



Manzanillo SUN

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine

Fishermen at La Boquita
a good day fishing, surrounded by
Magnificent Frigatebirds
hoping for a handout
Photo by John Chalmers



Colours of Mexico
Beyond Mexico
Nature's Wonders
Entertainment
History and Mythology
Finance
Recipe
Learn Spanish
Path to Citizenship

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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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Where are they?

by Suzanne A. Marshall



Ever since coming to Mexico, I've had this fascination for Pelicans. Which means I watch them a lot from my terrace and on regular beach walks up to the rocks and the river where the bay ends and Karmina Palace stands regally in the background.

The brown pelican common to Mexico is a great swimmer and dives like a torpedo for its food. If you watch them, it's pretty magnificent. They are apparently highly social and breed in colonies of up to several thousand, year round. They take care of and manage their young for up to one year but the young do not reach sexual maturity until 3-5 years. They are 'long-lived' and the oldest recorded individual reached a stunning record of 43 years of age. No wonder my fascination.

Due to pesticides, we almost lost this species between the late 1950s and early 1970s. Then it was placed on the Federal Endangered Species List leading to a ban on DDT and a reduction of the use of others. Things began to improve thereafter.

I'm worried this year. I have no real scientifically based reasons to be concerned but I have noticed a distinct drop in the number of Pelicans around our shores. In particular, we're usually inundated by the brown pelicans in the early months of the year. Perhaps they've gathered elsewhere nearby but, after 11 years of watching, that seems unusual.

As I've watched these majestic divers torpedo into the waves followed by their entourage of frigate birds and others, I've learned they are diving into massive schools of fish and enjoying the local banquet. The others pick up the leftover morsels and it seems to be a good relationship with nature. As time wore on, and the pelicans remained scarce, I came to the conclusion that the fish aren't showing up and therefore the pelicans have gone off somewhere else to hunt.

If I'm to draw any conclusions from the global forecasts and local weather, I'd have to say that the water is warmer and the

...Where are they?

fish don't like it. So they, too, go elsewhere. Perhaps further out to sea where there may be colder currents.



Pelicans are social, long-living birds who nest in groups of up to thousands.

All of this particular observation seems to also be connected to the number of local fisherman I see. This number has also dropped and I have seen only one skivvy of men diving in after nets and pulling them to shore with very little to show for their efforts. A few days ago I took my beach walk down to the river and was stunned to see a bare landscape where many men would be fishing off the shore and off the piled up rocks at the mouth of the river. That truly concerned me.

I'm not an ecologist of course but I do pay attention and listen to global weather reports round the world. This week, record keepers have confirmed the hottest June ever recorded on earth. In France, temperatures were recorded as high 40+C and records have been broken in Italy and Greece. Canada, too, has dealt with strange (or at least not typically what they are used to) weather and friends have sent photos of flooding while others are parched by heat.

At one time, I told myself that global warming and cooling were normal events over history. Look at the ice ages that have come and gone. Could human beings possibly be the cause of all the current disturbances? While I really didn't want to think

so, even I, this lowly layperson, am beginning to believe we are. It's an emotional thought when you think of future generations (your own in particular) and wonder what their world will look like.

I take some 'heart' from knowing that many are trying to change elements of the causes of climate change and we are doing what we can. Recycling, talking openly about it and hoping that the controls needed to stem the nasty production of polluting materials, including the inefficient burning of fossil fuels, are examples.



The parents feed the young from their giant bills.

Mexico, in my opinion, is behind many countries in measures to curb these problems. I note that ecology is being introduced into school systems here now, which is so important. Teaching children is one of the best moves possible. They are the future. Here, in Manzanillo, many restaurants are eliminating the use of plastic drinking straws; some are using paper products for take-out food; regular garbage pickup is being practiced on our beach (and hopefully others).

This is so important with that huge tide ready to sweep up everything off the beach and carry it out to sea. I've also noted the addition of several refuse cages strategically placed along the beach with signage encouraging use. And it seems to be

...Where are they?

happening. These are a great idea since they are somewhat permanent as fenced compounds complete with heavy duty wire and fence posts. Garbage cans simply weren't working or were being taken away, possibly stolen, for other uses. These are wonderful signs of progress and that there are people taking measures to be a part of cleaning up the planet.



Now, that's a mouthful

I don't mean to be 'preachy' here, but the least we can do is manage our garbage, recycle as much as possible and join the 'reuse' movement. If you have clothing and 'stuff' you don't like, need or want, give it away to a family who does or donate it to a cause that will be grateful to have it. Bring reusable bags when you go grocery shopping and skip the vegetable bags when possible. Do bunches of bananas really need separate clear bags? It's at least a beginning. And here I am sticking my



The Frigatebird during 'courtship'. Amazing.



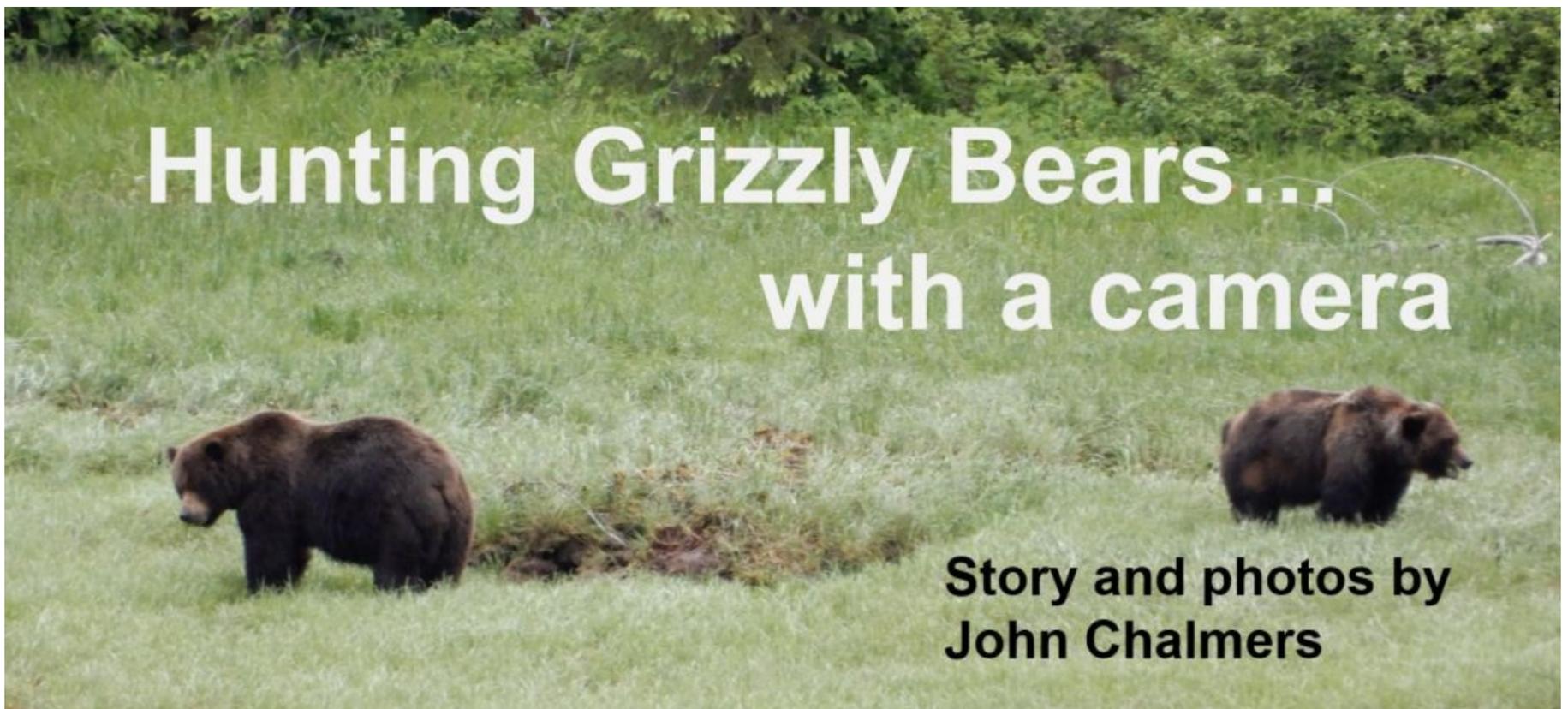
The ever-present Frigatebird looking for scraps.

neck out a wee bit with absolutely no authority and certainly needing more pertinent education; writing about this. I hope you will understand it comes from the heart.

One last add-in. My research found me honing in on PADI Proyecto A.W.A.R.E. Check it out. It's wonderful to see this initiation. www.projectaware.org.



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You may well wonder what grizzly bears have to do with México! In fact, not much now, but there was a time, thousands of years ago, when grizzlies ranged across western North America from México to Alaska. Today, there are no grizzly bears in México. In the continental, "lower 48" United States, the grizzlies are scarce, with an estimated 1,500 remaining close to the Canadian border, and are protected in Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and Washington. Far more grizzlies live in Canada, but more than half the estimated grizzly population in North America lives in Alaska, where hunting is allowed.

But the big bears can still be shot with a camera! That was my intention when I took a one-day trip on June 8 to see Canadian grizzly bears. Along with 99 other passengers on a charter aircraft, we flew from Edmonton, Alberta, to Prince Rupert, British Columbia. After a hot breakfast on board and a flight of about an hour and 45 minutes, we touched down at the Prince Rupert airport then took a five-minute bus ride to the dock where we began our hunt for the bears in an eight-hour cruise operated by Prince Rupert Adventure Tours.

Organized by Calgary-based Classic Canadian Tours, the tour is one of several operated by the company to see special places in Canada's north. The company began 15 years ago with one-day tours to see polar bears at Churchill, Manitoba, located on

the western edge of Hudson Bay and calling itself "the polar bear capital of the world."

That was a trip I had also taken with the company, and had the opportunity to "shoot" a dozen of the largest carnivores in North America. In addition to bears and sightseeing trips, the company now offers week-long expeditions to Newfoundland.

Upon arriving at waterside, we boarded the appropriately named 72-foot catamaran, *Inside Passage*, and began our hunt for the grizzly bears. Our route took us along the coast, north of Prince Rupert to the Khutzeymateen Inlet, where the Grizzly Bear Sanctuary protects some 50 grizzlies as well as the smaller black bears in the area. Available only by water or air, the "Valley of the Grizzly" was our destination.

My first target was a grizzly sow with two very young cubs not yet used to the sight of our boat, and Mama Bear quickly led her offspring back into the forest, giving me barely enough time to dash off a blurry shot with my camera. But success soon followed! Along the inlet we saw a dozen more handsome grizzlies, all feeding close to the shore, eating sedge grass or digging for clams. For the bears, salmon season would come later in the year.

...Grizzly Bears



Our aircraft was a chartered Boeing 737 flown by Canadian North airlines. Colorful livery of the aircraft is comprised of the logos of teams in the Canadian Football league, with western conference teams shown here. The starboard side features logos of the eastern conference teams.



Our cruise boat, the *Inside Passage* catamaran, has four decks from which passengers can see the bears and all other wildlife. A snack bar on board provided lunch, snacks and beverages.

On the flight there, naturalist Les Stegenga gave an informative talk to prepare us for the trip. I had enjoyed his commentary previously on the polar bear tour. Well informed and experienced, Les has studied grizzlies and polar bears in Canada as well as wildlife in Africa and China. Now retired as a senior keeper at the Calgary Zoo, Les was responsible for animals in the Canadian Wilds exhibit.

Although all aboard were excited about what we saw, everyone obeyed the rules of our boat's crew to remain hushed as we stopped close to shore whenever we pulled in to watch the bears. While the *Inside Passage* was tolerated by the bears, we were warned that loud voices and unfamiliar noises could still spook our targets. Probably everyone on board had a camera,

ranging from folks using their cell phones to several serious photographers using single lens reflex cameras with huge lenses.

Besides the success of photographing the subject of our excursion, the splendid scenery of a calm sea, mountains and endless forest added to rewards of the day. We were spared rain from an area known for 265 days a year of rain.

But the overcast day, in cloudy bright conditions, was perfect for photography, with even lighting, no harsh shadows and rich colors in our digital images. Because it might startle the bears, flash photography was not permitted, nor was it necessary.



Just as our flight began with a safety briefing, the grizzly bear cruise started with a safety talk by a crew member and instructions for using the life vest.



Mountains, forest and the sea were viewed in all directions as we cruised the calm coastal waters off the shore of British Columbia.

...Grizzly Bears



Seeing the huge grizzly bears in their natural environment is the main attraction of the tour. Male grizzlies weigh from 250 to 350 kilograms.



Long telephoto lenses on many of the cameras used by passengers on the cruise brought the wildlife subjects even closer.

In some respects, the tour was a trip back in time where we were surrounded by untouched wilderness to see the native denizens of the area. Only a couple of small fishing settlements and just a few fishing boats were among the only evidence of civilization. The return trip to the dock provided a close-up look at seals, pods of orcas and humpback whales, as well as harlequin ducks, gulls and other birds.

As we neared Prince Rupert, one of the crew announced, "We have one more treat for you today, as we will soon have a close-up look at bald eagles." Those magnificent birds knew what to expect. As the boat slowed down, we were pursued closely by a bald eagle, then two, then eight, then more and cameras were busy catching photos of them in flight.

Our boat slowed to a halt for an amazing spectacle! A crew member began tossing chunks of meat overboard and we were completely surrounded by at least a dozen bald eagles diving to pick up morsels from the water with their talons, then transferring it to their bills and circling the boat again for another reward.

It was a practice the eagles had learned from picking up scraps tossed overboard from fishing boats when the fish were cleaned. For the hundred tourists on board, it was a rare opportunity for a very close look at the eagles and a chance to shoot them with a camera. Having taken nearly 600 photos during the day, including many in high-speed "burst" mode to capture action, I was glad I was taking digital pictures instead of running up a big cost for film and processing!

Before we docked and took the flight home with dinner and wine included, besides the bears, the eagles, other wildlife and coastal scenery, I had one more reward. I got the prize for guessing the exact time of touchdown on the tarmac at Prince Rupert – 8:31 a.m. – and received a fine large photo of a grizzly, matted and ready for framing, taken by naturalist Les Stegenga. It's now displayed on the wall at home!

Learn more about those beautiful grizzlies we visited in an internet search. Wikipedia is informative at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grizzly_bear and get info about the adventures offered by Classic Canadian Tours at www.classiccanadiantours.com.

...more pics follow

...Grizzly Bears

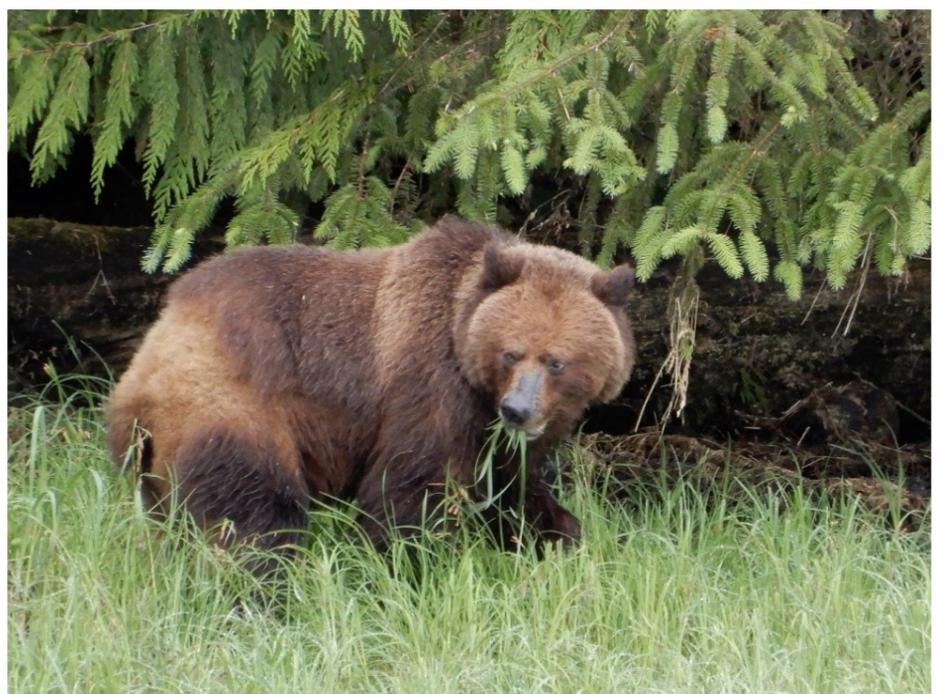


On the prowl, these young bears were patrolling the shore, oblivious to our boat as they searched for food. Color of the grizzly varies from very light to very dark.



The majestic wilderness scenery was enjoyed by all aboard while cruising the waters in search of bears, with almost no sign of civilization anywhere in this remote area.

As the boat slowed to nearly a stop, an excellent view was provided of some unique scenery. Killer Whale Rock is seen on the left and the face of Indian Rock at the right.



The only other tourists seen on the cruise was this group on a whale watching trip, where they paused right at shore to watch a grizzly bear.

Unconcerned about well-behaved tourists coming close to shore, the grizzlies rewarded everyone with opportunities for lots of photographs.

...Grizzly Bears



Fishing for halibut and salmon has long been an industry along the coast near Prince Rupert, a port city and a railroad terminus, with a population a little over 12,000.



Our cruise took us past the historic Green Island Lighthouse in the path of vessels sailing the inside passage. Built in 1956, it replaces the original one built in 1906 and is the northernmost lighthouse in BC, 40 km northwest of Prince Rupert.



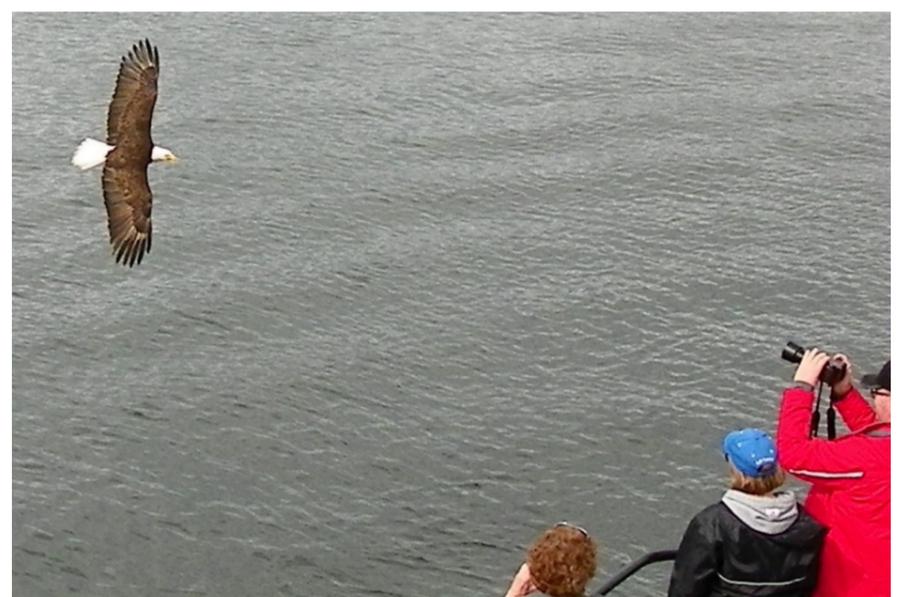
Lunch for this big grizzly is the sedge grass, growing along the shore and a major source of food for the bears.



For this young grizzly, clams along the shore are a source of food, and the big claws of grizzly are the tools used to dig them up.



Bald eagles followed the boat for a while in their usual practice of looking for a handout of something tossed on to the water for pickup.



Bald eagles seemed almost within arm's reach as they soared around the ship to scoop up snacks provided free for the taking.

...Grizzly Bears



Barely touching the water, the eagles scooped up chunks of meat with great skill and never missed their target, grabbing the meat before it could sink.



Immediately after snagging a chunk of meat, the eagles transfer it to their mouths, swallow it and circle back to look for more.



Male grizzlies are mostly solitary except during breeding season in May. After a gestation period of eight months, usually two cubs are born, but sometimes more.

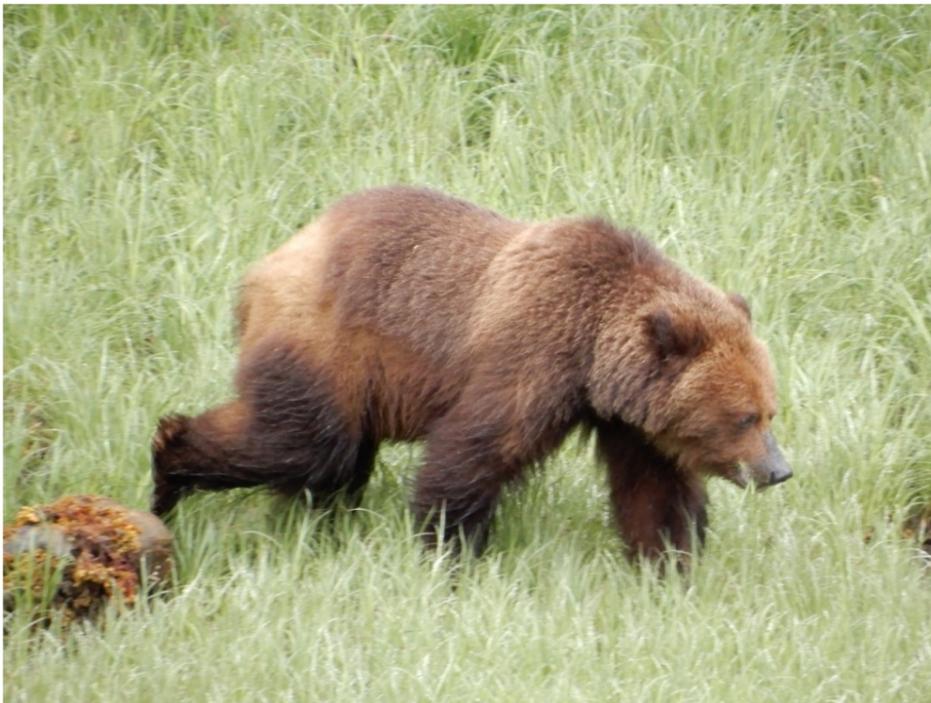


Mama bear, at left, has had her two cubs with her, now in their second year, but they will be leaving her in their third year to strike out on their own.



Bald eagles and bears close up were the special highlights of the tour, in providing a look at them in their native setting.

...Grizzly Bears



The beautiful bears likely have no idea of how much they are appreciated by travellers who come to see them! Grizzlies have a life expectancy of 15-20 years.

Writer/photographer Chalmers has now had the opportunity to photograph and write about both polar bears and grizzly bears in two amazing trips with Classic Canadian Tours.



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by Tommy Clarkson

Edible Palm Fruits and Nuts

(Most who know me are aware that I write several regular columns for a variety of electronic and hard copy venues. This one is sort of a "Tommy's Tips" by way of "Planting Roots" meets "Tommy's Tummy"!)

Upon seeing our wide array of different species of palms, no few of our visitors to Ola Brisa Gardens have inquired as to their edibility. Thus, herein, we will cite, but only, six, in partial answer that query.

In a rather comprehensive scholarly article, according to Jody Haynes and John McLaughlin, "Palms represent the third most important plant family with respect to human use."

Of course, the most obvious edible palm nut/seed would be the coconut (*Cocos nucifera*). (For details, please read my two-part article on this most ubiquitous of palms – and the others discussed here – by going to our web site: www.olabrisagardens.com. Click the "Advice" button at the top of the home page, then the sub-tab entitled "Planting Roots in Mexico", next on "Palms" and there you can find them. As a result of the availability of these more detailed articles, I will not go into much depth in this piece.)

The next most familiar one to the majority of folks might be the Date Palm of which there are hundreds of varieties. (One professional with whom I worked in Iraq - who I have no reason to doubt – told me there were 460 different varieties in that country alone!) We have five different ones - including the foremost of the family, the fructose (as opposed to what most others are – sucrose) based Medjool Date (*Phoenix dactylifera*). Ours are the "children" of those which grow around Saddam Hussein's palaces!



A'hhh, a lovely crop of dates here on this female Medjool that we grew from a seed picked up around one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in Iraq.

Next let's talk about the Jelly Palm (*Butia capitata*) from Uruguay which has a very tasty fruit that, appropriately enough, is good for making jams and jellies. But also, the fruit can also be eaten right off the tree when ripe. Also called a Pindo Palm, there is a significant variance in the sweetness of these fruits from one tree to another.

How about the African Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) now? Originally native to West Africa, it and its cousin, the American Oil Palm (*Elaeis oliefera*), are quite the pair. Commonly known as the Oil Palms, they are among the most economically important of all the world's palms. In fact, by volume weight, it is among the very most heavily produced fruit or nut in the world! And the large nuts, to my taste buds, are quite similar to those of the Brazil Nut.

...Edible Palm Fruits and Nuts



While edible, the thin layer of nectarine-like flesh of the Foxtail Palm fruit is all but flavorless.

Then there is the unique Fishtail Palm (*Caryota urens*). Firstly, its common name comes because its bi-pinnate leaves very much resemble the (well duh!) tail of a fish. The Latin name, *Urens*, means "stinging" as the fruit contains a chemical that stings. However, the kernel of the fruit is edible after it has fully been cleaned of that unfriendly outer flesh.

The principal product of the *Caryota urens* is a sugar substitute called kitul honey or jaggery - in fact, in some circles, this plant is also called a Jaggery Palm. The juice from the flowers is boiled to make a golden syrup.

But, here's the somewhat bizarre aspect about the Fishtail Palm. While this single-trunked palm grows fast, living to between 20 and 25 years old, when it fruits, the plant begins to die—though this "passing" process may take several years.

Moving on, some may recall that in the Broadway musical, South Pacific, there was a character called Bloody Mary who chewed the fruit/seed of the Betel Nut Palm (*Arecea catechu*).

The chewing of betel nut quids did not commence the day before yesterday! It is discussed in 1st century, AD, Sanskrit writings. It, purportedly, can "expel wind, kill worms, remove

phlegm, subdue bad odors, beautify the mouth, induce purification, and kindle passion". Because of its stimulating effects, Betel Nut is used in a manner similar to the western use of tobacco or caffeine.

It's also said to enhance "alertness, stamina, a sense of well-being, euphoria, salivation, (increase) the flow of saliva to aid digestion and stimulate the appetite".



Though thought by many to be the loveliest of all palmate palms, the attractively aligned fruit of the Bismarck Palm is inedible.

That all having been said, a side effect is that it has been linked to the incidence of metabolic syndrome . . . caused DNA damage and cancer . . . cited as the cause of precancerous changes in the mouth, throat, laryngeal, and esophagus".

Accordingly, though there are those who say it's OK to eat, I suggest not on this one!

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you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com

The Mesoamerican Serpent

by Kirby Vickery

I found, according to one internet site, there are thirteen different kinds of snakes in Mexico. Then I went to another and found three more. After that, I found some additional varieties. But, I'm not really sure how many varieties there are altogether. Of the seventeen I was able to catalog, they are: The Blunt-Headed Tree Snake, Boa, Brown Vine Snake, Eyelash Palm Pit Viper, File Tail Snake, Garter Snake, Guatemalan Pit Viper, Jumping Pit Viper, Mexican Cantil Viper, Mexican Green Rat Snake, Mexican King Snake, Mexican Milk Snake, Mexican Westcoast Rattle Snake, and the Neotropical Rattle Snake. One is protected by the government, and some are harmless, while others live in the trees, not wanting to see, meet up with, or prey on anything larger than a bird. They are inherently shy and have a tendency to shun human contact so, if you run across one, just leave it alone and back away so you and your not-a-pet snake can each go separate ways.

The snakes that are introduced and written about by the Mesoamerican societies were not real ones. Snakes had a special place in the mythical worlds of the Aztec, Maya, Olmec and other empires. Aztec and Maya mythology describes serpents as being the vehicles by which celestial bodies, such as the sun and stars, cross the heavens. The shedding of their skin made them a symbol of rebirth and renewal. Although shunned for its shape and mobility methods, the Mixtec peoples regarded the snake as a symbol of rebirth, shrewdness, patience, intellect, fertility, longevity, vigilance, eternity, protection, rejuvenation, intuition, enigma, and splendor.

One of the oldest major civilizations, The Olmec, were a shamanistic people and Jaguars were the shamans of the animal world. Their chief god was a 'Nahual.' It was depicted as being half-human and half-Jaguar. Then they had a 'Were-jaguar' which was the result of a jaguar mating with a human. They did have a "Plumed Serpent" which was seventh god in line of importance. It's very confusing because no one can read their language yet. Most everything about them, including their religious beliefs, will remain unknown until archeologists can figure out their written language.

The Mayan people kicked the serpent from 7th to 1st place in the order of importance, put some feathers on him, named him Kukulcan and made him their chief god, then built a pyramids and entire cities in his honor.



The Olmec Rain Spirit (serpent)

We know, through the translated Popol Vuh (The Maya "Bible"), that they knew of the nine underlying waves in the quantum field that drives the evolution of the universe and all things it contains. This wave form came from the Plumed Serpent who, to them, was a living deity. The calendar they developed plotted its movements and, from this plot, they could determine the rise and fall of civilization. As such, it became an important tool to chart the destiny of their civilization. It's a shame that the Aztecs picked up on its use as a calendar but didn't know about, or ignored, the section that contained the "Long Count" which accurately foretold of the arrival of the Spanish.



El Castillo Chichen Itza with its seven flowing undulations. This structure is unique because it showed the 'waves' of the serpent going up and down on both equinoxes.

...The Mesoamerican Serpent

The coiled snake headdress is a significant artifact worn by Mayan women, both ancient and modern. There are carved stone monuments, drawings in screen-fold paper books (codices), painted ceramic pots and on murals of women wearing this particular headdress. They are worn today by women who practice midwifery in the tradition of the goddess Ix Chel. In modern times, each village has its own curendera, who practices the ancient art of Mayan medicine.



The coiled snake headdress

The Aztecs took the Winged Serpent that they named Quetzalcoatl and made him the Creator God, subject to receiving many human sacrifices as tribute.



Quetzalcoatl probably eating a tribute losing player of Ullamalitzli (The Aztec Ball Game)

Quetzalcoatl was one of four sons to Tonacatehuctli and Tonacacihuatl who were the original creator gods according to Aztec mythology. He, along with one of his brothers, was told to create the world according to the Mendoza Codex. As it turned out, this really wasn't a good idea because of the ani-

mosity that existed between the two. As a matter of fact, Quetzalcoatl tried to kill Tezcatlipoca, during the creation of the 1st Age, with a stone club. This is why his brother commanded all the jaguars to eat up all the people. This happened four additional times where one would attempt to get even with the other. We are the living result in the 5th Age.



Quetzalcoatl

Another way this story unfolds was with the brothers cooperating and actually getting to create the earth and the sky. They had to transform themselves into two immense giant serpents, complete with feathers, to attack a female monster that was also reptilian, named Tlaltcuhtli (Cipactli) and tore her in half in the process. Then they went on to create other things like the moon, stars, the sun, other lesser gods as well as the first man and woman.

There is a Toltec myth that tells how Quetzalcoatl actually came to an end. The brother of Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca, wanted to get rid of him for once and for all. One evening, he was able to get Quetzalcoatl really drunk, which ended up with him sleeping with his sister, Quetzalpétatl, committing incest. When he woke up and saw what he had done he built a large pyre and sacrificed himself in it. Another version has him wandering down to the Gulf and sailing away on a raft he made of snakes. In the burning version, he later emerges as the planet Venus. You pick.

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At the Movies

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Wind River

Directed by: Taylor Sheridan

Starring: Jeremy Renner, Kelsey Absville, Julia Jones, Teo Briones, Apesanahkwat, Graham Greene, Elizabeth Olsen, Tantoo Cardinal

“East of Boulder Flats, deep into the vast and unforgiving white territory of the Wind River Indian Reservation, the seasoned game tracker, Cory Lambert, discovers the frozen body of the young Native American, Natalie. As this is a federal crime, the F.B.I. dispatches the inexperienced, but courageous, agent, Jane Banner, to lead the investigation, however, the unprepared outsider will soon team up with Cory to unravel the mystery of Natalie's murder. Before long, Cory will inevitably have to face his own past while, at the same time, both he and Jane are thirsting to see justice done. In the end, will this be a fruitful alliance.”

This movie was engaging, from the first images of the vast snow-covered landscape, when we view a wolf hunting its prey, then to the swift change of view of a person running and struggling through a vast field of snow. Suddenly, a shot rings out; the wolf goes down and Jeremy Renner (multiple award winner), playing Cory Lambert, expert marksman and hunter, appears. As the story begins to unfold, and the elements come to together, it becomes a perspective of life on an Indian Reservation and, to some extent, the psychology of that life, in it's portrayed personalities. It's a haunting story that reveals the intricacies of the lives of the people in the story and it's terribly sad sometimes. The movie stayed with me for days and it is well worth watching if you're looking for serious drama wrapped up in an unusual murder mystery.



IMDB rates this film at 7.7/10 based on 171,167 viewers.

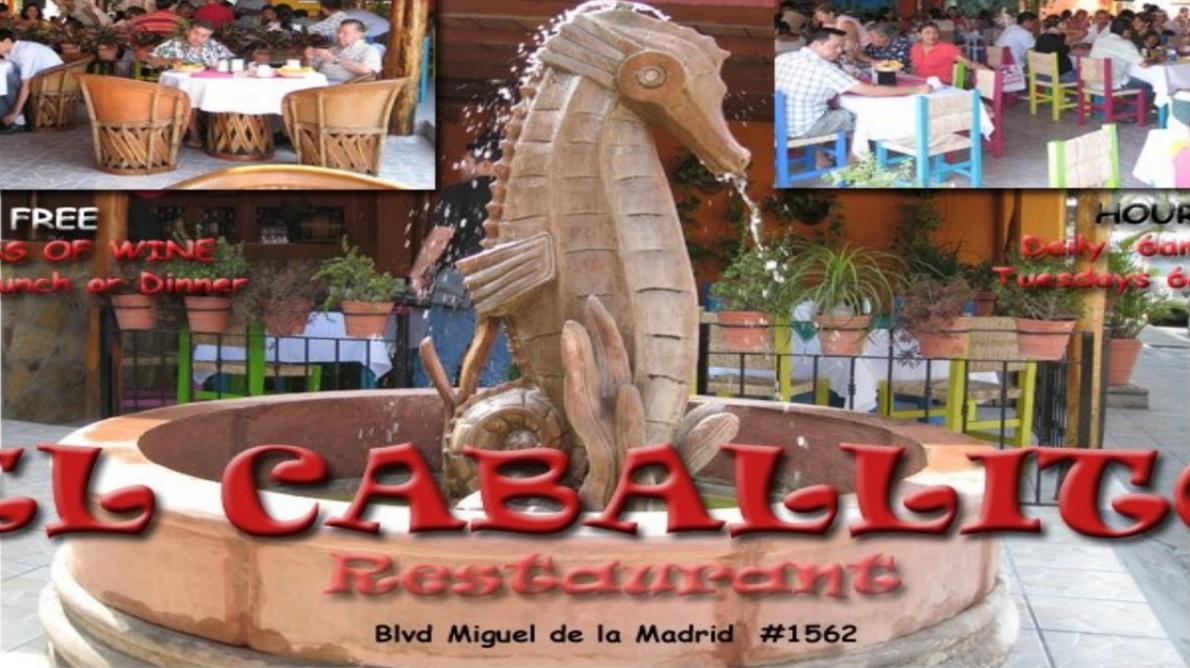


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At the Movies

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Hunter Killer

Directed by: Donovan Marsh

Starring: Gerard Butler, Gary Oldman, Linda Cardellini,...

"An untested American captain teams up with U.S. Navy SEALs to rescue the Russian president, who has been kidnapped by a rogue general."

As the story unfolds, we don't really know what the impetus for the submarine warfare that has begun under the icy waters of the Arctic. Gerard Butler and his crew are called into play as they are near the area where a U.S. sub has been fired on for apparently no reason.

Meanwhile a coup is taking place in the Russian government wherein the President is no longer in control. No one knows this. So, as you might imagine, this turns into a very tense submarine thriller drama.

It's a well done movie and quite entertaining for a change of pace. Gerard Butler plays his role well, as do the actors involved back in the war room in the USA and the crew of the submarine. There are a few surprises in store for viewers and I enjoyed the drama.

IMDB rates the movie at 6.6/10 based on 35,892 viewers' comments.



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by Tommy Clarkson

Beehive Ginger *Zingiber spectabile*

Family *Zingiberaceae*

Also known as *Pinecone Ginger, Ginger Wort or Malaysian Ginger*

Yes, the Ginger with which we are all most familiar is that of the commercially available and edible one, *Zingiber officinale*. Then there is the more conventionally seen Red Ginger (*Alpinia purpurata*). Beyond these, many of our guests are wholly enthralled by the brilliantly Red Torch Ginger, (*Etilingera elatio*). This is yet another "Ooooooh and awe" sort of guy! (Both are pictured and written about in Volume II of "The Civilized Jungle.")

Botanical columnist, Jamie McIntosh, has observed that, "It's difficult to find a more showy and unusual tropical flower than the Beehive Ginger. Depending on the variety, the cone-shaped bracts are borne throughout the growing season, providing interesting material for long-lasting tropical cut flower arrangements."

Native to eastern Asia, through Indomalaysia, to northern Australia, many of the eighty species in this genus are grown in the West as an ornamental plant. This particular beauty is native to the moist, tropical lowland forests and streamsides of Malaysia where it is sometimes used as a medicinal herb. For example, water collected from the bracts of its flowers is used by the Orang Aslis of the Temuan tribe to treat conjunctivitis.

And, though untried as of yet by me, I've read that, culinarily, leaves and rhizomes can be used for food flavoring. Young rhi-



Its Latin genus name comes from a Sanskrit word meaning "shaped like a horn".

zomes are sliced, soaked in vinegar and used as an appetizer and tender shoots are a salad substitute.

Its Latin genus name comes from a Sanskrit word meaning "shaped like a horn." The species name, *spectabile* is derived from another Latin word meaning "visible" or "spectacular". In turn, its common name, Beehive Ginger, is a result of the fact that its unique inflorescences resemble a skep beehive (The type used in mediaeval Europe and constructed of coils of straw or grass).

Rising from a fleshy, creeping rhizome – sounds a bit like a Class B horror flick, right? - Beehive Ginger needs ample growing space, rising to around ten feet tall (9.84 meters). Emerging from sheathing bases, its leaves are simple, alternate, two-ranked, subsessile (having a small stalk) with narrowly elliptical blades of eight to nineteen and a half inches (20.32 – 49.53 cm) long.

...Beehive Ginger



Nearby this new Beehive Ginger shoot one can see a Torch Ginger about to open up!

blooms. . .but too much sun can burn foliage, turning the edges crispy. (Like so many things in life, moderation is a good thing!) Might I suggest dappled - love that word - shade?)

Some folks with a sparsity of natural shade might consider containerizing their specimen on a screened lanai/porch or under a palapa/pergola. If – after all your efforts – you discern that your growing site gets more sun than desired, simply, increase watering times and amounts, never allowing them to dry out. Beyond moist soils, *Zingiber spectabile* enjoy high humidity. If they are grown as container specimens, merely mist the plants. While I've not tried it, I have read that an alternative to this is to briefly water the patio or deck on which your potted Beehive Ginger plants are sited. This technique works best on days with durned near "beastly" heat on which an almost steamy pocket arises around the plants during the evaporation process.



Its common name is a result of the fact that its unique inflorescences resemble a skep beehive.

Its rather remarkable flowers rise intermittently throughout the year, borne among yellowish ovate bracts (*A'hhh, yet another trickster of bracts acting like flowers!*) with rounded, curled tips in a dense ovoid-to-cylindrical spike of six inches to nearly a foot (15.24 - 30.48 cm) long on a leafless scape to three feet high (.91 meter). This "bloom" rises directly from the rhizome atop a scape (a separate stalk from the main plant). And here's yet one more Nifty Nugget of Knowledge: Birds and small animals are attracted to a foamy, fragrant nectar formed in these bracts.

Propagation may be done by division. It likes moist, well-draining soils in protected, partial shade. However, they do need some sun in order to produce those great bract/flower

Insect pests that can trouble your Beehive Ginger plants include ants, scale, aphids and mealybugs. The first of these are attracted by the honeydew secreted by aphids and mealybugs. Hence, should you notice ants around your plants, you may well have other insect pest problems as well. Scan along the stem and leaf petioles of your plants for signs of scale. Those sneaky aphids and mealybugs can hide under the leaves and in the bracts. Spray the entire plant with an insecticide as soon as you spot the insects – possibly repeating as often as every two weeks.



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How to Leave IRA Assets to a Beneficiary

by Yann Kostic

If the income from your individual retirement accounts (IRAs) turns out to be more than you actually require in retirement, and you're looking for ways to pass on some or all of your IRA assets to your heirs, you'll need to make some choices.

The first required minimum distribution from your traditional IRA must be taken by April 1 of the year following the year you reach age 70½, and annual distributions must continue to be made by December 31 of that year and in each following year. The calculation to determine the required minimum distribution can be based on your single life expectancy or the joint life expectancy of you and your beneficiary (either spouse or non-spouse). So first, consider and designate a beneficiary.

The single life expectancy method generally provides for the largest distributions and highest potential taxable income. In general, it is most appropriate if you plan to withdraw most of your IRA during retirement, because it increases the potential that you will deplete the account during your lifetime.

The joint life expectancy with a spouse beneficiary method can reduce your required minimum distribution and current taxable income, and can increase the potential for tax-deferred growth. Also, when you die, your spouse generally has more options for timing distributions.

The joint life expectancy with a non-spouse beneficiary method may reduce your required minimum distributions even more than when your beneficiary is a spouse-but because the beneficiary may be a child or grandchild, it may be most appropriate if you wish to maximize tax-deferred growth and leave a legacy for your heirs.

The choice you make will affect the size of the distributions, your taxable income, the amount left in the account to continue growing, tax- deferred, and the amount the IRA holder or beneficiary may leave to heirs. Your advisor can help you decide which choice is best for you.

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.



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Mexican Ricotta Croquettes

Use Requeson (Mexican ricotta) and a variety of other Mexican cheeses to make these craveable croquettes. Serve them with a sweet and smoky chipotle-honey salsa.

Yield: makes 12

Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

For the Chipotle-Honey Salsa:

- ✓ 4 plum tomatoes, cored
- ✓ 1 garlic clove, peeled
- ✓ 1/2 large yellow onion, roughly chopped
- ✓ 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- ✓ kosher salt
- ✓ 3 tbsp. honey
- ✓ 1 tsp. rice vinegar
- ✓ 2 cilantro sprigs
- ✓ 1 (7-ounce) can chipotle chiles in adobo sauce

For the Ricotta Latkes:

- ✓ 1 cup requeson (Mexican ricotta) or ricotta cheese
- ✓ 1 cup queso cremita, such as Tropical brand
- ✓ 1 cup finely crumbled cotija cheese
- ✓ 1 cup Chihuahua or mozzarella cheese
- ✓ 1/2 cup softened cream cheese
- ✓ 1/2 cup matzo meal
- ✓ 2 sticks unsalted butter, melted
- ✓ 2 large eggs
- ✓ 1 cup plain bread crumbs
- ✓ vegetable oil, for frying

Instructions

Make the chipotle-honey salsa: Heat the broiler. In a roasting pan, combine the tomatoes with the garlic and onion, then toss with the oil and season with salt. Broil, turning the vegetables as needed, until lightly blackened all over, about 6 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool. Transfer the vegetables to a food processor along with the honey, vinegar, cilantro, and chiles and adobo sauce and pulse until smooth.

Make the latkes: In a large bowl, combine the all 5 cheese with the matzo meal, butter and eggs and then refrigerate for 30 minutes. Using a 1-inch ice cream scoop, portion out balls of cheese, roll them in your hands to smooth, then coat them in the bread crumbs.

Pour enough oil into a 6-qt. Dutch oven to come 2 inches up the side and heat to 350° on a deep-fry thermometer. Working with 6 balls at a time, add the latkes to the oil and cook until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Drain the latkes on paper towels and serve immediately with the chipotle-honey salsa.

Source: Saveur.com



House for Rent

Golfers, take note!

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



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



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

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

Rates:

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

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

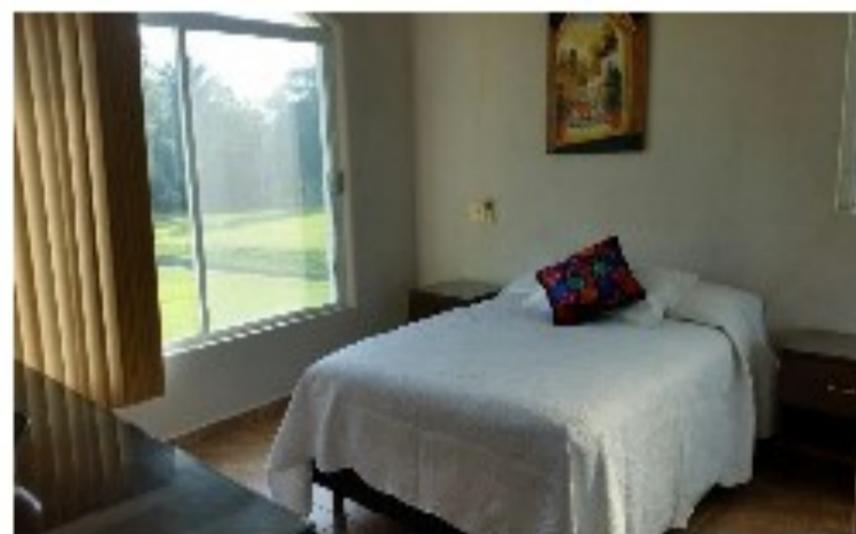
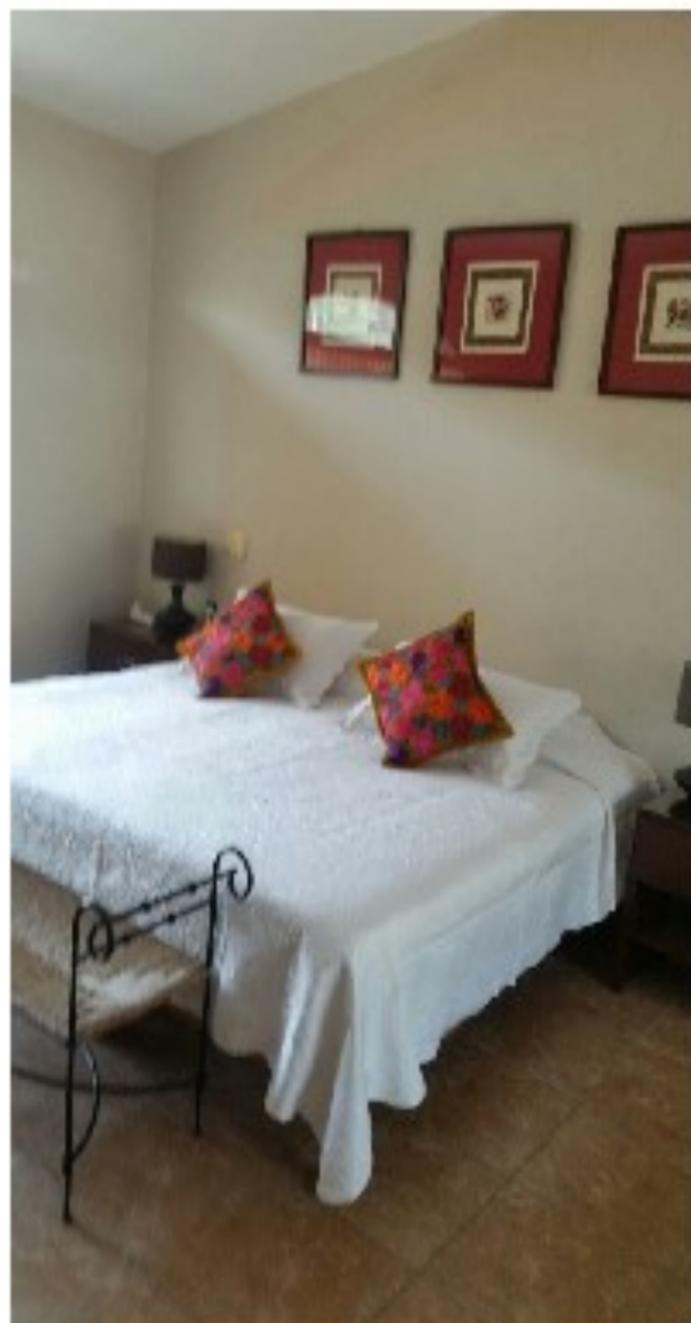
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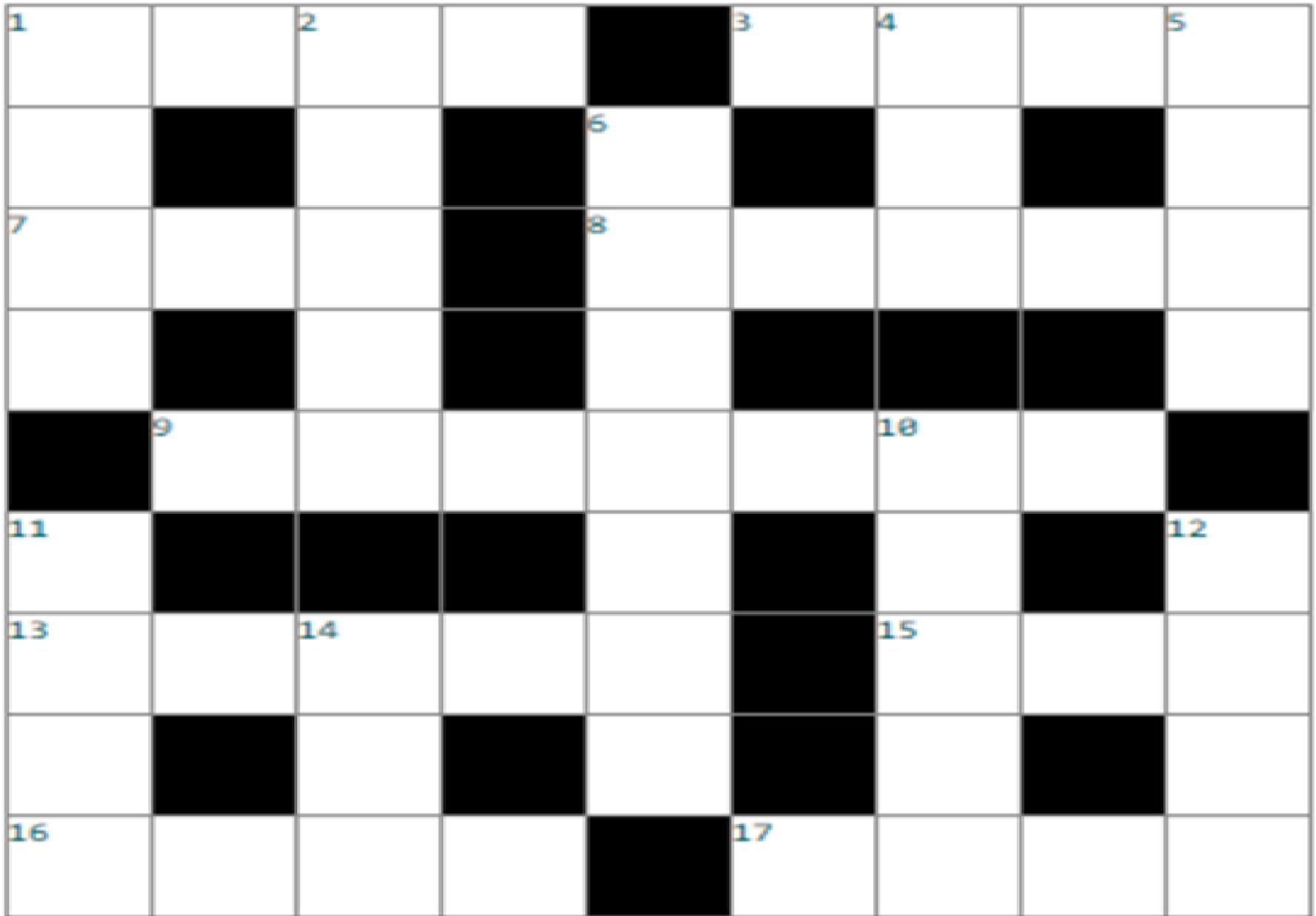
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Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



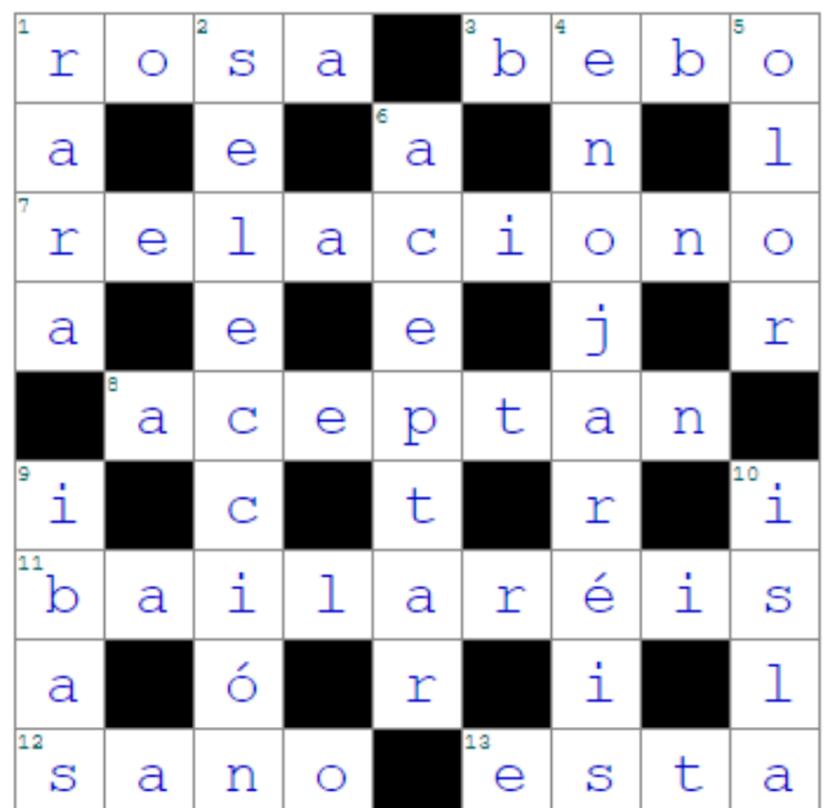
Across

- 1 (she) doubted
- 3 which, what, of those mentioned
- 7 two
- 8 (I) brought
- 9 (they) will wet
- 13 (I) cried
- 15 anger
- 16 love
- 17 (I) ate

Down

- 1 finger
- 2 desire, something wished for; wish
- 4 (feminine of) a
- 5 to read
- 6 across (1,6)
- 10 attic
- 11 (I) was smelling
- 12 (I) exited
- 14 bear

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

Timeline and Brief Historical Overview

from the Path to Citizenship series

BCE

- 1400 - The Olmec civilization begins to develop.
- 1000 - The Mayan Civilization starts to form.
- 100 - The Mayans build the first pyramids.

CE

- 1000 - The southern cities of the Mayan culture begin to collapse.
- 1200 - The Aztecs arrive in the Valley of Mexico.
- 1325 - The Aztecs found the city of Tenochtitlan.
- 1440 - Montezuma I becomes leader of the Aztecs and expands the Aztec Empire.
- 1517 - Spanish explorer Hernandez de Cordoba explores the shores of southern Mexico.
- 1519 - Hernan Cortez arrives in Tenochtitlan. Montezuma II is killed.
- 1521 - Cortez defeats the Aztecs and claims the land for Spain. Mexico City will be built on the same spot as Tenochtitlan.
- 1600s - Spain conquers the rest of Mexico and Spanish settlers arrive. Mexico is part of the colony of New Spain.
- 1810 - The Mexican War of Independence begins led by Catholic priest Miguel Hidalgo.
- 1811 - Miguel Hidalgo is executed by the Spanish.
- 1821 - The War of Independence ends and Mexico declares its independence on September 27th.
- 1822 - Agustin de Iturbide is declared the first Emperor of Mexico.
- 1824 - Guadalupe Victoria takes office as the first President of Mexico. Mexico becomes a republic.
- 1833 - Santa Anna becomes president for the first time.
- 1835 - The Texas Revolution begins.
- 1836 - The Mexican army led by Santa Anna is defeated by the Texans led by Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto. Texas declares its independence from Mexico as the Republic of Texas.
- 1846 - The Mexican-American War begins.
- 1847 - The United States Army occupies Mexico City.
- 1848 - The Mexican-American War ends with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The U.S. gains territory including California, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada.
- 1853 - Mexico sells portions of New Mexico and Arizona to the United States as part of the Gasden Purchase.
- 1857 - Santa Anna is exiled from Mexico.
- 1861 - The French invade Mexico and install Maximilian of Austria as president in 1864.
- 1867 - Benito Jaurez expels the French and becomes president.
- 1910 - The Mexican Revolution begins led by Emiliano Zapata.

- 1911 - President Porfirio Diaz, who ruled as dictator for 35 years, is overthrown and replaced with revolutionary Francisco Madero.
- 1917 - The Mexican Constitution is adopted.
- 1923 - Revolutionary hero and military leader Poncho Villa is assassinated.
- 1929 - The National Mexican Party is formed. It will later be named the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The PRI will rule the Mexican government until the year 2000.
- 1930 - Mexico experiences a long period of economic growth.
- 1942 - Mexico joins the Allies in World War II declaring war on Germany and Japan.
- 1968 - The Summer Olympics are held in Mexico City.
- 1985 - A huge 8.1 level earthquake hits Mexico City. Much of the city is destroyed and over 10,000 people are killed.
- 1993 - The North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and the United States is ratified.
- 2000 - Vicente Fox is elected president. He is the first president not from the PRI in 71 years.

Brief Overview of the History of Mexico

Mexico was the home to many great civilizations including the Olmec, the Maya, the Zapotec, and the Aztec. For over 3000 years before the Europeans arrived these civilizations flourished.

The Olmec civilization lasted from 1400 to 400 BC followed by the rise of the Maya culture. The Maya built many large temples and pyramids. The great ancient city of Teotihuacan was built between 100 BC and 250 AD. It was the largest city in the area and probably had a population of more than 150,000 people. The Aztec Empire was the last great civilization prior to the arrival of the Spanish. They came into power in 1325 and ruled until 1521.

In 1521, Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes conquered the Aztecs and Mexico became a Spanish colony. For 300 years Spain ruled the land until the early 1800s. At that time the local Mexicans revolted against Spanish rule. Father Miguel Hidalgo declared Mexico's independence with his famous cry of "Viva Mexico". In 1821, Mexico defeated the Spanish and gained full independence. Heroes of the Mexican revolution included General Augustin de Iturbide and General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

Source (images and article): Ducksters.com