; It's a Lifestyle



Weekly Ladies nights dinners offer fun and different locations throughout Manzanillo. The groups can be 3 - 30 in numbers depending on the time of year.



The fresh markets in Manzanillo are always heaped with fresh veggies. These carrots were quite large.



Family stays cool floating in the pool on a special visit from Canada.



It's always interesting to watch the cruise ships come and go!

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

**SAVE THE DATE! Thursday, February 21, 2019**

***It's the "Fun"draiser for Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare  
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For more information, contact:

Laurie Taylor [laurie.taylor88@gmail.com](mailto:laurie.taylor88@gmail.com)

Marge Tyler [maggiet19@gmail.com](mailto:maggiet19@gmail.com)

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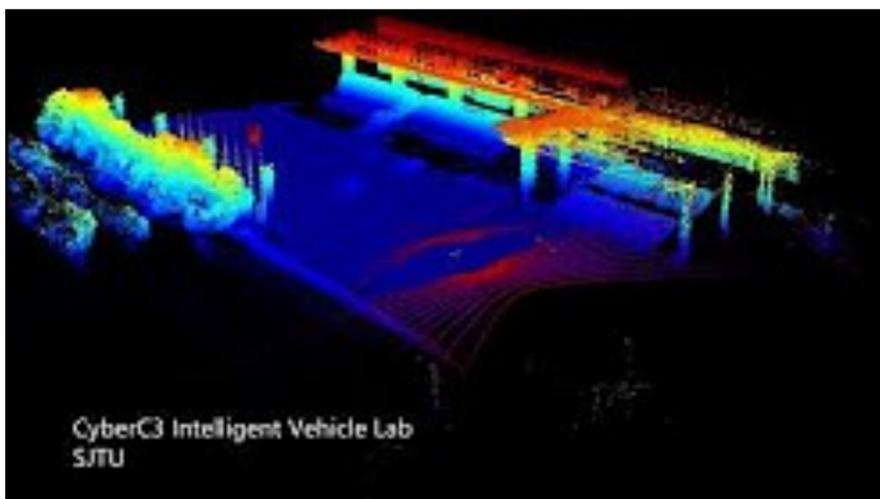
## The Maya

by Kirby Vickery

For what we don't and didn't know about the Olmecs – we know just about everything about the Mayan people except why their civilization collapsed. The reason for this knowledge is because a Spanish monk by the name of Francisco Ximénez found himself in possession of a Mayan 'Bible' which he had translated in 1701. It contained their version of the creation of the world and mankind.

The original book has disappeared, but we still have his translation. Yes, Timmy, the Mayan had a written language with books to read and we know the general population was literate. Even though Bishop Diego de Landa called for the eradication of all Mesoamerican literature in 1562, some of the books of the Maya are still about and are still being studied. There is one more important aspect about our learning of their civilization and that is currently being utilized.

It is something new in the mix of technical sciences. It is called 'LIDAR' which means Light Detection and Ranging. It's sort of a radar system that uses light impulses rather than electromagnetic pulses. A team from the University of Central Florida has placed this device in an airplane and are flying it all over Central Mexico and Central America.



A LIDAR presentation of a portion of a modern street.

They have discovered 61,480 new Mayan structures, and a city that contained more than a million people, under the jungle

canopy. All of it was previously unknown, even to the artifact poachers. All that remains is for teams of archeologists to go in and clear the jungle and start learning more about these people. It's also good for tourism after they establish inroads at any site.



A small piece of Maya writing.

Whereas the Olmecs settled in the Mexican lowlands around what is now Mexico City, the Mayans chose the Yucatan to grow and prosper. The Mayans lived much like the Olmecs with a few exceptions that we know about. It is believed the Olmecs lived by rule of their priest class. The Mayans incorporated a royalty class, complete with King and Queen, although they still had their priests who ran most everything. Like the Olmec people, these folks were into sacrifice, slavery and bondage too, only these people were a lot more warlike and violent.

While the Olmec people depended mostly on trade alone, the Mayans incorporated war, not only to outsiders, but to the various city states within the kingdom. Both civilizations depended on human sacrifice to appease their gods and most of the gods were the same.

The big differences between the civilizations was that the Mayans were far ahead of the Olmecs in the sciences such as as-

...The Maya

tronomy and mathematics, art and agriculture. Because of these books, called codexes, we've been able to decipher their numbering system and their written language.

Please remember that neither culture had any beasts of burden, or what we would call modern anything. Their agriculture was finite and the soil on the peninsula was volcanic and rich. That stuff would and will grow anything. Their diet was simple consisting of maize, squashes, beans and chili peppers as staples. It should be noted that this is the area that the vanilla bean, growing from an orchid plant, was discovered and later cultivated. Modern anthropology shows that their methodology in terracing the hills could have supported a larger number of people than it actually did.

#### POPOL VUH

The Popol Vuh is the Maya story of creation. It is not part of a bible to the Mayan people, but more like a history of the time before man, written in the progressive tense. This fact is uniform the world over, which strongly indicates it was passed down and told verbally. This was also the way of things in Europe during the late phases of the dark ages and the early renaissance when, in each village, there were story tellers who travelled from place to place. As a matter of fact, when the printing press was finally invented, most of the printing jobs were hand bills advertising when the more prolific story tellers were going to be where.

Obviously, the story the Popol Vuh contains was handed down for many generations before it was finally committed to a book in the written language of the Mayan called 'The Quiche.' It translates into English as, "The Council Body" or literally, "The Book of the Mat." "Mat" in this case refers to the woven mats the Mayan people would sit on while listening to their stories handed down from one generation to the next by priests and story tellers. It was also known as "The Ancient Word."

Popol Vuh was created by a people called the K'iche (also spelled 'The Quiche' depending which account you hook up with. I found K'iche to mean the people from the central Guatemalan highlands. The book is also known as 'Popol Wuj' [could be a phonetic spelling?]. Its history is muddled by time and multi-possession on both sides of the Atlantic.



Even today, there are two major schools of thought as to when its only copy was rediscovered and by whom. If I can believe the internet, the language of the original was simply beautiful. Either that or I'm falling in love with a translation of a translation or a copy of another translation. I will tell its story next month but go ahead and look it up if you want to enjoy the phraseology of the book.

The book itself is about the creation. Then it recounts the story of a set of twins who win over the forces of evil for the control of the earth after everything got done. It is believed that, at its beginning, it was one very long poem and then was divided up into four books when the story went through its copy and translation stages.

Actually, the twins are the sons of twins who are the sons of other twins, or something like that, but that has to wait for next month.

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by Tommy Clarkson

**Mexican Blue Bells** *Ruellia tweediana*

Family: *Acanthus*, also known as: *Spanish Ladies*, *Desert Petunia*, *Florida Bluebells* or *Mexican Petunia*

I've healthy specimens of all three of this species' primary colors – blue-violet, pink and white – gloriously thriving right inside our wrought-iron entryway. Because of their location, as I get into and out of our car, they are among the first of our extended plant family I see. And they generally make me smile!

According to Robert Lee Raffle, in his masterful tome, The Tropical Look (An Encyclopedia of Dramatic Landscape Plants) these also come in yellow, red and blue. He further informs us that the *Ruellia* genus is comprised of "about 150 species of evergreen, perennial herbs, shrubs and sub-shrubs (with oppositely arranged leaves, having five-lobed, trumpet-shaped flowers, although some species have more exotically shaped flowers with curved, asymmetrical corollas and long-protruding stamens. (However) many species are rather weedy in appearance . . . but many others have attractive flowers in colors of every hue in the rainbow."

Considered an evergreen sub-bush, they originated in South America. Blooming in the warm months, that's pretty much all the time down here! Like so many tropical flowers, they require sandy, well-draining soil and morning-to-full sun.

Their colorful, funnel-shaped flowers sometimes display a throat of red – but I've not known any to complain of soreness

in that area, nor display any signs of laryngitis! (*A little – I know, very little – plant health humor there!*)



The Mexican Blue Bells has five-lobed, trumpet shaped flowers, although some species have more exotically shaped flowers.

Its flora petal tips are two to four inches (5.08-10.16 cm) long, shallowly two-lobed and peduncle. (That last word means that it is the main stalk of the inflorescence to which the flowers are attached, i.e. a rachis.) Its leaves are narrow to broadly lanceolate and up to seven inches (17.78 cm) long. The stems are, occasionally, black in color.

While the flower shapes are virtually identical on my plants, the length and width of the leaves vary considerably. But, following extended perusal of my various botanical books, I understood better these differences. For example, Kirsten Albrecht Llamas points out an interesting fact in her excellent book Tropical Flowers (A Guide to Identification and Cultivation) – that she not only researched and wrote, but for which she also took the photographs.

She stated that "it has not been resolved if *R. malacosperma* from North America, (this, so named, species) *R. tweediana*, and *R. brittoniana* are variations of the same species, natural hybrids or close relatives. The form referred to as *R. malacosperma* has broader, lanceolate leaves and white flowers in cultivation. The considerable variation may also be due to hybridization with *R. ciliiflora* which overlaps the territory of these species."

...Mexican Blue Bells

There are various "shirt tail relations" that have attractive flora as well, such as the light purple colored, Wild Petunia (*R. lacteal*), reddish in color Trailing Velvet Plant (*R. affinis*), pink Monkey Plant (*R. makoyana*), *R. Macrantha* of dark red or light pink melding into gold (depending upon which authority one chooses to believe, as I've seen pictures and write-ups of both in authoritative publications) or the mauve colored *R. tuberosa*, which is used in both folk medicine and as a natural textile dye.



Its flora petal tips are two to four inches (5.08-10.16 cm) long, shallowly two-lobed and peduncle.

I recognize that we've bounced around with different species of this genus. My intent was not to confuse you. But virtually all of these have delightful – similar in appearance – flowers, and I, wished you to recognize that, just in case you can't find one species, another might do just as well!

In Neil Sperry's Complete Guide to Texas Gardening, he asserts that Mexican Petunia (as he chooses to call them) is an "old fashioned plant often found along driveways or walks at abandoned home sites." He further warns that they need "to be contained by walk or edging, otherwise (they are) somewhat invasive. (They need "ample moisture or will wilt badly (and are not really) a showy plant, but a dependable and durable performer." So how can we encapsulate a description of the *Ruellia tweediana*?

How about this? It is a beautiful flowering, low-growing perennial with long, narrow, glossy green, foliage, growing from one to three feet (30.48-91.44 cm). Its semi-woody stalks grow in an upright pattern producing bright, vibrant, trumpet-shaped blossoms that flower throughout our seasonally warm environs. The Mexican Blue Bells is – in my opinion anyway - rather showy



It is said of them that they are "old fashioned plants often found along driveways or walks at abandoned home sites."

when in bloom and can be a delightful allure for attraction of butterflies and birds. On top of all that, this shrub will naturalize and re-seed in moist areas of your garden!

Get your copy of *The Civilized Jungle: Tropical Plants Facts and Fun From Ola Brisa Gardens* [Volume I](#), and now [Volume II](#) is here!!

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

## Online USA Notary Public

by Terry Sovil

If you live in Mexico year-round, or are here during the winter months, you may have had a need for a Notary Public from the USA. Your only option, from what I've seen, is to journey to Puerto Vallarta or Guadalajara to visit a USA Consulate.

From what I understand, there are notaries in Canada, but they are lawyers. The folks in the USA apply in their home state and receive a number, and the required equipment, to observe signatures and then notarize a document. Ontario does allow individuals to become commissioners of affidavits and declarations but their powers are limited, much like in the USA.

My need for a notarized document had already been delayed 8 months due to Notary Public requirements. After several online "chats" and calls to the Human Resources department of this company back in the USA, it seemed the only option I had was to visit Puerto Vallarta or Guadalajara. It really upset me. Then I was advised of a pretty new option that did, in fact, work for me. It is a notary session online!

You are able to connect with a live Notary Public via your computer (desktop or laptop), tablet or phone! You can find these sites by simply searching for "Online USA Notary". I found one called "Notarize" and gave it a try. After going through the process, I looked at some of the others and they are all pretty much alike in their process. Understand that you must be a USA citizen, have a social security number and the document is one that will be used only in the USA. You could not notarize a Mexican document this way.

This is how it works. You connect to the internet on the device you plan to use. The device must have the ability to transfer files, allow a visual session with your webcam and have a microphone / sound. A tablet or phone can be either Apple (iOS) or Android. You will need to download an app for those devices. Right now, most of these online Notaries are working from the state of Virginia. They have a huge list of documents they can handle online.

1. Put the document where you can quickly get it and upload it—like your desktop
2. Connect with the Notary Public website
3. The company recognized that I was NOT in the USA and asked specifically if this document was for use in the USA only
4. I sent a note explaining what the document was, and in fact,

all the company needed was assurance that it was a real document, licensed Notary Public, in the USA, working on a document that would only be used in the USA

5. I was prompted to upload the document
6. Then they asked for some information from me:
  - ✓ The last 4 digits of my Social Security Number
  - ✓ Full name (first, middle, last)
  - ✓ Current address (I keep a USA domicile in TX where I am registered to vote and have a mail forwarding service)
  - ✓ Date of birth
7. Then I had to answer 5 questions within 2 minutes. These questions were like a list of addresses where I might have lived, information about a certain car I owned etc. They are able to really dig into various databases to come up with questions only you can answer. One had no answer that was correct, so I selected none and moved on. I passed.
8. Next, I had to have 2 ID's available, so I selected my USA driver's license with the current mailing address and my passport
9. You hold ID documents up to the webcam for both sides of the card and the two pages from the USA passport – You click "OK" for each photo taken to approve it
10. Next, the live notary comes online and your web conference begins
11. She asked if I had read the document, understood it and agreed with it
12. She asked if I was being forced to sign this document
13. She presented a list of fonts that were filled with my name for my signature, I chose one
14. Next, she completed her section of the form (see sample form below)
15. All of this is captured on video and sound; the ID pictures, the documents, the signatures and the conversation

That was it. She thanked me, I thanked her and the web conference ended. I was then presented with an option for payment. This one was \$25.00 paid via credit card. Pretty much signed and notarized in about 10 minutes! Done!

After the payment and some internal processing, your notarized document is available for you to download. I immediately got it uploaded to the company that needed it. It was exactly what they wanted to see, no problems. So it saved me a lot of time and grief.

...Online USA Notary Public

It may be helpful to have a scanner or printer, depending on what you need to do, but you can visit Office Depot for support there. Folks **in** the USA can also use this. No need to go hunt down a Notary Public!

Below is a sample of a typical document to be notarized. I've only included the portion that the Notary Public cares about, the first signature line is for your signature. The Notary will take the digital signature you chose and insert it. The seal is where the Notary digitally inserts his/her seal, signature etc.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

**Notary Public Acknowledgment**

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by Tommy Clarkson

**Firecracker Plant, *Crossandra infundibuliformis***

Family: *Acanthaceae*

Also known as: *Firecracker Flower or Crossandra*

*With a genus name sounding like some cranky lady, this beauty is far from that!*

In fact, thriving in a tallish pot, here in Ola Brisa Gardens, to the right of the spiral stairs - near where Patty's car is parked - which leads to my small, new plants nursery, above my seed storage and maintenance shop, grows a most attractive Firecracker Plant that inevitably draws numerous comments by visitors.

This showy species originated in central Africa, Southern India and Sri Lanka. A smallish, evergreen shrub, it blooms during the warm months - with is pretty much year-round down here! The flowers—about three to four inches (7.52 - 10.16 cm), above the foliage of the *C. infundibuliformis*, are often well described as being cantaloupe orange. But, actually, that's a bit of a wide and slightly incorrect observation, with there being various shade, hues and colors.

While there are some fifty species in this genus, there are two rather commonly grown cultivars. One is 'Lutea' which grows erectly from one to three feet (30.48 – 91.44 cm) tall, having a shrubbier habit with yellow to light orange flowers. The other is "Mona Wallhead", which grows a bit lower, spreads and has orange flowers. Another I've come across is named 'Orange Marmalade'. (I will allow you to discern its coloration!) That said, variants of this can be found in salmon or coral pink and red colors as well.



Its velvety brown seed pod spikes should be removed before they fully mature

Unlike some folks' children, the Firecracker Plant is not difficult to raise. Many I have seen are around two feet (60.96 cm) in height but they can reach a height of four feet (121.92 cm) if not cut back. It requires but only a regular amount of moisture – water when you notice that the soil appears to be dry - in rich, well-draining soil, in part to dappled sun. The great botanical master, Robert Lee Riffle, observed that in such locales as the latter, they are "the near perfect bedding plants. . . (with) no other plant (giving) more vibrant color to (slightly) shady situations . . . and are unexcelled (when) combined with impatiens, ferns, caladiums, and other shade loving exotics." Moisture-wise, it does prefer a higher level of humidity, if possible. Overwatering can cause them to become scraggly, with fewer flowers. Food-wise, they like an all-purpose sort but, if possible, find one that includes both major and minor elements, as well as trace minerals. As to insects, about the only one to be on the lookout for are spider mites.

...Firecracker Plant

Above its dark green, glossy, three to five-inch (7.62 – 12.70 cm), elliptic leaves, on four to six inch (10.16 – 12.70 cm) stalks are its salverform (meaning they're composed of united petals forming a tube that spreads at the open end) flowers that are tubular at their base. After their brilliance has faded, I'd suggest pruning and pinching them to encourage a more compact growth habit and for fuller branching. (By the way, cuttings can be used for propagation.) Speaking of cutting: Those velvety brown seed pod spikes take a bit of maintenance in that they should be removed before they fully mature, in order to keep the plant blooming.



Thriving in a tallish pot, here in Ola Brisa Gardens, grows a healthy Firecracker Plant – which by the absence of flowers, appears here to have been a bit overwatered!

In her book, *Gardener's Guide to Tropical Plants*, Nellie Neal, speaks of these flowers in this manner. "Abundant green leaves, shiny with deeply marked veins, cover the firecracker flower . . . The leaves are arranged in a lateral form, reminiscent of dog-wood but more dense layers. . . . They jut out like strong chins determined to fulfill a mission—in this case, to show off magnificent flower clusters.

The blooms are shaped like funnels with five lobes that spread out flat and almost upturned like a crooked smile. . . . Dynamic, charming, and unusual enough to be real conversation pieces, (the) Firecracker flower is small but powerful in raised beds, window boxes and baskets."



The Firecracker Plant's flowers are salverform and tubular at their base.

(Why, I must ask myself, try to state something when someone else has already said it well?) Ellen Zachos, in her book, *Tempting Tropicals*, described the Firecracker Plant succinctly when she wrote, "Its growing habit, is mounded and compact, and the contrast between the glossy green foliage and the warm orange flowers is stunning. There's something about the reflective, shiny leaves and soft plentiful flowers that is both perplexing and satisfying. How can something be soft and hard at the same time? Grow *Crossandra infundibuliformis* and find out."

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### Three Steps to Stretch your Retirement Savings

by Yann Kostic and Tom Zachystal

It is one of the most-asked questions of financial professionals: "If I want my nest egg to support me for the rest of my life, how much of it can I safely withdraw each year?" It is not an easy question to answer, as it depends on so many factors. However, here are some things you can consider.

#### Figure out how long you might live in retirement

You cannot know for certain, of course, but you can get an idea. Consider your health and look at some online calculators. If these tools illustrate anything, it is that you probably need your savings to support you into your early 90s, just to be on the safe side.

#### Come up with an anticipated withdrawal rate

Once you have an idea how many years you may be relying on your nest egg, you should think about how much money you will be spending in retirement. This is your withdrawal rate. Financial advisors have sophisticated tools to do this, but you can get an idea by looking at your expenses. Do not forget to factor in inflation and when living overseas, foreign currency exchange rate.

#### Allow for adjustments

Finally, understand that you will likely have to make adjustments to both your life expectancy and withdrawal rate over time. The former will change based on your health, and the latter will change based on your spending and the performance of your nest egg. A market crash or a collapsing currency, for example, can derail the best of plans.

Together, these steps will help you develop a strategy to generate the income you need for a successful retirement.

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

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



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## Mexico City

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

**March 10 - 13** (Days 64-67)

San Juan Teotihuacán and Mexico City, MX

We returned to Mexico City (our 3rd visit in 31 years) from Puebla, on Hwy 150D, a drive of 246 km (152 miles). Lisa and I were leading but that changed after a couple of wrong turns, when Mike and Kelly took the lead for the final 30 miles (50 km) or so. As the driving day progressed, it became very windy, to the point where Roland and Janice had to pull off and secure their awning. As we would find out later, the upside was clear blue skies in Mexico City to start our stay, a rarity in this normally polluted metropolis of 30 million people. Our destination was the Teotihuacán RV Park in San Juan Teotihuacán. This is the same park we stayed in December 2002 with our children, Kirsty, Ken and Heather.



Hwy 150D from Puebla to Mexico City

When we arrived in town, it became apparent that some road diversions were in place and our entry into the RV Park was not going to be straightforward. Before you could say Mexican standoff, we had traffic jammed up, lots of horn honking, a policeman quickly became involved with multiple people giving directions; oh good. Fortunately, after 30 minutes or so, cooler heads prevailed (not necessarily mine), and we got it sorted out. The park was tight, much smaller than we had remembered.

The park was nearly full, all Europeans, although almost half of the RVs were in storage. We were the last RV to park, since it was more akin to assembling a jigsaw puzzle. Having other



Entrance gate to San Juan Teotihuacán

campers watch a new arrival park is an age-old practice. In our case, we had two guys (a Brit and Frenchman) getting in the way as we jockeyed the trailer into place. We had to ask them to move out of the path of the van or we would have hit them. I cannot recall how polite Dan was about it. I have to say, a cold beer tasted very good once everything was set. Later, we organized a laundry drop and went out to the local pizza joint for dinner. A strong internet signal, however, remained elusive.



The next day, on Friday, we decided to take transit to the metro and leave the Baja Amigos Colectivo at the campground. Wise decision. It was 38 pesos for the bus, and a 3 block walk from the RV Park and 5 pesos for the subway, anywhere you wanted to go. This took us about 2 hours, leaving the campground at 9am and arriving at the Zocalo about 11 am. The gang split up and went many directions, agreeing to meet at 2:30 pm. Lisa and I had seen most of the sites immediately around the Zócalo, so we headed further into town. As I had said earlier, it was a fantastic day, with clear blue skies because of the big wind...a perfect day for photos in Mexico City.

...Mexico City



Estella Dan and Lisa

Day 3, Saturday, we left 30 minutes earlier and had arranged to meet Estella, Antonio Resendiz's niece at the Zócalo. Estella had stayed with us 2 years before while taking English in Vancouver. We stayed with Estella's Grandparents (Antonio and Estella Resendiz) at Christmas, in 1985, on our 1st Mexican adventure. We still see Antonio and Bety (Estella's uncle and aunt) on a regular basis in Bahia de Los Angeles on Baja. Estella brought Manuel, her cousin (another Antonio nephew), and we introduced them to the gang, then we all went and purchased tickets for the Turibus. The four of us dropped off at the Anthropology Museum, well worth a look for sure, and then made our way to Chapultepec Park and Castle, an iconic public park for Mexicans that includes deep historical roots to the Mexican-American War.

After our visit to Chapultepec, we met Estella's Sister, Gabriela and Manuel Sr. (Antonio's brother and Manuel's dad) for lunch. We have not seen Manuel Sr. in over 30 years. We had lunch at a very beautiful, upscale, authentic Mexican restaurant not too far away from the Chapultepec (20-minute Uber ride). It was a wonderful meal, hosted by Manuel Sr. Clearly Manuel did not know who we were and seemed surprised that we were the same Canadians he had met at Christmas in his parents' house

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in 1985. Afterwards, we said our goodbyes and took an Uber back to the RV Park which took less than an hour and cost about \$40 USD.



Coyoacán Freeway

The next day (Day 4), we did same trip into town with the gang, the bus and the metro, and this time we took the subway to Coyoacán to meet Estella again. This time, we also met Estella Sr. (Estella's mom and Antonio's sister). We had a lovely drive around parts of Coyoacán, drove by where we stayed in 1985, the Zócalo and church where we visited. We went in the church and went into the crypt where the remains of Antonio Sr. and Estella Sr. were interred.

The visit was moving for both of us. We also went to the local mercado and art exhibition. Later, we headed back to Estella's condo where she resides with her parents. Rodolfo returned later, and we had a good chat as they hosted dinner; very tasty and hospitable indeed. We said our goodbyes and jumped in an Uber once again, back to the RV Park, in about 1.5 hours.

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Mexico City suburbs

We really enjoyed our time in Mexico City and loved reconnecting with old friends and meeting new ones. We look forward to our return and a much longer stay. Sadly, we learned a few days later, that our dear friend Antonio Resendiz from Baja Sur, died suddenly from a massive heart attack in Bahia de Los Angeles. He will be missed by many.

### Mexico City, District Federal

Mexico City is the federal district (distrito federal), capital of Mexico and seat of the federal powers of the union. It is a federal entity within Mexico which is not part of any one of the 31 Mexican states but belongs to the federation as a whole (not unlike Washington, DC). Mexico City is the country's largest city as well as its most important political, cultural, educational and financial center. As an "alpha" global city, Mexico City is one of the most important financial centers in the Americas. It is located in the Valley of Mexico (Valle de México), a large valley in the high plateaus at the center of Mexico, at an altitude of 2,240 metres (7,350 ft). The city consists of sixteen boroughs.



The 2009 estimated official population for the city proper was around 8.84 million people, with a land area of 1,485 square kilometres (573 sq mi). According to the most recent definition agreed upon by the federal and state governments, the Greater Mexico City population is 21.2 million people, making it the largest metropolitan area in the western hemisphere, and the largest Spanish-speaking city in the world.



The gang in the Metro

Mexico's capital is both the oldest capital city in the Americas and one of two founded by Amerindians (Native Americans), the other being Quito. The city was originally built on an island of Lake Texcoco by the Aztecs in 1325 as Tenochtitlán, which was almost completely destroyed in the 1521 siege of Tenochtitlán, and subsequently redesigned and rebuilt in accordance with the Spanish urban standards. I

n 1524, the municipality of Mexico City was established, known as México-Tenochtitlán, and as of 1585, it was officially known as Ciudad de México (Mexico City). Mexico City served as the political, administrative and financial center of a major part of the Spanish colonial empire. After independence from Spain was achieved, the Federal District was created in 1824.

### History

#### Aztec Period - Tenochtitlán

The city currently known as Mexico City was created by the Mexica people, later known as the Aztecs, in 1325. The old Mexica city, that is now referred to as Tenochtitlán, was built on an island in the center of the inland lake system of the Valley of Mexico, which it shared with a smaller city-state called Tlatelolco. It is sometimes seen in the scholarly literature writ-

...Mexico City

ten as "Tenochtitlán-Tlatelolco". The great Aztec market that conqueror Bernal Díaz del Castillo describes in detailed wonderment in his chronicle "The True History of the Conquest of Mexico" is, in fact, describing the market located in Tlatelolco. The Mexica were one of the last of the Nahuatl-speaking peoples that migrated to this part of the Valley of Mexico after the fall of the Toltec Empire. Their presence was resisted by the peoples who were already in the valley, but the Mexica were able to establish a city on a small island on the western side of Lake Texcoco.

The Mexica themselves had a story about how their city was founded, after being led to the island by their principal god, Huitzilopochtli. According to the story, the god indicated the site where they were to build their home with a sign - an eagle perched on a nopal cactus with a snake in its beak. Between 1325 and 1521, Tenochtitlán grew in size and strength, eventually dominating the other city-states around Lake Texcoco and in the Valley of Mexico. When the Spaniards arrived, the Aztec Empire reached much of Mesoamerica, touching both the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean.

The population of Tenochtitlán in 1519 has been estimated as between 150,000 and 200,000; the population of London at that time was approximately 50,000; Paris was approximately 300,000.

**Spanish conquest of Tenochtitlán**

After landing in Veracruz, Hernán Cortés heard about the great city and the long-standing rivalries and grievances against it. Although Cortés came to Mexico with a very small army, he was able to persuade many of the other native peoples to help him destroy Tenochtitlán. Cortés first saw Tenochtitlán on November 8, 1519. Upon viewing it for the first time, Cortés and his men were stunned by its beauty and size. The Spaniards marched along the causeway leading into the city from Iztapalapa. Although Montezuma came out from the center of Tenochtitlán to greet them and exchange gifts, the camaraderie did not last long. Cortés put Montezuma under house arrest, hoping to rule through him.

Tensions increased until, on the night of June 30, 1520 – during a struggle commonly known as "La Noche Triste" – the Aztec revolted against the Spanish intrusion and managed to capture, or drive out, the Europeans and their Tlaxcalan allies. Cortés regrouped at Tlaxcala. The Aztecs thought the Spaniards were permanently gone. They elected a new king, Cuitláhuac, but he died after a few months due to smallpox; the next king was Cuauhtémoc.

Cortés decided to lay siege to Tenochtitlán in May 1521. For three months, the city suffered from the lack of food and water, as well as the spread of smallpox brought by the Europeans. Cortés and his allies landed their forces in the south of the is-



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land and fought their way through the city, street by street, and house by house. Finally, Cuauhtémoc had to surrender in August 1521.

### **The rebuilding of the city as Mexico City**

The Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral was built by the Spaniards over the ruins of the main Aztec temple. The Spaniards practically razed Tenochtitlán during the final siege of the conquest. Cortés first settled in Coyoacán but decided to rebuild the Aztec site to erase all traces of the old order. Cortés did not establish an independent, conquered territory under his own personal rule, but remained loyal to the Spanish crown. The first viceroy of the new domain arrived in Mexico City fourteen years later. By that time, the city had again become a city-state, having power that extended far beyond the city's established borders. Although the Spanish preserved Tenochtitlán's basic layout, they built Catholic churches over the old Aztec temples and claimed the imperial palaces for themselves. Tenochtitlán was renamed "Mexico", its alternative form name, only because the Spanish found this easier to say.

### **Growth of Colonial Mexico City – 1600**

The city had been the capital of the Aztec empire and, in the colonial era, Mexico City became the capital of New Spain. The viceroy of Mexico or vice-king lived in the vice regal palace on the Main Square or Zócalo. The Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral, the seat of the Archdiocese of New Spain was constructed on another side of the Zócalo, as was the archbishop's palace, and across from it the building housing the City Council or Ayuntamiento of the city. A famous late seventeenth-century painting of the Zócalo by Cristóbal de Villalpando depicts the main square, which had been the old Aztec ceremonial center. The existing central place of the Aztecs was effectively and permanently transformed to the ceremonial center and seat of power during the colonial period, and remains, to this day, in modern Mexico, the central place of the nation.

The rebuilding of the city after the siege of Tenochtitlán was accomplished by the abundant indigenous labor in the surrounding area. Franciscan friar Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, one of the Twelve Apostles of Mexico that arrived in New Spain in 1524, described the rebuilding of the city as one of the afflictions or plagues of the early period:

"The seventh plague was the construction of the great City of Mexico, which, during the early years, used more people than in the construction of Jerusalem. The crowds of laborers were so numerous that one could hardly move in the streets and causeways, although they are very wide. Many died from being crushed by beams, or falling from high places, or in tearing down old buildings for new ones."

Preconquest Tenochtitlán was built in the center of the inland lake system, with the city reachable by canoe and by wide causeways to the mainland. The causeways were rebuilt under Spanish rule with indigenous labour. Colonial Spanish cities were constructed on a grid pattern, if no geographical obstacle prevented it. In Mexico City, the Zócalo (Main Square) was the central place from which the grid was then built outward. The Spanish lived in the area closest to the main square in what was known as the traza, in orderly, well laid-out streets. Indian residences were outside that exclusive zone and houses were haphazardly located. Spaniards sought to keep Indians separate from Spaniards but since the Zócalo was a center of commerce for Indians, they were a constant presence in the central area, so strict segregation was never enforced. At intervals, the Zócalo was where major celebrations took place as well as executions. It was also the site of two major riots in the seventeenth century, one in 1624 the other in 1692.

The city grew as the population did, coming up against the lake's waters. As the depth of the lake water fluctuated, Mexico City was subject to periodic flooding. A major labour draft, the *desagüe*, compelled thousands of Indians, over the colonial period, to work on infrastructure to prevent flooding. Floods were not only an inconvenience but also a health hazard, since during flood periods, human waste polluted the city's streets. By draining the area, the mosquito population dropped, as did the frequency of the diseases they spread. However, draining the wetlands also changed the habitat for fish and birds and the areas accessible for Indian cultivation close to the capital.

The 16th century saw a proliferation of churches, many of which can still be seen today in the historic center. Economically, Mexico City prospered as a result of trade. Unlike Brazil or Peru, Mexico had easy contact with both the Atlantic and Pacific worlds. Although the Spanish crown tried to completely regulate all commerce in the city, it had only partial success.

...Mexico City

The concept of nobility flourished in New Spain in a way not seen in other parts of the Americas. Spaniards encountered a society in which the concept of nobility mirrored that of their own. Spaniards respected the indigenous order of nobility and added to it. In the ensuing centuries, a noble title in Mexico did not mean one exercised great political power as one's power was limited even if the accumulation of wealth was not. The concept of nobility in Mexico was not political but rather a very conservative Spanish social one, based on proving the worthiness of the family. Most of these families proved their worth by making fortunes in New Spain outside of the city itself, then spending the revenues in the capital, building churches, supporting charities and building extravagant palatial homes. The craze to build the most opulent residence possible reached its height in the last half of the 18th century. Many of these palaces can still be seen today, leading to Mexico City's nickname of "The city of palaces" given by Alexander Von Humboldt.

The Grito de Dolores ("Cry of Dolores"), also known as El Grito de la Independencia ("Cry of Independence"), uttered from the small town of Dolores near Guanajuato on September 16, 1810, is the event that marks the beginning of the Mexican War of Independence and is the most important national holiday observed in Mexico. The "Grito" was the battle cry of the Mexican War of Independence by Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Roman Catholic priest. Hidalgo and several criollos were involved in a planned revolt against the Spanish colonial government, and the plotters were betrayed. Fearing his arrest, Hidalgo commanded his brother, Mauricio, as well as Ignacio Allende and Mariano Abasolo, to go with a number of other armed men to make the sheriff release the pro-independence inmates there on the night of September 15. They managed to set eighty free.

Around 6:00 am September 16, 1810, Hidalgo ordered the church bells to be rung and gathered his congregation. Flanked by Allende and Juan Aldama, he addressed the people in front of his church, encouraging them to revolt. The Battle of Guanajuato, the first major engagement of the insurgency, occurred four days later. Mexico's independence from Spain was effectively declared in the Declaration of Independence of the Mexican Empire on September 27, 1821, after a decade of war. Unrest followed for the next several decades, as different factions fought for control of Mexico.

The Mexican Federal District was established by the new government, and by the signing of their new constitution, where the concept of a federal district was adapted from The U.S. constitution. Before this designation, Mexico City had served as the seat of government for both the State of Mexico and the nation as a whole. Texcoco and then Toluca became the capital of the state of Mexico.

### **The Battle of Mexico City**

The Battle for Mexico City refers to the series of engagements from September 8 to September 15, 1847, in the general vicinity of Mexico City during the Mexican-American War. Included are major actions at the battles of Molino del Rey and Chapultepec, culminating with the fall of Mexico City. The U.S. Army, under Winfield Scott, scored a major success that ended the war. The American invasion into the Federal District was first resisted during the Battle of Churubusco, on August 8, where Saint Patrick's Battalion, which was composed primarily of Catholic Irish and German immigrants, but also Canadians, English, French, Italians, Poles, Scots, Spaniards, Swiss, and Mexican people, fought for the Mexican cause, repelling the American attacks.

After defeating Saint Patrick's Battalion, the Mexican-American War came to a close after the United States deployed combat units deep into Mexico, resulting in the capture of Mexico City and Veracruz by the U.S. Army's 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Divisions. The invasion culminated with the storming of Chapultepec Castle in the city itself. During this battle, on September 13, the 4th Division, under John A. Quitman, spearheaded the attack against Chapultepec and carried the castle. Future Confederate generals George E. Pickett and James Longstreet participated in the attack. Serving in the Mexican defense were the cadets later immortalized as Los Niños Héroes (the "Boy Heroes"). The Mexican forces fell back from Chapultepec and retreated within the city. Attacks on the Belén and San Cosme Gates came afterwards. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in what is now the far north of the city.

### **Porfirian Era**

Events such as the Mexican-American War, the French Intervention and the Reform War left the city relatively untouched and it continued to grow, especially during the rule of President Porfirio Díaz. During this time, the city developed a modern in-

...Mexico City

infrastructure, such as roads, schools, transportation, and communication systems. However, the regime concentrated resources and wealth into the city while the rest languished in poverty. Under the rule of Porfirio Díaz—about 30 years formally as president; about 35 years in all, 1876-1911, in effective control, Mexico City experienced a massive transformation. Díaz's goal was to create a city which could rival the great European cities. He and his government came to the conclusion that they would use Paris as a model, while still containing remnants of Amerindian and Hispanic elements. This style of Mexican-French fusion architecture became colloquially known as Porfirian Architecture.

During this era of Porfirian rule, the city underwent an extensive modernization. Many Spanish Colonial style buildings were destroyed, replaced by new, much larger, Porfirian institutions and many outlying rural zones were transformed into urban or industrialized districts with most having electrical, gas and sewage utilities by 1908. While the initial focus was on developing modern hospitals, schools, factories and massive public works, perhaps the most long-lasting effects of the Porfirian modernization were creation of the Colonia Roma area and the development of Reforma Avenue. Many of Mexico City's major attractions and landmarks were built during this era, in this style.

Díaz's plans called for the entire city to eventually be modernized or rebuilt in the Porfirian/French style of the Colonia Roma, but the Mexican Revolution began soon after and the plans never came to fruition with many projects being left half completed. One of the best examples of this is the Monument to the Mexican Revolution. Originally the monument was to be the main dome of Díaz's new senate hall, but when the revolution erupted, only the dome of the senate hall and its supporting pillars were completed. This was subsequently seen as a symbol, by many Mexicans, that the Porfirian era was over once and for all and as such, it was turned into a monument to victory over Díaz.

### **Mexican Revolution - Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata entering Mexico City (1914)**

Fast, modern development eventually led to the Mexican Revolution. The most significant episode of this period for the city was La decena trágica ("The Ten Tragic Days"), a 1913 coup against President Francisco I. Madero and his vice president,

José María Pino Suárez. Victoriano Huerta, chief general of the Federal Army saw a chance to take power, forcing Madero and Pino Suarez to sign resignations. The two were murdered later while on their way to prison. Zapatista forces, which were based in neighboring Morelos, had strengths in the southern edge of the Federal District, which included Xochimilco, Tlalpan, Tláhuac and Milpa Alta, to fight against the regimes of Victoriano Huerta and Venustiano Carranza. After the assassination of Carranza, and a short mandate by Adolfo de la Huerta, Álvaro Obregón took power. After willing to be re-elected, he was killed by José de León Toral, a devout Catholic on a restaurant near La Bombilla Park in San Ángel in 1928. Plutarco Elias Calles replaced Obregón and culminated the Mexican Revolution.

The rapid growth of the city during the 20th Century exploded in the development of both illegal constructions and opulent residences in the periphery. The history of the rest of the 20th century to the present focuses on the phenomenal growth of the city and its environmental and political consequences. In 1900, the population of Mexico City was about 500,000. The city began to grow rapidly westward in the early part of the 20th century and then began to grow upwards in the 1950s, with the Torre Latino-Americana becoming the city's first skyscraper. The 1968 Olympic Games brought about the construction of large sporting facilities. In 1969, the Metro system was inaugurated. Explosive growth in the population of the city started from the 1960s, with the population overflowing the boundaries of the Federal District into the neighboring state of Mexico, especially to the north, northwest and northeast. Between 1960 and 1980, the city's population more than doubled to nearly 9 million. In 1980, half of all the industrial jobs in Mexico were located in Mexico City. Under relentless growth, the Mexico City government could barely keep up with services.

Villagers from the countryside that continued to pour into the city to escape poverty only compounded the city's problems. With no housing available, they took over lands surrounding the city, creating huge shantytowns that extended for many miles. This caused serious air pollution in Mexico City and water pollution problems, as well as a sinking city due to over extraction of groundwater, a groundwater-related subsidence. Air and water pollution have been contained and improved in several areas due to government programs, the renovation of vehicles and the modernization of public transportation.

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### **Unrest**

The autocratic government that ruled Mexico City since the Revolution was tolerated, mostly because of the continued economic expansion since World War II. This was the case even though this government could not handle the population and pollution problems adequately. Nevertheless, discontent and protests began in the 1960s leading to the massacre of an unknown number of protesting students in Tlatelolco.

The Tlatelolco massacre was the killing of students and civilians by military and police on October 2, 1968, in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in the Tlatelolco section of Mexico City. The events are considered part of the Mexican Dirty War, when the government used its forces to suppress political opposition. The massacre occurred roughly 10 days before the opening of the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City. More than 1,300 people were arrested by security police. There has been no consensus on how many were killed that day in the plaza area. This incident has had a lasting effect on Mexican society.

At the time, the government and the mainstream media in Mexico claimed that government forces had been provoked by protesters shooting at them. But government documents, made public since 2000, suggest that the snipers had been employed by the government. Estimates of the death toll ranged from 300 to 400, with eyewitnesses reporting hundreds of dead. According to US national security archives, Kate Doyle, a Senior Analyst of U.S. policy in Latin America, documented the deaths of 44 people. The head of the Federal Directorate of Security reported the arrests of 1,345 people on October 2, 1968.

### **Earthquakes**

On Thursday, September 19, 1985, at 7:19 am local time, Mexico City was struck by an earthquake of magnitude 8.1 on the Richter scale. Although this earthquake was not as deadly or destructive as many similar events in Asia and other parts of Latin America, it proved to be a disaster politically for the one-party government. The event caused serious damage to the Greater Mexico City area and the deaths of at least 5,000 people. The sequence of events included a foreshock of magnitude 5.2 that occurred the prior May, the main shock on 19 September, and two large aftershocks.

The first of these occurred on 20 September with a magnitude

of 7.5 and the second occurred seven months later on 30 April 1986 with a magnitude of 7.0. They were located off the coast along the Middle America Trench, more than 350 kilometres (220 mi) away, but the city suffered major damage due to its large magnitude and the ancient lake bed that Mexico City sits on. The event caused between three and four billion USD in damage as 412 buildings collapsed and another 3,124 were seriously damaged in the city.

The government was paralyzed by its own bureaucracy and corruption, forcing ordinary citizens to create and direct their own rescue efforts and to reconstruct much of the housing that was lost as well. Dan and Lisa arrived with their children in December 1985 and stayed with Antonio Resendiz's parents over Christmas in the Coyoacán district and witnessed much of the damage.

Most of the earthquake damage was to buildings. Two reasons are the resonance in the lakebed sediments and the long duration of the shaking. The buildings most damaged were from 6 to 15 stories in height. These buildings tended to resonate most with the energetic frequency band of the lakebed motions. One interesting characteristic was that many buildings had their upper floors collapse, leaving the lower floors relatively undamaged.

In many damaged buildings, just one floor had collapsed. In some cases, the damage was caused by the top of a lower, adjacent building banging against the walls and the supporting columns of its neighbor. Eventually, the columns gave way. In other cases, the first few floors of buildings were designed as parking garages, open lobbies or large shopping areas. These "soft" stories were particularly flexible and tended to collapse after prolonged shaking. Some types of foundations, particularly those involving piles driven into clay and held in place by friction, turned out to be weak. One 9-story building, for example, overturned. Its pilings were pulled entirely out of the ground.

A survey by the government of the damage done found that few buildings from one to five stories suffered serious damage; the same was true for buildings over fifteen stories. When the buildings were built seemed to have an effect as well. Before the 1957 earthquake, there were no building codes with respect

...Mexico City

to earthquake resistance. Some regulations were passed in that year, and more in 1976, after another, stronger earthquake shook the city. However, none of these regulations had an event like 1985's in mind when passed. Most of the seriously damaged buildings were built between 1957 and 1976, when the city was starting to build upwards, in the six-to-fifteen floor range. In second place were buildings from before 1957, possibly because they were weakened by the earlier earthquakes. Structures built between 1976 and 1985 suffered the least damage.

At the time of the earthquake, Mexico City had one of the most stringent building codes, based on experience gained from earthquakes in 1957 and 1979. However, the codes were not designed for seismic activity of the intensity experienced in 1985. The event was one of the most intense of any recorded in the world, allowing for macro seismic waves to arrive in the Valley of Mexico with unusually high energy content. Prior to the event, estimates about ground movement on the lakebed were generally accepted and a number of buildings were built on these estimates. Several notable buildings were relatively untouched by the quake. One significant example is the Torre Latino Americana. Despite being 44 stories tall, it survived the 1985 event almost undamaged. It was constructed with two hundred piles extending down over a hundred feet into the stable earth stratum.

Mexico City is divided into boroughs. Eighty percent of the earthquake damage was confined to four of them: Venustiano Carranza, Cuauhtémoc, Benito Juárez and Gustavo A. Madero. The damage area corresponds to the western part of the lake zone within two to four kilometers of the Alameda Central. Nearly all the buildings that collapsed were located in this lake zone that extended from Tlatelolco in the north to Viaducto Miguel Alemán in the south, Chapultepec Park in the west and to a short distance east of the Zócalo or main plaza.

Cuauhtémoc, which includes the historic downtown, suffered the most damage. In this particular area, 258 buildings completely crumbled, 143 partially collapsed and 181 were seriously damaged. The next seriously affected area was Venustiano Carranza where 83 buildings collapsed, 128 partially collapsed and 2,000 structures were seriously damaged. Damage was localized to the center parts of the city, leaving much of the residential

outer rim unscathed, but the damage in the affected area was extensive. Over 720,000 tons of debris was removed during the first six weeks after the event. The Metropolitan Commission for Emergencies of the Federal District reported 2,831 buildings damaged for the entire city: 31% or 880 were completely ruined, 13% were uninhabitable with major repairs and the rest, totaling 1581, were recoverable with minor repairs. This translates to more than 30,000 housing units completely destroyed and another 68,000 units damaged.

### Death toll

To this day, the death toll has been in dispute. About 5,000 bodies were recovered from the debris and represent the total of legally certified deaths but does not include those who were missing and never recovered. Reports have numbered the dead anywhere from 5,000 to 30,000 (claimed by a number of citizens' groups) to 45,000 claimed by the National Seismological Service. However, the most commonly cited figures are around 10,000.

While high as an absolute number, it compares to other earthquakes of similar strength in Asia and other parts of Latin America where death tolls have run between 66,000 and 242,000 for earthquakes of magnitude 7.8 or above. Part of the explanation for that was the hour in which the earthquake struck, approximately 7:20 am, when people were awake but not in the many schools and office buildings that were severely damaged. However, the death toll was great enough to require the use of the IMSS baseball field as a morgue, using ice to conserve bodies for identification.

The main reason that the figures have been disputed is the government's response to the tragedy. President Miguel de la Madrid ordered a news blackout and did not address the situation at all for 39 hours after the event. When the government did give estimates of the number killed, they ranged from 7,000 to 35,000. Consequently, most of the populace believes that the true numbers have never been revealed. According to government figures, approximately 250,000 people lost their homes directly due to the earthquake. Unofficial sources put that figure much higher. Some sources say that more than 50,000 families lost their homes. INEGI reports that 700,000 people in the Federal District and the suburbs in the State of Mexico lost their homes.

...Mexico City

However, the last straw may have been the controverted elections of 1988. That year, the presidency was set between the P.R.I.'s candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and a coalition of left-wing parties led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of the former president Lázaro Cárdenas. The counting system "fell" because coincidentally the lights went out and suddenly, when it returned, the winning candidate was Salinas, even though Cárdenas had the upper hand. As a result of the fraudulent election, Cárdenas became a member of the Party of the Democratic Revolution. Discontent over the election eventually led Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas to become the first elected mayor of Mexico City in 1997. Cárdenas promised a more democratic government, and his party claimed some victories against crime, pollution, and other major problems. He resigned in 1999 to run for the presidency.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador, often abbreviated as AMLO, won the Presidential election held July 1, 2018. He began his political career in 1976 as a member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Tabasco and eventually became the party's state leader. 1989, he joined the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and was the party's 1994 candidate for Governor of Tabasco. He was the national leader of the PRD between 1996 and 1999. In 2000, he was elected Head of Government of Mexico City.

Often described as a populist and a nationalist, López Obrador has been a nationally relevant politician for more than two decades. López Obrador resigned as Head of Government of Mexico City in July 2005 to enter the 2006 presidential election, representing the Coalition for the Good of All, which was led by the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and included the Citizens' Movement party and the Labor Party. He received 35.31% of the vote and lost by 0.58%. López Obrador subsequently alleged electoral fraud and refused to concede, leading a several months long takeover of Paseo de la Reforma and the Zócalo in protest.

López Obrador was a candidate for the second time in the 2012 presidential election representing a coalition of the PRD, Labor Party, and Citizens' Movement. He finished second with 31.59% of the vote. He left the PRD in 2012 and in 2014 founded the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA), which he led until 2017.

López Obrador was a candidate for the third time in the 2018 presidential election, representing Juntos Haremos Historia, a coalition of the left-wing Labor Party, right-wing Social Encounter Party, and MORENA. This time, he won in a landslide victory, taking 53 percent of the vote. His policy proposals include increases in financial aid for students and the elderly, amnesty for some drug war criminals, universal access to public colleges, cancellation of the New Mexico City International Airport project, a referendum on energy reforms that ended Pemex's monopoly in the oil industry, stimulus of the country's agricultural sector, delay of the renegotiation of NAFTA until after the elections, the construction of more oil refineries, increased social spending, slashing politicians' salaries and perks and the decentralization of the executive cabinet by moving government departments and agencies from the capital to the states. He is scheduled to begin his term in office on December 1, 2018. Our 45 Day tour of mainland Mexico begins on November 1 and we are scheduled to arrive in Mexico City on November 20th. It will be interesting.

### Geography

Mexico City is located in the Valley of Mexico, sometimes called the Basin of Mexico. This valley is located in the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt, in the high plateaus of south-central Mexico. It has a minimum altitude of 2,200 meters (7,200 feet) above sea level and is surrounded by mountains and volcanoes that reach elevations of over 5,000 meters. This valley has no natural drainage outlet for the waters that flow from the mountainsides, making the city vulnerable to flooding. Drainage was engineered through the use of canals and tunnels starting in the 17th century. The city primarily rests on what was Lake Texcoco. Seismic activity is frequent here. Lake Texcoco was drained starting from the 17th century. Although none of the lake waters remain, the city rests on the lake bed's heavily saturated clay. This soft base is collapsing due to the over-extraction of groundwater, called groundwater-related subsidence. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the city has sunk as much as nine meters in some areas. This sinking is causing problems with runoff and wastewater management, leading to flooding problems, especially during the rainy season. The entire lake bed is now paved over and most of the city's remaining forested areas lie in the southern boroughs of Milpa Alta, Tlalpan and Xochimilco.

...Mexico City

### Landmarks

The Historic center of Mexico City (Centro Histórico) and the "floating gardens" of Xochimilco in the southern borough have been declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. Famous landmarks in the Historic Center include the Plaza de la Constitución (Zócalo), the main central square with its epoch-contrasting Spanish-era Metropolitan Cathedral and National Palace, ancient Aztec temple ruins Templo Mayor ("Major Temple") and modern structures, all within a few steps of one another. (The Templo Mayor was discovered in 1978 while workers were digging to place underground electric cables).

The most recognizable icon of Mexico City is the golden Angel of Independence, found on the wide, elegant avenue Paseo de la Reforma, modeled by the order of the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico after the Champs-Élysées in Paris. This avenue was designed over the Americas' oldest known major roadway in the 19th century to connect the National Palace (seat of government) with the Castle of Chapultepec, the imperial residence. Today, this avenue is an important financial district in which the Mexican Stock Exchange and several corporate headquarters are located. Another important avenue is the Avenida de los Insurgentes, which extends 28.8 km (17.9 mi) and is one of the longest single avenues in the world.

Chapultepec Park houses the Chapultepec Castle, now a museum, on a hill that overlooks the park and its numerous museums, monuments and the national zoo and the National Museum of Anthropology (which houses the Aztec Calendar Stone). Another piece of architecture is the Fine Arts Palace, a white marble theatre/museum whose weight is such that it has gradually been sinking into the soft ground below. Its construction began during the presidency of Porfirio Díaz and ended in 1934, after being interrupted by the Mexican Revolution in the 1920s. The Plaza de las Tres Culturas in the Tlatelolco neighbourhood, and the shrine and Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe are also important sites. There is a double-decker bus, known as the Turibus that circles most of these sites, and has timed audio recordings describing the sites, in multiple languages, as the bus goes by. Our fall tour group is scheduled to be on this transport during our stay.

In addition, the city has about 160 museums - the world's greatest single metropolitan concentration - over 100 art gal-

leries, and some 30 concert halls, all of which maintain a constant cultural activity during the whole year. It has either the third or fourth-highest number of theatres in the world after New York, London and perhaps Toronto. In many locales (e.g. Palacio Nacional and the Instituto Nacional de Cardiología are murals painted by Diego Rivera. He and his wife Frida Kahlo lived in Coyoacán, where several of their homes, studios, and art collections are open to the public. The house where Leon Trotsky was initially granted asylum and finally murdered in 1940 is also in Coyoacán.

In addition, there are several restored haciendas that are now restaurants, such as the San Ángel Inn, the Hacienda de Tlalpan and the Hacienda de los Morales, all of which embody Mexican history and boast some of the world's best food.

### Museums

Mexico City has numerous museums dedicated to art, including Mexican colonial, modern and contemporary art, and international art. The Museo Tamayo was opened in the mid-1980s to house the collection of international contemporary art donated by famed Mexican (born in the state of Oaxaca) painter Rufino Tamayo. The collection includes pieces by Picasso, Klee, Kandinsky, Warhol and many others, though most of the collection is stored while visiting exhibits are shown. The Museo de Arte Moderno (Museum of Modern Art) is a repository of Mexican artists from the 20th century, including Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros, Kahlo, Gerzso, Carrington, Tamayo, among others, and also regularly hosts temporary exhibits of international modern art. In southern Mexico City, the Museo Carrillo Gil showcases avant-garde artists, as does the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, or MUAC, designed by famed Mexican architect Teodoro González de León, inaugurated in late 2008.

The Museo Soumaya, named after the wife of Mexican magnate Carlos Slim, has the largest private collection of original Rodin sculptures outside Paris. It also has a large collection of Dalí sculptures, and recently began showing pieces in its masters collection including El Greco, Velázquez, Picasso and Canaletto. The museum inaugurated a new futuristic-designed facility in 2011 just north of Polanco, while maintaining a smaller facility in Plaza Loreto in southern Mexico City. The Colección Júmex is a contemporary art museum located on the sprawling grounds of the Júmex juice company in the northern industrial suburb

...Mexico City

of Ecatepec. It is said to have the largest private contemporary art collection in Latin America and hosts pieces from its permanent collection as well as traveling exhibits by leading contemporary artists. The new Museo Júmex, in Nuevo Polanco, opened in November 2013. The Museo de San Ildefonso, housed in the Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso in Mexico City's historic downtown district is a 17th-century colonnaded palace housing an art museum that regularly hosts world-class exhibits of Mexican and international art.

Recent exhibits have included those on David LaChapelle, Antony Gormley and Ron Mueck. The National Museum of Art (Museo Nacional de Arte) is also located in a former palace in the historic center. It houses a large collection of pieces by all major Mexican artists of the last 400 years and also hosts visiting exhibits.

Most of Mexico City's more than 150 museums can be visited from Tuesday to Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm, although some of them have extended schedules, such as the Museum of Anthropology and History, which is open to 7 pm. In addition to this, entrance to most museums is free on Sunday. In some cases, a modest fee may be charged. Another major addition to the city's museum scene is the Museum of Remembrance and Tolerance (Museo de la Memoria y Tolerancia), inaugurated in early 2011. The brainchild of two young Mexican women as a Holocaust museum, the idea morphed into a unique museum dedicated to showcasing all major historical events of discrimination and genocide. Permanent exhibits include those on the Holocaust and other large-scale atrocities. It also houses temporary exhibits; one on Tibet was inaugurated by the Dalai Lama in September 2011.

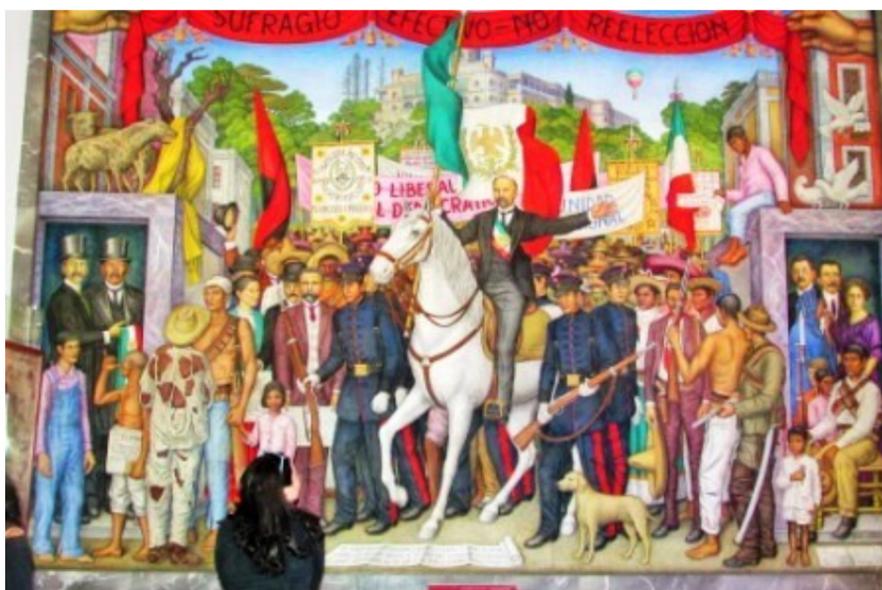
... more pics follow



Carriage at Chapultepec Castle



Chapultepec Castle city scape



Mural at Chapultepec Castle



Chapultepec Castle plaza

...Mexico City



Bank of Mexico



Angel de la Independencia



Downtown



Downtown on the Turibus



Entrance to Chapultepec Castle



Alebrijes at the art exhibition in Coyoacán

...Mexico City



Bruce and Marian on the Turibus



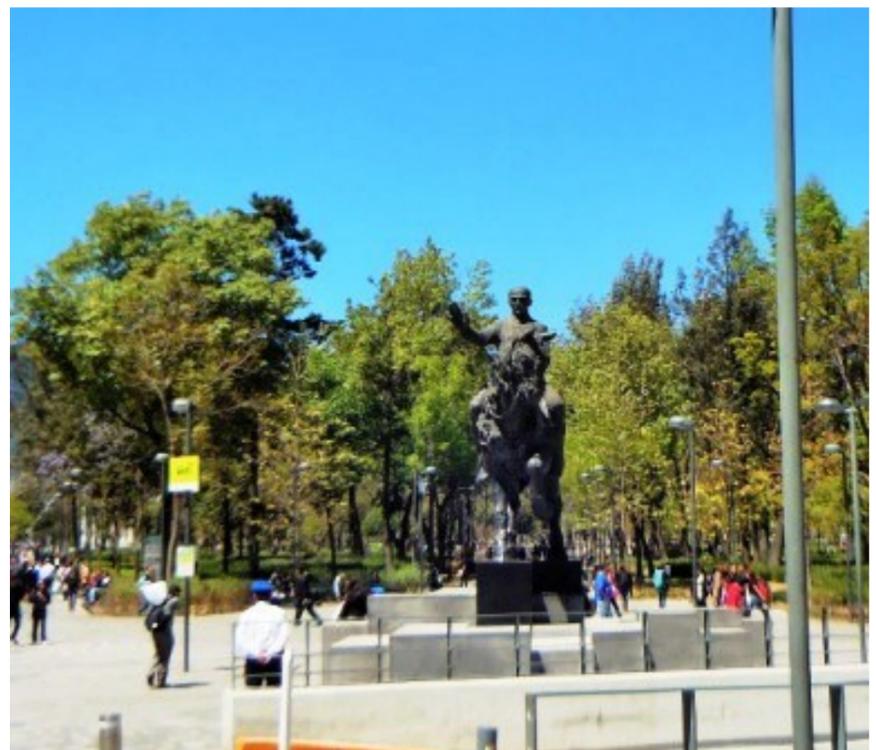
On the bus tour around town



Dan and the rope exhibit in Coyoacán



Turibus looking back



Lots of monuments and parks

...Mexico City



Crypt plaque for Antonio and Estella Resendiz



Dan at Niños Héroes monument



Dan and Estella's dad



Dan and Manuel Resendiz (Antonio's brother)



Dan and Lisa on the Turibus

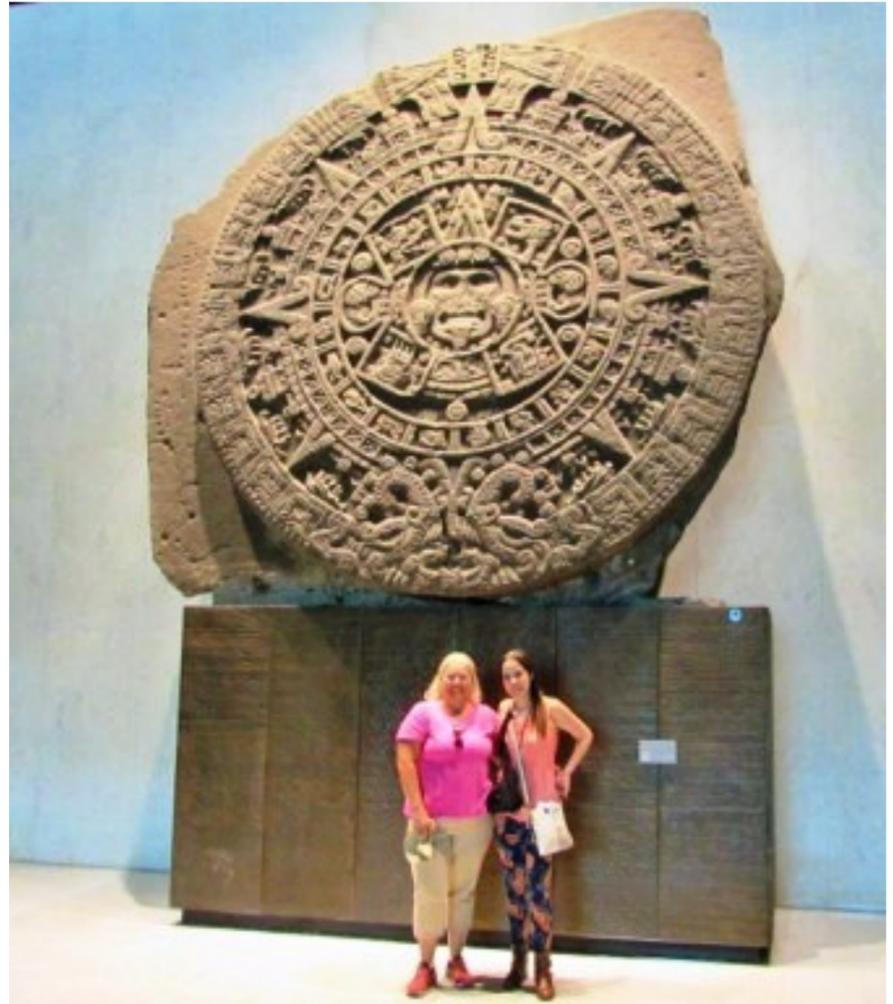


Estella enjoying a taco

...Mexico City



In town Teotihuacán



Lisa and Estella, Mexico City Anthropology Museum



Lisa, Estella and Manuel - Olmec big head



Mural in Coyoacán



Mexico City streetscape



Near Plaza de la Constitución

...Mexico City



Monument on the Hwy into Mexico City



Monumento a la Revolución in Mexico City



Lots to see in the city



Modern city



Lots to see from the Turibus



Zócalo

...Mexico City



National Anthropology Museum exhibits (top and right)



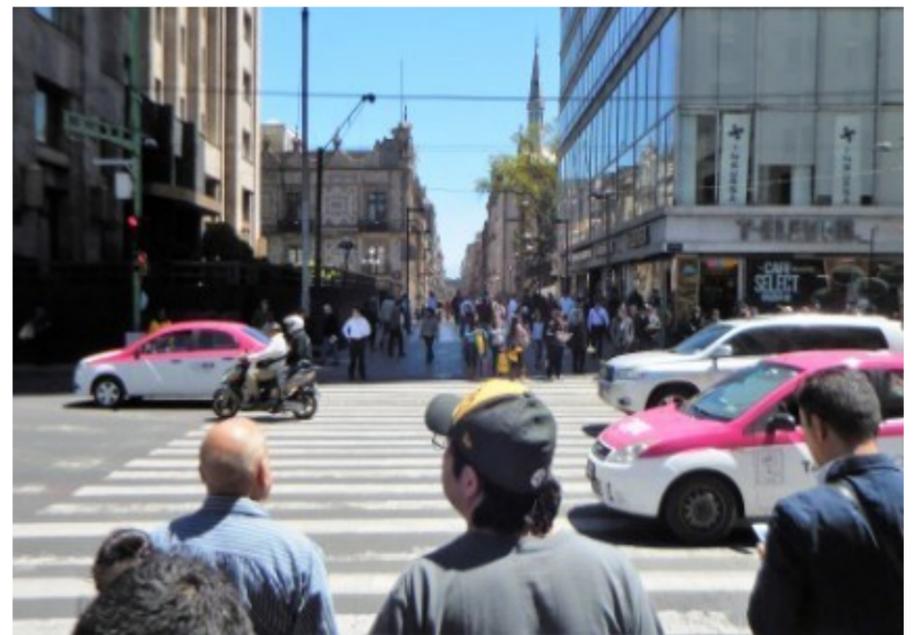
Water feature at the National Anthropology Museum



Palacio de Bellas Artes



Chapultepec Castle mural



Downtown CDMX



Hernán Cortés residence in Coyoacán

Rope installation  
(or a rope version of ET?)



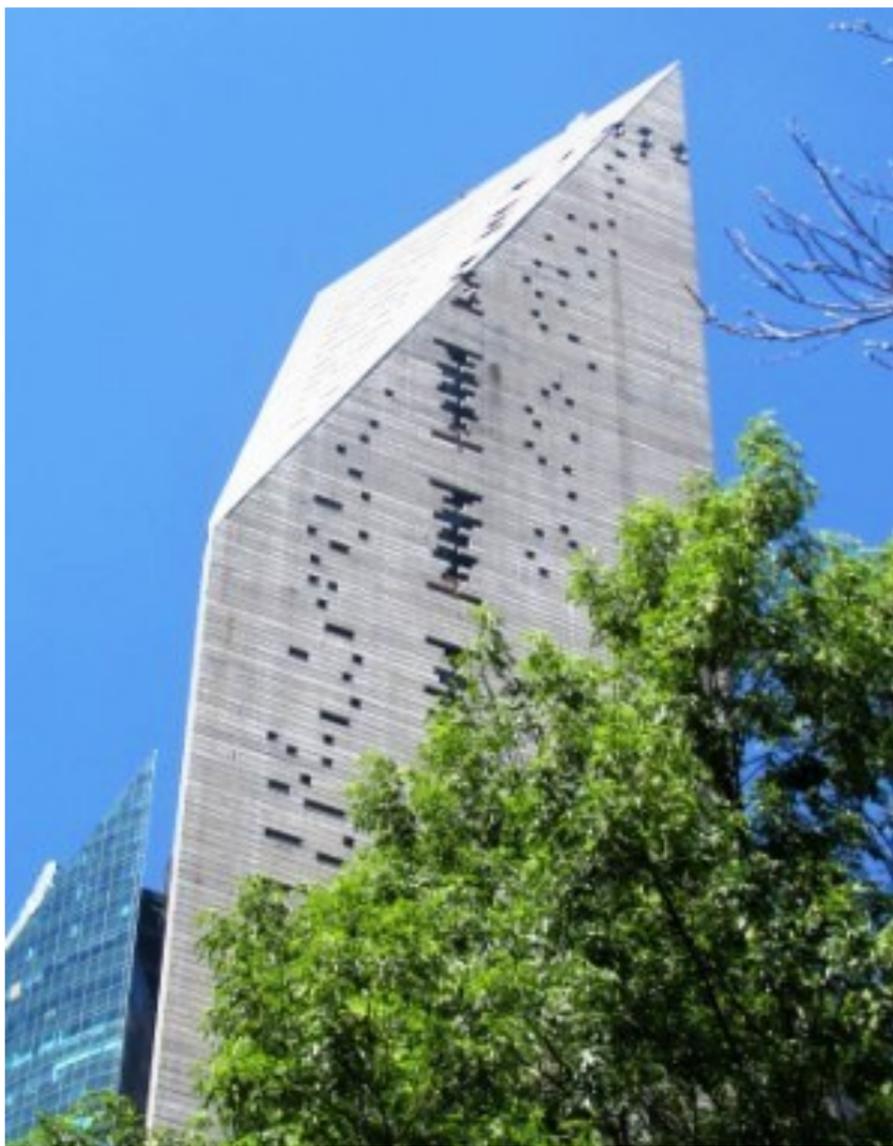
...Mexico City



Resendiz family lunch



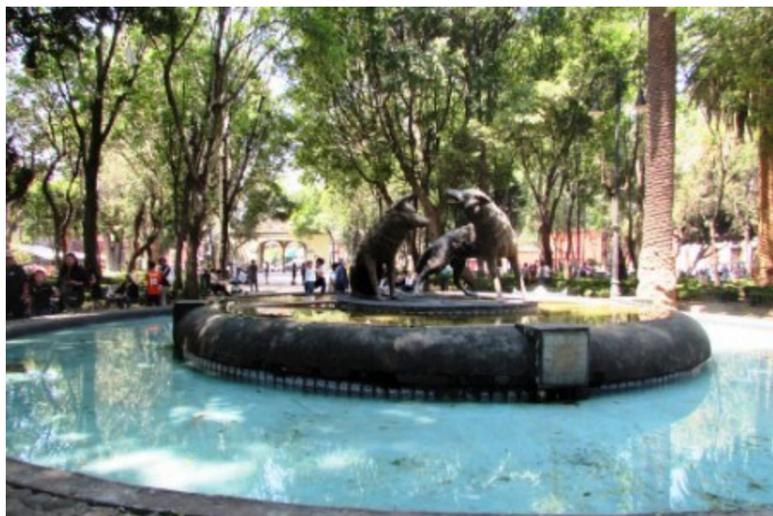
Euro vertical RV slide



Unique building design



Templo mayor near the Zócalo



Famous statue at Coyoacán



Tree of life

...Mexico City



On the road, Hwy 150D



Puebla - Mexico City Hwy 150D - incredible scapes



Beautiful scenery, Hwy 150D



RV park in Teotihuacán



Plaza de la Constitución (*above and below*)



Very diverse architecture

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)

## Poblano Chile with Cheese and Cream

### Rajas con Queso

Rajas con queso (Pronounced ra-HAS con KAY-so) is a taco filling made with fresh Poblano chile, a mild green chile typically used for chiles rellenos, rajas, and crema de poblano. This dish is served throughout Mexico. The dish is prepared with fresh Poblano chiles, onion, garlic, corn, asadero cheese and Mexican cream. Yields 16 tacos.

- ✓ prep 40 mins
- ✓ cook 12 mins
- ✓ total 52 mins

#### Ingredients

- ✓ The meat from 10 roasted and peeled Poblano chiles
- ✓ 1 large white onion
- ✓ 1 cup corn kernels
- ✓ 3 cloves garlic
- ✓ 3/4 cup crema (Mexican cream)
- ✓ 3/4 cup shredded Oaxaca or asadero cheese
- ✓ 16 corn tortillas
- ✓ Salt to taste

#### Instructions

1. Cut the Poblano chile into 2" by 1/4" strips.
2. Cut the onion into 2" by 1/4" strips.
3. Finely chop the garlic.
4. In a medium hot pan, cook the onion and garlic until the onion starts to soften, about 4 minutes. Do not brown.
5. Add the chiles and cook for another 4 minutes.
6. Add the corn and cook for 2 minutes.
7. Turn off the heat and add the cream. Stir to incorporate.
8. Add the cheese and stir continually until the cheese is just melted.
9. Check the salt and add salt if needed.
10. Serve immediately on hot tortillas.



#### NOTES

##### Substitutions

You can substitute sour cream for Mexican cream (crema mexicana). You can substitute mozzarella or Monterey Jack or any mild white cheese that melts well. You can serve on flour tortillas if you'd like.

##### Storage

It will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days although it is best eaten when freshly prepared.

##### Reheating

Reheat in the microwave until it is just heated through, 1 to 2 minutes.

Recipe and images from [MexicanFoodJournal.com](http://MexicanFoodJournal.com) by author Douglas Cullen



## 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.



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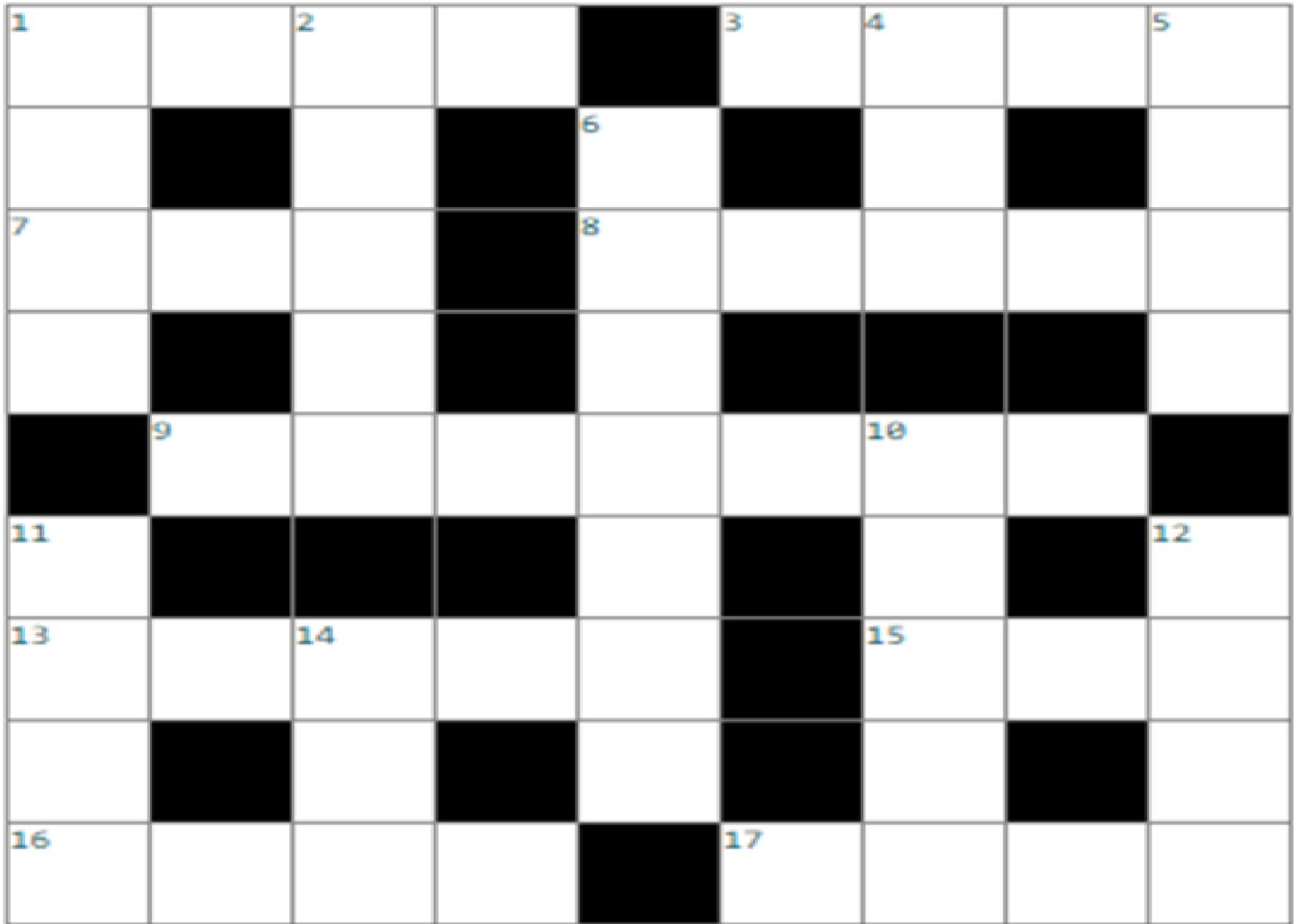
Phone or Whatsapp (+521) 314 102 4355, (+521) 314 106 0392

Landline (+52) 314 138 2725



Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 chalk
- 3 cigar; pure
- 7 by, near, or next to
- 8 loose
- 9 (I) began
- 13 (he) wishes
- 15 cabbage
- 16 (feminine of) other
- 17 soup

Down

- 1 sort
- 2 fox
- 4 use, act of using
- 5 smell
- 6 suburb
- 10 cycle
- 11 hatred
- 12 she
- 14 south

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

## Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla

from the Path to Citizenship series

Don Miguel Gregorio Antonio Ignacio Hidalgo-Costilla y Gal-laga Mandarte Villaseñor; 8 May 1753 – 30 July 1811), more commonly known as **Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla** or simply Miguel Hidalgo, was a Mexican Roman Catholic priest and a leader of the Mexican War of Independence.

He was a professor at the Colegio de San Nicolás Obispo in Valladolid and was ousted in 1792. He served in a church in Colima and then in Dolores, Dias. After his arrival, he was shocked by the rich soil he had found. He tried to help the poor by showing them how to grow olives and grapes, but in Mexico, growing these crops was discouraged or prohibited by the authorities due to Spanish imports of the items. In 1810, he gave the famous speech, "The Cry of Dolores", calling upon the people to protect the interest of their King Fernando VII (held captive by Napoleon) by revolting against the European-born Spaniards who had overthrown the Spanish Viceroy.

He marched across Mexico and gathered an army of nearly 90,000 poor farmers and Mexican civilians who attacked and killed both Spanish Peninsulares and Criollo elites, even though Hidalgo's troops lacked training and were poorly armed. These troops ran into an army of 6,000 well-trained and armed Spanish troops; most of Hidalgo's troops fled or were killed at the Battle of Calderón Bridge.

Fearing his arrest, Hidalgo commanded his brother Mauricio, as well as Ignacio Allende and Mariano Abasolo, to go with a number of other armed men to make the sheriff release prison inmates in Dolores on the night of 15 September 1810. They managed to set eighty free. On the morning of 16 September 1810, Hidalgo called Mass, which was attended by about 300 people, including hacienda owners, local politicians and Spaniards. There he gave what is now known as the Grito de Dolores (Cry of Dolores), calling the people of his parish to leave their homes and join with him in a rebellion against the current government, in the name of their King.



Statue of Hidalgo in front of his church at Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato

Hidalgo's Grito didn't condemn the notion of monarchy or criticize the current social order in detail, but his opposition to the events in Spain and the current viceregal government was clearly expressed in his reference to bad government. The Grito also emphasized loyalty to the Catholic religion, a sentiment with which both Creoles and Peninsulares could sympathize.

The town of his parish was renamed Dolores Hidalgo in his honor and the state of Hidalgo was created in 1869. Every year on the night of 15-16 September, the president of Mexico reenacts the Grito from the balcony of the National Palace. This scene is repeated by the heads of cities and towns all over Mexico.

Source: Wikimedia

**Bistro Marina, Puerto Las Hadas  
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Happy hour from 6 - 8 pm daily, till March 20th

2x1 includes national international drinks  
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