



Egret
Laguna de las Garzas, Manzanillo
photo by Marg McKenna



Around Manzanillo
History and Mythology
At the Movies
RV Travel
Nature's Wonders
So Much to See
Recipe
Learn Spanish
Path to Citizenship

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- Pictures are welcome
- Comments, letters to the editor, articles, photos and advertisements are always welcome

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The Mighty Coconut

by Suzanne A. Marshall

I find it interesting to note that, when you're living a smaller life, staying at home more avoiding a pandemic, little things catch your interest that you didn't really notice before. This in addition to all those irritating little house fix ups, like oiling hinges, and fixing small items you've managed to ignore thus far. Several days ago, as we had our breakfast on the terrace, I noticed strange men in the yard. They were here to harvest the coconuts from the palm trees surrounding our oceanside yard.

I never really thought too much about it before, other than to make sure I wasn't sitting under them when seeking some shade, pool side. I had already ascertained that one of those babies could probably knock me unconscious if dropped on my head. They grow in fairly ominous clusters.

So, this day they've already begun to take down the coconuts as one can plainly see. There is a lot of foliage on the ground and one man in particular was below our terrace. I began to watch what they were doing as I sipped my coffee and became

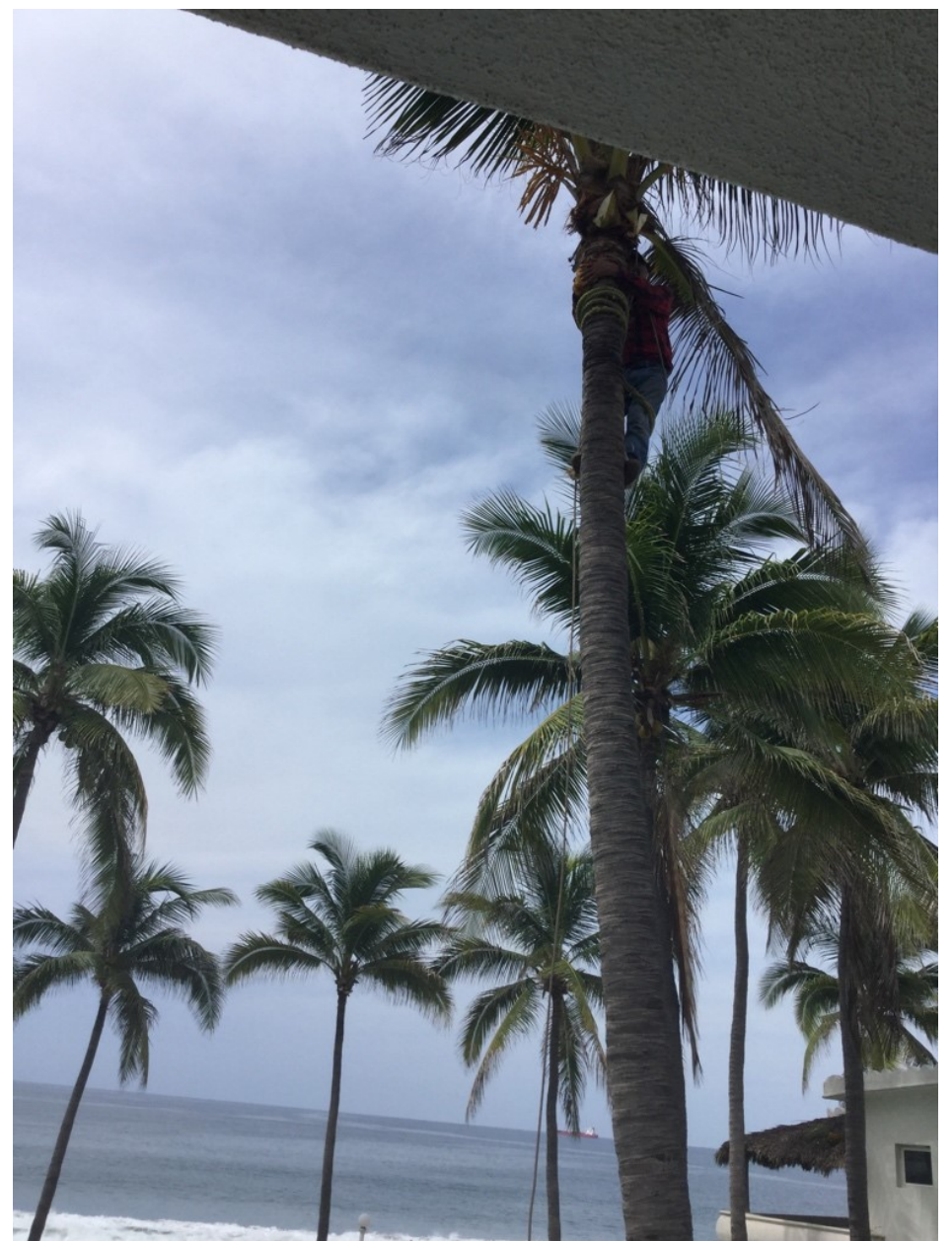
so focussed on their task I ultimately stood up and gave this man an applause. (I may have embarrassed him a little). Funny as it may seem, this is quite dangerous work in my world! These palms trees can grow as tall as 90 feet!! Ours are a good 40-50 feet tall.

He began by slinging a thick, well-used rope around the tree, which was somehow twisted to allow each foot a loop to stand in. Once positioned he shimmied the rope farther up the tree and followed suit with each foot. Quite frankly, he climbed like a monkey! He did give himself a head start by placing a step ladder at the base of the tree and then the rest was all up to him and his machete!

I could see and hear him hacking away at the clusters. They don't drop them to the ground, but again use rope to lower them gently. I imagine this is to avoid cracking and damaging the fruit. They will later sell these coconuts to various vendors and the tree palm trimmings are the very thing they use to



A man shimmies up the palm to cut the coconuts down.



He's almost at the top with his machete.

...The Mighty Coconut



Outside, on our front street, the men put the coconut harvest into the back of the pick up truck. The palm branches will be loaded on top and taken away.

All will be resold to coconut vendors and construction businesses will create beautiful palm palapas over many terraces and restaurants. Our building incorporates a number of these palapas into its Spanish Mediterranean design.

weave lovely thatched palapas, which we see in so many tropical places. They provide perfect shade and a waterproof area to sit and enjoy the view.

So, what's the big deal about coconuts? As a child, I remember my mother making a lovely vanilla cake which was topped with a crusty coconut layer with sweetened coconut, brown sugar and butter. Then I come to Manzanillo and have the best coconut shrimp I've ever tasted!

But, it's not just a treat for people with a "sweet tooth", like myself. It is actually the newest health craze and with good cause. Let me tell you more about coconuts:

There was a time when coconut was thought to be unhealthy and fatty. That is simply not true. In fact it's quite the opposite. Though it is a saturated fat, it's not like animal fat. You shouldn't overload when eating it but the good news is that the majority of this fat is made up of medium-chain triglycerides which your body breaks down for energy rather than storage. If you use coconut oil as a substitute for saturated fat, and use it modestly, it's very good for you.

As a skin product, virgin coconut oil means it can help reduce the appearance of fine lines. It helps rebalance your own oil production and, if you have oily skin, the rebalancing process of coconut oil will leave your skin less oily in the long run. Use it in small amounts and, if using as a cleanser, remove it thoroughly. Beauty bloggers are praising coconut oil for use on hair and skin.



Although our terrace does not have a palapa, our neighbours' terraces do.

Coconut water is low in calories, free of fat and cholesterol, is super hydrating and contains more potassium than four bananas, thus it has become a health craze. Marketers are calling it "Mother Nature's sports drink and the demand has skyrocketed. It, apparently, helps with a whole host of conditions, from hangovers to cancer and kidney stones.

Coconut water has a sweet, nutty taste. It contains easily digested carbohydrates in the form of sugar and electrolytes. But, don't confuse it with high-fat coconut milk or oil. It is the clear liquid in the fruit's center that is tapped from young, green coconuts.

Although not a proven fact, the coconut palm is believed to be native to the Malay Archipelago or the South Pacific. Worldwide, the global coconut market size increased by 3.5% to \$35.6 billion, inclusive of revenues of producers and importers. The countries producing the highest volumes are Indonesia, Philippines and India, with a combined 72% of the global consumption. Sri Lanka, Brazil, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Mexico and Thailand together comprise an additional 16%. (2018)

In 2019, Mexican exports of coconut reached 9,100 metric tons and it is one of the leading coconut exporting countries in Latin America. Mexico has averaged exports of approximately 17.5 Million USD annually.

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... more pics and recipe follow

...The Mighty Coconut



Above: Coconut clusters

Right: In the surrounding hills and valleys of Colima, you will see miles and miles of palm groves, a strong commercial export for Mexico.

Below: No matter where you go in Mexico, especially the coastal areas, you will find wonderful restaurants, topped with amazing palm palapas, built and woven by hand. It's almost an art form.



These men are preparing a frame, which will be topped with woven palm branches to form a palapa



Left: In the summer heat, the shade of a palapa is cool and welcoming.

...The Mighty Coconut

EASY COCONUT SHRIMP RECIPE

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

Total time: 30 minutes

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- ✓ 1/3 cup all-purpose flour or whole-wheat flour
- ✓ ½ teaspoon salt
- ✓ ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ✓ 2 large eggs, beaten
- ✓ ¾ cup Panko bread crumbs
- ✓ 1 cup sweetened shredded coconut
- ✓ 1 pound raw large shrimp, peeled and deveined, with tails
- ✓ Vegetable oil or coconut oil

1. Start with 3 medium bowls.
2. Combine flour, salt, and pepper in one bowl.
3. Beat the eggs in the second bowl.
4. Combine Panko and coconut in the third bowl.

5. Dip the shrimp into the flour, then the eggs, and then dredge the shrimp into the coconut, mixing, pressing gently to adhere. You want a lot of coconut on each shrimp. Set the coated shrimp aside on a plate as you coat the remaining shrimp.
6. Add enough oil to cover the bottom of a large skillet on medium heat. Fry the coconut shrimp in batches – do not crowd them in the pan. (Roughly 6-7 together) Flip after two minutes and fry the other side for two minutes or until golden brown. If you want them a little darker, try frying each side for 3 minutes.
7. Place the finished coconut shrimp on a plate lined with a paper towel as you fry the rest. Serve with your favourite sweet chilli sauce to 2 parts orange marmalade. Sprinkle with a little chopped cilantro (optional) and serve.
8. Leftovers keep well in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. You can also freeze for up to 2 months and reheat in a 350F degree oven or until thawed and warm.

Note: frying in coconut oil gives the best coconut flavour!



Photo by Elsie Hui - 238-365 Coconut Shrimp, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48747781>

Tezcatlipoca

story by Kirby Vickery

Tezcatlipoca (Fiery Mirror) was undoubtedly the Jupiter of the Nahua pantheon. He carried a mirror or shield, from which he took his name, and in which he was supposed to see reflected the actions and deeds of humankind. The evolution of this god, from the status of a spirit of wind or air, to that of the supreme deity of the Aztec people, presents many points of deep interest to students of mythology.

Originally a personification of the air, the source both of the breath of life and of the tempest, Tezcatlipoca possessed all the attributes of a god who presided over these phenomena. As the tribal god of the Tezcucans who had led them into the Land of Promise, and had been instrumental in the defeat of both the gods and men of the elder race they dispossessed, Tezcatlipoca naturally advanced so speedily in popularity and public honour that it was little wonder that, within a comparatively short space of time, he came to be regarded as a god of fate and fortune, and as inseparably connected with the national destinies.

Thus, from being the peculiar deity of a small band of Nahua immigrants, the prestige accruing from the rapid conquest made under his tutelary direction, and the speedily disseminated tales of the prowess of those who worshipped him, seemed to render him at once the most popular and the best feared god in Anahuac, therefore the one whose cult quickly overshadowed that of other and similar gods.

Tezcatlipoca, Overthrower of the Toltecs

We find Tezcatlipoca intimately associated with the legends, which recount the overthrow of Tollan, the capital of the Toltecs. His chief adversary on the Toltec side is the god-king Quetzalcoatl, whose nature and reign we will consider later, but whom we will now merely regard as the enemy of Tezcatlipoca. The rivalry between these gods symbolizes that which existed between the civilized Toltecs and the barbarian Nahua, and is well exemplified in the following myths.

Myths of Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca

In the days of Quetzalcoatl, there was abundance of everything necessary for subsistence. The maize was plentiful, the calabashes were as thick as one's arm, and cotton grew in all colours without having to be dyed. A variety of birds of rich plumage filled the air with their songs, and gold, silver, and precious stones were abundant. In the reign of Quetzalcoatl, there was peace and plenty for all men.

But, this blissful state was too fortunate, too happy to endure. Envious of the calm enjoyment of the god and his people, the Toltecs, three wicked "necromancers", plotted their downfall. The reference is of course to the gods of the invading Nahua tribes, the deities Huitzilopochtli, Titlacahuan or Tezcatlipoca, and Tlacahuepan.

These laid evil enchantments upon the city of Tollan, and Tezcatlipoca, in particular, took the lead in these envious conspiracies. Disguised as an aged man with white hair, he presented himself at the palace of Quetzalcoatl, where he said to the pages-in-waiting: "Pray present me to your master, the king. I desire to speak with him."

The pages advised him to retire, as Quetzalcoatl was indisposed and could see no one. He requested them, however, to tell the god that he was waiting outside. They did so and procured his admittance.

On entering the chamber of Quetzalcoatl, the wily Tezcatlipoca simulated much sympathy with the suffering god-king. "How are you, my son?" he asked. "I have brought you a drug which you should drink and which will put an end to the course of your malady."

"You are welcome, old man," replied Quetzalcoatl. "I have known for many days that you would come. I am exceedingly indisposed. The malady affects my entire system and I can use neither my hands nor feet."

...Tezcatlipoca

Tezcatlipoca assured him that, if he partook of the medicine which he had brought him, he would immediately experience a great improvement in health. Quetzalcoatl drank the potion, and at once felt much revived. The cunning Tezcatlipoca pressed another and still another cup of the potion upon him, and, as it was nothing but pulque, the wine of the country, he speedily became intoxicated, and was as wax in the hands of his adversary.

Tezcatlipoca and the Toltecs

Tezcatlipoca, in pursuance of his policy inimical to the Toltec state, took the form of an Indian of the name of Toueyo (Toveyo), and bent his steps to the palace of Uemac, chief of the Toltecs in temporal matters. He had a daughter so fair that she was desired in marriage by many of the Toltecs, but her father refused her hand to one and all.

The princess, beholding the false Toueyo passing her father's palace, fell deeply in love with him and, so tumultuous was her passion that she became seriously ill because of her longing for him. Uemac, hearing of her indisposition, bent his steps to her apartments, and inquired of her women the cause of her illness.

They told him that it was occasioned by the sudden passion, which had seized her, for the Indian who had recently come that way. Uemac at once gave orders for the arrest of Toueyo, and he was hauled before the temporal chief of Tollan.

"Whence come you?" inquired Uemac of his prisoner, who was very scantily attired.

"Lord, I am a stranger, and I have come to these parts to sell green paint," replied Tezcatlipoca.

"Why are you dressed in this fashion? Why do you not wear a cloak?" asked the chief.

"My lord, I follow the custom of my country," replied Tezcatlipoca.



Tezcatlipoca or the Jaguar God

"You have inspired a passion in the breast of my daughter," said Uemac. "What should be done to you for thus disgracing me?"

"Slay me; I care not," said the cunning Tezcatlipoca.

"Nay," replied Uemac, "for if I slay you my daughter will perish. Go to her and say that she may wed you and be happy."

Now the marriage of Toueyo to the daughter of Uemac aroused much discontent among the Toltecs; and they murmured among themselves, and said: "Wherefore did Uemac give his daughter to this Toueyo?" Uemac, having got wind of these murmurings, resolved to distract the attention of the Toltecs by making war upon the neighboring state of Coatepec.

The Toltecs assembled armed for the fray and, having arrived at the country of the men of Coatepec, they placed Toueyo in ambush with his body-servants, hoping that he would be slain by their adversaries. But Toueyo and his men killed a large number of the enemy and put them to flight. His triumph was celebrated by Uemac with much pomp. The knightly plumes were placed upon his head, and his body was painted with red and yellow, which is an honor reserved for those who distinguished themselves in battle.

...Tezcatlipoca

Tezcatlipoca's next step was to announce a great feast in Tolan, to which all the people for miles around were invited. Great crowds assembled and danced and sang in the city to the sound of the drum. Tezcatlipoca sang to them and forced them to accompany the rhythm of his song with their feet.

Faster and faster the people danced, until the pace became so furious that they were driven to madness, lost their footing, and tumbled pell-mell down a deep ravine, where they were changed into rocks. Others, in attempting to cross a stone bridge, precipitated themselves into the water below, and were changed into stones.

Tezcatlipoca ([teskatti'po : ka]) was a central deity in Aztec mythology. He was associated with many concepts. Some of these are the night sky, the night winds, hurricanes, the north, the earth, obsidian, enmity, discord, rulership, divination, temptation, sorcery, beauty, war and strife. His name in the Nahuatl language is often translated as "Smoking Mirror" because of his connection to obsidian, the material from which mirrors were made in Mesoamerica and which was used for shamanic rituals.

He had many names in context with different aspects of his deity: Titlacauan ("We are his Slaves"), Ipalnemoani ("He by whom we live"), Necoc Yaotl ("Enemy of Both Sides"), Tloque Nahuaque ("Lord of the Near and the Nigh") and Yohualli Ëcatl (Night, Wind), Ome acatl ("Two Reed"), Ilhuicahua Tlalticpaque ("Possessor of the Sky and Earth").

On pictures, he was usually drawn with a black and a yellow stripe painted across his face. He is often shown with his right foot replaced with an obsidian mirror or a snake - an allusion to the creation myth in which he loses his foot battling with the Earth Monster.

Sometimes the mirror was shown on his chest, and sometimes smoke would come from the mirror. Tezcatlipocas Nagual, his animal counterpart, was the jaguar and his Jaguar aspect was the deity Tepeyollotl "Mountainheart".

The Tezcatlipoca figure goes back to earlier Mesoamerican deities worshipped by the Olmec and Maya. Similarities exist with the patron deity of the K'iche' Maya as described in the Popol Vuh. A central figure of the Popol Vuh was the god Tohil, whose name means "obsidian", and who was associated with sacrifice. Also, the Classic Maya god of rulership and thunder, known to modern Mayanists as "God K", or the "Manikin Scepter", and to the classic Maya as K'awil, was shown with a smoking obsidian knife in his forehead and one leg replaced with a snake.

Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl

Tezcatlipoca was often described as a rival of another important god of the Aztecs, the culture hero, Quetzalcoatl. In one version of the Aztec creation account the myth of the Five Suns, The first creation, "The sun of the Earth" was ruled by Tezcatlipoca but destroyed by Quetzalcoatl when he struck down Tezcatlipoca who then transformed into a jaguar. Quetzalcoatl became the ruler of the following creation, "Sun of Water", and Tezcatlipoca destroyed the third creation, "Sun of Wind" by striking down Quetzalcoatl.

Tepeyollotl 1

When Hernán Cortés first landed close to what is now Veracruz, Mexico, in 1519, the last thing he was interested in was the preservation of the knowledge and history of the Mesoamerican culture(s) as he went through and defeated them in battle, both by war and by trickery, to obtain their gold. Two things happened, which for the love of history, turned out to be good. The first was that the Aztecs did not want anyone knowing where they came from and hid or destroyed all their books (yes, they had a written language) showing where they came from. Although a blessing for the Aztecs, this has turned into a modern search for where they and the rest of the Central American Tribes and Empires came from. (It has even gotten silly.

The Olmecs were the first and they did not leave a written language. So, because of the shape of the Olmec features on their giant heads they carved, one group from Africa has claimed in-

...Tezcatlipoca

heritance and want the world to turn all of Central America, including Mexico, to them.

The second was the Catholic Church that decreed that all the books of the "Heathen" depicting their 'false' gods be destroyed. What is good was that there were a few priests that didn't follow the order and some of them even sat some of the 'savages' down to write of their culture, history and religion. These have become the Codices, which modern day people are always quoting.



Mayan Codex

These, it seems, did not turn up immediately in Spanish hands, but later, from various churches in France and other countries. It is these Codices that have given historians and archeologists a firm foundation in the Mesoamerican cultures to include their languages, beliefs, culture, and mythology which they may not have valued, as such, but have turned into something a lot better than the much sought after gold Hernan was originally after.

There are volumes of information on the Mesoamerican Gods, most of which concern an Aztec Central God named Quetzalcoatl. He was the brother of Tezcatlipoca, depicted in the codex Rios in the aspect of a Jaguar - in this form he was called Tepeyollotl.

In later myths, the four gods who created the world, Tezcatlipoca, Quetzalcoatl, Huitzilopochtli and Xipe Totec were referred to respectively as the Black, the White, the Blue and the Red Tezcatlipoca. The four Tezcatlipocas were the sons of Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl, lord and lady of the duality, and were the creators of all the other gods, as well as the world and man. [Confused yet?]

We can look at him this way, too: Tezcatlipoca was often described as a rival of another important god of the Aztecs, the culture hero, Quetzalcoatl.

In one version of the Aztec creation account, there is a myth of the Five Suns, where the word 'Sun' is actually a singular creation of a 'world.' The first creation, "The Sun of the Earth", was ruled by Tezcatlipoca but destroyed by Quetzalcoatl when he struck down Tezcatlipoca who then transformed into a jaguar.

Quetzalcoatl became the ruler of the following creation "Sun of Water", and Tezcatlipoca destroyed the third creation, "The Sun of Wind", by striking down Quetzalcoatl.

Here is a quick story which is a good example of their rivalry: To the Toltecs, Tezcatlipoca was their head God. The Aztecs considered the Toltec their intellectual equal and also revered Tezcatlipoca but not as much as Quetzalcoatl. And that is what set the two gods up as adversaries.

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The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel

Series on Amazon Prime video

review by Suzanne A. Marshall

Program creator: Amy Sherman-Paladrino

Starring: Rachel Brosnahan, Alex Borstein, Michael Zegen, Marin Hinkle, Tony Shalhoub

"It's the late 1950's and Miriam "Midge" has everything she has ever wanted—the perfect husband, two kids and an elegant apartment on New York's Upper West Side. Her seemingly idyllic life takes a surprising turn when she discovers a hidden talent she didn't previously know she had - - stand up comedy. This revelation changes her life forever as she begins a journey that takes her from her comfortable life on the Upper West Side through the cafes and nightclubs of Greenwich Village as she makes her way through the city's comedy industry on a path that could ultimately lead her to a spot on the "Tonight Show" couch."

IMDB rates the movie at 8.7/10 by its viewing audience. I agree.

Like the rest of the world, our home has become a refuge from COVID-19. And, like so many others, our isolation has taken us to more television viewing than the norms of the past. This series is a welcome reprieve and a most enjoyable escape from reality. It is, without doubt, one of the best series I've ever watched. It was a sad occasion when we caught up with all three years of the production and now await the coming season with great anticipation.

The 1950's era plays out so perfectly. You are there. The fashions, automobiles, colours and personalities of the era are so perfect. The characters are really amazing and I still wonder at the ability of Midge to move so easily through her lines as a stand up comic and the general relationships that developed with the family, friends and entertainment world.

It's no small wonder that the series has received so many accolades and won the Screen Actors Guild Award for "Outstanding Performances" by an ensemble in a comedy series. It has won five acting Emmys, Golden Globe Award for "Best Performance" by an actress; Primetime Creative Arts Emmy Award; Golden Globe for "Best Series" and the list goes on and on! This is highly recommended viewing!



Highway 19 – Road to adventure on the West Cape of Baja California Sur (BCS)

by Dan and Lisa Goy

It took 20 years after our 1st trip to Baja Peninsula before we ventured onto Hwy 19 and the west cape of BCS. About 20 minutes west of La Paz, Hwy 19 forks with all roads leading to Cabo San Lucas. In 2005, both roads were basically the original narrow 2-lane highway, southwest, through Todos Santos, and southeast through Los Barriles. Today, Hwy 19 is unrecognizable from that road we drove on in 2005, from beginning to end.

Todos Santos has been well established for decades, including a small in-town campground (El Litro) which works for tenting and very small RVs. Our first camping experience on Hwy 19 was in 2008 at the former government campground abandoned at Los Cerritos, built in 1974, and abandoned shortly after. We did not know it at the time, but we were the last campers at this location. Following our departure after a few days, access to this location was blocked and later developed. We learned later that this campground had been the most popular dry camping location on the west cape since its construction.



Hwy 19 construction in December 2011

We moved to a location called the "golf course", a couple of minutes south and father away from the Pacific. This is where the bulk of campers had moved to following the closure of the old Los Cerritos campground. In 2008, the Hacienda Cerritos, perched on the point overlooking the beach, was in construction, as was the Sol Pacífico Cerritos, a large condo residential/rental project on the beach that included the largest infinity pool on all of Baja. The Los Cerritos Surf Club had been established but was still in its infancy. Yet to come was the Los Cerritos Surf Colony (renamed Surf Town) and the Mayan Village.

In 2008, the San Pedrito RV Park, located on the beach north of El Pescadero, had been long since washed away (built in an arroyo). In years to come, Baja Serena located on Hwy 19, was established in Pescadero, 20 minutes south of Todos Santos, which offered 8 sites and a mini-super Los Arcos.

Later the Mountain Shadow RV Park was built by BC resident, Kenny Sewell. This is a full-service campground and includes a pool and a high secure fence all around.



Hwy 19 newly paved

Around 2014, it burnt to the ground and, when rebuilt, was renamed the Pescadero RV Park. Our stay in 2008 is also when we were introduced to La Pasadita, a family owned Taquería in El Pescadero, located at a residence. José and his family offer hamburgers, tacos, burritos and more, probably the best on Baja, at a reasonable price. A hosted dinner visit to "La Pasadita" was a staple feature of our tours for years.



Hwy 19 construction in January 2012

In 2011, our tours included a stop in El Pescadero on the west cape. We found Bobby and Wendy Cain who owned a number of rental casitas, Las Palmas Tropicales, on the beach adjacent to the San Pedrito beach and decided to develop some property nearby as a campground. We were the first RVs to stay at this newly opened campground, which included water that worked occasionally, and was within walking distance of the beach.

...Hwy 19

Baja Amigos promises "Fun and Adventure" on all out tours and, as we explain, these are two (2) different words! The drive in and out of the Las Palmas Tropicales Campground was an adventure navigating locked gates and farmers' fields led by Bobby. We have many great memories of our many stays over a couple of seasons.



RVs parked at Las Palmas Tropicales RV campground

In 2013, heading to Bobby's campground, we were informed at our arrival at our Hwy 19 rendezvous location that the gates were locked and our route no longer accessible. Unfortunately, the alternate route was not an option for our large RVs.

Turning challenge into achievement, we headed to the Los Cerritos RV Park, which had opened in 2012, located beside the Cerritos Surf Colony. Although the sign out front said, "RV Park", this was nothing more than a gravel parking lot, somewhat landscaped with vegetation, some of which was alive, at first blush not very appealing.



Driving into Las Palmas Tropicales RV campground
Pescadero

Granted the ground was solid, level and flat; however, there were no amenities, none. No power, water, dump stations, not even a garbage can. What worked was full access to all the amenities of the Surf Colony, which included a large pool, outside shower, a private beach access, restaurant and bar, Wi-Fi, washrooms and satellite TV. Our guests loved it once they were able to experience all the bells and whistles. Good thing, as this cost us \$30 USD per RV per day to park here.

Unfortunately, the ownership of the Cerritos Surf Colony changed hands and the adjacent Los Cerritos RV Park was not part of the sale in the 2016/2017 season. Our Baja Amigos fall tour had a wonderful 4-day stay in December. We were stunned when our first January tour arrived to find access to Surf Colony no longer available and closed with a barbed wire fence where the gate entrance was.



RV set up at Cerritos RV parking

In typical Mexican style, we were never notified about the change, even though we had been making and confirming reservations for 3 seasons. In addition, the owners of the Los Cerritos RV Park continued to demand \$30 USD per RV per day. We scrambled to find other accommodation for our group and eventually ended up in the Pescadero Soccer field, an easy 2-block walk from La Pasadita. We kept Hwy 19 and a 1-evening stop in the schedule until our 2018/2019 season. Even though we made reservations for the soccer field, and it was easy in and out, flat, level and secure, it was too much "adventure" for many of our guests.

The blanket factory operated by Efrén and Vivian Bautista, just south of Los Cerritos, also became a familiar and regular stop. Always happy to see our groups, they offer a great selection of products at great prices. We even visited their family on the mainland near Puebla, in 2016, on our 90-day Mexico RV adventure. On average, our groups would purchase \$500 - \$750

...Hwy 19

USD every time we stopped. Sadly, family pressures sent Efrén's prices through the roof and our groups no longer enjoyed this stop.



Blanket factory

We eliminated Hwy 19 from our 2019/2020 Baja RV tour schedule and have added an excursion, using hired transport, into Todos Santos, from the Campestre Maranatha campground in La Paz. For those interested in RVing Hwy 19, and checking out the sites, there is always lots of RV parking in Todos Santos and the Pescadero RV Park (formally Mountain Shadow) can be an option although they do not allow dogs or short-term stays. You can take in Hwy 19 and Todos Santos in a day as a bypass has now been added from Hwy 19 to the north side of San José del Cabo.

Whenever possible, we will drop into "La Pasadita" and have dinner. You should too!



Mike and Casey at the blanket factory

Todos Santos (Spanish: All Saints) is a small coastal town in the foothills of the Sierra de la Laguna Mountains, on the Pacific coast side of the Baja California Peninsula, about an hour's drive north of Cabo San Lucas, on Highway 19, and an hour's drive southwest from La Paz. Todos Santos is a natural paradise, located at the Tropic of Cancer, and has a population of approximately 7,000 residents. Many Canadians and Americans own winter homes in this town and the population swells from October through March.



Hwy 19 parking for RVs
Blanket factory

History

The mission at what is now Todos Santos, Misión Santa Rosa de las Palmas, was founded by father Jaime Bravo in 1723. In 1724, it was renamed Nuestra Señora del Pilar de La Paz. Located across the street, to the southwest, from the small town plaza, this mission contains the statue of the Virgin of Pilar, which is the focus of Todos Santos' main festival in November.

During the Mexican American War, the "Skirmish of Todos Santos" was the last battle of the war, fought near the town on March 30, 1848.

During the 19th century, following the secularization of the missions, Todos Santos thrived as the Baja sugarcane capital, supporting eight sugar mills at the end of the 19th Century. Only one existed by the time the town's freshwater spring dried up in 1950 and that last mill closed in 1965.

Todos Santos faced a bleak future until the spring came back to life in 1981 and the Mexican Government paved Highway 19 in the mid-1980s. The highway brought tourists and the rich farmlands have been revived. The town now prospers from farming vegetables, chilies, avocados, papayas and mangoes; as well as from fishing and ranching.

...Hwy 19

Contemporary Todos Santos

More recently, there has been a gradual increase in tourist activity and a boom in real estate development. Handicraft shops, owner-operated art galleries featuring landscape paintings of local scenes (some artists from Guadalajara and other parts of Mexico also exhibit works in Todos Santos), upscale restaurants, boutique hotels and restored colonial buildings have contributed to the gentrification and redevelopment of the town. There are a few annual festivals including the Festival de Cine and the Todos Santos Music Festival.



RVs parked in Todos Santos

The Hotel California is a favorite stop because of the name association with the song made famous by the Eagles, even though the song does not specifically reference this particular hotel, nor any other existing hotel. On May 1, 2017, the band, The Eagles, filed a lawsuit against the Hotel California in United States District Court for the District of Central California alleging Trademark Infringement. The Eagles were seeking relief and damages. The lawsuit was settled in 2018: the hotel continues to use the name, abandoned efforts to apply for a trademark in the United States, and now expressly denies any connection with the song or the Eagles.

There are many beautiful beaches within a 15-minute drive of Todos Santos. However, some of the area's beaches, with rip tides, undertows, and fairly steep drop offs close to shore, are not considered safe for swimming. Playa Las Palmas and Playa Los Cerritos are great beaches for swimming and shell collecting. San Pedrito Point, Los Cerritos and other local surf breaks attract surfers from around the world.

There are many accommodations, both at San Pedrito and at Cerritos beach. This town attracts beach aficionados, bird-watchers, hikers, wild-life enthusiasts, kayakers, surfers, snorkelers, scuba-divers, fishermen, the list is truly endless. The climate around Todos Santos has allowed hundreds of species of flora and fauna to flourish in dozens of microclimates. So unique is the area that UNESCO has designated it as a Biosphere Reserve.

Todos Santos was named a "Pueblo Mágico" in 2006 and its most famous resident is Peter Buck, co-founder of R.E.M.

El Pescadero, Baja California Sur is a small village in the municipality of La Paz, in the Mexican state of Baja California Sur. It is located at km 64 on Federal Highway 19 on the Pacific Ocean, about 8 kilometers south of Todos Santos, which is about a one-hour drive north of Cabo San Lucas. The village has around 3,000 residents, not counting expats who reside here during the winter months.

Climate

The climate is heavily influenced by the Pacific Ocean, which moderates the temperatures year-round. Pescadero is bordered by the Sierra de la Laguna mountains to the East. In the huerta (orchard) area of Pescadero (the farmland area,) palm-lined roads and farms co-exist with low-density private residences. A common sight in the huerta are the chili and basil fields. Most of these crops are grown for export. Commercial farming in Pescadero flourishes because of an ample supply of underground water funneled down from the mountains. Air from the Pacific Ocean is pushed up the Sierra de la Laguna mountain range and is met with hotter air from the Gulf of California, resulting in frequent mountain rain storms that persist through the summer and fall.



Surfing

Surf breaks punctuate the length of the peninsula's Pacific coast. Two of the best are located in El Pescadero: Los Cerritos and San Pedrito. Both beaches have right breaks. Los Cerritos is better for beginner and intermediate surfers, while San Pedrito is considered an advanced surfer's break because of its rocky bottom, abundance of sea urchins and strong currents.

Festivals

Each March, the pueblo hosts the Chili and Strawberry Festival, celebrating and promoting the area's agriculture. Organic produce and plants are offered for sale, food is available to sample, and agricultural products and tools are on display from vendors. The festival includes a dance, crowning of a queen, and a cabalgante - a procession of horse and riders from Todos Santos to the festival in Pescadero.

... more pics follow

...Hwy 19



Sol Pacífico Cerritos completed

Cerritos RV parking and surf colony



Cerritos surf colony

Body surfing, Los Cerritos



...Hwy 19



A Mike moment at Cerritos surf colony



Baja Amigos Charlie and Rosy, Cerritos beach



Baja Amigos at Cerritos surf club pool



Los Cerritos RV parking lot



View of Cerritos beach



Daughter Heather surfing at Los Cerritos

...Hwy 19



Free dry camping near Cerritos



Sol Pacifico Cerritos infinity pool in construction



Sol Pacifico Cerritos in construction in 2008



2008, last RVs on Cerritos beach camping



Early days at Cerritos surf club (2008)



Cerritos surf club - guests only

...Hwy 19



Sunset at Cerritos



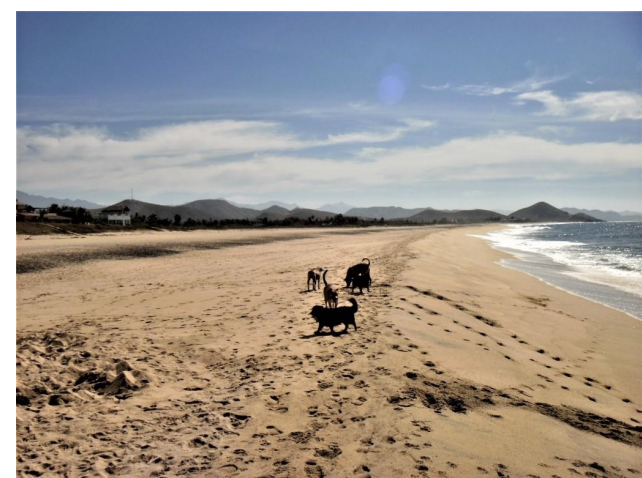
Surf's up! 2008 Cerritos with the Sol Pacífico Cerritos in the distance, under construction



Pescadero soccer field RV parking in 2017



RV parking, Pescadero soccer field, 2017



Above: dogs on playa Pescadero
Left: Dan on the boogie board on Pescadero beach

Basil field in Pescadero



...Hwy 19



Peppers in
El Pescadero



Beach fishing, Pescadero



Baja Amigos on
the beach in
Pescadero

...Hwy 19



Shopping in Todos Santos



Completed northbound exit on Todos Santos bypass



Aztec calendar in Todos Santos



The gang on a walk around Rancho Verde



Shopping plaza in Todos Santos



Shop in Todos Santos

...Hwy 19



George's tacos, favourite stop in Todos Santos



Breakfast in Todos Santos



Gallery in Todos Santos



Beautiful magic town!



Todos Santos shop



Todos Santos hotel of legend

...Hwy 19



Todos Santos Hwy 19 bypass



Zócalo (main plaza) in Todos Santos



Weaving loom at the blanket factory



Lisa and Efrén (owner) at the blanket factory

...Hwy 19



Baja Amigos La Pasadita experience



Dan and Betty at the blanket factor



Carl, Betty and Gwen in Todos Santos



Hwy 19 landscape



Baja Amigos gang at Casa Bentley in Todos Santos

Submitted by
Dan and Lisa Goy
Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours
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by Tommy Clarkson

Choco Palm *Astrocaryum mexicanum*

Family *Arecaceae*

Also known as Lancetilla or Chichon

The genus *Astrocaryum* is comprised of eighteen, very spiny, pinnate-leaved palms. As a whole, they grow naturally in the West Indies, through Mexico, through Central America and into South America. The genus name is derived from the Greek words meaning "star" and "nut", referring to the pattern on the seed coat. While a few of these are of the clumping sort, most are solitary trunked while a few have subterranean stems. For the most part, these are undergrowth, rain forest plants preferring full to partial shade.

In "An Encyclopedia of Cultivated Palms," Robert Lee Raffle and Paul Craft stated, "Some have plume-like leaves because the leaflets grow from the rachis at different angles; many others have flat leaves with leaflets in one plane. All the leaflets are silvery or white beneath. The juvenile plants of many species have entire leaves with unseparated leaves."

They go on to say, "the inflorescences grow from the leaf sheaths and are accompanied by a large, persistent, spiny paddle-shaped bract. The flowering branches bear male and female blossoms, are usually short, and are formed at the end of long peduncles which elongate and become pendant as the fruits mature. The latter are formed in clusters and are yellow to brown, mostly globular and spiny."



From the distance, at first, casual glance, the Choco Palm doesn't look treacherous!

They then address the proverbial heart and soul (*or would that be needles and spines?*) of these small palms, "These species are of exceptional beauty at every stage of growth, have stout and vicious spines on most of their anatomy, and are difficult to handle; they are not recommended for planting in high traffic areas. (*Might I editorially embellish on this and suggest "In no areas near where folks might be?"*)

This spininess is one reason these beauties are still rare and difficult to find, but are worth the effort."

...Choco Palm



We've only one other palm nearing the unfriendliness (read: lethality) of this one!



Trunk, frond stems and the leaflets themselves – This guy is not one for tree huggers!

They wrap up their thoughts by saying, "This exceptional, small palm is among the most beautiful in the family, especially when young. It needs a protected, partially shady spot to keep its gorgeous leaves from splitting and is unsurpassed as a patio or close-up subject (*They are both, obviously, much braver than am I, having been on the receiving ends of those needles too many times!*) Planted in groups of three or more individuals of varying heights, there is hardly a more beautiful landscape subject."

Appropriate to some of the previously stated, the *Astrocaryum mexicanum* is a smallish, solitary-stemmed, evergreen palm tree. It is found in the rainforests of Mexico, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and here, in Ola Bris Gardens! They usually grow to just under five feet to nearly twenty feet (1.52 – 6.10 meters) in height with an occasional exception to well over twenty-six feet (7.92 meters). The unbranched trunk can be three inches (7.62 cm) in diameter. And, yes, the Choco Palm is armed with a copious number of spreading, stout, black spines one to two inches (2.54 – 5.08 cm) or more long.

It has no crown shaft (applying to pinnate-leaved palms only, this means the tubular or cylindrical shaft above the woody part of the trunk consisting of expanded and tightly packed leaf bases). Its top is a crown of seven to ten arching, sparingly divided, somewhat dark green leaves with a lighter underside, comprised of irregularly divided leaflets. This spreads for eight to twelve feet (2.44 – 3.66 meters). Its mature seeds are brown with spines and germinate erratically - anywhere from ten to twenty weeks.

As to its inflorescence, such is one foot (30.48 cm) long from within its crown. The blossoms are creamy, pale yellow-whitish and, purportedly, edible! In turn, its fruit is ovoid; 2" (5.08 cm) long and heavily armed with short spines.

With a somewhat slow growth rate, and appreciating regular watering to keep its rich, well-draining soil rather moist, they are not heat, drought, salt or wind tolerant. And, yes, while requiring high humidity in such a locale, it can be grown as an indoor palm – *but with those dangerous needles, why?* And, away from the civility of one's backyard, in some of its native regions, it is harvested from the wild as a local source of food and materials.

So, the call is yours! The consensus appears to be that these are attractive palms and - properly located - a delight to behold. Yet, I would be sorely remiss if I did not repeat myself in pointing out the less than desirable ramifications and results from either poor placement or tree hugging of them!

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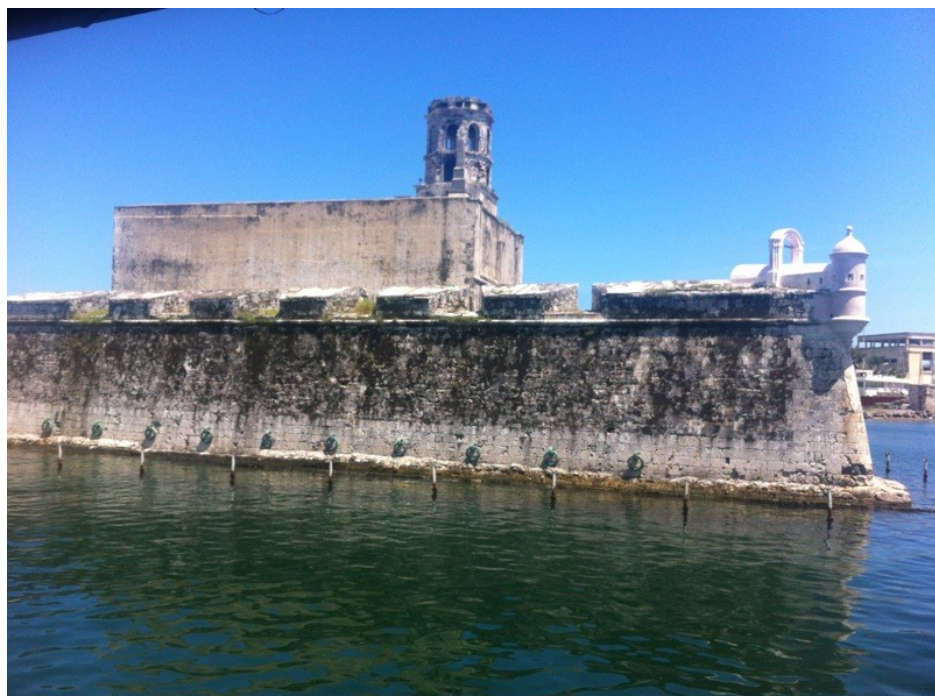
Veracruz, Veracruz

places the editors have been and recommend you visit

Veracruz is a large city in the state of Veracruz in Central Mexico. The locals call their city "Puerto" (port) to differentiate the city from the state of Veracruz. The Port of Veracruz remains the core of its economy. It is also famous for its nightlife and its spacious downtown area near the harbor (zócalo) comes alive with music and dancing with a strong Cuban influence. Highlights are the annual carnival (Carnaval) celebrations around February, when the party atmosphere is particularly raucous and hotel rooms become difficult to find.

Veracruz has a rich history. It has been the main gate of the country for sea travelers and products since its foundation. In this region, the Spanish first entered Mexico in the 16th century and remained for three centuries, forever changing the region. About 20 km northwest from Puerto Veracruz, in a town known as La Antigua Veracruz, Hernán Cortés first landed in Mexico. Veracruz would be one of the main ports of the Spanish Treasure Fleets. From its harbor, Mexican silver and the Asian silks, porcelain and spices of the Acapulco-Manila galleon trade were loaded onto galleons for transport to Spain.

San Juan de Ulúa fortress, located on an island off the city's coast, was built in the 16th century, to guard against pirate attacks. It was the scene of the final stand of Spanish colonial-



San Juan de Ulúa

ism in the New Spain, being occupied by Spanish soldiers for four years after Mexico's War of Independence. Veracruz has witnessed four foreign invasions, earning the city the title 'Cuatro Veces Heroica' ("Four Times Heroic"). Two of these attacks led to full-scale invasions of Mexico which retraced the route of Cortés, by the US in 1847, and France in 1862.

Despite its status as the oldest European settlement on the American mainland, much of the colonial city was destroyed by invasions. The city walls were demolished during the era of Porfirio Díaz. However, there is some significant historic architecture, including two historic fortresses, several museums and historical buildings along the "malecón" which is the long promenade or sea wall.

A few beaches can be found north of Veracruz but the beaches and water are not very clean. Beach lovers might want to go north to Tecolutla or south to Las Tuxtlas.

Local language is, of course, Spanish. More than half (but not all) of the hospitality workers speak English. Local people are known as "jarocho." This denomination is not only for the people of the city but for the whole region of the State of Veracruz, known as "Llanuras de Sotavento." The jarocho are friendly people who love to be outdoors. The weather is mild, averaging between 25 and 32 degrees Celsius, but between January and March high winds from the north, known as "nortes", can reach up to 120 Km/h.

Don't miss

- ✓ San Juan de Ulúa Castle
- ✓ Baluarte de Santiago
- ✓ Museo Agustín Lara

Image and story source:
Wikimedia / Wikitravel



by Tommy Clarkson

Red Aglaonema *Aglaonema Creta*

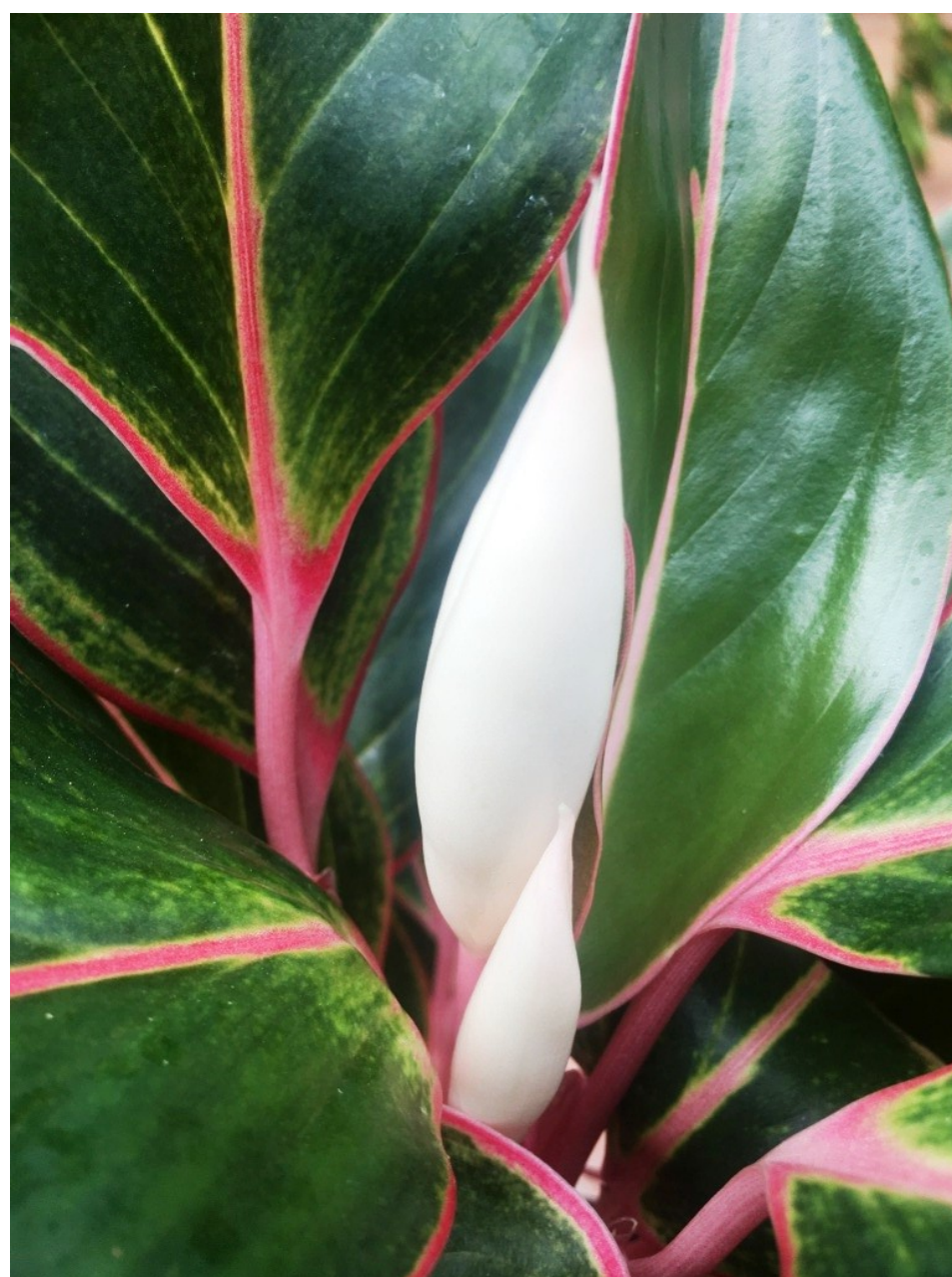
Family *Araceae*

Also known as Chinese Evergreen

In Volume I of "The Civilized Jungle" series, I wrote about the Chinese Evergreen (*Aglaonema commutatum*) – or, sometimes, called an *A. pseudo-bracteata*. Ours prolifically grow beneath a large and beautiful Bougainvillea to the left and on the Transition Terrace directly below our entrance palapa at which we regularly entertain. Often, they require thinning out and we are finding friends to whom we might give them new homes. I can but only wonder if such will be the case with these recent, attractive additions to the gardens!

In "Southern Living" I read, "With the recent arrival of colorful selections from Thailand, *Aglaonemas* have been transformed from the familiar green-and-silver houseplants to specimens splashed with color like a croton, coleus or caladium. These new-spangled plants have the same leathery leaf texture." (At the sake of sounding commercial, the best picture that I have come across of a nice selection of these various cultivars was on the internet on Costa Farms site which, in its opening sentence describes them, saying that it's "One of the easiest of all houseplants to grow [and] one of the most stylish.")

What with this wide array of color variations, ranging from dark green to silver and, obviously, pinks and reds, identifying these



Keep an eye out for its small blooms resembling those of the Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum* sp.)

is a bit of a challenge. However, all - as a result of their attractiveness and ease of maintenance - are popular, indoor houseplants. A generic description online reads, "It's gorgeous on desks or tabletops, as well as coffee tables and side tables in dens, living rooms, and bedrooms." Just keep it a few feet from harsh, sunlight-streaming windows as it prefers a bright, diffused light. Here, however, we merely wished to incorporate them - in shady locations - into the greater, outdoor, garden whole, for visitors to enjoy.

Continuing in this discussion of their uses, they can survive in low humidity environs. But, native to the tropical forest floors of Asia, they'll absolutely thrive with higher humidity levels. So if employed indoors with "dry air," mist their leaves regularly to raise the humidity. And, if potted indoors - found in "The Leaflet" - here's some good counsel, "Rotate your plant periodically to ensure even growth on all sides and dust the leaves often so

...Red Aglaonema



Some are simple, two-colored, but elegant.

the plant can photosynthesize efficiently. This is especially important if the plant is in a lower light location. When dusting the leaves, also take the opportunity to inspect the undersides and keep an eye out for pests."

The preceding all said, it bears pointing out that, as a result of the calcium oxalate crystals included in their make-up, plants of the *Aglaonema* genus are moderately toxic to pets and humans. If ingested, they cause irritation of the mucous membranes and its excreted juice can cause skin irritation and/or a painful rash.

Around here, the Red Aglaonema appreciates a general houseplant fertilizer once a month - "up north" do so only in the spring and summer. With an eye to upkeep, during the warm times, these plants prefer to be moist - though let the soil dry out before watering again - but ensure that it isn't left in a sustained, soggy condition. You remember the old phrase, "Moderation in all things." Also, keep in mind that its leaves will



Others may be a bit more flamboyant!

turn yellow when it's not getting enough - or too much - water. Additionally, like some other types of houseplants, a common problem these guys have is 'tipping' - that's when the tips of the leaves dry out and turn brown. The cause of this can be overwatering, too much fertilizer or use of tap water that contains chlorine, fluoride and salts.

As some plants are prone to do, yours might grow to be leggy. If so, merely cut the stems down to a couple of inches (5.08 cm) above the soil. For new plants, either cut the stems with the foliage back to four to eight inches (10.16-20.32 cm) and plant with some root stimulant or root stems in water.

They like to be slightly root-bound, but if your specimen is in a pot, and gets full and large, you may wish to move it to a pot that's slightly bigger. But, they are more than just a pretty foliage plant as, occasionally, small blooms resembling those of the Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum sp.*) will appear.

And here's another Nifty Nugget of Knowledge: Plants of the *Aglaonema* genus are but a few that can adapt to fluorescent lighting conditions.

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Birria

Birria comes in various forms and can be made with a variety of meats. It is a popular dish to serve at the Mexican Independence Day (September 16) celebrations.

Ingredients

- ✓ 3 lbs stew meat (beef, lamb or goat), cut into 1- 2 inch pieces
- ✓ 1 tablespoon salt
- ✓ pepper to taste
-
- ✓ 2 cups chicken or beef broth
- ✓ 4 dried guajillo chiles (see notes)
- ✓ 2 dried pasilla chilies (optional)
-
- ✓ 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- ✓ 1 large onion, diced
- ✓ 6 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- ✓ 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes, preferably fire-roasted (and juices) or 1.5 cups fresh, diced tomatoes
- ✓ 3 tablespoons vinegar (white or apple cider)
- ✓ 1 tablespoon dried Oregano (or thyme)
- ✓ 2 bay leaves
- ✓ optional: 3-inch piece of orange zest (1/2 inch wide) use a veggie peeler
-
- ✓ 1 cinnamon stick (or see notes)
- ✓ 6 whole cloves (or see notes)
- ✓ 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- ✓ 2 teaspoons coriander seeds
- ✓ 8 peppercorns
- ✓ 2 bay leaves
-
- ✓ 1-2 canned chipotle peppers (optional), or 2-3 tablespoons adobo sauce (from the can)
- ✓ 1 tablespoon honey, or sugar
-

Optional garnishes: cilantro, lime, chopped onions, radishes, cucumber, pickled onions, hot sauce, Mexican cheese, avocado, sour cream, chipotle mayo, fresh tomatillo salsa.

Serve with: tortillas, cilantro lime rice, Mexican pinto beans, Mexican slaw



Directions

1. Read all the way through before starting
2. Season meat with salt and pepper and set aside.
3. Break dry chilies apart, remove stems and most seeds, and toast them in a dry skillet over medium-low heat until fragrant and slightly darkened (do not burn- they get bitter). Place chilies in a small pot with the chicken broth, bring to a simmer, cover, and let stand 20 minutes turning the heat off, until softened.
4. In the same warm skillet, toast any whole spices you are using- cinnamon stick, cloves, cumin, coriander, peppercorns- until it smells amazing- only a couple of minutes. Place all but the cinnamon sticks in a blender and pulse a few times then set this aside (you'll add the softened chilies and broth to this blender later).
5. In the meantime, heat oil in Instant Pot, on SAUTE setting, (or large Dutch oven over medium heat) and add onion and garlic, stirring until fragrant and golden. Add tomatoes and their juices, simmer 2-3 minutes until breaking down, then add vinegar and oregano and scrape up any browned bits (important) using a wood spoon. Turn heat off.

6. Add the softened chilies and broth to the blender with the spices plus roughly one cup of the tomato mixture from the Instant Pot (leave the rest of the tomatoes in the instant pot). Place a towel over the blender lid and hold it firmly down (to prevent a blender explosion!), starting on low and increasing to high. Turn blender off and, at this point, add the canned chipotle peppers. 1-3 peppers will suffice or, for milder, just use the adobo sauce out of the can. Blend till very smooth.
7. Pour this flavorful sauce back into the instant Pot or Dutch oven and stir.
8. Add the bay leaves and salted meat and stir to coat well.
9. Instant Pot: Set the Instant Pot to 45 minutes on high pressure. Let naturally release. Shred the meat using two forks.
10. You can skim the fat if you like or use it for dipping tortillas, before frying them (traditional).
11. Dutch Oven: If using a Dutch oven, cover tightly and either simmer on the stove over medium-low heat, 3 hours, or bake in a 350F oven, 3 hours. Check at hour 2, for dryness, adding a little more broth if you think necessary.
12. Slow Cooker: You could also place this in a slow cooker 6- 8 hours.
13. Stir in the honey. Taste, adjusting the salt, honey to your liking. You may wish to add a little more ground cinnamon.

Serving options

BOWL OF STEW: you could serve this as a hearty stew (feel free to thin with a little more broth if you prefer) in a bowl, topped with cilantro, radish, cucumber, chopped onion or pickled onion, cotija cheese or sour cream and lime.

Additional, fresh, chopped things add good texture.

TACOS: You can use birria as taco filling. Often you'll see (food truck versions) the tortillas dipped into the rich broth, before being fried in a skillet, covered in melty cheese (Oaxacan string cheese) then filled with the birria and all the fixins'. Decadent but amazing!

Notes

If cooking in a Dutch oven, preheat oven to 350F

SPICES: sub 1 teaspoon cinnamon (for cinnamon spice) and 1/2 teaspoon cloves

Use dry mild chilies like guajillo and pasilla chiles, to add flavor and depth—but not too much heat. Feel free to use other dried chilies, paying attention to heat level. Add chipotles for more heat and smoky flavor. If you want a milder stew, I suggest use only guajillos (like 6). You can always add more spice at the end (cayenne, chili flakes, chipotle powder) if not sure. Using dried chilies really makes this dish.

If you prefer a brothier stew, you can always add more chicken or beef broth at the end of cooking, seasoning with a little more salt.

MEAT: Tougher cuts of meat work great here like stew meat. Shoulder, shank, leg, etc. Goat meat is traditional.

FAT: This can be made ahead; cooled – the fat will solidify, and then can be removed more easily if going for a leaner version.



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.

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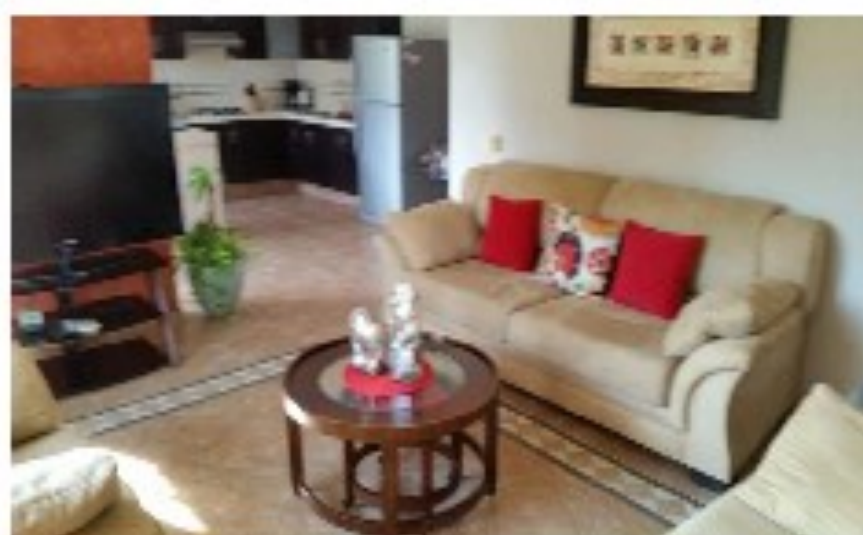
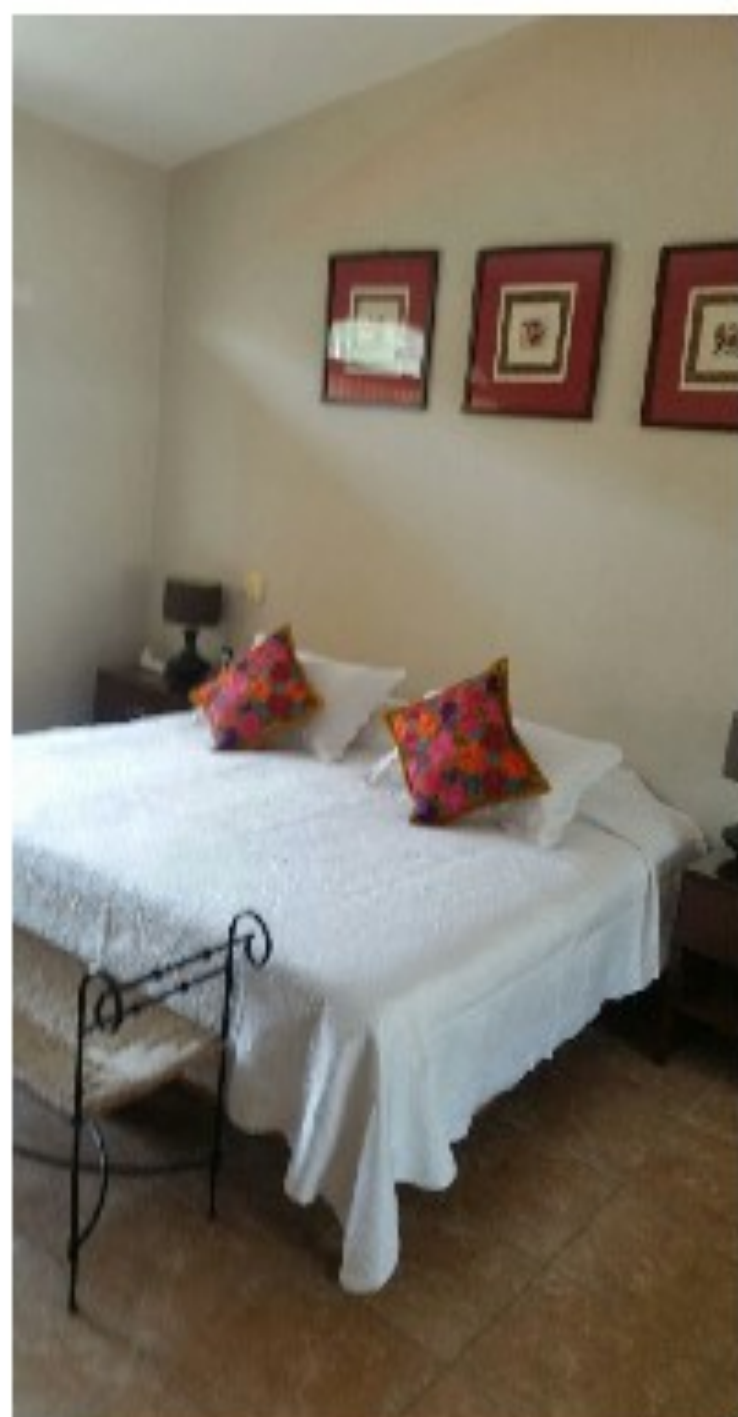
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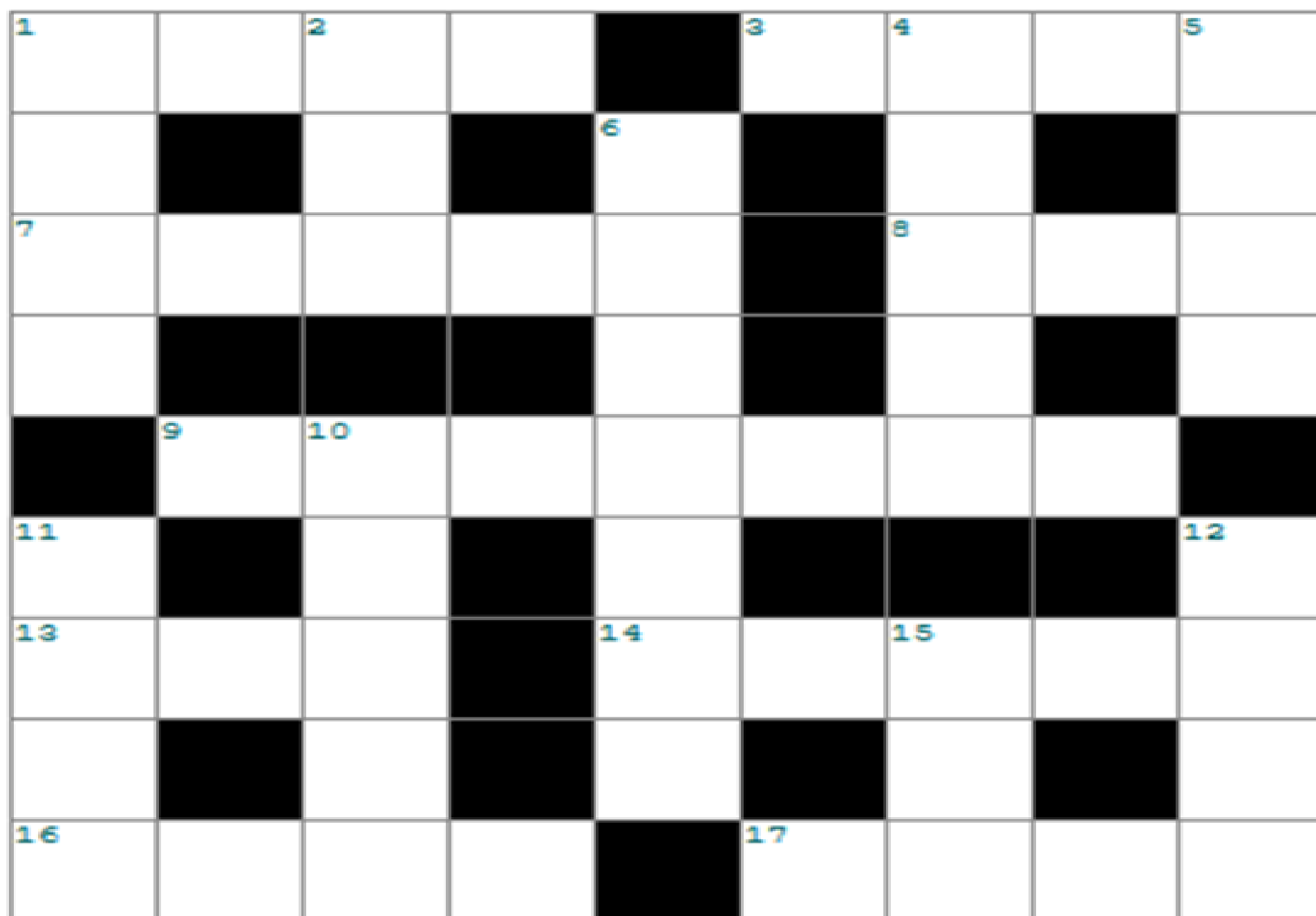
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Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 (he) fears
- 3 hand
- 7 grass
- 8 net, mesh of string, cord or rope
- 9 printed
- 13 south
- 14 knots
- 16 but, on the contrary
- 17 shovel

Down

- 1 cover, lid
- 2 more
- 4 (you/tú) open
- 5 wave, undulation
- 6 nephew
- 10 (they) look
- 11 those
- 12 island
- 15 day, period of 24 hours

Last month's crossword solution:



José López Portillo

from the Path to Citizenship series

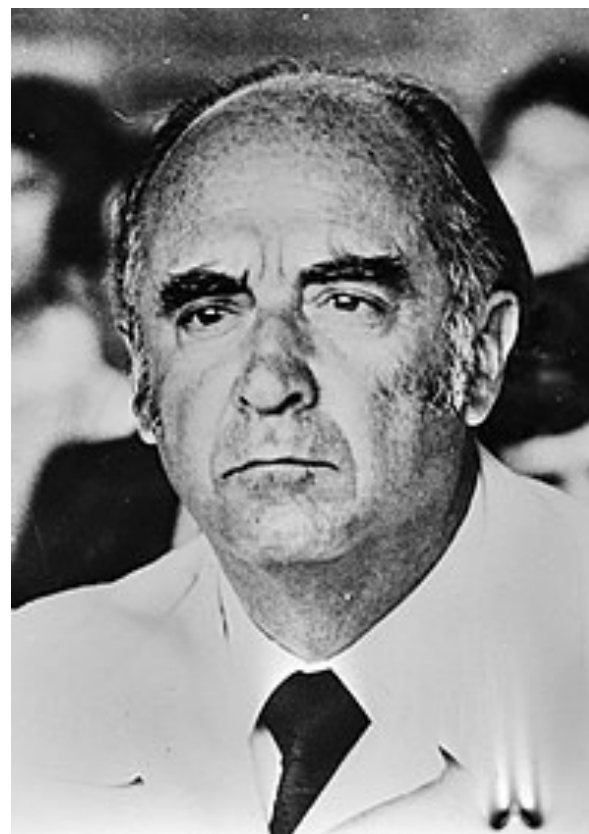
José Guillermo Abel López Portillo y Pacheco, (16 June 1920 – 17 February 2004) was a Mexican lawyer and politician affiliated with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) who served as the 51st President of Mexico from 1976 to 1982. López Portillo was the only official candidate in the 1976 Presidential election, being the only President in recent Mexican history to win an election unopposed.

López Portillo was the last of the so-called economic nationalist Mexican presidents. His tenure was marked by heavy investments in the national oil industry after the discovery of new oil reserves, which propelled initial economic growth, but later gave way to a severe debt crisis after the international oil prices fell down, leading Mexico to declare a sovereign default in 1982. As a result of the crisis, the last months of his administration were plagued by widespread capital flight, leading López Portillo to nationalize the banks three months before leaving office. His presidency was also marked by widespread government corruption and nepotism.

Shortly after leaving office, during the presidency of his successor, Miguel de la Madrid, numerous officials who had worked under the López Portillo administration were prosecuted for corruption, the most notorious cases being Arturo Durazo and Jorge Díaz Serrano. Although López Portillo himself was suspected of having been involved in corruption as well, he was never charged with any crimes.

López Portillo was born in Mexico City, to his father José López Portillo y Weber (1888-1974), an engineer, historian, researcher, and academic, and to Refugio Pacheco y Villa-Gordoa. He was the grandson of José López Portillo y Rojas, a lawyer, politician, and man of letters.

Another ancestor was a Royal Judge in the Audiencia de Nueva Galicia in the eighteenth century. He was the great-great-great grandson of José María Narváez (1768-1840), a Spanish explorer who was the first to enter the Strait of Georgia, in present-day British Columbia, and the first explorer to view the site now occupied by Vancouver, Canada. He studied law at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) before beginning his political career.



After graduating, he began his political career with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 1959. He held several positions in the administrations of his two predecessors before being appointed to serve as finance minister under Luis Echeverría, a close friend from childhood, between 1973 and 1975.

On September 1, 1982, at his final annual Address to the Congress ("Informe de Gobierno"), López Portillo gave a famous speech where he condemned businessmen and bankers responsible for the capital flight, claimed that the crisis was not his fault ("I'm responsible for the helm, but the storm is not my fault"), announced the nationalization of the banks ("They have looted us, but Mexico is not finished, they won't loot us again!"), and asked for forgiveness over his mistakes as President and the economic crisis.

He famously broke into tears during his speech after asking for the forgiveness of Mexico's poor. This passionate speech, however, did little to repair his image, and he remains one of the most unpopular Mexican presidents in recent history.

López Portillo was the last economic nationalist president to emerge from the ranks of the Institutional Revolutionary Party. Subsequent presidents have all been for free trade (librecambismo).

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