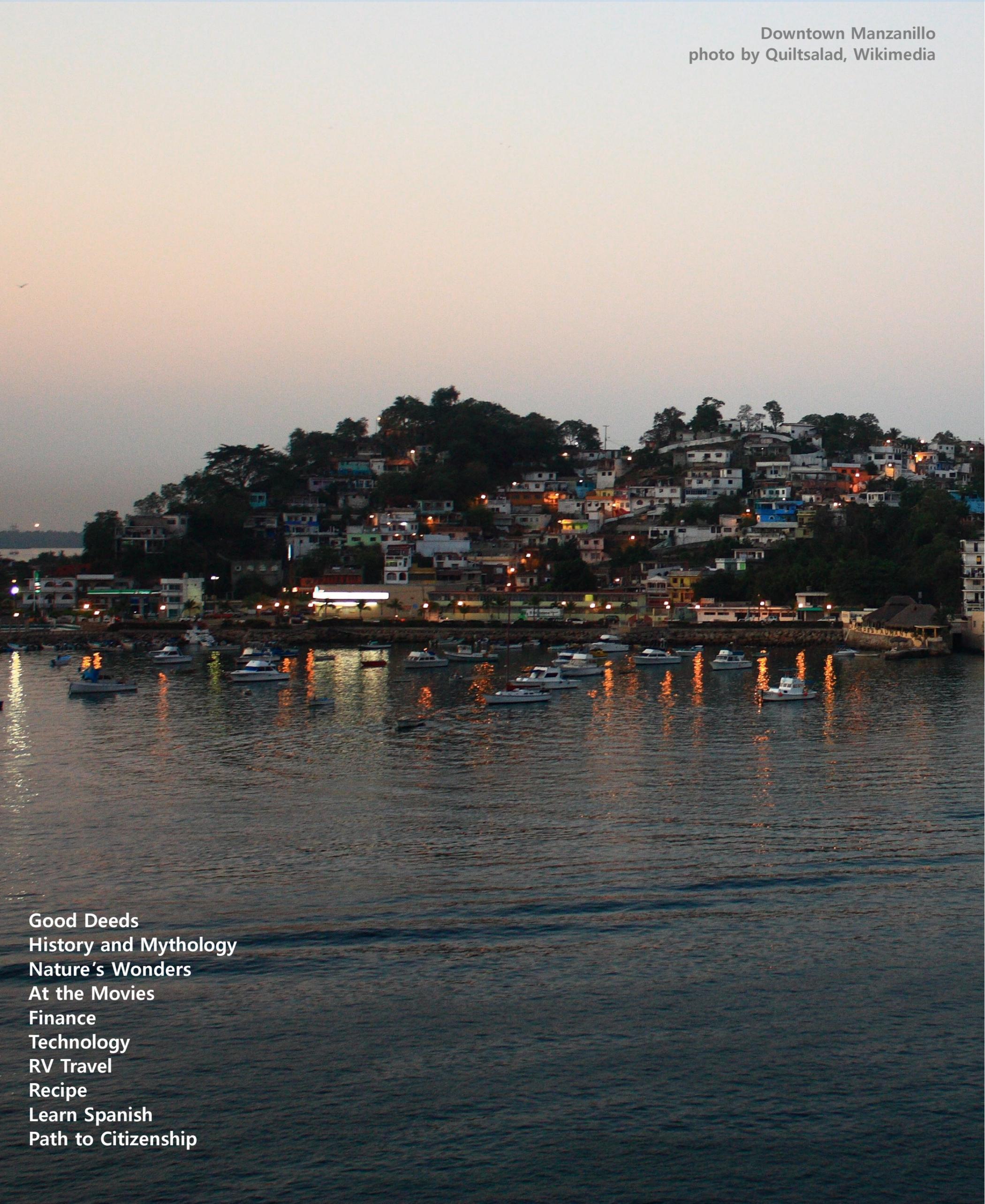




Manzanillo SUN

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine

Downtown Manzanillo
photo by Quiltsalad, Wikimedia



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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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Mother Earth

by Dane Russo

A big dream is becoming reality on a small farm in La Central. Psychologist Ana Melo and her family are developing Mother Earth, a self-sustaining farm to provide Horse Therapy for children with physical and mental disabilities and teach respect for our environment and for animals.

More than 9 million people living in Mexico suffer from some form of disability and, of those, more than 60% suffer from mobility or cognitive difficulties. Unfortunately, availability of medical and therapeutic treatment for these individuals is extremely limited. Mother Earth will help meet this need.

Mother Earth is providing Equine Therapy or Horse Therapy to help patients develop needed skills and attributes, such as responsibility, self-confidence, self-esteem and self-control. The therapy involves interactions between patients and horses and involves supervised activities such as grooming, feeding, haltering and leading a horse.



Mother Earth is being developed to help young people suffering from problems of hyperactivity, anxiety, autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, various mental disorders, and behavioral issues stemming from abuse.

The farm is currently treating 10 young children, with a goal of helping 80 children. The patients are selected from students at the Hellen Keller School in Manzanillo. Others come as a result of recommendations.

The entire project was a start-from-scratch family effort. Everything was done with the hard work of this amazing family and their friends. Today the farm has 2 hectares of leased land, 4 horses, a few goats, turkeys, and hens, and a 1995 truck. Mother Earth opened to the public in April 2018.

The horses at Mother Earth were rodeo or farm horses, scheduled to be sacrificed due to their age. Juan David Soto, Ana's husband, bought and trained the horses for therapy work. Saving older horses, and extending their useful lives, is yet another benefit from the operation of Mother Earth.



Developing and maintaining the farm is an expensive enterprise. Care and feeding of a single horse costs up to \$1,500 pesos per month. The farm is primarily subsidized by the earnings of Ana and her husband who own a quality management consulting service.



Donations from members of the community are sought to help maintain and help grow this important community resource. If you are able to help in any way, please contact Ana at 314 125 8014. You may make a direct deposit at any OXXO using the following card number (número de tarjeta): 5204 1651 9989 7798. The name or titular de la cuenta is Rosario Soto Ceniceros. Please help in any way you can.

You are invited to visit the farm. It is located on Highway 200 Manzanillo-Cihuatlan Km 20, Ejido La Central, Manzanillo, Colima.

you can reach Dane at dane.russo@manzanillosun.com



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*All proceeds benefit Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare (fomaw.org)

Popol Vuh

by Kirby Vickery

I have to tell you that Popol Vuh is the most intriguing piece of Mesoamerican literature I have ever looked into. The original has been lost in time, partly because it was handed down from father to son for generations before finally being written down, even in the language of the Maya. Then, the only copy known to exist was lost after it was translated into Spanish.

The history of the translations (yes, there are many) is every bit as intriguing as the reading and the history of the book itself. Throwing Popol Vuh up into Google yields about two and a half million hits. True, some of the sites are about a Spanish bar or supposed really, great Mayan restaurant somewhere else. But, the complicated story of the reading of the book into several languages including English, as well as the translation's own history, is convoluted and complex to say the least.

By the grace of the editors of the Manzanillo Sun, I shall stick to the basic facts concerning the publication itself. But, if anyone out there has an interest, I can tell you that the story of this publication, and it's history, is well worth following through the mazes of the internet, and then some. - K. Vickery, 29 Oct 2018.

An example of Mayan writing:



These pages from the Madrid Codex are part of the Maya version of the 120-day agricultural almanac known as the Sacred Round. Apic / Hulton Archive / Getty Images, credit: [Thoughtco](https://www.thoughtco.com)

The Popol Vuh is the story of the creation of the Mayan world and was first translated by Dominican friar Francisco Ximénez, against orders of the Catholic Church that it, along with all of the other Mayan documents, be destroyed as heresy.



Father Ximénez's manuscript contains the oldest known translation of the Popol Vuh. It is mostly written in parallel K'iche' (Quishe) and Spanish. Many agree that the original story was spoken in the form of a very long epic poem. However, through time and translations, it has grown to be presented as four books with a preamble, and is still being studied today, as it is currently used in the land of the K'iche' to help them in their religious efforts and political sovereignty.

The preamble introduces our two heroes, the twin grandsons of Xpiyacoc and Xmucane. It tells of the initial creation, or measuring of the earth, by Heart-of-Sky, and the reason for it. It reads, in part, through one translation:

THE CREATION

Here is the story of the beginning,
 when there was not one bird,
 not one fish,
 not one mountain.
 Here is the sky, all alone.
 Here is the sea, all alone.
 There is nothing more
 no sound, no movement.
 Only the sky and the sea.
 Only Heart-of-Sky, alone.
 And these are his names:

Maker and Modeler,
 Kukulkan,

...

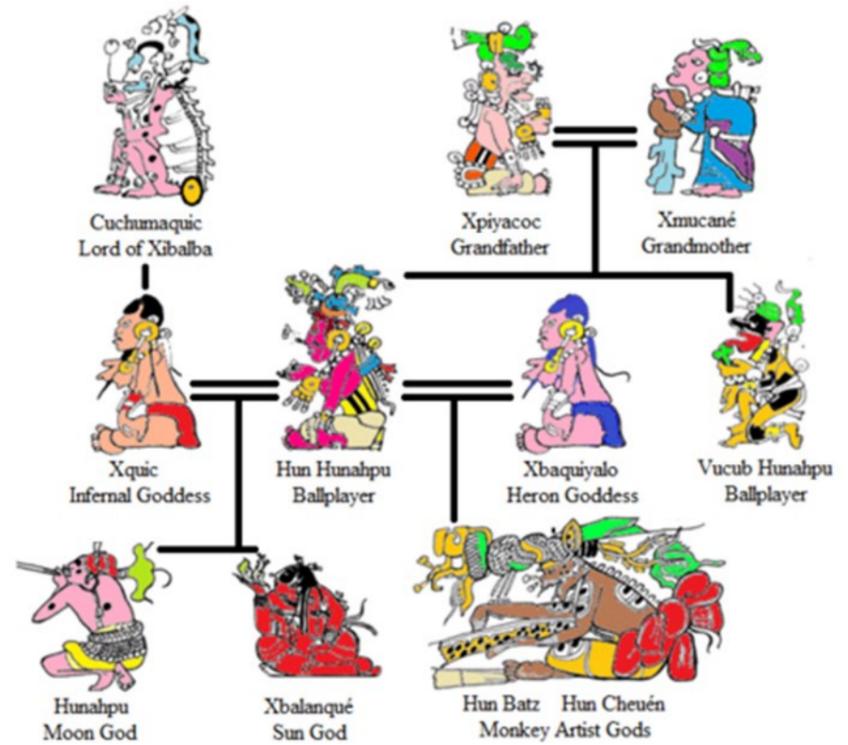
...Popol Vuh

Book One is the account of the creation of living beings. Animals were created first, followed by humans. The first humans were made of earth and mud, but soaked up water and dissolved. The second humans were created from wood. They were all flat-faced and couldn't speak the praises of Heart-of-Sky and he sent a huge hurricane to wipe them all out. However, some escaped and were turned into monkeys. There is also the story of Vucub-Caquix (meaning, Seven Macaw). He was a large bird demon that dwelt on the surface of the world after the flood. Hunahpu (or Hun-Ahpu) shot Seven Macaw with a blow gun.

This was taken from a Classic Mayan vase picturing Mayan mythology. Vucub-Caquix dwelled on the surface of the world, even though he was from the twilight world between the earth and the moon. His name represents the world between the former or first-world creation and the new or present one. Vucub-Caquix pretended to be the sun and moon of the twilight time (his name also refers to the seven stars in the Big Dipper). Even though this false sun-moon bird was shot out of his tree with a blowgun by Hun-Ahpu, one of the Maya Hero Twins still managed to sever our hero's arm.

Finally, however, the demon was deprived of his teeth, his eyes, his riches and his power. Even wounded, he was able to escape into the twilight world to father a set of sons himself. Together, the (good guy) Twins become the true sun and moon of the present creation. The episode is only loosely connected to the main tale of the Twins, and is varied by other Mesoamerican hero myths.

In Book Two, our hero twins plot a plan to kill Vucub-Caquix and his two sons, Zipacna and Cabracan. There is an epic battle and the good guys come out as victors and heroes as the deaths of these bad guys restores order, balance, and harmony to the world. In the story, Vucub-Caquix invites the brothers down (relative term here) into Xibalba for a game of ball with a



A family tree of gods and demigods. Vertical lines indicate descent. Horizontal lines indicate siblings. Double lines indicate marriage.

lot of deceit. Xibalba is described in the Popol Vuh as a court below the surface of the earth. It is associated with death and with twelve gods or powerful rulers known as the Lords of Xibalba. The first among the Maya Death Gods ruling Xibalba were Hun-Came ("One Death") and Vucub-Came ("Seven Death"), though Hun-Came is the senior of the two.

The remaining ten Lords are often referred to as demons and are given commission and domain over various forms of human suffering. For example: to cause sickness, starvation, fear, destitution, pain and ultimately death. These Lords all work in pairs. For example: Xiquiripat ("Flying Scab") and Cuchumaquic ("Gathered Blood"), who sicken people's blood. Then there is Ahalpuh ("Pus Demon") and Ahalgana ("Jaundice Demon"). These two cause people's bodies to swell up, and so on.

Xibalba was rife with tests, trials, and traps for anyone who came into the city. Even the roads to Xibalba were filled with obstacles. The city was home to at least six deadly houses and each was a trial for any visitor. The first was Dark House. As you can guess it was a house that was completely dark inside. The second was Rattling House or Cold House, full of ice and rattling hail. The third was Jaguar House, filled with hungry jaguars. The fourth was Bat House, filled with scary, shrieking vampire bats, and the fifth was Razor House, filled with blades and

...Popol Vuh



The land of K'iche' in Guatemala today

razors that moved about of their own accord. The sixth house was a test. It was filled with fires and heat. The purpose of these tests was to either kill or humiliate people placed into them if they could not outwit the test.

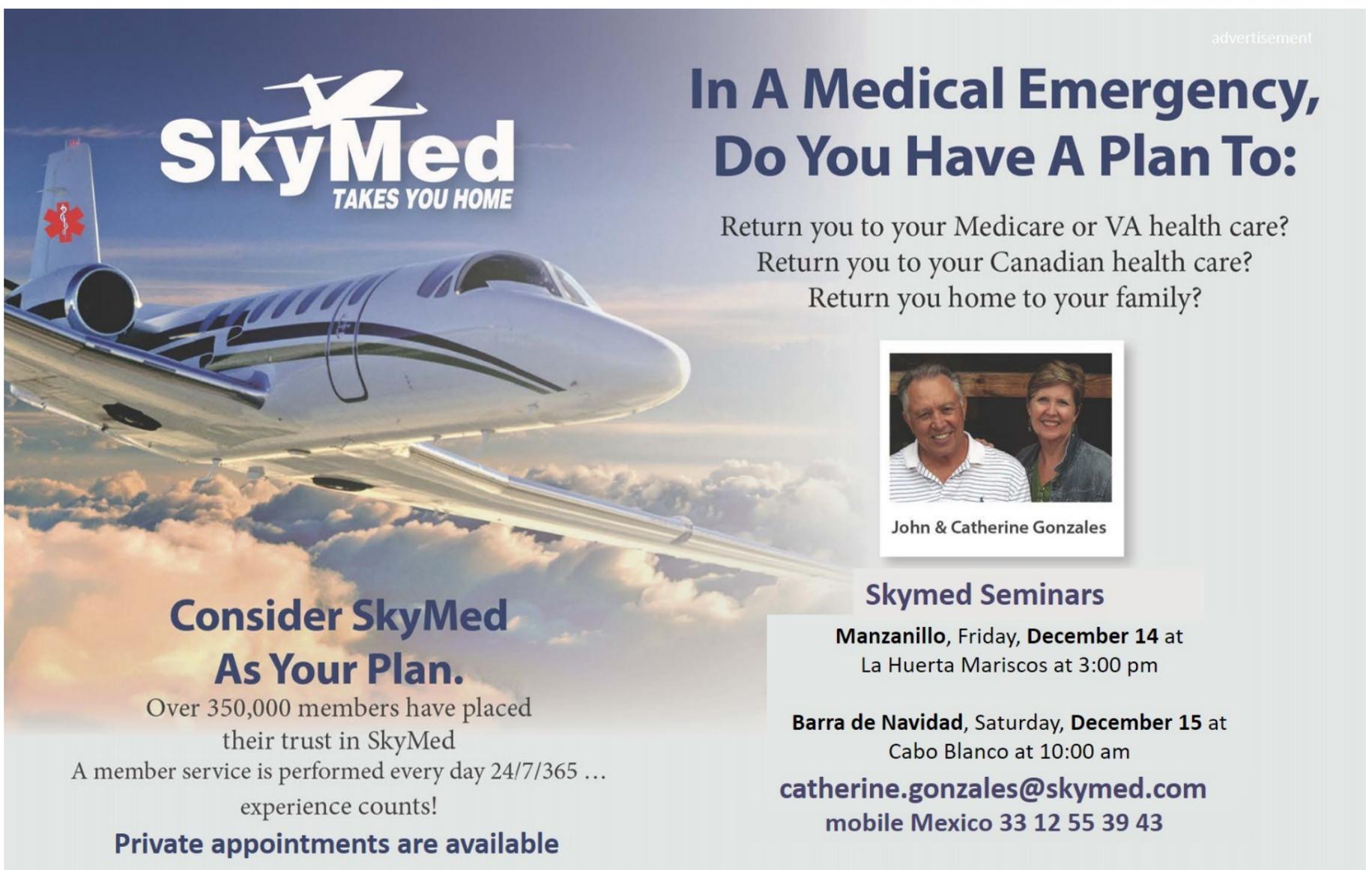
In Book Three, the father and uncle of The Hero Twins, Hun-Hunahpu and Vucub-Hunahpu, sons of Xmucane and Xpiacoc are murdered at a ball game in Xibalba. Hun Hunahpu's head is placed in a Calabash tree, where it spits in the hand of Xquiq, impregnating her. She was the daughter of one of the lords of Xibalba, called Cuchumaquic.

She leaves the underworld to be with her Mother-in-law, Xmucane, who doesn't believe her or her chastity. Most of this book is about her trials and how she overcame these obstacles to become the mother of the Maya Hero Twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque. Her sons then challenge the lords who killed their father and uncle, succeeding and becoming the sun and the moon. Sort of a vicious circle, but it sure beats day-time television soap operas.

Book 4 tells of the rewards of those humans of the maize that make it through the maze of houses and trapped roads, etc. Those that made it got immortality for their loyalty. Then they got wives to satisfy their contentment and went to live in the land of K'iche' which exists today. It also introduces Gucumatz which, along with the K'iche', is the subject of next month's article.

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

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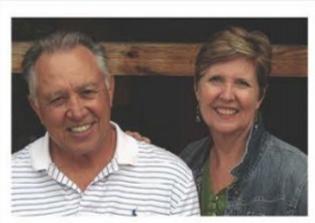


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by Tommy Clarkson

Hybrid Glory Bower Vine *Clerodendrum x speciosum*

Family: *Lamiaceae*

Also known as: *Clerodendrom Vine*

*(Before we go one word further, if you've read - and remember what I wrote - about the Bleeding Heart (*Clerodendrom thomsoniae*) in volume I of this series, you already know over 90% of what you might wish about this guy. They are, definitely, close family. In fact, when the blooms of the latter are in their later, purple-colored stage, the bushes are all but indistinguishable, unless closely scrutinized!)*

Appropriate thereto, Eric Schmidt, of the Leu Gardens in Florida wrote the following, germane, comments on this group: "The genus *Clerodendrum* contains approximately 400 different species of shrubs and vines. Most of these are native to subtropical and tropical regions. Recently, the species has gone under some taxonomic changes.

Clerodendrum formerly was a member of the *Verbenaceae* Family but now (as with many of them previously of that group) have been placed into the *Lamiaceae* Family making it related to some common garden plants such as lavender (*Lavandula*), mint (*Mentha*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), coleus (*Solenostemon scutellarioides*) and sage (*Salvia*). Many of these species are grown for their colorful or fragrant flowers. The flowers are tubular shaped and are produced in clusters or panicles. Some also produce colorful calyxes and fruit following the flowers. Many of these are good butterfly plants."



Delightful contrast, isn't it?

Now as to a discussion on the *Clerodendrum x speciosum* specifically, what can we say? By way of brief overview, we can call it a full, shrubby, sun-loving, evergreen vine. In discussion of its heredity, we would be correct in asserting that it is a sterile hybrid of the Glory Tree – some call it a Flaming Glorybower (*Clerodendrum splendens*) and Bleeding Heart (*Clerodendrum thomsoniae*).

In describing it, we would be accurate in stating that it is a fairly rapid growing vine, reaching up to, potentially, twenty-five to thirty feet (7.62 to 9.14 meters) and it has dark green, glossy, oval leaves that, in a healthy specimen, reach five to seven inches (12.7 to 17.78 cm) in length. Its pride and joy – its flowers – are displayed in clusters of bicolored blooms with a dull pink, through light purple, to reddish calyx surrounding a short tube of deep crimson, shaded with violet.

Hardier than most *Clerodendrums*, if grown further north (read: *Gringolandia* and points beyond), when planted in partly shaded locations that are shielded from harsh chilling winds – though why any of us would seek such a locale to live is well beyond me - it should survive most frosts and freezes unscathed. However, for such folks, there is another option.

Accordingly to the Missouri Botanical Garden professionals, "To grow (these bushes) indoors, a winter rest is required. This can be accomplished by moving the vine to a cooler location away from any heat source. A spot between 60 to 65 F degrees (15.56 to 18.33 °C) during the day and 5 to 10 F degrees (-5 to 12.22°C) degrees; lower at night would be ideal. Some leaf-drop is a normal response to entering winter dormancy. During this period, water just enough to keep the soil from drying out and withhold fertilizer.

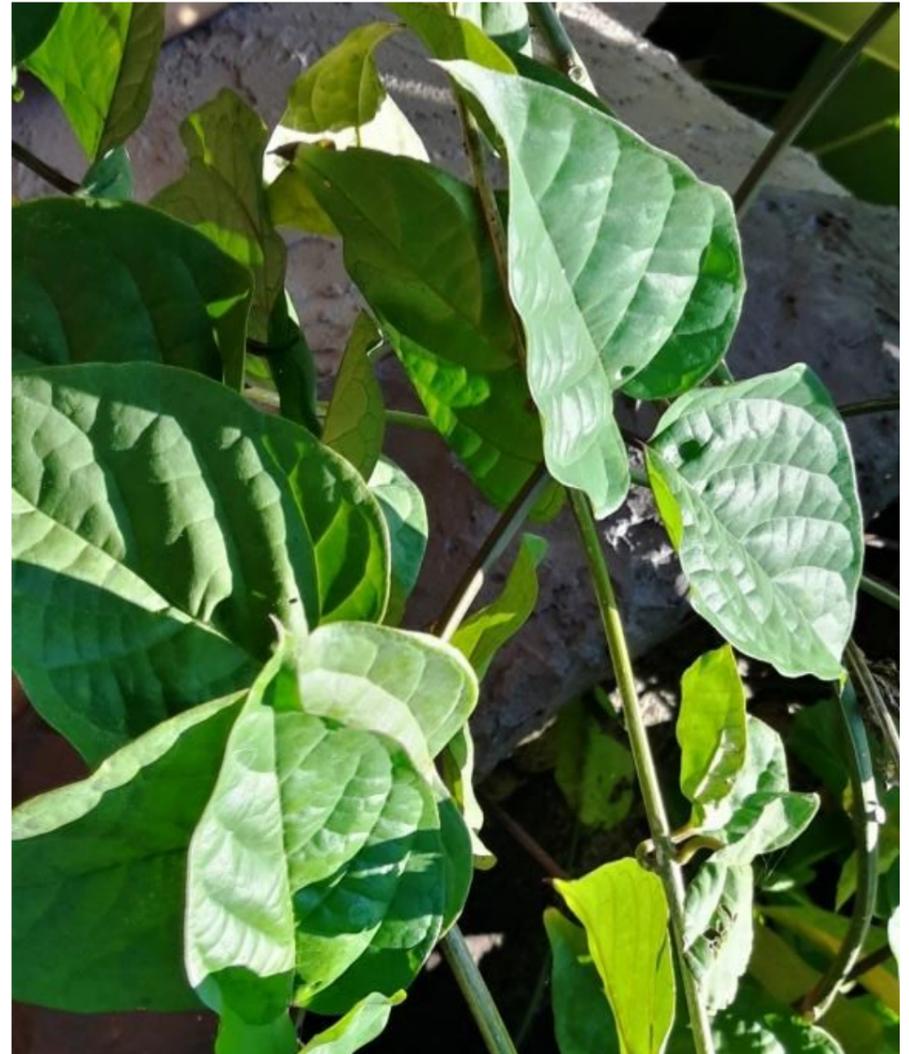
...Hybrid Glory Bower Vine



It is the quintessential full, shrubby, sun-loving, evergreen vine.

In late winter or early spring, prune the vine before new growth emerges. Because flower buds are produced on the current season's growth, pruning at this time will encourage the production of vigorous flowering shoots. Do not be afraid to prune severely. Thin out old, overcrowded shoots and any other far-reaching growth to keep the vine in bounds. After pruning, move the plant to a warm, brightly lit location or outdoors if temperatures have warmed sufficiently. Water when the soil surface feels dry."

In that it does not sucker nor set seeds, the Hybrid Glory Bower Vine is non-invasive. A rapid grower, it is a great choice for use on trellises, arbors, archways or with tall fences. If it had its absolute "druthers", it would like to receive bright, daylong shade or morning sun and afternoon shade. It is pest and drought-tolerant.



Its leaves are all but indistinguishable from its kin, the Bleeding Heart.

It needs minimal maintenance. Though, that said, I might encourage that, before establishing your Hybrid Glory Bower Vine within your garden, that you enrich its new home site with organic matter.

I mingle in some of our own compost and dried cow manure. Post-planting, mulch around - and a ways out from - the root ball. Those that are kept mulched throughout their lives rarely need watering and, virtually never, need plant food.

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Another Happy Client
... Patty Murphy



by Tommy Clarkson

White Mandevilla, *Mandevilla boliviensis*

Family: *Apocynaceae*

Also known as: *Mexican Love Vine* or *White Dipladenia*

Many are familiar with the red or pink Mandevilla, but, for whatever reason, there doesn't seem to be as much recognition or discussion on the wonderful white ones.

Ours thrive from a faux (fiberglass) "hollowed out coconut log" we designed for that very purpose on the southern side of our Sunrise Palapa outside our master bedroom. Its beautiful flowers and dark green foliage cascade down, framing the upper portion of our view of the Santiago Bay from our living room below.

For us, much of the fun of this plant is that the blooms – seldom the leaves – drop into our infinity pool below. Hence, when we swim we feel a bit like Dorothy Lamour in the old Bing Crosby and Bob Hope Movie "Road to Bali" where she bathed in a pool resplendent with large blossoms. (*I know, my young readers, you have no idea of what I speak – just trust me on this one!*)

Originally from the Bolivia and Ecuador region, this evergreen vine climbs and clings – *sort of like a neurotic yet needy young socialite I knew many years ago* – up to around twelve feet (3.66 meters). Preferring moderate moisture, it blooms much of the year in fertile, well-draining soil. It likes full to partial sun, with a preference to filtered sun in the hot season.

Now, as to those flowers! They are perfectly white, trumpet-shaped, yellow-throated and up to two inches (5.08 cm) wide. The nicely contrasting leaves are elliptic, glossy, veined and grow up to four inches (10.16 cm) in length.



They are perfectly white, trumpet-shaped, yellow-throated and up to two inches (5.08 cm) wide.

(*And – "Oh, by the way, many ask what plant they might have around their homes on the ocean's shore. This is a great one for such a location."*)

This woody stemmed, tropical vine enjoys making its home on a trellis which well showcases its flowers. But, wherever it grows, be aware that pruning can help shape and form the plant to its optimum appearance. Also, one can pinch back tips of new shoots to in order to promote bushier growth. But, remember that, when cutting stems, watch out for the milky sap as it is a potential skin irritant and, if ingested, may be toxic. These Mandevilla have no serious disease or insect problems but might, once in a while, possibly be bothered by scale and mealybugs which can be fast resolved by use of an insecticidal soap.

Inasmuch as it is a prolific flowerer, I encourage regular applications of fertilizer. The application of an all-purpose plant food – every two to three weeks during the spring and summer – will encourage health, vitality and quantity of the blossoms. But what kind, you ask?

...White Mandevilla



This is a perfect, inexpensive size with which to start.

Mandevilla, like most young plants, appreciates extra phosphorus which encourages healthy root development. Accordingly, seek out a fertilizer with a larger second number in its content designation, ensuring that you apply the recommended amount as described in the label directions. Along with this, know that fertilizers that are high in nitrogen promote good leaf growth. But, remember, excess nitrogen in the soil can also cause excessive vegetative growth at the expense of those flowers.

As the root system for this species originated under hot, arid conditions, it is able to hold enough water to keep the plant well hydrated for extended periods. So, ensure that the soil around the plant is completely dry before watering again. (I heartily encourage use of a hydrometer.) Another indicator of when to water is when the glossy, green foliage begins to look a bit dull. When watering, give the roots ample time to well absorb the moisture. Simply stated, the key to watering is to do so deeply and less frequently.



The nicely contrasting leaves are elliptic, glossy, veined and grow up to four inches in length.

But don't wait to water your plants until after they have wilted. Though some recover from this condition, if they wilt too much, quite simply, they will die. I suggest that you water early in the day, or later in the afternoon, to minimize plant stress. Furthermore, water early enough that it has a chance to evaporate from plant leaves prior to nightfall.

For those potted specimens, apply enough *agua* to allow it to flow through the drainage holes at the bottom. Quite obviously, during a plant's first couple of years, regular watering is important for establishment in its new home. So, summarizing, I leave this subject stating that it is better to water deeply once a week than to water frequently for a few minutes.

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A Star is Born

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Directed by: Bradley Cooper
Starring: Lady Gaga, Bradley Cooper, Sam Elliot, Greg Grunberg

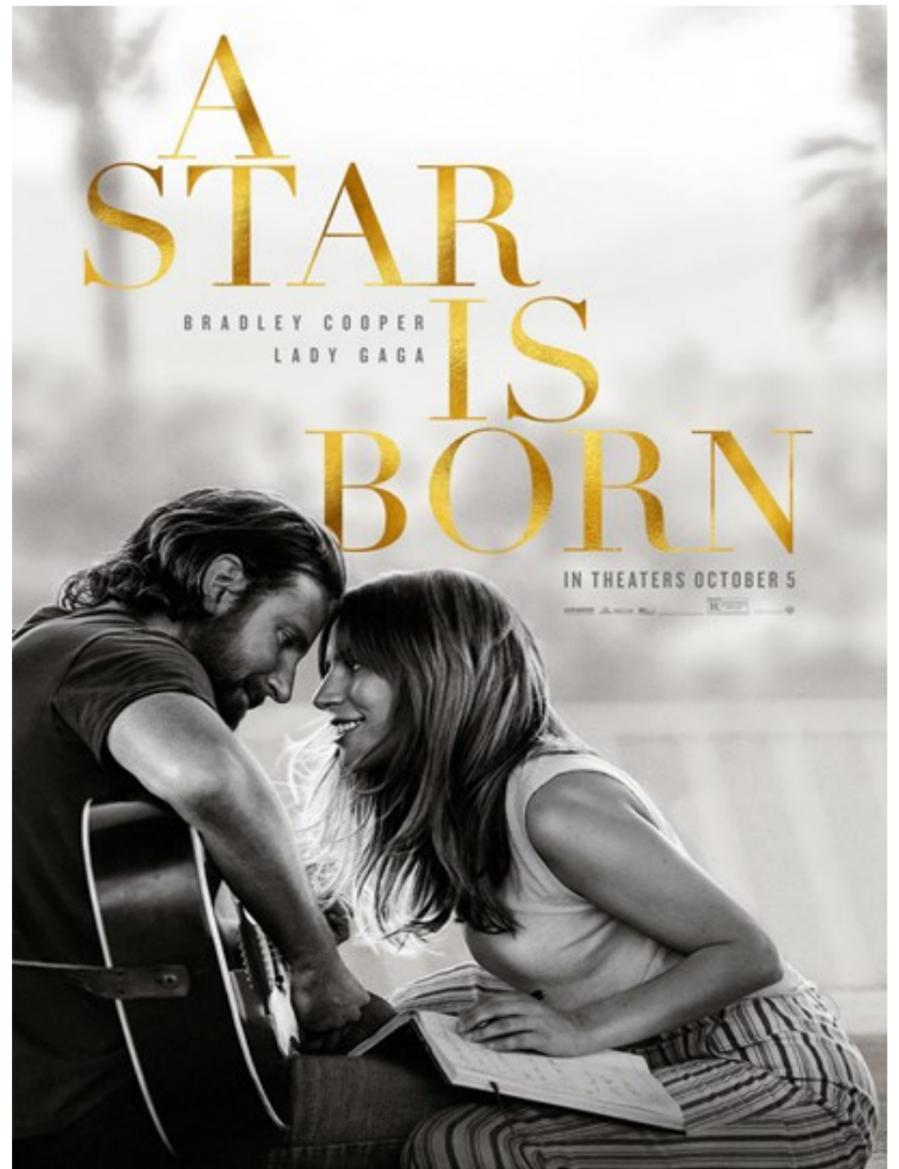
"A musician helps a young singer find fame, even as age and alcoholism send his own career in into a downward spiral."

Wow, what a movie. This is one of the best movies I've seen in years. With Bradley Cooper directing, singing and playing guitar in his own role.

Add to that the sheer talent of Lady Gaga, musically, and her abilities to act the role, this movie draws the audience in and never lets go until it's over. The musical performances are simply fabulous. It's a 'new take' on a 4th remake of the story and, for me, this version is the best.

The production itself is first class, with numerous large audience venues and 'on stage' performances that are entirely realistic. The cinematography is wonderful, as is the soundtrack. Having had the opportunity to see the movie twice, once in Manzanillo, and again in Canada with family, I picked up even more of the nuances in the performances and storyline. I'd be willing to see it again.

Many in the audience were dabbing their eyes by the end of this one because it truly captivates, especially in a good theatre with a quality sound system. Enjoy!



The movie has already won a few awards and nominations including for People's Choice and cinematography. I'm positive there will be more.

IMDB rated this movie currently at: 8.3/10 based on 90,032 viewers.

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

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POLLO • BURGERS • BEER

Bohemian Rhapsody

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Directed by: Brian Singer
Starring: Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton, Gwilym Lee, Ben Hardy, Joseph Mazzello, Aiden Gillen, Allan Leech, Tom Hollander, Mike Myers

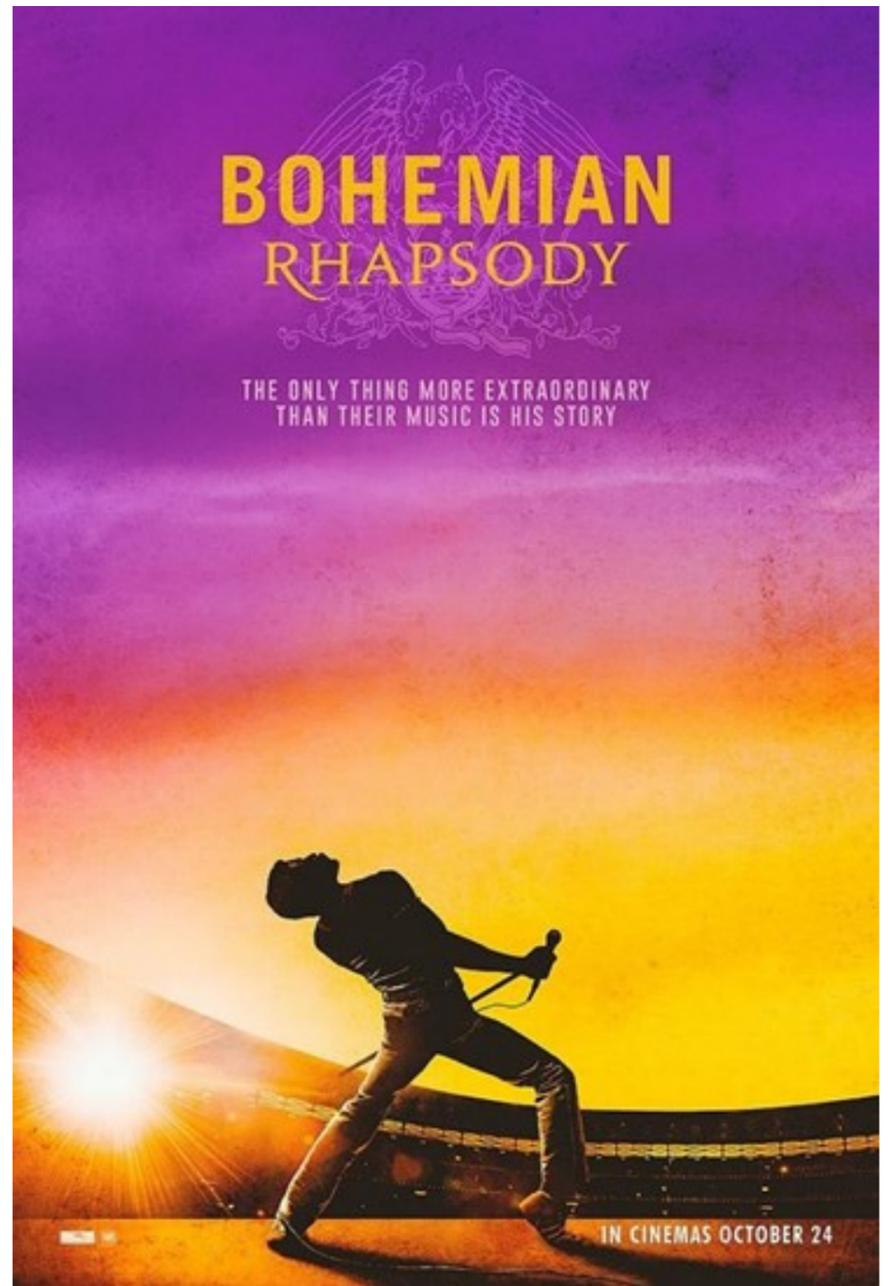
"A chronicle of the years leading up to Queen's legendary appearance at the live Aid Concert (1985)", the film is marketed as a biography, drama and music story. Some would argue the accuracy of the biography aspect relating to the band's personal relationships.

It's a fabulous movie. Firstly, I was completely taken by the amazing performance of Rami Malek as Freddy Mercury. His characterization is spot on in his body language, movement and speech.

The other band members proved to be engaging as talented musicians that obviously played for the love of their music since several of them were highly educated in other professions. The music in this film is, of course, the soundtracks from the band Queen, including Bohemian Rhapsody, widely considered to be one of the best songs of all time and which defined Queen's career.

Culminating with the live concert performance for Live Aid, it's easy to see why the band is renowned by many for the best live concert performance ever! They stole the show among a tremendous list of big names. I'd gladly see this one again, too.

Technically the production is first class with some amazing editing and cinematography. It will be interesting to see what



happens with the next Oscars and, I believe, the Malek performance will at the top of the list for best actor.

IMDB currently rates this movie at 8.4/10 based on 77,888 viewers.

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So You've Had a Windfall. Now What?

by Yann Kostic and Tom Zachystal

Sometimes we get lucky through an inheritance, a tax refund, a settlement, a gift, or even winning a lottery. The downside is that we have to figure out what to do with the cash. In such a situation, where do you start?

Understanding how to prioritize your financial goals is important. You might be inclined to splurge on a luxury, invest in a new home (or several), pay down debt, or save up a cushion of cash for future emergencies. Which is the best option?

In most cases, you'll want to save first to ensure you have an emergency stash of cash in place.

After all, finally paying down your car or student loans isn't going to provide much comfort when you lose your job or your best contract and can't afford your mortgage or lifestyle.

Beyond a minimum level of essential savings, priorities will differ depending on your life and your goals. Luckily, there are questions you can ask yourself to ensure that you're doing the right thing with your windfall.

For example, is your debt load worrisome because of its level or interest rate? If so, you may want to apply the spare cash to paying more than the monthly minimum payments. Just be sure to think about how best to eliminate debt among various sources.

For example, do you pay off one credit card or pay a little on all? Do you pay one car loan off or pay both cars loans off. Also consider whether the cash would be best used to invest more in your 401(k) plan (or equivalent IRA). If your employer offers a match and you're not getting all of it, you may want to take advantage of the "free" money by contributing more.

It may also be wise to think about whether you have enough insurance, meaning health insurance, life insurance, long-term disability insurance, and liability insurance, in case something goes wrong.

Finally, remember there may not be a "best" decision. It's not a one-size-fits-all situation; however, professional advice can help.

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

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Take Advantage of All of Your Wi-Fi Signal

by Señor Tech

If your residence is constructed with thick brick walls, or spread out over a great area, you may notice locations where your Wi-Fi signal is either weak or non-existent. These are called deadzones and can be annoying when you just want to cruise down that information super highway that we call the internet.

Since we bought our condo in Manzanillo many years ago, I have been working hard to find a solution to eliminate those deadzones. I have installed range extenders, additional routers and a number of other network devices to ensure we had fast internet in all our usable living spaces (yes including the baños). I found using different solutions introduced other issues that were less-than-perfect. In fact, they became annoying.

In one configuration, I installed a hardwired router as an extender, but it slowed internet speed in half and kept knocking my Sonos speakers off the network. But, at least, we had internet in all areas. I just had to occasionally reset the Sonos network configuration to locate the speakers.

That is until I decided to try a relatively new network technology called "whole home mesh Wi-Fi". Unlike range extenders that have inherent shortfalls, a mesh system takes over the distribution of Wi-Fi from the internet provider's router.



The system I chose has three devices to distribute the Wi-Fi throughout our condo. The first device is connected to the ISP's modem (in my case, Telmex) and the other two devices

(nodes) sync to the first device (router) wirelessly. The second and third nodes are set in place to provide the best coverage. The devices have ethernet output ports that can be used to connect to devices with an ethernet cable (this provides the best possible throughput). The product advertises coverage for a 6000 sq. ft. house, but this will be less if your domicile is of concrete/brick construction.

The mesh Wi-Fi units are controlled by a smartphone or computer. Set-up was relatively easy as the step-by-step instructions were displayed on my phone. The set-up took about 15-20 minutes, and the system was fully operational.

The big **advantages of mesh Wi-Fi** versus the use of wireless extenders:

- ✓ does not require changing settings, once logged in, surfing the web continues throughout the house seamlessly
- ✓ Tri-Band Wi-Fi system provides 100% wireless coverage throughout your home by creating a high-range, mesh network only requires one login / password as the nodes connect to each other using a single SSID (in layman's terms an SSID is a name for the Wi-Fi network) and password
- ✓ connect legacy devices through the wired ethernet ports

The **phone app** allows additional configurations including:

- ✓ a guest account (this is a good way to let guests use your Wi-Fi but not have access to your network). You can easily change this password if someone starts abusing your generosity.
- ✓ parental controls that allow you to set controls on individual devices. For example, you can set any or all devices to have access to the internet at certain times. You can set a child's iPad to only have access to the internet from 4-9 pm weekdays and all access on weekends. Other users are not affected.

...Take Advantage of All of Your Wi-Fi Signal

I have noticed a significant positive difference to the speed I achieve wirelessly on my devices and I have full speed throughout the condo as well as by the pool. I no longer have to login to different Wi-Fi access points, and my Sonos speakers never lose their configuration settings due to conflicting Wi-Fi signals.

Wi-Fi mesh systems are a bit more money than a router/extender configuration but, if you want to have seamless wireless internet, it is worth it.

If you have a small residence and the ISP's Wi-Fi router provides total coverage, then a Wi-Fi mesh system is not required. On the other hand, if you experience deadzones, Wi-Fi mesh is the best solution.



I am listing a few Wi-Fi Mesh systems for your information:

- ✓ TP-LINK Deco M5 AC1300 Whole Home Mesh Wi-Fi
- ✓ ASUS Lyra AC2200 Whole Home Mesh Wi-Fi System
- ✓ Linksys Velop Wireless AC6600 Whole Home Mesh Wi-Fi System
- ✓ NETGEAR Orbi AC2200 Whole Home Mesh Wi-Fi System

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

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Guanajuato

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

March 20 - 23 (Days 74-77)

Guanajuato, Guanajuato, MX



Driving to the RV park in Guanajuato

After our time at the San Ramon RV Park in San Miguel de Alende, we next headed for Guanajuato, but first a detour to Dolores Hidalgo where pottery was a primary business with the locals. We headed north on Hwy 51 to Dolores Hidalgo, about a 40 km diversion. This is the small town where Father Miguel Hidalgo uttered his famous cry for the independence of Mexico (the Grito de Dolores) there in the early hours of September 16, 1810, in front of Andrea and Karla parish church. After Mexico achieved independence, the town was renamed Dolores Hidalgo in his honour.

Today Dolores Hidalgo is known primarily for its ceramics industry, started by Father Hidalgo, which provides income to well over half the city's population. The inexpensive and mass-produced output of the town is marketed throughout Latin America and the United States. We all bought our fair share on our visit, a great selection at fantastic prices. Our purchases included a sink for a bathroom and a ceramic water decanter on a metal stand. There were dozens of stores on the one street, really amazing to behold.

After some grocery shopping at a conveniently located Super Ley we backtracked to San Miguel and took Hwy 45D to Guanajuato led, by Mike and Kelly. The drive was longer than it should have been. In hindsight, we could have taken a much

shorter route. However, the gang was just following a track laid out by me and Google Maps. The good news is that we did get there, although at one point we did get separated at a toll booth which resulted in an illegal u-turn witnessed by the Federales. Luckily, no fines or tickets, just a good scolding and we got pointed in the right direction.

At the end of the day, actually in the afternoon, we did arrive together at the Bugamville RV Park, just outside Guanajuato, owned and operated by Carlos Puente Morales, our long way around added about 3 hours. The campground itself was clean and well set up with electrical, water and dump stations at each site. Lisa tested the showers upon arrival and reported that there was hot water.



Bound for the RV park with Roland and Janice in the lead

We had now been on the road 74 days and I was getting a little cranky and, I must say, some of the interaction with Carlos was less than satisfactory. We asked about the laundry and his response was immediate, "I have a guy from town that does it, pickup and delivery, \$35 pesos per kilo". Very expensive, I thought, as we have been paying \$9-\$15 per kilo, but this would be convenient. As it turns out, the only person doing pickup and delivery was his daughter. Carlos was adding the extra \$20 or so pesos per kilo.

We also asked about a guide for a first look around Guanajuato. The original price was \$250 per person, everyone agreed, then \$305 with an English-speaking guide and a driver, again

...Guanajuato



Heading into Guanajuato

the gang agreed. The next day, the guide and an auto for 5 show up (really just 3). We jammed into the car and headed to the office to pick up a bigger Van that comfortably fits all of us.

Gabriel was a great guide, lots of info, very flexible, compelling personal story about his time in the US and subsequent deportation. It was a good day overall, we all enjoyed it and the Mummy Museo was a real highlight (and a little creepy). However there was a snafu with the final payment. We were not to pay the guide, but Carlos, and yes the price was changing again.

In the end I added a little extra which I paid directly to Gabriel as he deserved it. My last complaint is about the Wi-Fi. When we arrived, he tells us he has it but Telmex is doing a rebuild and it is off and on. He is sincere and convincing (why do I always believe these guys about their Wi-Fi). Four days later, it is apparent Carlos is full of it. There is no Wi-Fi, probably never was. Why not just say, "Sorry, no Wi-Fi". Enough complaining about Carlos.

We enjoyed our time in Guanajuato, lots of walking and shopping. The Mercado designed by Gustav Eiffel was particularly cool. This guy really got around Mexico. Our bus ride into, and out of, town was exciting. At one point we thought maybe Bobby Unser was driving. I have to say, the tunnels were amazing and were everything and more than I had heard about them, simply a maze. Lisa and I had a patio lunch somewhere in town. We also visited the Diego Rivera Museo, which was well worth the stop.

Our last day, we went and filled up with water and just hung out. Mike and Kelly, Roland and Janice did go into town in the evening for dinner, Lisa and I stayed back and enjoyed the light show put on by Mother Nature, spectacular. Sorry folks one last complaint about Carlos. He sold us on a \$150 pesos per person

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Hwy 45 into Guanajuato

"Mexican Plate" dinner that included a beer or margarita at his restaurant and bar on site. The service was good, staff (daughters) friendly, place was clean with some ambience. Too bad the food was awful, tasteless for sure. I love beans, not cold ones. Again, for \$150 pesos per person we all felt we had been taken. Time to move on.

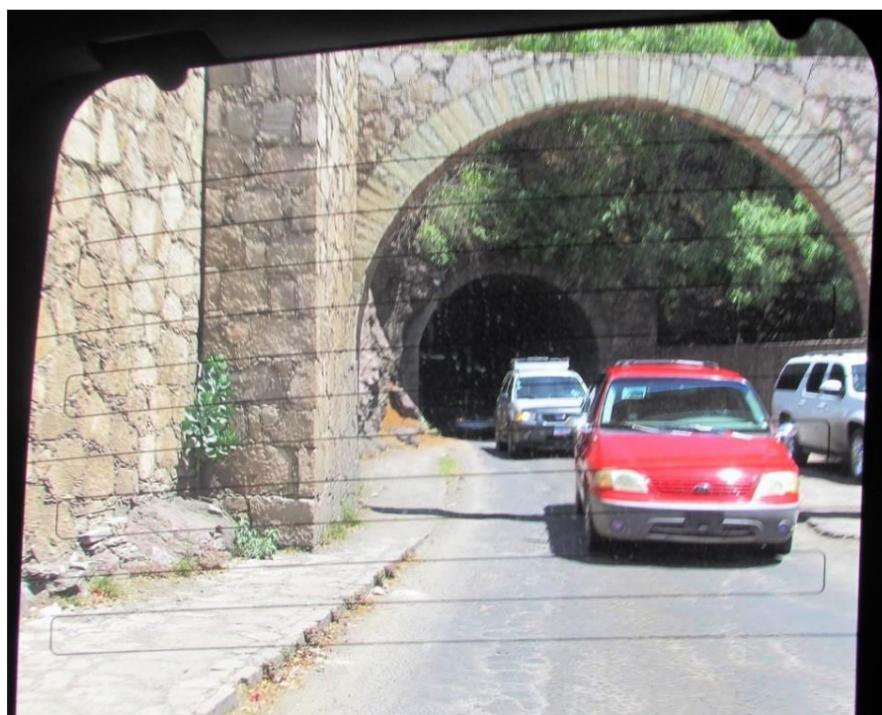
At the end of the day, we really enjoyed our time in Guanajuato and would be hard pressed to choose between Guanajuato and San Miguel de Allende as our favourite colonial towns.

*As we write about our experience in Guanajuato, we have returned to the Bugamville RV Park operated by Carlos Morales with our 1st 45-day mainland Mexico RV Caravan Tour. We decided to give him another chance. The price he quoted in October 2017 for camping remains the same at \$350 pesos per RV, although this is a considerable increase from our stay in 2016 at \$280 pesos per RV. Carlos now has Wi-Fi that works, limited to the office area and we have found the power to be low, 108V for a high, 94V at the low end. The quoted bus tour price has increased from \$320 pesos to \$350 pesos per person, about the rate of inflation. Laundry is now \$40 pesos per kilo, picked up and delivered. We may return in 2020 with our next 45-day tour, or do transport from San Miguel de Allende. The jury is still out.

Guanajuato, Guanajuato

Guanajuato is both a city and municipality in central Mexico and the capital of the state of the same name. It is part of the

macro-region of el Bajío, located in a narrow valley, which makes the streets narrow and winding. Most are alleys that cars cannot pass through, and some are long sets of stairs up the mountainsides. Many of the city's thoroughfares are partially or fully underground. The historic center has numerous small plazas and colonial-era mansions, churches and civil constructions built using pink or green sandstone. The origin and growth of Guanajuato resulted from the discovery of minerals in the mountains surrounding it. The mines were so rich that the city was one of the most influential during the colonial period. One of the mines, La Valenciana, accounted for two-thirds of the world's silver production at the height of its production.



Guanajuato City tunnel

The city is home to the Mummy Museum, containing naturally mummified bodies found in the municipal cemetery between the mid-19th and 20th centuries. It is also home to the Festival Internacional Cervantino, which invites artists and performers from all over the world, as well as from Mexico. Guanajuato was the site of the first battle of the Mexican War of Independence, between insurgent and royalist troops at the Alhóndiga de Granaditas, and was named a World Heritage Site in 1988.

History - Pre-Hispanic period

The first known inhabitants of the area were the Otomi, who were then displaced by the Chichimeca. There was P'urhépecha presence as well. The oldest known name for the area is "Mo-o-ti," which means "place of metals." Later, it was called "Paxtitlán" by the Aztecs, which means "place of straw." The current name of Guanajuato comes from P'urhépecha "Quanax

...Guanajuato

huato," which means "hilly place of frogs." Mining had been done in this area long before the Spanish arrived. Late in the pre-Hispanic period, the Aztecs had a presence here, specifically to look for metals to make ornamental objects for their political and religious elite. Some stories from this time state that the area was so rich in minerals that nuggets of gold could be picked up from the ground.



Many tunnels

Colonial era

The Spanish found deposits of gold here in the 1540s and soon they sent soldiers and built forts. In 1548, the outpost was formally established with the name of Real de Minas de Guanajuato by Viceroy Don Antonio de Mendoza. Despite Chichimeca



More tunnels

attacks, the population of the area grew rapidly with the arrival of Spanish and Creole adventurers and indigenous and mestizo laborers. It was soon declared a town with the name of Santa Fe Real de Minas de Guanajuato and Preafán de Rivera as the first mayor. Its first church was consecrated in 1555, and it was named "alcadía mayor" in 1574.

Initially, the city was divided into four barrios, or neighborhoods, called Marfil/Santiago, Tepetapa, Santa Ana and Santa Fe. The last is considered the oldest and is in the current colonia of Pastita. This city was split by a small river that served as a main thoroughfare. The oldest neighborhoods are Rayas y Mellado, Cata, La Valenciana, and Pastita, named after the

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mines found there. The very first mineral vein discovered, called San Bernabé, attracted attention not only in New Spain, but in Spain itself. The discovery brought thousands of adventurers to the area, which led to discovery of other deposits, such as at the Rayas mine. The San Bernabé find produced until 1928, when it tapped out. Today, the remains of this mine are found in the small village of La Luz, just outside of the city proper.

In 1679, by decree of viceroy of Fray Payo Enriquez de Rivera, the name was changed to Ciudad de Santa Fe y Real de Minas de Guanajuato (Very Noble and Loyal City of Santa Fe y Real de Minas de Guanajuato). It received an escutcheon in the same year, which is still in use. The city's coat of arms is of a gold background with an image of a woman in the center referring to the Holy Faith (Santa Fe). It contains other images such as a seashell supported by two laurel branches, blue ribbon and marble columns. It is topped with the royal crown of Castille and acanthus leaves.

In 1741, the city received the title of "The Most Noble and Loyal City of Santa Fe de Minas de Guanajuato" and became an "intendencia" (province) in 1790, because of the abundance of riches coming from its mines. In the 18th century, it was the world's leading silver extraction center, making it the richest

city in Mexico for much of the early colonial period. The production of the La Valenciana mine alone affected the world economy and made the counts of Valencianas one of the most powerful families in New Spain. The city was one of the richest and most opulent in New Spain in the 18th century. This wealth is manifested in its civil and religious architecture.

The colonial architecture includes some of the best Baroque and Churrigueresque examples in the New World—such as the Valenciana, Cata, and La Compañía (Jesuit) Churches, and the Basilica of Our Lady of Guanajuato. Most constructions from this time are of pink or green sandstone. In the churches, the Baroque altars were gilded with gold from local mines. These structures have influenced later buildings throughout central Mexico. **According to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the La Compañía and La Valenciana churches are considered among the most beautiful examples of Baroque architecture in Central and South America.**

Independence

By the end of the 18th century, the lower classes were poor and oppressed, despite the great wealth coming out of the mines. One event foreshadowing the Mexican War of Independence was a revolt carried out in the city, attacking the Caja Real (the building that held the Crown's share of mining pro-

Guanajuato's historical centre



...Guanajuato

duction) to protest the high taxes. One year later, there were large protests against the expulsion of the Jesuits.

The War of Independence broke out in the state of Guanajuato, in the town of Dolores, when Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla shouted the “Grito de Dolores” and raised an insurgent army on 15 and 16 September 1810. This army marched to San Miguel, today San Miguel de Allende, and then on to the city of Guanajuato. Just on the outskirts, on 28 September 1810, Hidalgo sent a warning letter to city authorities, but it was ignored.

Instead, royalist troops and many of the elite made their stand at the Alhóndigas de Granaditas granary, an imposing building with few windows and thick walls. After entering the city unopposed, Hidalgo decided to attack the granary. This was the first battle against Spanish troops in the war and is popularly called the 'Siege of the Alhóndiga'.

The insurgents were unable to take the building as royalist gunfire kept them from approaching the only entrance. **Then, a poor miner by the name of Juan José de los Reyes Martínez, better known as El Pípila, strapped a large flat stone onto his back for protection. Crawling, he carried a flask of tar and a torch. When he reached the wooden doors of the main entrance, he smeared it with the tar and set it on fire. This allowed the insurgents to enter and take the building. This action is commemorated by a colossal statue of El Pípila on a hill overlooking the city.**



Historic site



Lots of colour here

After Independence, the province of Guanajuato was made a state, and the city was made its capital in 1824. However, fighting in the state and the rest of the country continued as Liberals, who wanted a Federalist government, fought with Conservatives, who wanted a centralized government under a monarch or dictator. Power in the city and state changed hands between the two factions during much of the 19th century, taking its toll on mining. The city was the provisional capital of the country in 1858, as Liberal president Benito Juárez fought Conservative rebels. In 1863, the French took the city during the French Intervention in Mexico, receiving a visit from the installed Emperor Maximiliano I and his wife, Carlota. French occupation ended in 1868, when General Florencio Antillón captured it on 26 January.

Mining reactivated around the 1870s, due to foreign investments encouraged by the Porfirio Díaz government. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this renewed economic activity spurred projects such as the Juárez Theater, the Esperanza Dam, Monumento a la Paz, the Hidalgo Monument and the State Government Palace. Flooding had been a serious problem through most of the city's history, due to the area's steep compact hillsides. In 1760 and 1780, two major floods nearly wiped it out. This spurred construction of large ditches and tunnels to contain and divert overflows during the rainy season. These eventually crisscrossed a large part of the city. Dam construction in the 1960s brought the flooding under control, and many of the ditches and tunnels were converted into underground roadways.

The first Festival Internacional Cervantino was held in 1972. The historic city center was declared a World Heritage Site in 1988.

...Guanajuato

Lay out and transportation

The city was split by a small river that serves as a main thoroughfare. Because of the extremely hilly terrain, only one main road enters and another one leaves. The main street into the city, called Belaunzarán, now runs for three km underground and follows the original course of the Guanajuato River. **Unlike the regular layouts of many other Spanish and Mexican cities, the streets of Guanajuato follow the extreme irregularity of the terrain, with small alleyways, plazas and, in some cases steep staircases up hillsides.**

Most are paved with square cut stone, with only a limited number that are passable to cars. Most of the passageways are really alleys with a limited amount open space in the way of very small plazas, which gives the city a more European flavor than other Mexican cities.



Historic residence

A number of these alleys have no names and some have whimsical names such as "Sal si puedes" (Exit if you can). Another famous alley is the Callejón Oacutén, through which Ignacio Alende and Miguel Hidalgo entered, with their army, in 1810. One alley near the State Government Palace is called the Callejón de la Condesa (Alley of the Countess). The name comes from the lady of one of the mansions who lived there in

the very late 18th and very early 19th centuries. Ashamed of her husband's bad reputation with other women, before and after the marriage, the Countess began to enter and leave her home through the back door into this alley to avoid the glances of the townspeople.



Mansion, no longer in use

The most famous alley is the Callejón del Beso. Located on the slopes of the Cerro del Gallo hill, in a neighbourhood that dates back to the 18th century, it is only 168 cm (66 in) wide in places with balconies that nearly touch each other. Folklore states that couples who kiss on the third step (painted in red) are guaranteed seven years of happiness together.

The name, which means Alley of the Kiss, comes from a legend of two young lovers who come to a tragic end: Doña Carmen and Don Luis. Doña Carmen's father forbade the courting of his daughter by the young Luis, threatening to send Carmen to a convent if she left the house to see him. Carmen's balcony reached over this alley and nearly touched the balcony of the neighboring house. Luis found out who owned it and arranged access. One evening, while the two were on these balconies, Carmen's father discovered them as Luis held Carmen's hand between his own. Enraged, Carmen's father stabbed her, leaving the shocked Luis holding the hand of his beloved as it grew cold and lifeless, giving it one final kiss.

The narrow streets and alleys have given rise to a pastime called "callejoneadas." These are roving parties, traditionally held by the students of the University of Guanajuato with live musicians. Today, there are callejoneadas arranged for tourists as well.

...Guanajuato

Juarez Street is one of the few through streets on the surface. It is filled with stores and restaurants and has a constant flow of people and traffic. The other through streets of town are either partially or fully underground, following the old drainage ditches and tunnels dug during colonial times. Originally, they were used for flood control, but modern dams have controlled flooding and left them dry, so they have been turned into thoroughfares in a city with little surface area. The most important of these roads is Miguel Hidalgo or Belauzarán, which carried the runoff from the river that used to divide the city in two. Guanajuato's version of the La Llorona story has the woman wandering the tunnels, some of which had rivers or streams running through them.

The streets and alleys of the city are filled with mostly colonial era buildings, restaurants, bars, cafes with terraces and small plazas. Buildings have been constructed of sandstone in pink and green, adobe and other stone, filling the streets with shades of pink, green, ochre and red. Most of these plazas are in front of, or to the side of, the many churches, such as the Plaza San Fernando, Plaza San Roque, Plaza de la Valenciana, Plaza de Los Angeles, and Plaza de Mexiamora. Exceptions to these are the Jardín Reforma and the Jardín Unión.

The Mines

The mines that made Guanajuato rich are inside, and just outside, of the city proper. A number of these mines gave rise to small communities with their own churches; these still exist with other institutions such as museums. The best-known mines gave their names to a number of the city's oldest neighborhoods such as Cata, Rayas y Mellado, La Pastita, San Luisito and Valenciana. Some of these mines are open to the public for tours. The first significant mine was called San Bernabé, which brought thousands of adventurers to Guanajuato, and led to the discovery of other mineral deposits. This mine functioned from the 16th century until 1928. The remains of this mine can still be found in the small village of La Luz, just outside the city.

The most important of these mining complexes is the La Valenciana mine, on the northern edge of the city. It began operations in 1774 and, until the early 19th century, it was one of the most productive silver mines in the world, accounting for two thirds of the world's production at its peak. It produced



Former mine site

80% of all silver mined in the state of Guanajuato and one sixth of all Mexico. For over 250 years, it produced about 30% of the world's silver. The mine continues operations today, although production is much diminished, with one ton of rock is still extracted every six minutes. The largest shaft descends for 450 meters and about 10,000 miners have worked it over its history.

The mine made its owners, the Counts of Valenciana, extremely wealthy and powerful. The first Count of Valenciana, Antonio de Obregón y Alcocer had the San Cayetano Church (also known as the La Valenciana Church) built near the entrance of this mine. Dedicated to Saint Cajetan, it was built between 1765 and 1788. The church has a Churrigueresque portal, which has been compared to the Mexico City Cathedral and the La Santísima Church, both in Mexico City. The interior conserves a number of gilded altarpieces and a pulpit that is encrusted with ivory and precious hardwoods. The interior also contains graffiti to work and paintings from the 19th century.

Near the Valenciana Mine is the Guadalupe Mine, established in the 16th century. This complex was built with extremely large and thick stone walls supported by buttresses, giving it the look of a medieval fortress. The mine is no longer in operation, but the complex has been undergoing redevelopment as a resort with a hotel, spa, golf course and more.

The Cata mine is one of the early mines, and a city neighborhood is named after it. The mine is near the Don Quijote Plaza, and began operations in 1558, with peak production in

...Guanajuato



Beautiful tree on the drive to the campground

the first quarter of the 18th century. It was owned by the Marquis of San Clemente. The center of the neighborhood is the Señor de Villaseca Church, more commonly called the Cata Church. This church was built in the 17th century in Mexican Baroque, or Churrigueresque style, similar to that of the Valenciana Church. The church holds a valued crucifix called the Señor del Villaseca and is registered as a Mexican Federal Historic Monument.

The Bocamina de San Ramón mine is one of the city's early mines, with the deposit found by some travelers in the early 16th century. In 1548, its mother lode was found. Today, the mine is a tourist attraction in which visitors can descend into the earth through the old shafts. The complex has a patio area, a gallery of minerals and a bar called El Petardo, which once was the gunpowder storage room.

The Rayas mine gave rise to one of the city's original neighborhoods, after having been found in 1550 by Juan Rayas. The mine's apogee occurred in the 18th century, giving its owner, José de Sardineta y Legaspi the titles of Viscount of Sardineta and Marquis of Rayas. Today it is found on a section of the Carretera Panorámica (Panoramic Highway) that circles the city. The complex walls are tall and are held up by stone buttresses. It has one of the longest mine shafts in the world, which extends into the earth for 425 meters.

The Castle of Santa Cecilia is a majestic medieval style construction built on a former 17th century mining hacienda. The current building functions as a hotel.

The Mummies

The city's most famous tourist attraction is the Mummies of Guanajuato, which are in their own museum, on the side of the municipal cemetery in the Tepetapa neighborhood. The Mummy Museum contains a collection of specimens that mummified naturally in the adjoining cemetery. **Authorities began exhuming bodies in 1870, when a new law required residents to pay a tax for perpetual burial. If survivors didn't pay the tax, they exhumed the body.**



Mummies behind glass

If the body was mummified, they stored it in a building above ground and people began paying to see them in the late 1800s. The burial tax was abolished in 1958. At first, the mummies were displayed in a poorly lit tunnel that visitors entered with a torch or candle. **Visitors were allowed to touch the mummies with some even breaking off pieces for souvenirs or to verify the body was real.** The modern museum opened in 1970 with proper lighting and ventilation, and the mummies protected behind glass.

The collection contains 111 mummies, mostly women, with some men and about 20 children, but only 59 of these are on display. It is considered the largest collection of mummies in the Western Hemisphere. Almost all of the people were commoners and came from backgrounds such as miners and farmers. **The mummies were disinterred from the municipal cemetery between 1870 and 1958, and were people who died between 1850 and 1950.**

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Mummy of an infant

The first of the documented mummies, which has been on display in one form or another since the 1870s, is that of a French doctor named Remigio Leroy. He can be seen at the current museum. Of the children in the collection, one can see evidence of a practice where deceased Catholic children were dressed as angels, if girls, or as saints, if boys, to indicate their purity and assured entrance into heaven. Several are babies, including one considered the smallest mummy in the world.



Lots of mummies in Guanajuato

Two of these small bodies were partially embalmed by taking out internal organs and replacing the cavities with packing material. One was a fetus, which probably miscarried at about 24 weeks, and the other is a newborn male infant. This embalming process may have enhanced the natural mummification process but was not the cause. It is not known why these had been embalmed, nor are their years of death exactly known. There is a mummy of a woman who died in childbirth or miscarriage (a dried placenta is attached to her) but it is not known if she is the mother of either of these mummified children.



Travelling museum exhibit of mummies

Although only one out of every 100 bodies interred in the cemetery became naturally mummified, the concentration of this phenomenon has led to theories about how they have come about. Some believe that they are the result of people who had been buried alive, after mistakenly declared dead. These people, according to belief, died of desperation and asphyxiation and as a sign of their pain, convert into mummies.

More commonly, it is likely the result of Guanajuato's altitude or the abundance of minerals in the soil. However, all the mummified remains were found in the cemeteries above ground cement crypts, not in underground graves. **Researchers believe the phenomenon is due to the warm, dry climate of the area, which dried out the bodies rapidly.**

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Market inside building designed by Eiffel

One of the main reasons for the mummies' fame in Mexico is the 1972 film *El Santo contra las momias de Guanajuato*, which featured Mexico's most famous lucha libre wrestler, El Santo, as well as two others called Blue Demon and Mil Máscaras. In this movie, the mummies are reanimated by a wrestler known as "Satán" and El Santo fights to defeat them. It was filmed in the Guanajuato cemetery and has since become a cult classic.

A mayor of the city, Dr. Eduardo Hicks, initiated the Guanajuato Mummy Research Project in 2007 to increase knowledge and awareness of the specimens. They have since been extensively studied in Mexico and the United States. The study has found evidence of medical conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, extreme anemia, lung damage from smoke inhalation and tuberculosis.



Castillo Santa Cecilia

Some of the research looked into the folklore surrounding a number of the mummies such as the man with a misshapen face thought to have been caused by a mortal blow, a woman who was supposedly hanged by her husband and a woman

who is thought to have been buried alive. No scientific evidence has been found to support the last two stories.

Without records, it is not possible to know exactly when some mummies died. Carbon 14 cannot help because it has a margin of error of 50 years and it is already known that the mummies died between 1850 and 1950. In 2009, 36 of the mummies were displayed for the first time outside of Mexico, at the Detroit Science Center in the United States, as part of a tour to last until 2012. They have been the focus of a National Geographic documentary series called "The Mummy Road Show," which covered 18 of the mummies.

Festival Cervantino

The Festival Internacional Cervantino is an annual cultural event, mostly held in the city of Guanajuato, which sponsors a large number of artistic and cultural events with artists invited from Mexico and other parts of the world. The event is named in honor of Miguel de Cervantes, author of *Don Quijote*. The festival began in 1972, as short plays performed by University of Guanajuato students, based on the works of Cervantes. In 2010, special guests included the state of Querétaro and the country of Colombia. The 2010 edition of the festival included performers such as Tangokineses from Argentina, Cumbia Cienaguera from Colombia. In total there were 424 events over 26 days.

The festival hosts events such as opera, theater productions, film showings, art exhibitions, academic conferences and talks, concerts and dance recitals. The performances occur in 70 venues over most of the month of October. Events are held throughout the city, with some in other locations such as Mexico City, Guadalajara and San Miguel de Allende. The most important venue in Guanajuato for the festival is the Juárez Theater, which is on the Jardín de la Unión (Union Garden).

Other important venues in the city are the Teatro Principal, the Cervantes Theater and facilities of the University of Guanajuato. Events are also held in area churches, plazas and even on the streets. The Festival Internacional Cervantino Callejero is a parallel event sponsored by the Centro Libre de Experimentación Teatral y Artística (CLETA). In 2010, this event featured 300 performances with social themes. This annual event was begun in 1975, in part inspired by The Beatles' Abbey Road album cover.

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The cow likes the statue

Landmarks

The center of the modern city is the **Plaza de la Paz (Plaza of Peace), also known as the Plaza Mayor (Main Plaza)**. Since the colonial period, the richest of the city's families built their main homes here, along with government buildings and the parish church, now a basilica. This plaza is a garden with a sculpture of a woman representing peace; its placement here in the late 19th century caused the official name to change to Plaza de la Paz. Today, the plaza is surrounded by the basilica, other churches, government and commercial buildings, many of which were once mansions.

Still remaining around the plaza are mansions that belonged to local nobility such as the Counts of Rul, Count of Galvez, and the Count de los Chico. The Rul house was constructed at the end of the 18th century by architect Francisco Eduardo Tresguerras. It is noted for its inner courtyard, with architectural features from ancient Greece. Alexander von Humboldt stayed here in 1803. Later, the house became known as the Palacio de Otero. The Casa Real de Ensaye is a Baroque mansion that, on its façade, bears the first noble coat of arms granted in Guanajuato.

The main church is the **Basilica Colegiata de Nuestra Señora de Guanajuato, built between 1671 and 1696**. Overall, the church is a sober Mexican Baroque in style but there are popular elements from donations made by the area's miners, and other elements that demonstrate the influence of several of the

city's rich mining nobility. The Marquis of San Clemente and Pedro Lascuráin de Retana were the current building's first patrons.

Later, the Counts of Valenciana left their influence as well with the donation of a clock for one of the towers and the acquisition of relics related to a saint and martyr named Faustina obtained from the Pope. These relics are in the main altar. The main portal is made of pink sandstone with "estipite" or inverted truncated pyramidal columns. The focus of the main altar is the image of Our Lady of Guanajuato (Nuestra Señora de Guanajuato), who is the patroness of the city. She was donated to the city by Carlos I, and his son Felipe II, in 1557. In 1696, the church gained minor basilica status and full basilica status in 1957.



Dan and Lisa at the Guanajuato lookout

The **Legislative Palace, or state government building, was the site of the Aduana, or Casas Consistoriales (customs house), in the colonial period**. The current building was constructed by Cecilio Luis Long, in a European style popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and inaugurated in 1903. The façade has a Neoclassical portal in sandstone of colors typical of the Guanajuato area. It contains the legislative chamber

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called the Sala de Sesiones, decorated with 19th- and 20th-century paintings and somber furniture.



Diego, Dan and Frida

Alhóndiga de Granaditas

The Alhóndiga de Granaditas is a large building covering an entire block, and originally built to store enough grain to feed the city for a year, to protect the population against famines such as those that occurred in 1783, due to crop failure. This gave the building its name, which roughly translates to "house of grain." The building is two floors high, nearly windowless, with a very large courtyard in its interior. Construction began in 1798, under an architect named Durán y Villaseñor and terminated under José del Mazo.

The Alhóndiga only served its original function for eight months after it was built. The main reason for its importance today is that it was the site of the first battle of the Mexican War of Independence between insurgents and royalist troops on 28 September 1810. When Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende and the insurgent army approached the city, royalist troops under Lieutenant Riaño, and the city's elite, took refuge in the building, along with millions of pesos of silver and other loot.

The insurgents quickly surrounded the building, but the building proved difficult to penetrate due to the lack of openings and royalist gunfire. **The battle remained a stalemate until a miner from San Miguel de Allende devised a way to approach the building's main entrance. Juan José de los Reyes Martínez, a miner, AKA El Pípila, who joined the insurgent army as it passed through his hometown.**

After the battle, it was used as barracks, a tenement and tobacco warehouse. From 1864 to 1949, it was used as the state penitentiary. In 1949, the building was converted into the Museo Regional de Guanajuato, documenting the history of the area and its role in Mexican national history, from the pre-Hispanic period to the present, divided among fourteen halls on the upper floor.

On the ground floor there are large mascarons of José Mariano Jiménez, Vicente Guerrero, Ignacio Allende and Ignacio Aldama. The main hall has mascarons of Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos y Pavón who "guard" the national coat of arms.

In front of this sits an eternal flame that is renewed each 28 September. The main stairwell contains mural work by José Chávez Morado that alludes to Independence. It houses a large collection of ceramics from western parts of Mesoamerica, especially from Chupícuaro. It contains works by Guanajuato artist Hermenegildo Bustos and photographer Romualdo García.

There are displays related to the building itself, in its construction, its original function as a granary and its role in one of the first battles of the War of Independence. The large courtyard within the Alhóndiga is a traditional place to celebrate Mexico's Independence Day with the reenactment of Miguel Hidalgo's "El Grito de Dolores." It is one of the sites for a number of the

Diego Rivera mural



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Diego Rivera Museum

events of the Festival Cervantino. The museum was restored in 2010 for the Bicentennial by the INAH at a cost of 5.7 million pesos as part of similar museums in Dolores Hidalgo and San Miguel de Allende to form the Ruta de Independencia (Independence Route). The work was the first renovation of the building in 20 years.

University of Guanajuato

The University began as a Jesuit school for children in the 1st half of the 18th century. The school was established and sponsored by Josefa Teresa de Busto y Moya, sister of the Marquis of San Clemente, who obtained permission from the Spanish Crown in 1732 and established the institution in her home.

Although she provided a significant donation and solicited donations from other wealthy families in the city, credit for the establishment of the school is most often given to Jesuits. Over time, the school grew and began to offer high school and professional level studies. The school has had several names, including Real Colegio de la Purísima Concepción (1767), Colegio del Estado (1828), Colegio Nacional de Guanajuato (1867), with its current name adopted in 1945. The Colegio del Estado name was prompted the fact that the institution became property of the state in 1828. In 1945, it gained university status.

Today the institution serves approximately 30,000 students at the high school, bachelor and graduate levels. In addition to the main campus in the city, there are nine others in other

parts of Guanajuato state. The university hosts a number of the events of the Festival Cervantino, with its famous stairway acting as seating. The best known facility of the institution is the main building in Guanajuato city, which was built in neoclassical style in green stone. It houses the dean's office, administrative offices and a number of the institution's departments.

The main building is recognized by its long staircase with 113 steps, which empties onto the Callejon del Estudiante. Under the main roof is a 16th-century chapel that was sponsored by Vasco de Quiroga for indigenous mine workers. It's called the Templo de los Hospitales (Temple of the Hospitals). It received the image of the Virgin of the Rosary, now called the Nuestra Señora de Guanajuato.



Eiffel-built structure - large market

The Museo de Historia Natural Alfredo Dugés is on the ground floor of the University of Guanajuato's main building. It contains a national-level collection of fossils, plants and animals. The importance of this collection comes from its state of conservation and its age. The collection was gathered by Alfredo Dugés and donated to the university.

Other Plazas and Churches

The city is dotted with a large number of small plazas that were built along with the churches that usually gave them their names. One of the best-known plazas or open spaces is the Jardín de la Unión, on the south side of the San Diego Church. The garden is filled with carefully pruned Indian laurels and, in addition to the church, is surrounded by small cafes, restaurants, and the Juarez Theater. It occupies a triangular space that originally was the church atrium.

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Public art

In 1883, wrought iron benches and a kiosk were installed. Today, concerts are held in this kiosk on occasion. It is popular with wandering student musicians performing callejoneadas and functions as the atrium of the San Diego Church. This church is a Churrigueresque façade and the interior has paintings from the 18th century, neoclassical altarpieces and a crucifix called the Cristo de Burgos, which was donated to the church by the Count of Valenciana.

The current church was built between 1780 and 1784, by the Count of Valenciana, when the original was destroyed by a flood. In the 19th century, its original gilded altarpieces were replaced with the current neoclassical ones. The monastery, which was also destroyed, was never rebuilt, but the site is now home to the San Diego Museum. It was created to rescue and display the cultural inheritance of the city, describing its development and changes from its beginnings to the present day. It also contains a computer simulation of what the original monastery looked like.

Located next to the University, the Temple of the Company of Jesus or Oratorio de San Felipe, was built in 1746 by José

Joaquín Sardaneta y Legazpi. It was completed in 1767, the same year that the Jesuits were expelled from New Spain. The new church remained abandoned until 1804, when the order was allowed to return and reclaim it. The order then worked to renovate the church, replacing Baroque elements for neoclassical ones, which were then in fashion.



Streetscape

It has a façade with narrow estipite columns in Churrigueresque style, but its more unique aspect is a colossal cupola with three levels, which was added in the 19th century by architect Vicente Heredia. The temple includes a collection of 180 paintings that were recently studied and restored. Some of these paintings are displayed in the church complex, while the rest are kept in a pinacoteca created for the purpose. The main altar and the paintings are by Miguel Cabrera.

Dating from 1726, the oldest plaza still in existence is the Plaza de Baratillo, located in front of the San Roque Church, surrounded by very old houses. The name comes from a weekly market once held on Sundays. This market specialized in low prices (baratillo means "very cheap"). In the center is a fountain brought from Florence, Italy. This fountain once provided area residents with potable water from the Olla Dam. Today, it is purely ornamental.

There is a stone cross, which indicates the ground was once used as a cemetery. Starting in the 1950s, this plaza was used for short, one-act plays called Entremeses Cervantinos, which later developed into the Festival Cervantino. The plaza is still

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used for these plays, as well as for events associated with the annual event. The San Roque Church dates from 1726. It has a sober Baroque façade and contains an important collection of colonial era paintings.

Other important churches include the Temple of Guadalupe from the 18th century in sober Baroque, the Pardo Church from the 18th century with a façade covered with sculpted plants. The San Francisco Church on Sopeña Street faces a plaza with the same name. It has a Baroque façade of pink stone, with a green tint, a staircase with wrought iron railings and a small fountain.



Emiliano Zapata

The Belén Church was built in the 18th century by the Count of Valenciana with a modest façade. It is across from the Hidalgo Market and on the street leading to the Alhóndiga de Granaditas. The Mellado Church was part of the Merced Monastery. The cloister area is now in ruins but the church remains and is dedicated to the veneration of Our Lady of Mercy. The original Baroque altarpieces were replaced with Neoclassical ones in the 19th century. The Jardín Reforma or Reforma Square was originally a market, built in 1861. When the Hidalgo Market opened, most vendors moved out. In 1923, the site was renovated into a garden with a central fountain and Indian laurel, eucalyptus and cypress trees. The Jardín Reforma has an arched entryway with a series of thin columns.

The Plaza de Quijote is at the old San Antonio bridge and to the side of the San Diego Church. The plaza was created to

honor the 400th anniversary of the first edition of Don Quijote of La Mancha in 1605.

Other Landmarks

The Juarez Theater is located across from the San Diego Church in the city center. It is one of the main venues of the Festival Cervantino. It is considered one of the most beautiful theaters in the country, according to Mexico Desconocido. It is in neoclassical style, with a façade containing nine sculptures depicting the Muses of Greek mythology.

The south façade of the Juárez Theater has a lintel with the word "Tragedia" on it and on the north façade. The matching lintel reads "Comedia." It is one of the main venues of the Festival Cervantino. The interior has an eclectic design and is richly decorated. The vestibule or foyer (also called the Smoking Room) has columns and garlands. The auditorium is Mauresque with Arabesque detail throughout. The curtain contains an image of Constantinople. The theater was built from 1872 to 1903 by Antonio Rivas Mercado, who designed the Angel of Independence monument in Mexico City, and inaugurated with the opera Aida by Giuseppe Verdi with President Diaz in attendance. It is the only theater in the country that has conserved its original furnishings.



Former government building

On the side of the Juarez Theater, there is the Rincón del Arte. Next to this is a cable car that rises up to the Pípila Monument on San Miguel Hill. The monument honors the insurgent who managed to torch the main entrance of the Alhóndiga de Granaditas. The monument consists of a giant statue of Pípila raising a torch over his head. Around the monument, there is an esplanade and overlook with permits a panoramic view of nearly the entire city.

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Tunnelling through

The Teatro Principal was built at the city's height when the wealth of the mines attracted entertainers. It was the first theater in the city, built in neoclassical style, and one of the few places where people of different social strata could enter. The theater closed periodically during its early history due to socio-political upheavals. After the Mexican Revolution, it was converted into a movie theater. Shortly after this, it suffered a fire and closed for 30 years. Today, it is reconstructed and run by the University of Guanajuato as one of the main venues of the Festival Cervantino.

Unlike other theaters in the city, which were stage theaters converted into movie houses at one point or another, the Teatro Cervantes was a movie house that was converted into a stage theater. It is used for puppet shows, dance recitals, experimental theater and conferences.

The Mercado Hidalgo was built by Ernesto Brunel in 1910, over what was the site of the old Gavira bullring. It was inaugurated by President Porfirio Díaz to celebrate Mexico's Centennial of Independence. The roof has a cupula with a clock tower. The clock has four faces and the interior of the market is a giant metallic nave. The market sells typical candies of the region such as "charamuscas," which is often shaped as a charro or mummy and wrapped in wax paper. The upper floor of the market contains a large number of crafts and souvenir shops containing products such as baskets, knit items, ceramics, leathercrafts and more. The ground floor has many everyday items such as fresh and packaged food, household goods, wickerwork and hardware.

The Museo del Pueblo de Guanajuato was created to exhibit the best of the artwork of the city. It contains an important collection of religious arte from the 17th to 19th centuries. It contains collections of works by Olga Costa and José Chávez Morado. This includes three murals by Chávez Morado, set up as altars. These murals depict the end of the colonial period and the War of Independence.

The Museo Diego Rivera was the house where the painter was born and spent his early childhood. The first floor is dedicated to furniture and other items from the late 19th century. The floors above contain a large collection of paintings, about 100 of which are Rivera's early and little known works. It has workshops for arts, literary events, film showings and other cultural activities.



No lack of gold at this church

Very near the Jardín Union on Luis González Obregón Street is the **Casa de Gobierno, were Benito Juárez made the city the temporary capital of Mexico.** Next to the Casa de Gobierno is

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Lots of stairs to climb in this city

the Real Caja de Guanajuato, which dates from 1665. It was the scene of the naming of the first authorities of a Mexico declared liberated from Spanish rule. Later it was used as a women's prison and teachers' college.

The Museo Iconográfico del Quijote is on Manuel Doblado Street. It was created in 1987 to honor Don Quijote. The museum contains visual representations of the character, including some created by notable artists such as Pedro Coronel, José Guadalupe Posada and Salvador Dalí.

The Museo de Arte Olga Costa y José Chávez Morado is in the Pastita neighborhood, installed in a building in the former Guadalupe Hacienda. This was the home of the two artists who donated the structure and their personal art collection to the city after their deaths. The collection contains their own works as well as works by a number of other artists.



Guanajuato suburbs

The Casa Museo Gene Byron, in the suburb of Marfil, was the former Santa Ana Hacienda and belonged to Canadian artist Gene Byron. Byron began studying Mexican muralists in 1941, but her work was also influenced by contemporary Spanish artists. She and her husband settled in Guanajuato in 1958, and took over this ex-hacienda in 1962. Today the grounds are a cultural center that hosts art exhibitions, theatrical productions, concerts, and book presentations.



Lovely park

The Christ the King Monument was constructed on the top of Cubilete Mountain in 1923 by architect Nicolás Mariscal Piña and sculptor Fidias Elizondo. The sculpture stands 20 meters tall and shows Christ with his arms extended, flanked by two angels who hold a crown of thorns and a royal crown. The sculpture weighs 250 metric tons. From the plaza, one can see the entire Bajío Valley.



Popular grazing spot

... more pics follow

...Guanajuato



San Ramón mine entrance (above) and airshaft (below)



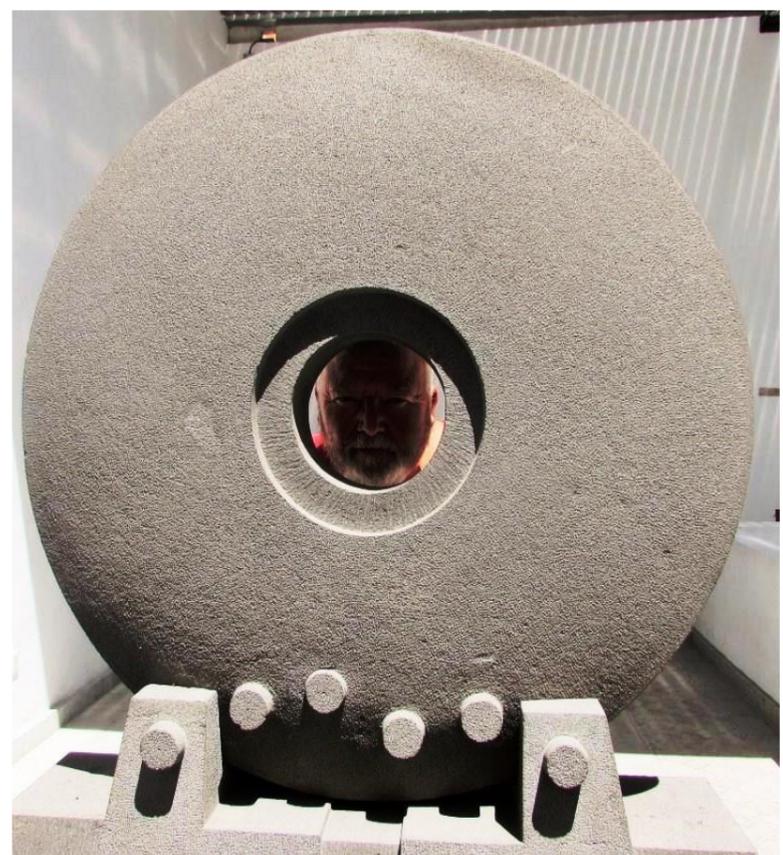
Sculpture at the roundabout



The Baja Amigos in Guanajuato

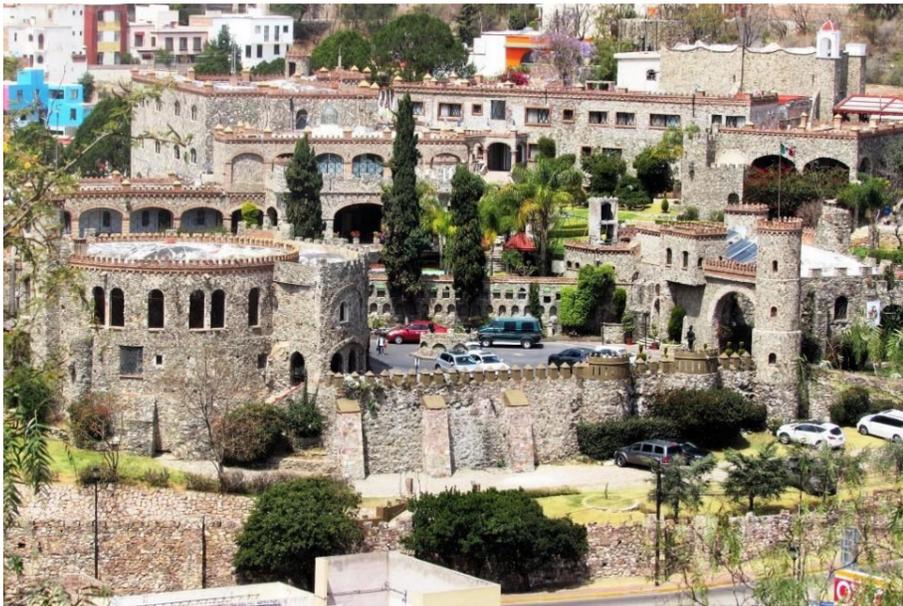


Street market



Square head and a round hole

...Guanajuato



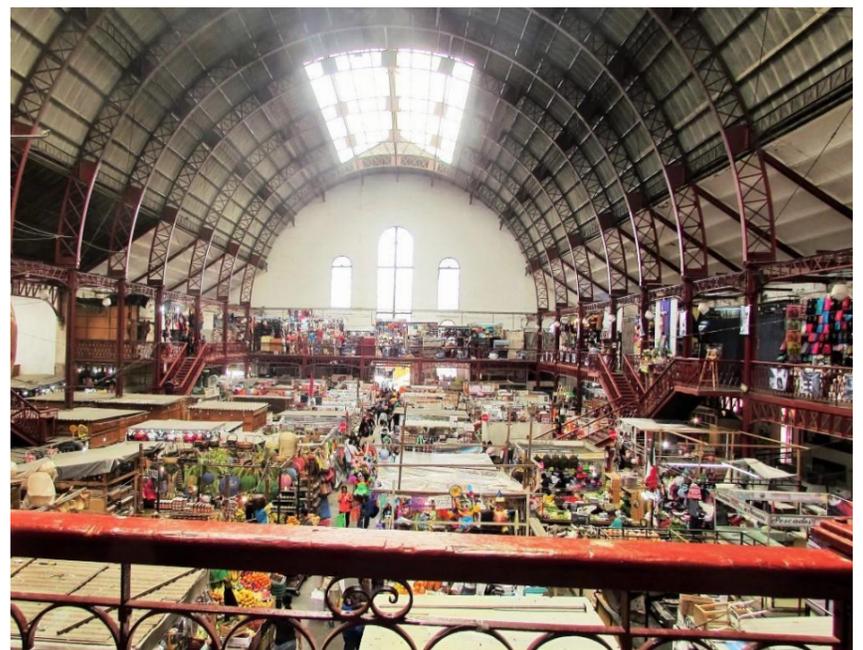
Castillo Santa Cecilia on the inside



A major battle of independence from Spain took place here



Lunch stop



Inside the Eiffel-designed market

MUSEUM HOUSE OF DIEGO RIVERA

The museum was established in 1975 in the same building where Diego María de la Concepción Juan Nepomuceno Estanislao de Rivera y Barrientos Acosta y Rodríguez, in short Diego Rivera, one of the greatest Mexican painters, was born December 8th 1886 in one of the rooms on the first level, and where he would live during the first 6 years of his life. This period in life would mark the development of his creative personality.

In 1971 one of his daughters Guadalupe Rivera Marín promoted the recovery of the complete building where her father was born and started the project to convert the house into a museum that would honor this illustrious Mexican muralist in his native city. The restoration and rehabilitation work was started in 1973 sponsored by the Federal Government, the Government of the State of Guanajuato the Fine Arts Institute, and the University of Guanajuato.

Not only they performed the restoration of the original characteristics of the residence, but also added to the decoration furniture and objects from the end of the nineteenth century, with the purpose of creating the original ambience in which the Rivera Barrientos family lived in. The rooms designated to the epoch recreate the living room, the bedrooms, dressing room, the bedroom of his Aunt Vicenta, the bedroom of the Rivera matrimony, the dining room and the study.

The wealth of the Museum House of Diego Rivera contains fundamentally the collection of the engineer Marte R. Gómez, of which around 175 original art pieces of Diego Rivera are regularly on exhibition. This collection is one of the most important of the country, due to the fact that it represents various creative stages of the artist, like the formative years his work with cubism among other artistic movements. As a visitor one can admire portraits, landscapes, nudes, allegories, still life, sketches of murals performed in different techniques, like oil paint, ink, lithograph and water colors.



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

Chile Ancho Soup

The heat of this deep-red ancho chile soup and its pasilla chile garnish is balanced by the addition of cooling crema and thinly sliced avocado.

Serves 6 - 8

Ingredients

- ✓ 3 dried ancho chiles
- ✓ 4 medium plum tomatoes
- ✓ 2 cloves garlic
- ✓ 1 small white onion
- ✓ 1/2 cup canola oil
- ✓ 8 small dried pasilla chiles
- ✓ 8 cups chicken stock
- ✓ Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ✓ 1 cup queso fresco, crumbled
- ✓ 8 sprigs cilantro, finely chopped
- ✓ 1/2 cup crema or sour cream
- ✓ 1 avocado, very thinly sliced
- ✓ Fried tortilla strips, for garnish

Instructions

1. Heat a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add ancho chiles and cook, turning once, until lightly toasted, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Pour over 1 cup boiling water, and let sit until soft, about 30 minutes. Drain chiles, reserving soaking liquid, and remove and discard stems and seeds. Transfer chiles to a blender and set aside.

2. Return pot to heat, and add tomatoes, garlic, and onion; cook, turning as needed, until blackened all over, about 10 minutes. Transfer to blender, and puree until smooth, at least 4 minutes. Pour through a fine strainer into a bowl, and set chile puree aside.
3. Return saucepan to heat and add 1/4 cup oil; add pasilla chiles, if using, and fry, turning once, until crisp, about 5 minutes. Transfer to paper towels and let cool. Discard oil and wipe pan clean.
4. Return pan to medium-high heat, and add remaining oil. When hot, add chile puree, and fry, stirring constantly, until slightly reduced, about 6 minutes. Add stock, and bring to a boil; remove from heat, season with salt and pepper, and keep warm.
5. Divide cheese and cilantro among serving bowls, and then ladle soup over each. Top each with a dollop of crema, a few slices of avocado, and some tortilla strips; garnish with a fried pasilla chile, if you like.

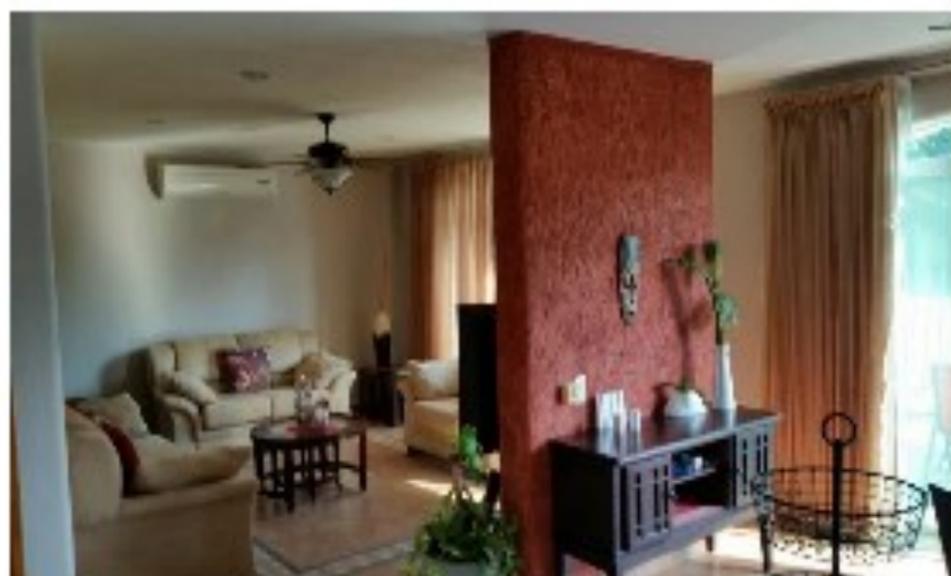
Recipe and images from [Saveur](#)



House for Rent

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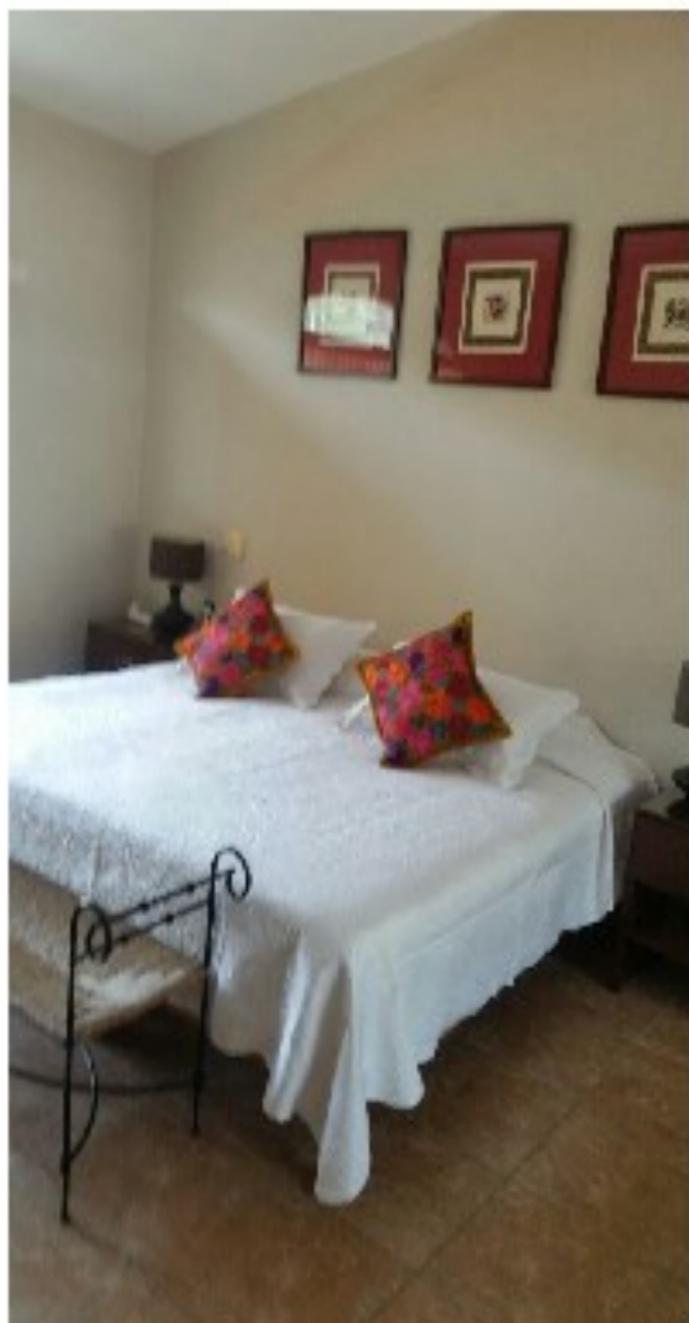
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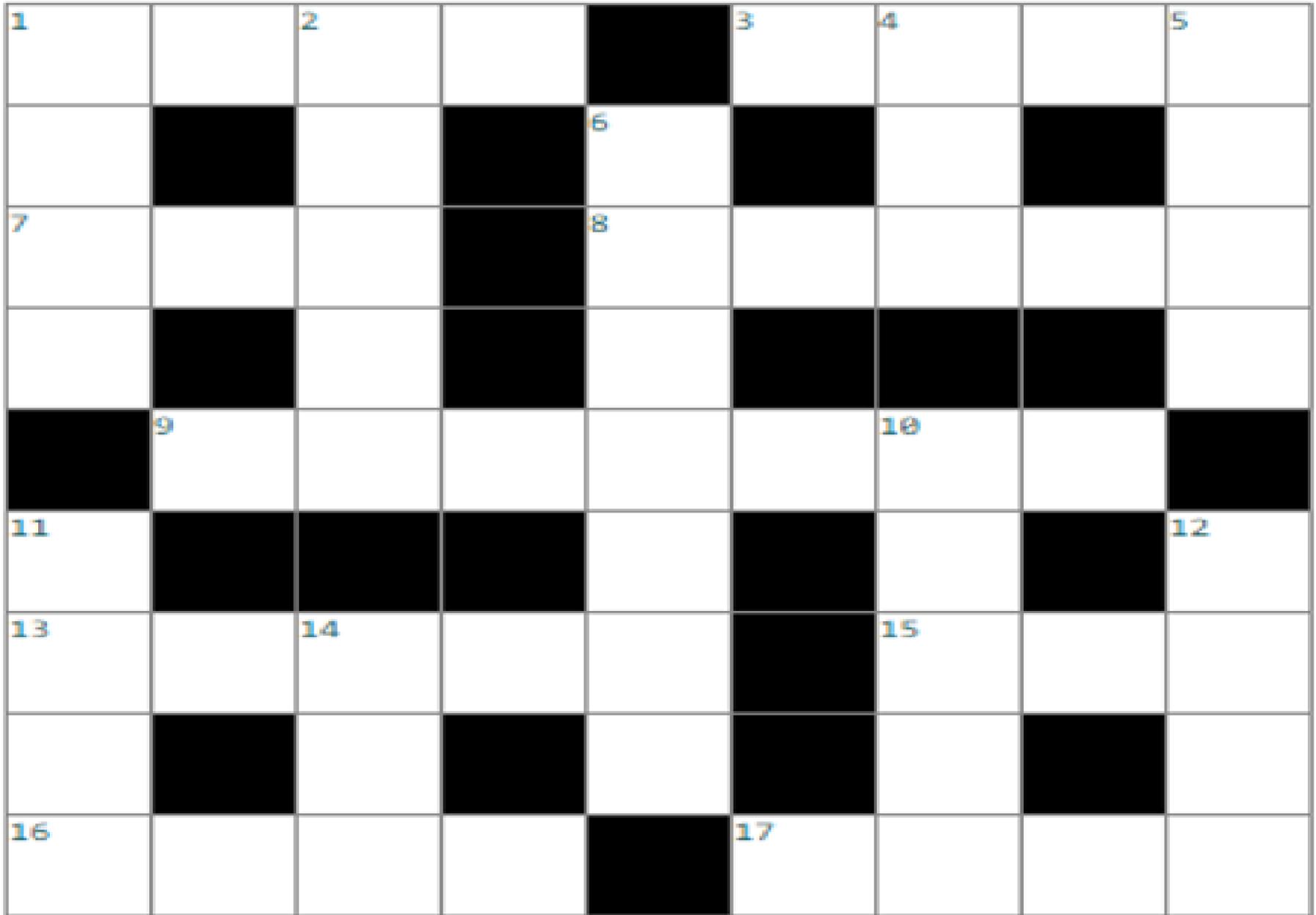
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Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 (it) doubted
- 3 buoy
- 7 eye
- 8 (feminine of) loose
- 9 (I) warmed
- 13 (she) spends
- 15 anger
- 16 classroom
- 17 (I) ate

Down

- 1 god, deity
- 2 goddess
- 4 bear
- 5 (you/tú) love
- 6 suburb
- 10 wheat
- 11 water
- 12 peanut
- 14 sun

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

La Llorona (legend)

from the Path to Citizenship series

In Mexican folklore, **La Llorona**, "The Weeping Woman", is a ghost of a woman who lost her children and now cries while looking for them in the river, often causing misfortune to those who are near, or who hear her. There is no credible source or evidence to the events that inspired the tale/legend of La Llorona.

Legend

The legend is said that in a rural village there lived a young woman named Maria. Maria came from a poor family but was known around her village for her beauty. One day, an extremely wealthy nobleman traveled through her village. He stopped in his tracks when he saw Maria. Maria was charmed by him and he was charmed by her beauty so, when he proposed to her, she immediately accepted. Maria's family was thrilled that she was marrying into a wealthy family, but the nobleman's father was extremely disappointed that his son was marrying into poverty.

Maria and her new husband built a house in the village to be away from his disapproving father. Eventually, Maria gave birth to twins: a boy and a girl. Her husband was always traveling,

and stopped spending time with his family. When he came home, he only paid attention to the children and Maria knew her husband was falling out of love with her.

One day, he left and never returned. Years later, as Maria and her twins were walking by a river, she saw a familiar carriage with a younger, beautiful woman next to her husband. Maria was so angry and confused that, without thinking, she picked up her two children and threw them into the river, drowning them.

Only after she saw their bodies floating in the river did she realize what she had done and she then jumped into the river, hoping to die with her children. Now she spends eternity looking for her children around that river. It is said that, if you hear her crying, you are to run the opposite way. If you hear her cries, they could bring misfortune or even death. Many parents in Mexico and Guatemala use this story to scare their children from staying out too late.

At the gates of heaven, she was challenged over the whereabouts of her children, and not permitted to enter the afterlife until she found them. La Llorona is forced to wander the Earth for all eternity, searching in vain for her drowned offspring. She constantly weeps, hence her name "La Llorona." She is caught between the living world and the spirit world.

In some versions of the tale, La Llorona kidnaps wandering children who resemble her missing children, asks them for forgiveness, then kills them to take the place of her own. People who claim to have seen her say she appears at night or in the late evening by rivers or lakes. Some believe those who hear the wails of La Llorona are marked for death, but those who escape in time are not, as in the Gaelic banshee legend.

Amongst her wails she is noted as crying "¡Ay mis hijos!" which translates to "Oh my children!" In the Guatemalan version of the legend, it is said that when her wailing sounds near, she is actually far and when she sounds distant- she is actually very near.

It should be noted that the folklore will vary dependent on the location, as it is not specific to any one region, and is known throughout numerous Latin American countries.

Image and article source: [Wikimedia](#)



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