



- Good Deeds
- Manzanillo Living
- Nature's Wonders
- Findings in Nature
- History and Mythology
- Technology
- Entertainment
- Finance
- Recipe
- Learn Spanish

Color and costumes at the Fiesta in El Naranjo
Photo by John Chalmers

In this issue

Good Deeds series by *John Chalmers*
A Fiesta for El Naranjo...1

Manzanillo Living series by *Suzanne A. Marshall*
Inevitable Change...8

Nature's Wonders
I Planted Roots in Mexico series by *Tommy Clarkson*
Aphelandra Squarrosa...12
Indian Rubber Plant...20

Findings in Nature series by *Terry Sovil*
Limes in Mexico...14

History and Mythology series by *Kirby Vickery*
Mesoamerican Dogs...17

Technology series by *Señior Tech*
Potpourri - A collection of technical tips for your stay in Manzanillo...22

At the Movies series by *Suzanne A. Marshall*
Water...24

Finance series by *Yann Kostic*
The Great Investment Risk...25

Recipe - Food and Drink
Pier House Key Lime Pie...26

Spanish Skills
Crossword...29

Path to Citizenship (P2C)
Rail Transport in Mexico...30



E-MAGAZINE

a publication of Manzanillo Sun

www.manzanillosun.com

Publisher/editor: Dana Parkinson

Contact:

General info@manzanillosun.com

Dana Parkinson dana@manzanillosun.com

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

ads@manzanillosun.com

Regular writers and contributors:

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

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

info@manzanillosun.com

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

Article submissions:

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

ADVERTISING

Website

WEB AD plus these options to advertise in the e-magazine...

1/4 page - \$3,200 MXN per year (a discount of nearly 48%!) **MOST POPULAR!**

1/2 page - \$4,300 MXN per year- can be horizontal or vertical (a discount of 53%!)

Full page - \$6,000 MXN per year (a discount of 57%!)

BEST VALUE!

ads@manzanillosun.com

sample ad below

MEDIA KITS

See our current media kits here
(in English and in Spanish)

Sample ads



monkey's
POLLO • BURGERS • BEER



OLA BRISA
gardens
"The Civilized Jungle"



Lakeside Medical Group

Comprehensive Medical Care Covered By Your Insurance

Most US and CAN insurances accepted:

- Humana
- United Health Care
- Aetna
- BlueCross/Anthem
- Best Doctors
- Coventry
- Cigna
- IMG
- Seven Corners
- Tricare
- VA Service Connected
- ChampVa and more U.S. Insurance Plans



- Primary Care
- Specialist Network
- Medications Covered
- Pain Clinic
- Hospital Network
- Physical Therapy

Free Enrollment

No Deductibles

No Out-of-Pocket expenses



NOW IN MANZANILLO

Website: www.lakemedicalgroup.com

Email: staff@lakemedicalgroup.com

Mexico Toll free: 01-800-681-9396

US Toll Free: 1-888-449-7799

Mexico Tel: 376-766-0395

A Fiesta for El Naranjo

story and photos by John Chalmers



A colorful backdrop created in the colors of México's flag, festooned with items of Mexican culture, was prepared for the festive event.

At the small town of El Naranjo, population 1,500, in the municipality of Manzanillo, and not far from the city center, school kids in the town are keeping alive the culture, tradition, heritage and dances of México.

On March 19, at the open-air *casino*, the pavilion beside Highway 200 at El Naranjo, the students of Griselda Álvarez Ponce de León Secundaria Pública school put on a fine performance in a special fund-raising event. The *escuela* is named for Griselda Álvarez (1913-2009), the first female governor in México who, from 1979-1985, served as governor of Colima, the state in which Manzanillo is located. Her father had served as governor of Colima from 1919-1923. When Colima became a state in 1857, Griselda's great-grandfather became its first governor.

There was more than just a dance performance for the evening! It began with a true Mexican buffet dinner with all dishes made by women in the town. It was as authentic a traditional feast as folks could find anywhere! Diners had the opportunity to enjoy *pozole*, *tamales*, *guacamole*, *chiles rellenos*, *flautas*, *enchiladas* and other home-cooked specialities. Of course, in addition to soft drinks, the bar offered *cervezas*, *magaritas* and *piña coladas*—just as one would expect in México! For dessert, a giant cake decorated like the flag of the county provided a fine finish to the dinner.

Entertainment followed in a lively dance and music program presented by the students. Some 200 folks attended the sell-out gala and comprised an appreciative audience. Many attending the event were snowbirds from the area, who not only enjoy the charms and climate of México while they escape win-

ter at home in Canada and the United States, but are also very supportive of local charitable activities and events.

School director, Yamil Torres, spoke to the audience in thanking them for their attendance and explaining the need to replace equipment that had been stolen. He explained that the festive occasion was staged for the benefit of the school, which has been vandalized five times in two years, with theft of computers, television sets, cooking equipment and electrical cable.

The *escuela* is located across the road from the pavilion and the adjacent rodeo ring, two important local facilities used for special occasions. Two buildings and a covered basketball court, also used for school assemblies, comprise the school. It has 70 students from 12 to 16 years old in levels corresponding to grades seven to nine.

Staff includes six teachers, a secretary, an attendant and Yamil Torres, the director. He and other teachers, along with help from some of the students who were experienced with the dances, did the choreography and put the program together.

All who attended the fiesta left with admiration for the skill and dedication of the young performers. As well as being well fed and well entertained, those who came and also made donations made during the evening, had the satisfaction of knowing they had supported a worthy cause for the hard-working students of a local school. In the *escuela* with a connection by name to Mexican history, the students themselves have been keeping alive the traditions of their country.

... more pics follow

...A Fiesta for El Naranjo



The *casino*, the open-air pavilion at El Naranjo, was the venue for a special occasion with a buffet dinner and a lively dance performance by students from a local *escuela*.



A spectacular dress and amazing make-up made this character for the evening a popular subject for many of the guests' cameras.



The traditional Mexican holiday *Día de Muertos*, the Day of the Dead, is at the beginning of November, but these zombies arrived for the party and later in the evening they danced with dinner guests!



After joining the line-up to fill their plates with traditional dishes, guests were seated to enjoy the meal prior to the performance.



A hearty meal was enjoyed by the sell-out crowd who came to enjoy the fund-raising presentation for support of the school.

...A Fiesta for El Naranjo



A huge cake topped with the Mexican flag was big enough for everyone to enjoy a piece to finish their dinner.



Appropriate costumes were an integral component and added color to all the dances in the evening's program.



Students from the school are lined up in costume at the start of a non-stop presentation of synchronized and well-performed dances.



Radiant smiles from the dancers, along with fancy footwork and foot-tapping music, were all part of the show.



With canes and masks to help portray old men, the boys in the ensemble were entertaining and comical in this number.

...A Fiesta for El Naranjo



A solo singing sensation in a spectacular outfit, eleven-year old Luis wowed the crowd with his vocal talents.



Color, serapes and swirling skirts, combined with dance and music, contributed to a very enjoyable program.



The quality of performance by all the young dancers was proof of their training, dedication, practice and confidence in themselves.



Boys, as well as the girls, were given plenty of opportunity to contribute to the program and demonstrate their skills.



The enthusiasm of the dancers, in all their numbers, was clearly evident in their precise movements and footwork.



School director Yamil Torres, while thanking all for attending, spoke to the crowd in explaining the need to replace facilities and equipment in the school.

...A Fiesta for El Naranjo



A western theme in this dance presented by smiling cowgirls was a change of pace from the traditional costumes and dances.

Dancer Leslie (right), daughter of Maria and Rogelio (left, below), is seen left and right and, like all the dancers, she performed in many numbers of the program.



Parents Maria and Rogelio were among the many parents involved in staging the event, preparing the food and then serving the guests.



...A Fiesta for El Naranjo



Left: In some numbers, the costumes are as much a part of the performance as the dance itself in contributing to the dynamic movement of the number.



Above: For both the boys and girls in the troupe, all dances earned well-deserved applause from the audience for every dance number.



In a final performance, grace, beauty, costumes and dance combined for the total effect.

...A Fiesta for El Naranjo



The Griselda Álvarez Ponce de León *escuela* across the road from the pavilion was the ultimate beneficiary of the fund-raising event.



Writer/photographer Chalmers isn't really scared. He just never before had an opportunity for a selfie like this!

you can reach John at john.chalmers@manzanillosun.com

Inevitable Change

by Suzanne A. Marshall

When we started our winter sojourns to Manzanillo in 2007, we felt we'd hit the jackpot with a wonderful reprieve from Canadian winter and a good start at initiating our retirement 'bucket list'. We were only partially retired but freedom and travel were at our fingertips. We selected Manzanillo, as described in past articles, because it had all the criteria we determined to be a necessity, including accessibility, healthcare services, beachside living, community, affordable cost and a placement of tourism in fourth place, after the port business, power production, fishing and agriculture. This made/makes Manzanillo a pleasant place to meet the people and live life at a moderate pace without the constant push that tourism seems to bring. Eleven years later, we have no regrets.

Looking back now, with this perspective, a tremendous amount of change has consistently crept up on the city and general area. Manzanillo has grown dramatically and, according to predictions and business plans, will continue to do so for a while yet.



Manzanillo dock area around 1938. New Lamposts!

A few years back, the local news announced a huge expansion of the port that would likely double the shipping activity and, with it, jobs and population. We viewed this news with some trepidation, already being possessive of Manzanillo the way it existed and worried about what would come with this type of growth. Thus far, our lifestyle has not been impacted and we continue to love every minute here with all the fabulous amigos we have come to know and enjoy on a regular basis. They are wonderful, friendly people.

Now, mindless pondering and curiosity find me thinking about just what has changed. When I began to list them all, I was quite surprised.

When we first viewed our beachside condo, the dirt street behind us was a terrible mess of potholes large enough to lose a gas tank in. But when we returned some months later, the entire street had been redone in smooth beautiful concrete. What a delight. It was also at this time that the ever-present Walmart store, just a few blocks away, had put the final touches to its loading docks and was open for business.



Walmart in Manzanillo is a popular supermarket. It opened about ten years ago.

Since then, it's been a bustling stop for Mexicans and expats alike, looking for everything from clothing to groceries and auto supplies. But, for many of us expats, the greatest arrival of note was the Home Depot store, smack on the nearby boulevard. It was immediately crawling with home improvement junkies such as myself, who were already familiar with the store products and layouts. For many of us older folks, its an interesting transition to see ourselves just as interested in hardware stores as we are fashion shops!



Cheers for Home Depot. Heaven for DIY junkies. Opened in ZLO a few years back.

...Inevitable Change

The main boulevard of Miguel de la Madrid has also been improved, with new lanes and lovely paved stone sidewalks; new stainless-steel public benches and public bus shelters, etc. It's enjoyable to take a walk or ride a bike on these wide passages and they also look so much more attractive.

Across from the Home Depot store, a huge empty beachside lot is now boasting a grand commercial mall named Punto Bahia (Bay Point). The mall sports a flagship department store, La Marina, and 3 levels of various stores, complete with underground parking. For us, the greatest bonus has been the opening of a large Cineplex movie chain and a wonderful gymnasium. The theatre is first class with luxury lounging seats, foot rests and 6 or 7 theatres. The third floor gym sports every kind of equipment we could ever hope to need and reasonable prices for seniors. We love to join during the summer months when walking the beach can be too hot and the rainy season is upon us.



Punto Bahia Mall. A modern 3 story plaza complete with cinemas, gymnasium and underground parking. La Marina department store draws shoppers there and to many other businesses in the mall.

The gym is air conditioned and welcomes the seniors who generally like to work out during the day, normally a slower time. Living nearby means we can walk to these amenities. This is not something we're used to since in Canada, driving is a constant necessity with malls and box stores spread out in the suburbs and usually too far away to walk. It certainly adds to our fitness program!

Very recently, we have been reading that another huge mall will be built towards the Valle de las Garza's avenue with another cinema and a flagship department store named Liverpool to anchor the mall and, of course, attract the shop owners that seek a mall environment. This is but a rumour even though we have seen articles and drawings. These things don't always come to fruition.

So, with the port expansion, Manzanillo becomes a more attractive place for other businesses. Of course, it also goes without saying that the job numbers have risen though I do not have those statistics. But, one can imagine, when noting that going back four years the container movement through the port topped 1,066,377 TEU's (twenty foot equivalent containers) or 11,930,726 tons. At that time, this was a 15.8% increase over the previous year. Imagine the numbers now, four years later! I am also sticking my neck out and suggesting that Manzanillo is receiving approximately 1,000 vessels per year based on a growth rate of 9.1% back in 2014. Manzanillo is now Mexico's busiest shipping port.



The Port of Manzanillo is Mexico's busiest port, thanks to expansion over the past 10 years.

With port expansion comes various complementary improvements such as the completion of a large modern overpass to the port and the El Centro section of town. This, of course, is necessary to accommodate the movement of trains and container transport trucks. The volume of arrivals and departures coming in from the ships or being loaded on the cargo ships is mind boggling.



Modern overpasses and efficient roadways help the port move well over a million twenty-foot containers a year. (2015)

...Inevitable Change

The scene in the port area is a sea of containers with vast rows of container cranes marking the skyline all along the interior bay area. Fortunately, these areas are a distance away from the local 'suburbs' or townships of Salagua and Santiago where most of us live. So, life goes on as usual without really noticing the daily port activities. The transport trucks skirt these main population areas and most of us take no note of it.



Nearly 12,000,000 tons of cargo are processed through the Port of Manzanillo per annum according to stats from 2015.

With such major expansion to the port, the population has expanded as well. I did my best to find some accurate statistics but could only find a census from 2015. Still, the numbers indicate a significant population growth. In 2007, the population was 110,728, from a 2005 census. In 2018, the population had grown to 184,541. Again, this is a 2015 census.

Looking at these growth numbers, it isn't difficult to assume that the prediction of a population doubling is well on its way. This is when one begins to really take a look around the area and see the vast new neighbourhoods spreading up the hills toward the ring road and is perhaps the reason behind the new mall slated to be opening closer to these areas.

With port expansion also came the rebuilding and expansion of a new cruise ship dock; a big delight for the people working in

the El Centro area who offer all kinds of tourist trinkets and souvenirs. In 2018, Manzanillo was slated to receive 24 cruise ships with various well-known cruise lines such as Princess and Holland America. We love to sit and watch these gigantic vessels crossing the bay morning and evening. We even received a couple of visits from friends who were on board. We picked them up and spent the day together. Finally, we could share a little of our dream with them.



In 2018, Manzanillo welcomed 24 cruise lines to its port. This is a great boost to the local economy.



On the more controversial side, Manzanillo has a thermoelectric power plant that has been converted to natural gas over the past few years. This is a welcome blessing since the smoke output from the stacks has been a bone of contention with residents for many years.

This plant functions continuously, supplying power to five Mexican states. There are many that observe and are not convinced that the plant has completed the transition to cleaner burning fuel.

Apparently there is a large inventory of bunker oil that the owners are wanting to use in between, in order to deplete the

...Inevitable Change

fuel. So, some days we see very little smoke or trails of white plumes but, on others, we observe trails of dark brown smoke billowing into the air. For certain, I have noticed a much cleaner air quality in my own home and there has been a dramatic improvement over the years. Still, the sooner the plant is completely converted, the better for all of us. We understand that natural gas is a more expensive fuel and, since Mexico has chosen to open its doors to world gas markets, it follows that the cost of gas to all consumers has risen accordingly to world prices.



Manzanillo's hydro-electric plant produces power for five states in Mexico.

At most times, the price of gas in Manzanillo is near the average price in Canada with the exception of British Columbia who have layered on more taxes to consumers than any other part of the country. I suppose one could view higher pricing as a way to have consumers conserve and use less power and fuel, giving a spinoff benefit to the environment. Certainly, we watch our gas consumption and watch the use of air conditioners, ceiling fans and lights quite religiously. It makes a big difference to those of us on fixed income and we're contributing is some small way to a better environment.



Music lovers enjoy an outdoor concert beside Miramar beach. Some set up tents for weekends across the road and have a great time!

Returning to positive views, there are many new restaurants all over Manzanillo to enjoy. If you're paying attention, you'll find new establishments everywhere. Mexicans love to come to Manzanillo for vacations, particularly from Guadalajara where the higher elevation and cooler temperatures have them craving a little heat and sunshine by the seaside. So, on major holiday occasions and through the summers, the beaches are filled

with sun bathers and children with pails and shovels having a wonderful time. There are also a number of big events that take place during Carnival, such as parades and beach fiestas. Special concerts take place in El Centro that are free to the public and the odd beach concert attracts partiers by the thousands. I could not believe the number of tour buses along the Miramar beach this spring as well as those who even love to camp in open fields across from the beach roads. It seems most of us human beings are lured by the sea and its amazing power.

I love to relate the successes of Friends of Mexican Animal Welfare, a voluntary group of residents who work religiously to counter the stray dog and cat populations with spay and neuter clinics. They have made a huge difference to the stray populations in order to reduce their suffering. Through spay and neutering clinics, these folks have steadily reduced the stray dog and cat populations by the thousands. By training volunteers, raising funds for clinics and educating veterinarians, they have made a huge difference in Manzanillo since we first moved here. I know the stray populations are down by many thousand over these past ten or so years. A wonderful effort.



Locals are making great efforts to keep garbage off the beaches

I also note a budding environmental awareness taking in place in Manzanillo. The new boulevard sports trash cans all along the walkways, and every now and then, we see a band of clean up crews walking the beaches and picking up the trash left by beach picnickers and dog walkers. We have a long way to go here. As we all know, old habits die hard, but I know there is more education being taught in some of the schools about the environment and, as they say, if you educate the children, the rest will follow.

In spite of the tremendous port and population growth, Manzanillo maintains its small city atmosphere and we continue to enjoy every moment of it. It's possible that tourism is up, but it's hasn't brought the haggling and change of attitude towards expats thank goodness. The people continue to be warm and friendly and helpful. We certainly do appreciate them and I for one continue to be taken by their warmth and generosity of spirit. They are family people who truly care about each other and they are equally as kind to us.

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



by Tommy Clarkson

Aphelandra Squarrosa *Aphelandra squarrosa*

Family *Acanthaceae*

Also known as *Saffron Spike*

(This beauty, most probably, originated in Brazil. But why/how I recall something else, most convolutedly related, is clearly yet another example of my particular thinking process of quirkiness! You see, before I completed US Army Officer Candidate School and became a commissioned officer - in my callow youth as a junior enlisted man - I rather vividly recall a "performer" billed as the "Brazilian Bombshell" near Fort Knox in Louisville, Kentucky...upon further reflection, perhaps we'd better just leave that story without further elaboration! However, "exceedingly, visually attractive and quite flashy" seem both to be most appropriate in both description of the Zebra Plant and in recollection of her repertoire of talents. A'hhh, Brazilian exports!)

But, youthful reflections put aside, let's get back to our subject plant. The genus *Aphelandra* is comprised of more than 200 species, the preponderance of which originated in that large South American country. Those perhaps most commonly seen are this beauty, as well as the *A. acutifolia*, *A. rigida*, *A. sinclairiana*, *Aphelandra squarrosa*, *A. tetragon*, and *A. tridentata*. Most prefer a life in the humid undergrowth.

Casual perusal of the Zebra Plant, adorned by its glossy, dark-green colored leaves, streaked with striking, contrasting white-cream veins and yellow, red or orange spikes, sporting small, brownish flowers, explains their allure. These showy, erect, terminal inflorescences are nearly two and a half to nearly six inches (6.35 to 15.24 cm long) tall, sometimes accompanied by two shorter lateral spikes.



This beauty, most probably, originated in Brazil.

It is an erect, compact, evergreen shrub. sometimes exceeding six feet (1.83 meters) in height - however, plants grown indoors or in pots rarely exceed one to two feet (30.48-60.96 cm). On fleshy stems, the simple, opposing, oblong, broadly elliptic, leathery leaves of the *Aphelandra squarrosa* are of a beautiful intense and bright green color that contrasts with the white veins. They're light green color on the underside.

It should be located in a very bright place - but not in direct sun and protected from drafts. It requires high temperatures, above 65 °F (18.33°), in summer the ideal would be around 70° to 80° F (21.11°-26.67° C) although, after flowering, you can give a short period of rest with slightly cooler temperatures, but not lower than 58° F (14°C), otherwise, bad things happen!

...Aphelandra Squarrosa



The Zebra Plant is adorned by its glossy, dark-green colored leaves, streaked with striking, contrasting white-cream veins and yellow, red or orange spikes, sporting small, brownish flowers.

It requires a well-draining soil kept constantly humid - without stagnation; very dry or very wet substrate causes the leaves to fall. Water frequently at air temperature, making sure that the soil is always wet and does not dry out. During flowering, water it regularly; when flowering finishes, reduce the amount. You might wish to dampen the leaves from time to time, which will help to maintain humidity if the ambient temperature is too high. But, keep in mind - it's a sensitive sort. Too much or too little water can quickly cause the leaves to drop.

The leaves can be cleaned occasionally with a soft, damp cloth, while holding them with one hand to prevent breakage. If potted, maintain the humidity of the plant by placing the pot on a wide plate, saucer filled with gravel or flat, broken tile pieces so as to ensure that it doesn't come into direct contact with the bottom of the pot. This could cause the roots to rot.

If it is losing leaves, that's generally a result of being improperly located with either too much sun or more cool temps than it wants. The *Aphelandra squarrosa* prefers its root feet in a mix of one-part sand, another of mulch, and two parts of *fibra de coco* (coir or coconut fiber) - which I acquire in massive bales!

I encourage that you water it frequently to prevent the soil from drying out. Feed it every two weeks, during the growing

season, with a diluted liquid fertilizer. It does not need some sort of highly scientific pruning - merely cut the flower spikes when they wither so that new buds might emerge. When the flower spike begins to form, increase its feeding to once a week. A good balanced fertilizer is equal proportions of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, such as marked on the package - 30:30:30.



It is an erect, compact, evergreen shrub sometimes exceeding six feet in height - however, plants grown indoors or in pots rarely exceed one to two feet.

Zebra Plants can most easily be reproduced by springtime cuttings. But, regardless of its age or size, in dry environs they can be attacked by woodlice and aphids. And, lastly, while not considered as poisonous to pets, its sap can cause skin irritation in some people who have certain allergies.

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

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

Visit us at... www.olabrisagardens.com



you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com

Limes in Mexico

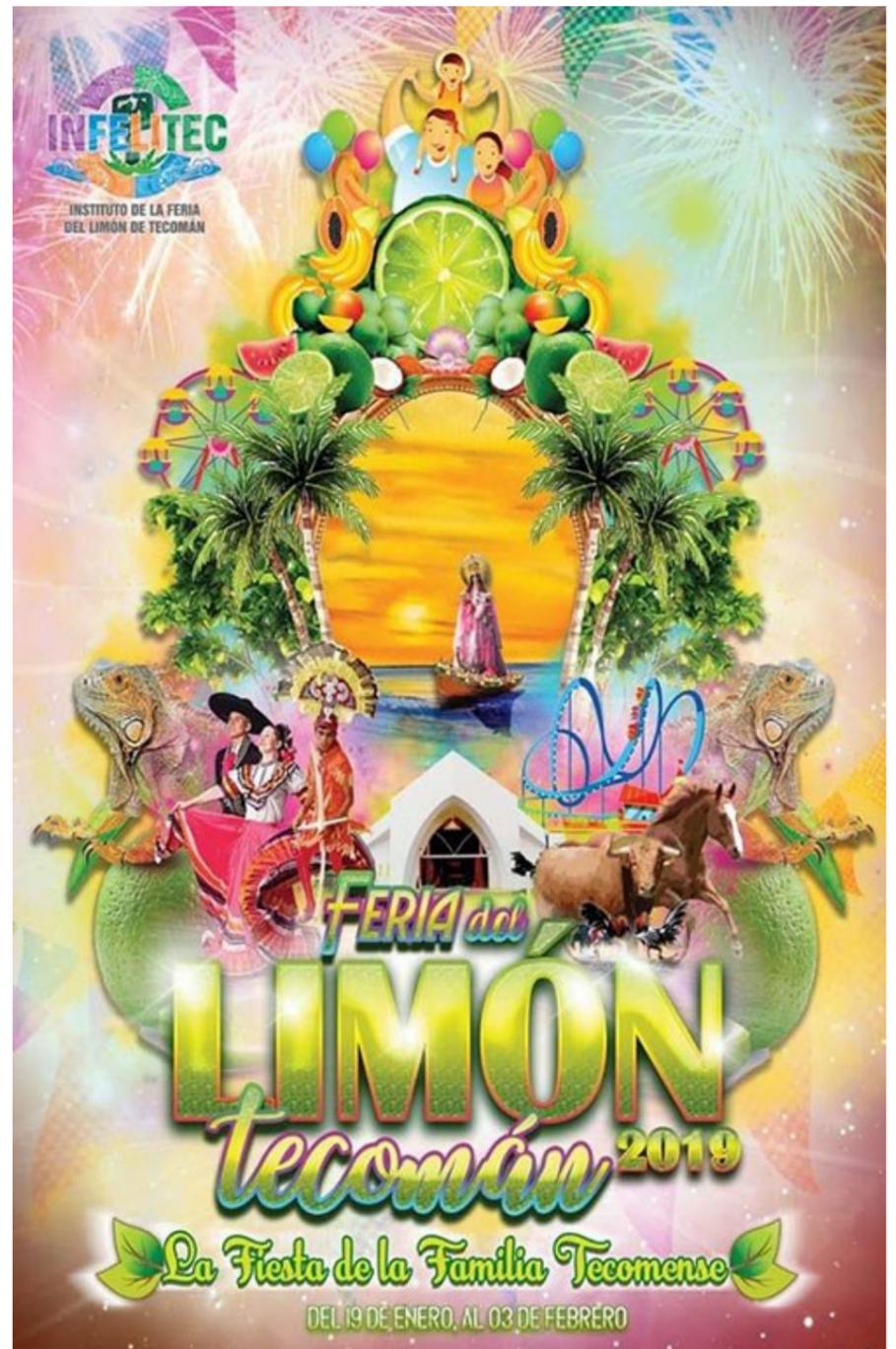
by Terry Sovil

Do you know the correct Spanish name(s)? I'm used to lime = green acidic fruit and lemon = yellow acidic fruit. But here, in Mexico, a lime is *limón*, and a lemon is *lima*, sometimes also referred to as a *limón real*. Outside of Mexico their names may switch around.

Where would be without lime juice? In Mexico, the *limón* is everywhere, except coffee, and for sale in the smallest stores. Limes are considered a necessity here and they are served at almost every meal.

Types of Limes

Two popular limes are the Mexican Key Lime (West Indian Lime) and the Persian Lime (Bearss Lime or Tahitian Lime). Mexico is a major producer and consumer of citrus fruits. When I think of a "Key Lime" my thoughts go back to the Florida Keys where small limes were grown and the Pier House in Key West made their fantastic KEY LIME PIE (make your own; see the Recipe section). Our Key limes are mostly consumed here, in Mexico, but exports are increasing.



The Mexican lime tree is slender and grows to 2.0-4.0 m (6.6-13.1 ft). The flowers mature into fruits singly, in pairs or large clusters. The fruit is generally 25-51 mm (0.98-2.01 in) in diameter. The juice is highly acidic, flavorful, with a good smell and many small seeds. Mexican limes do well in moist areas. They have a longer shelf life than other limes. The tree came to Mex-

ico via Europeans who had traveled to the Indo-Malay region, to North Africa with Arabs and the Mediterranean with the Crusaders. They are primarily cultivated in Mexico, India, Egypt and the West Indies.

Production

Mexican limes are mostly grown in the southwest (about 60% of the total) and in the southeast of the country (40%). Key limes amount to about 54% of the total lime production and are grown in the southwestern states of Jalisco, Colima, Michoacán, Guerrero, and Oaxaca. Persian limes (about 42%) are grown in Jalisco, Colima, Hidalgo, in northern Veracruz micro-climates and in the southeastern

...Limes in Mexico

states of Tlaxcala, Chiapas, Tabasco and the Yucatán. The most important lime producing states are Michoacán and Colima. The United States is the main importer of Mexican limes purchasing more than 655,000 tons in 2017.

A Yellow Dragon plague (Huanglongbing de los Cítricos or "HLB") has affected Colima limes since 2010. Tecomán, the world's lime capital, was hard hit by the plague and then in 2016 became a battleground with cartels. But the production of limes began to recover in 2017 with 20,000 hectares of limes planted in Armería, Tecomán and Coquimatlán. There are also over two million seedling lime trees in Colima alone. Mexico exports the juice and lime oil and limes to 28 countries!

Global lemon/lime production was about 10.6 million tons in 2010 which was about a 15% increase more than 1996-98 levels. There is an estimate of a 1.1% annual growth rate. Mexico, Spain, and Argentina have been the major exporters of fresh lemons. In 2003, Mexico produced 768,000 tons of Key limes and 235,000 tons of Persian limes. For the 2010/2011 season, the forecast was for 1.9 million tons of limes. The consumption of lime in Mexico is expected to increase over the forecast period to reach 1,590,759 tons by the end of 2020.



Mexican Key Lime

The skin is thinner than that of Persian limes so if it gives to a light squeeze it will be juicy. The best way to juice a lime is to roll it on the countertop while you apply a light pressure. Then you can cut it and juice it. To store lime juice, pour it into an ice cube tray and, once frozen, move it to a freezer safe plastic bag. It will stay fresh for 12-14 weeks!



Persian Lime

Lime Selection, Storage and Handling

In selecting limes, look for shiny, soft surfaces that are slightly dimpled. Mexican limes that are heavier yield the most juice. The color of the skin should be brightly pigmented and green.



Mexican Key, or West Indian, Lime which is especially aromatic on the right and the Persian, Tahitian or Bearss Lime on the left.

...Limes in Mexico



Medicinal

Limes are used as a digestive aid, which explains why they are served with most every meal. The carbohydrates in limes are pectin. It can slow digestion which keeps blood sugar stable. Also helps promote good cholesterol levels.

Citric acid and Vitamin C are factors:

- Limes help a vitamin C deficiency and promote a healthy heart and the vitamin C improves your immune system.
- Limes protect against kidney stones, citric acid keeps them from forming.
- Limes can be used on the skin to externally scrub off dead skin cells and to heal rashes. The Vitamin C promotes production of collagen, a protein that prevents skin wrinkles. It can also help acne due to the astringent and antibacterial properties which exfoliates skin and helps prevent clogged pores.
- Limes are used to treat gout. Those with la gota should drink the juice of half a lime mixed into a glass of water 2 times a day. Lime combats inflammation as the citric acid breaks down uric acid. Uric acid is the cause of gout pain.

Lime juice is recommended to repel insects and to relieve the sting and itch of a bite. Lime peel oil can be extracted and is used in body oils, cosmetics and a wide range of toiletry items.

you can reach Terry Sovil at terry@manzanillosun.com

advertisement

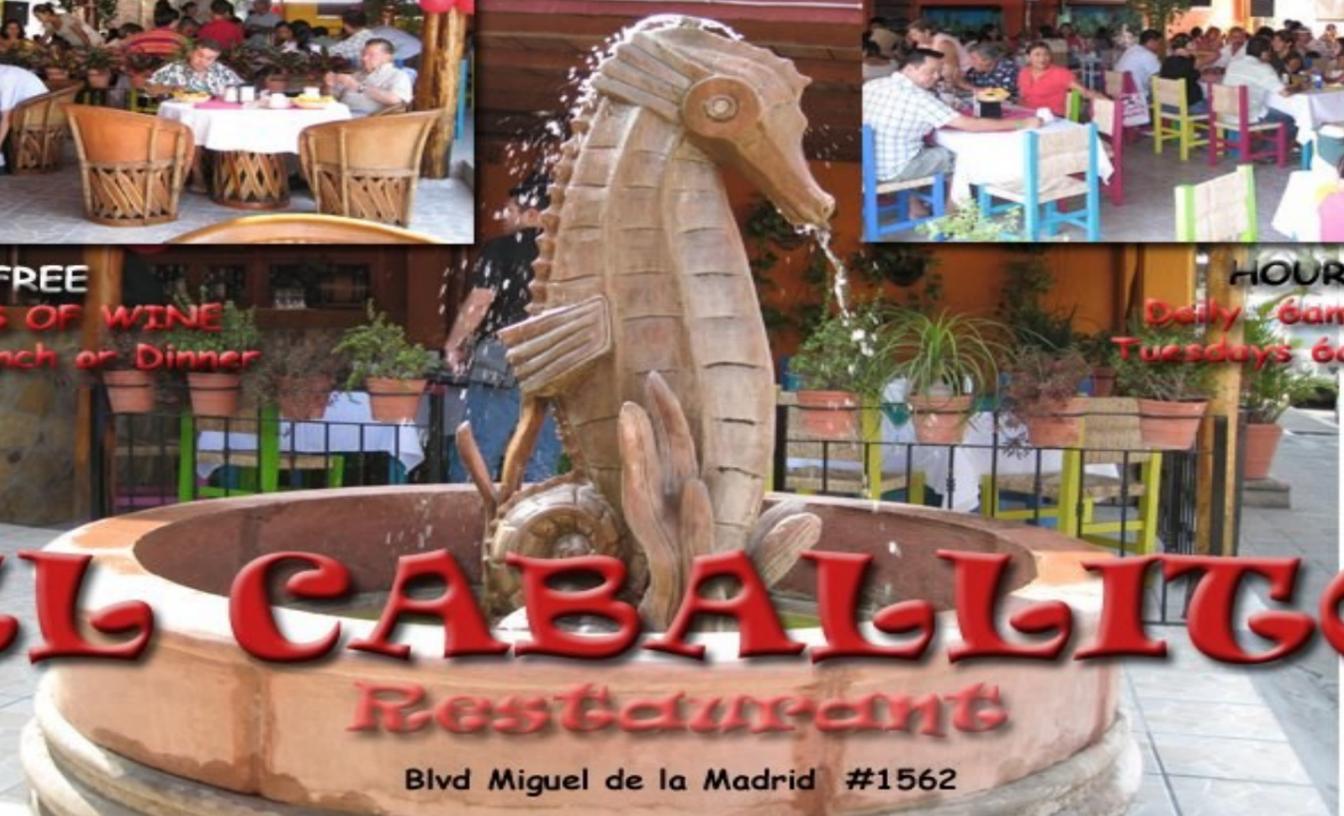
314-334-7125



FREE
GLASS OF WINE
With Lunch or Dinner



HOURS
Daily 6am-1am
Tuesdays 6am-8pm



EL CABALLITO

Restaurant

Blvd Miguel de la Madrid #1562

MESOAMERICAN DOGS

PART ONE

as told by Kirby Vickery



The Cairn (Daisy) and the 'Mostly Maltese' (Molly) on the right.

I own a Cairn Terrier whose breed purports to be from Scotland and, even though there are histories that support this thesis, there are internet sites about Scottish dog breeds which deny her existence. My other dog is a 'Mostly.' She's a rescued dog but doesn't hold the Cairn's heritage against her.

If you call either one of them, you'll get the mostly Maltese with a Cairn attached to her neck. You run into about the same thing when you go looking through the internet about Mexican dog breeds. Different sites list different numbers of breeds but they all boil down to two very distinct dogs.

The Chihuahua's history is convoluted, and many theories surround the origin of the breed. Both folklore and archaeological finds show that the breed originated in Mexico and then went west into Asia. The most common theory is that Chihuahuas are descended from the Techichi, a companion dog favored by the Toltec civilization in Mexico.

No records of the Techichi are available before the 9th century, although 'dog pots' from Colima, Mexico, buried as part of the western Mexico shaft tomb tradition, which date back to 300 BC, are thought to depict Techichis. The early version of this breed were thought to be mute.

Wheeled dog toys in Mesoamerica range from Mexico to El Salvador. The earliest of these were found at Tres Zapotes in Veracruz, Mexico, which date to 100 AD, indirect evidence that a Chihuahua-like breed was in Mexico over 1400 years before the first Europeans arrived.

It is believed that these little dogs crossed Beringia with the eastward migration of mankind but were mostly used for food until much later in the settling of Mexico.

...Mesoamerican Dogs



Olmec wheeled dog toy

Xolos (Xoloitzcuintli) are national treasures in Mexico, with a history that goes back at least 3,000 years. Mentions of these "strange hairless dogs" appear in the journals of Columbus and other European explorers. Ancient Aztecs named the breed for their dog-headed god Xolotl.

Evil sorcerers are said to be able to change themselves into black dogs in order to prey upon the livestock of the neighbors of these sorcerers. In central Mexico (such as Oaxaca, Tlaxcala and Veracruz), such a sorcerer is known as a Nahuatl. According to Wikipedia: In Mesoamerican folk religion, a nagual or nahual (both pronounced [na'wal]) is a human being who has the power to transform, shapeshift beyond the premises of the human form; most often believed to be an animal form.



Xoloitzcuintli (Xolo) or Mexican Hairless Dog

advertisement

Century 21
Jim Woods
314-100-6773
281-573-8863
Jim@c21goldenproperties.com

Thank You

Another Happy Client
...Patty Murphy

...The Mesoamerican Dogs



The Chihuahua,
new and old



There is a widespread superstition that, in order to become a nagual, you have to do a pact with the devil and offer him something really special. In the Yucatán Peninsula, they go by the name of Huay Chivo. Another supernatural dog in the folklore of Yucatán is the Huay Pek (witch-dog in Yucatec Maya), an enormous phantom black dog that attacks anybody that it meets and is said to be an incarnation of the Kakas Bal, an evil spirit.

In more recent times, the Chinantecs and Mixes of Oaxaca believed that a black dog will help the newly dead to cross any body of water to the land of the dead. The Huitzilán believe that a dog carries the dead on their backs to reach the underworld home of the devil.

A folktale from Tlaxcala tells how some hunters saw an enormous black dog one night and they wanted to capture and keep it. It fled at their approach, so one hunter shot and wounded it in a leg.

The blood trail led them to a richly furnished peasant hut, whose owner was tending a wound in his leg. They gave up and headed for the nearest village. The locals told them that the peasant was a nahual who could transform into a dog to steal riches.

The Tzeltal and Tzotzil Maya of highland Chiapas in Mexico say that a white dog mated with Eve in the Third Creation, producing Ladinos, while a yellow dog fathered the indigenous peoples.

A Jakaltek tale from the Guatemalan Highlands relates how the first dog witnessed the creation of the world and ran everywhere telling everyone the secrets of creation. Hunab' Kuh, the Creator-God, was furious and swapped the dog's head for its tail and its tail for its head. Now, whenever a dog wants to talk and give away its secrets, it cannot speak, instead it may only wag its tail.



Depictions of the Death God Xolotl

The Ahuizotl is an Aztec creature said to be half dog or half monkey (some say half human). It lives in the lakes and in watery caverns of Central America. Said to protect the waters, it grabs fishermen and unwary humans with its claw-like hand attached to the end of its tail. Being a cunning animal, it would lure victims with a human childlike cry.

When an unsuspecting victim would come near the water's edge in search of the crying child, it would meet, instead, the grasp of the Ahuizotl's tail hand. It was feared by the Aztecs, because it enjoyed chewing the most delicate human parts, but it didn't consume the human flesh. Instead it allowed the flesh to float on the waters after the victim's demise.

In order to stop these attacks, fishing villages decided to offer a portion of their catch back to the Ahuizotl. They figured the creature's primary function in the world was to protect the fish in its home land. Offering the fish was said to diminish the number of human victims that the Ahuizotl took, but it never stopped this creature's attacks.

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



by Tommy Clarkson



Rosie is dwarfed by this monster!

Indian Rubber Plant *Ficus elastic*

Family *Moraceae*

Also known as *Indian Rubber Tree, Rubber Fig, Rubber Bush, Assam Tree or Snake Tree*

From a genus of no less than 800 species – and a rather substantive group thought to be double that number by some botanists – the strange growth and aberrant evolution of the Indian Rubber Plant to maturity is interesting.

It usually begins its life as an epiphyte. After a bit of time, however, without remorse or the slightest hint of guilt, over an extended period of time, it lingeringly strangles its host in a torturous and (for my money) most sordid manner.

Having done so, it then evolves into a relentless, shadow skulking, night marauding...*no, no, forgive me, my hyperactive imagination involuntarily kicked in during my plant description and got thoroughly confused with one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's evildoers!*

After – honest to goodness – choking its host plant, it then does evolve, but into a gigantic, banyan type fig, growing, potentially, up to 150 feet (45.72 meters). It has a massive, buttressed trunk covering a large area, with serpentine roots snaking every which way from the trunk, giant ascending limbs and a veritable sheet of aerial roots. To quote Robert Lee riddle, "(These) trees make not only a forest within a forest, but are also veritable worlds unto themselves . . . It is one of the noblest and most awe-inspiring examples of tropical vegetation."

Its origin is the somewhat broad region ranging from India, through Myanmar, Sumatra and Java to Malaya. (*Yes, even though I've lived and worked in that part of the world for four years, I, too, wasn't altogether sure what that last one constituted or where it was. Devious sort that I am, I believe I'll let you discern that location on your own!*)

It should almost go without saying that such is the enormity of these trees that, as a rule, they don't figure into a place in the normal backyard garden! But it is, truly, a wonder to behold! Somewhat a reflection of the great tree itself, its dark green on top - with a glossy under surface - one foot (30 cm) in length, elliptic to oblong leaves with their prominent, light-colored mid-vein are, in themselves, magnificent and an enjoyment to view –and study!

These leaves are short stalked and, in the older trees, generally, found mostly at the branch ends. The tree's leaf buds are covered with a pink to red colored stipule that - *like some unwanted visitors* - may linger long, well after the leaf emerges.

Yet, this only adds to the tree's beauty and allure. (Getting back to that word "stipule" – It refers to outgrowths borne on either one, or both, sides of the base of a leafstalk, which you might remember is the "petiole".)

Its light to dark green, oblong figs are approximately one-half inch (1.27 cm) in diameter. Its tiny flowers have no petals. The fruit is inside of a hollow, fleshy receptacle with a tiny opening through which insects enter and do the job that they were intended - pollinate the flowers!

...Indian Rubber Plant



While, for all intents and purposes, the roots of palms are quite non-invasive, suffice it to say these are not!

The Rubber Tree's latex sap is thick and milky and not poisonous. It was once used in rubber making, as a substitute for the superior sap of the *Hevea brasiliensis*.

The *F. elastic* 'Decora', 'Doescheri', 'Schryvariana' and 'Tricolor' cultivars are variegated forms but they don't, necessarily, work well as good landscape specimens. Possible houseplants? Yes. Out of doors? No, probably not.

These days, one can find almost any number of plants, in nurseries, grocery stores and aside roads that are labeled "*Ficus elastic*". It seems that almost every plant around aspires to be a

Rubber Tree Plant! The cultivar names, by which they are known, vary greatly. It could be a tongue-twisting mouthful such as the *Foliis Aurio-marginata* or as simple as a Burgundy, Rubra, Tricolor or, perhaps, an interesting sounding, Strawberry and Cream Rubber Tree Plant.



One look at the leaves and most of us say, "Rubber Tree"!

As for me, as concerns this plant and its many variations, I can't help but always smile and have positive feelings upon seeing one. These stem from remembering the great lyrics - as written by Sammy Cahn for the song "*High Hopes*" - sung by Frank Sinatra in the 1959 movie "*Hole in the head*" with this relative stanza, "*Oops there goes another Rubber Tree Plant!*" (I will save you from my actually singing it. But if you don't remember the song, look it up. It's a fun one!)



you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com

Potpourri - A collection of technical tips for your stay in Manzanillo

by Señor Tech

This month I am going to write tips to address a number of issues affecting residents and visitors to Mexico.

At some point, everyone needs to either print a document from their computer/tablet or make a copy from other papers. If your needs are minimal, get a cheap data thumb drive and load the file as a PDF document then take it to Office Depot for printing. Convenience may be your preference and there are two viable options. Black and white laser printers can be purchased for under \$1,200 pesos. This is a good option as the toner does not dry out and they tend to be a low maintenance item. Color printers are more expensive and require a bit more maintenance.

The color options include laser and inkjet technologies. Color lasers usually are a bit more expensive than the inkjet versions, but they have the low maintenance factor to consider. Inkjet printers come in two types, pre-filled cartridges and refillable inkwells. The pre-filled cartridges should be avoided.



While these printers appear to be cheaper, the replacement cartridges cost more than the original printer purchase, so this will cost significantly more in the long term. The cartridges dry out if left without use (you can extend the cartridge life by putting a wet paper towel over the cartridge print head and store it in a plastic zip lock bag). The newer inkwell inkjet printers advertise 4,000 to 6,000 copies per fill (my experience is half that). Whether you choose laser or inkjet technology, make sure that the printer has wireless capability; this will allow printing from either computer, phone or tablet.

Another option to consider is a built-in scanner. The scanner will make the printer an inexpensive copier and allow making digital copies that can be stored on your computer, phone, or tablet. Inkjet printers need to be used regularly, otherwise the ink dries in the nozzles and the heads need to be cleaned. This process uses a lot of ink and, for this reason, laser and inkwell inkjets make the most economical sense.

Internet is available from a number of providers in Manzanillo. If you are in an area serviced by Telmex or Telecable, you have the option of wired service. This is the most reliable and speedy option. The wired service can then be made wireless with a rentable modem or a modem you own. If you are out of Telmex or Telecable service areas, Telcel has two tiers of wireless Internet available (5 meg and 10 meg service). The Telcel option requires a purchase of a 4g modem (\$1,800 pesos).

There is a company offering wireless service in Vida del Mar (consult your neighbors for pricing and reliability). If you are simply using internet for email and social media, your cell-phone service may be all you require. Caution: do not use your cell plan for multimedia as this will exhaust your included data and could be very costly if you go over your data allotment.

Telcel offers a cellular plan for unlimited data after 10 pm and before 7am for 100 pesos Monday through Friday. For \$150 pesos, the unlimited data is available 7 days a week from 10 pm to 7 am (this is a great option if you are a night owl).

Cell phone service is very reasonably priced in Mexico. If you have a permanent or temporary resident visa (not tourist visa), you can get a monthly cell plan from either AT&T or Telcel. The cheapest plan is \$199 pesos a month for unlimited calling and text to Mexico, Canada and the USA.

This plan also provides 1 gig of data and an additional 1 gig of social media data. There are no roaming fees travelling to Canada or the USA (this includes data). The plans also allow up to six months use out of Mexico. This is an excellent price for unlimited toll-free calling within the three countries.

...Potpourri - A collection of technical tips for your stay in Manzanillo



Laptop computer or tablet, which is best? These days tablets are best for the majority of people. Unless you are writing a novel or editing large numbers of photos, a computer is over-kill. When travelling, tablets easily go through security scans.

A tablet can be used throughout a flight, unlike computers which need to be stored during takeoff and landing. If you only use your device for browsing the internet, social media and email, a computer is more cumbersome.

Online banking, watching movies, listening to music, as well as shopping online, are all possible with a tablet. The other advantage with tablets is that you don't have to wait for it to boot-up like a computer.

Tablets are lighter, more convenient for travel, have built-in cameras and are more reliable mechanically than laptop computers. They are lower priced than laptops and the higher end tablets are now competing in speed with laptops in the photo editing capability.



The topics covered are minimal, if you wish to know more, please send me an email and I will include answers in future articles.

you can reach Señor Tech at seniortech@manzanillosun.com

advertisement



At the Movies

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Water

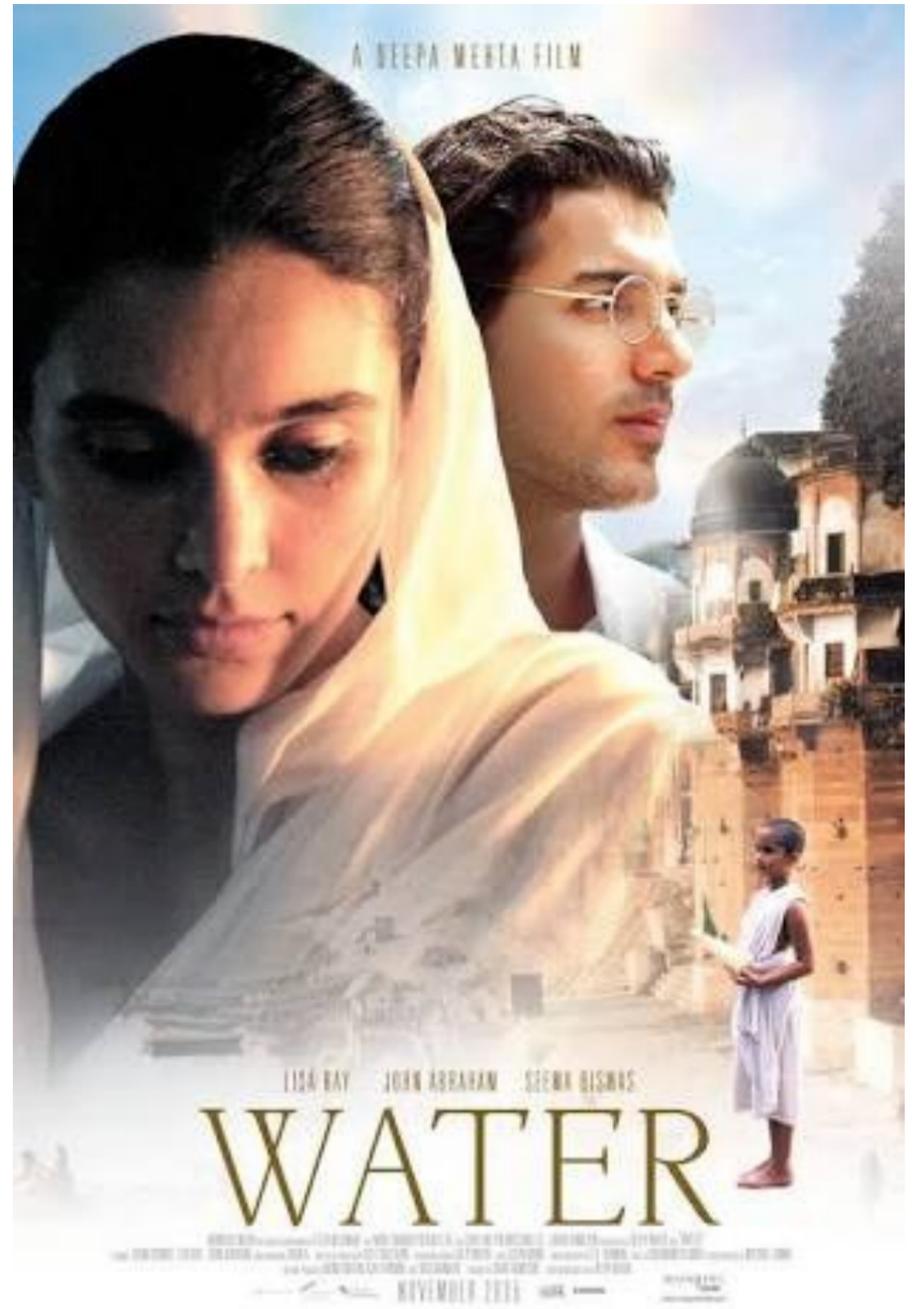
Directed by: Deepa Mehta
Starring: Seema Biswas, Lisa Ray, John Abraham, Sarala Kariyawasam, Manorama

"The film is set in 1938 when India was still under British occupation. Child marriage was common practice, and widows had a diminished position in society.

Chuyia (Sarala Kariyawasam) is an eight-year-old girl, whose husband suddenly dies. In keeping with traditions of widowhood, she is dressed in a white sari, her head is shaven and she is left in an ashram, to spend the rest of her life in renunciation. There are fourteen women who live in the dilapidated house, sent there to expiate bad karma, as well as to relieve their families of the financial and emotional burdens of caring for widows. The ashram is ruled by Madhumati (Manorama), a pompous lady in her 70s. Her only friend is the pimp, Gulabi (Raghuvir Yadav), a hijra who keeps Madhumati supplied with cannabis. The two also have a side business: Gulabi helps Madhumati prostitute Kalyani (Lisa Ray), a beautiful young widow, by ferrying her across the Ganges to customers. Kalyani was forced into prostitution as a teenager to support the ashram."

This is a very touching film and a story that reveals a true part of India's society today. Even now, 34 million widows deal with abuse and societal rejection simply for being widowed. Some of them are young girls who were married to old men when they were only seven years old. Part of the story reveals a young romance with a young male suitor being a follower of Mahatma Gandhi in the early days of his mission to find peace and equality among his people.

The movie is an Indo-Canadian production spoken in French with English subtitles but it did not deter me or undermine my



complete captivation of the film. The cinematography, music and art direction are beautiful and this film was nominated and won a number of awards. Some of these include Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards where the Best Actress award went to Seema Biswas as well as numerous other awards, too many to mention. Even though it was produced in 2005 and debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival, the era of its' telling makes it feel as current as any new release. I highly recommend this file.

We watched this film on Apple TV but I also note its availability on YouTube. There may be other locations that I am unaware of.

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

The Great Investment Risk

by Yann Kostic

Some people believe they risk losing some or all of their money by investing. But did you know that not investing could be even riskier?

Let's say a 35-year-old has decided to invest for her retirement and is putting \$750 a month (a total of \$9,000 a year) in a tax-deferred account such as a 401(k). She's convinced the bull market will halt suddenly, so she's invested her money in a low-risk investment vehicle earning 6% a year.

Flash forward 25 years. This investor is about to retire and has accumulated roughly \$523,000. Will it last another 20 years or so? Perhaps not. After 25 years, \$523,000 is equivalent to \$244,000 (assuming 3% annual inflation). And when you take out what is owed in taxes, the total dwindles even more. It may not be enough to live on for 20 years.

The moral of the story: Don't let all your savings sit in a checking or savings account because you fear risk.

To build a diversified portfolio, you should consider investing in individual stocks and bonds as well as cash, or in mutual funds that hold these asset classes.

Of course, investing more aggressively isn't an appropriate strategy for all investors. Returns are not guaranteed. But it is an option to consider.

Also, remember, diversification doesn't end at having a mix of stocks, bonds and cash. There are many types of equity investments: growth, value, large-cap, small-cap, international, domestic.

There are also many types of bond investments, from municipal to high yield. And, at any given time, one type tends to outperform the others. So be sure to consider all your options.

One option you may not want to consider is letting your money languish because you are afraid of risk. Your financial advisor can help you compare options to get the most from your hard-earned savings.

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

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

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



advertisement

La Vie en Rose

Patisserie Francaise

Authentic French Bread & Pastries
Pan y Pasteles Franceses Auténticos

Chocolates & Macarons

Breakfast & Lunch / Desayuno y Almuerzo
Coffee / Café

50ft from Colon St.
A 10 mts de Colón

(376) 766-1360
Independencia #2



advertisement

El Vaquero **Crucero Las Brisas**

reservaciones
314-333-1654
314-334-0129

Crucero Las Brisas, Col El Pacifico

Pier House Key Lime Pie

Graham Cracker Crust

- ✓ 1 1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- ✓ 1/4 cup sugar
- ✓ 1/4 cup butter

Pie Filling

- ✓ 5 egg yolks
- ✓ 1 cup sweetened condensed milk
- ✓ 1/2 cup Key Lime juice (about 5 medium limes)
- ✓ 1 teaspoon grated lime rind

Blue Heaven Restaurant Key Lime Pie

- ✓ Meringue Topping:
- ✓ 5 egg whites
- ✓ 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- ✓ 1 cup of sugar

Directions

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit
- To make the crust, combine cracker crumbs, sugar and butter, mixing with your fingers until well blended and crumbly. Press into a 9-inch pie pan. Bake 8 to 10 minutes and remove to wire rack to cool.
- Readjust oven to 350 degrees.

- To make the filling, beat yolks until light and fluffy. Gradually add sweetened condensed milk, lime juice and rind. Pour into cooled graham cracker crust and bake for 15 minutes. Remove from oven to cool.
- Readjust oven to 425 degrees.
- You can make a meringue topping or just skip to baking and use whipped cream.
- To prepare the meringue topping, whip egg whites until frothy. Gradually add sugar and cream of tartar, beating constantly until stiff peaks form.
- Spread meringue over pie, being sure to cover all the way to the edge, since there will be some shrinkage when it bakes.
- Bake for five to six minutes, or until meringue is nicely browned. Remove to wire rack to cool.

Serve chilled. Yield: 1 nine-inch pie.

Shared by Terry Sovil



House for Rent

Golfers, take note!

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



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



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

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

Rates:

\$2,100 USD monthly (3-6 months)

\$1,800 USD per month (7-12 months)

Ask about our rates for other lengths of stay.

Contact Yamil Achcar

yamil.achcar@gmail.com

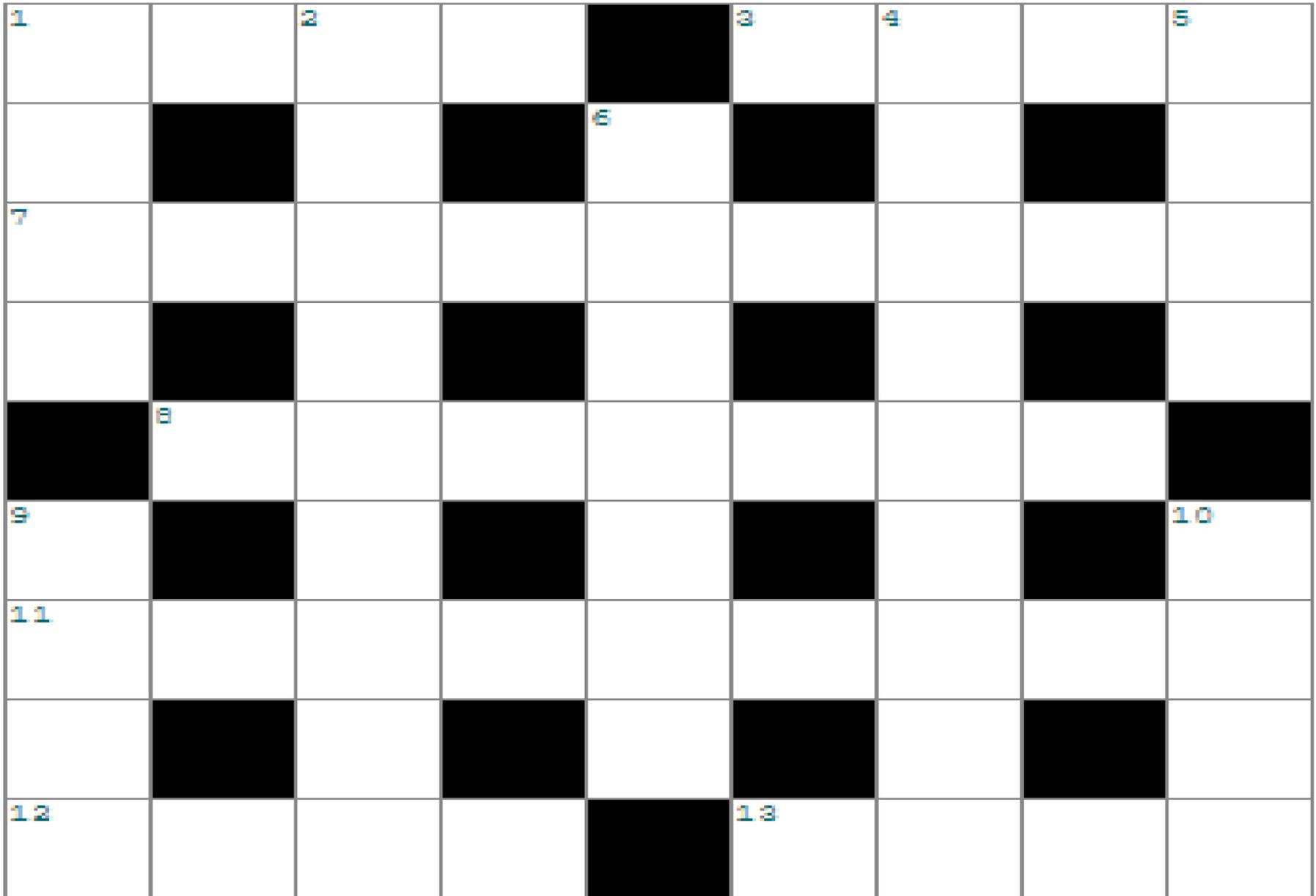
Phone or Whatsapp (+521) 314 102 4355, (+521) 314 106 0392

Landline (+52) 314 138 2725



Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 pink; rose
- 3 (I) drink
- 7 (I) link
- 8 (they) accept
- 11 (you/vosotros) will dance
- 12 healthy
- 13 (feminine of) this

Down

- 1 (feminine of) weird; rare
- 2 choice
- 4 (you/vosotros) will anger
- 5 odour
- 6 to accept
- 9 (you/tú) were going
- 10 island

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

Rail Transport in Mexico

from the Path to Citizenship series

Mexico has a freight railway system owned by the national government and operated by various entities under concessions (charters) granted by the national government. The railway system provides freight and passenger service throughout the country (the majority of the service is freight-oriented), connecting major industrial centers with ports and with rail connections at the United States border. Passenger rail services were limited to a number of tourist trains between 1997, when Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México suspended service, and 2008, when Ferrocarril Suburbano de la Zona Metropolitana de México inaugurated Mexico's first commuter rail service between Mexico City and the State of Mexico. This is not including the Mexico City Metro, which started service in 1969.

Construction

Mexico's rail history began in 1837, with the granting of a concession for a railroad to be built between Veracruz, on the Gulf of Mexico, and Mexico City. However, no railroad was built under that concession.

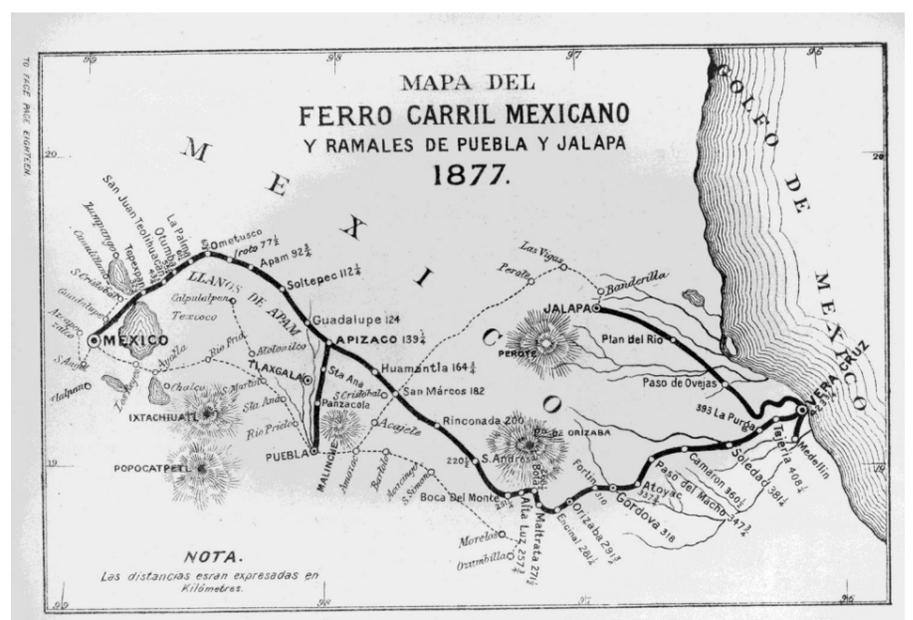
In 1857, Don Antonio Escandón secured the right to build a line from the port of Veracruz to Mexico City and on to the Pacific Ocean. Revolution and political instability stifled progress on the financing or construction of the line until 1864, when, under the regime of Emperor Maximilian, the Imperial Mexican Railway Company began construction of the line. Political upheaval continued to stifle progress, and the initial segment from Veracruz to Mexico City was inaugurated nine years later on January 1, 1873 by President Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada.

President Lerdo and his successor Porfirio Díaz encouraged further rail development through generous concessions that included government subsidies for construction. At the beginning of his first term Díaz inherited 398 miles (640.5 km) of railroads consisting almost exclusively of the British-owned Mexican Railway. By the end of his second term in 1910, Mexico boasted 15,360 miles (24,720 km) of in-service track, mostly built by American, British and French investors.

Growing nationalistic fervor in Mexico led the Díaz administration to bring the bulk of the nation's railroads under national control through a plan drafted by his Minister of Finance, José Yves Limantour. The plan, implemented in 1909, created a new government corporation, Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México (FNM), which would exercise control of the main trunk rail lines through a majority of share ownership.

Nationalization

The rail system deteriorated greatly from neglect during the period of the Mexican Revolution. Following the Revolution, the entirety of the Mexican rail system was nationalized between 1929 and 1937. In 1987 the government merged its five regional railroads into FNM. During the later period of national ownership, FNM suffered significant financial difficulties, running an operating deficit of \$552 million (37 percent of its operating budget) in 1991. Competition from trucking and shipping decreased railroad's share of the total freight market to about 9 percent, or about half of rail's share a decade earlier.



Map of first Mexican rail line between Veracruz and Mexico City

Privatization

In 1995, the Mexican government announced that the FNM would be privatized and divided into four main systems. As part of the restructuring for privatization, FNM suspended passenger rail service in 1997.

In 1996, Kansas City Southern (KCS), in a joint venture with Transportacion Maritima Mexicana (TMM), bought the Northeast Railroad concession that linked Mexico City, Monterrey, the Pacific port at Lázaro Cárdenas and the border crossing at Laredo. The company was initially called Transportación Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM), but was renamed Kansas City Southern de México (KCSM) in 2005 when KCS bought out TMM's interests. KCS's systems in the United States and Mexico jointly form end-to-end rail system linking the heartlands of Mexico and the United States.

The Northwest Railroad concession, connecting Mexico City and Guadalajara with the Pacific port of Manzanillo and various crossings along the United States border was sold to a joint

...Rail Transport in Mexico



Ferrosur train in Veracruz

venture between Grupo Mexico and Union Pacific Railroad in 1998 during the presidency of Dr. Ernesto Zedillo (which later occupied the position of Director of the Board of Union Pacific). The company operates as Ferrocarril Mexicano or Ferromex. Ferromex's freight volumes have increased; it hauled a record 22,365 million tonne-km in the first 6 months of 2010. Also, Ferrosur, the railroad serving Mexico City and cities/ports southeast of Mexico City, hauled their own record 3,565 million tonne-kilometers.

There were two southern concessions, merged in 2000 to form Ferrosur. Ferrosur operates the line between Mexico City and the Gulf of Mexico port of Veracruz. In 2005, Ferrosur was bought by Ferromex's parent company. KCSM challenged the acquisition and the merger failed to receive regulatory approval. However, in March 2011, a tribunal ruled in Grupo Mexico's favor, and the merger was permitted.

The three major Mexican railroads jointly own Ferrocarril y Terminal del Valle de México (Ferrovalle) which operates railroads and terminals in and around Mexico City.

High-speed rail

The Secretariat of Communications and Transport of Mexico proposed a high-speed rail link[5] that will transport its passengers from Mexico City to Guadalajara, Jalisco, with stops in the cities of Querétaro, Guanajuato, Leon and Irapuato; and a connected line running from the port city of Manzanillo to Aguascalientes. The train would travel at 300 km/h,[6] and would allow passengers to travel from Mexico City to Guadalajara in just 2 hours at an affordable price (the same trip by road would last 7 hours). The network would also be connected to Monterrey, Chilpancingo, Cuernavaca, Toluca, Puebla, Tijuana, Hermosillo, Cordoba, Veracruz, Oaxaca, Colima, Zacatecas, Torreón,

Chihuahua, San Luis Potosi, Mexicali, Saltillo, and Acapulco by 2015. The whole project was projected to cost 240 billion pesos, or about 25 billion dollars. Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim expressed an interest in investing in high-speed rail.



Ferromex map

Revival of passenger service

President Enrique Peña Nieto proposed a return to services of intercity trains, the proposed projects are Mexico City-Toluca (construction began July 7, 2014), the Peninsular train (Yucatán-Mayan Riviera), Mexico-Querétaro high speed train starts construction October 2014 and will operate speeds up to 300 km/h (with expansion to Guadalajara) and Puebla-Tlaxcala-Mexico City.

On November 3, 2014, China Railways Construction Corporation associated with Prodemex, Teya and GHP has won the contract to build the high Speed train Mexico City-Querétaro. The estimated cost will be close to 4 billion dollars, to be finished by the end of 2017 and will be fully operational by spring 2018. However, Mexico canceled the contract four days later because of doubts over the bidding process. In 2015, Mexico opened a new tender, which was revoked again. Hence, Mexico could indemnify China Railway Construction Corporation \$1.31m.

President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced a US\$7.4 billion plan to build a tourist and freight railway on the Yucatán Peninsula in September 2018. The project, named the Mayan Train, began construction in December 2018 and will connect Palenque to Cancún, but remains controversial with environmentalists and indigenous rights activists.

Image and content source: [Wikimedia](https://www.wikimedia.org/)