



# Manzanillo SUN

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine

Musicians from  
Casa Hogar Los Angelitos  
photo by  
John Chalmers



Good Deeds  
Health  
History and Mythology  
RV Travel  
Nature's Wonders  
So Much to See  
Food and Drink  
Learn Spanish  
Path to Citizenship

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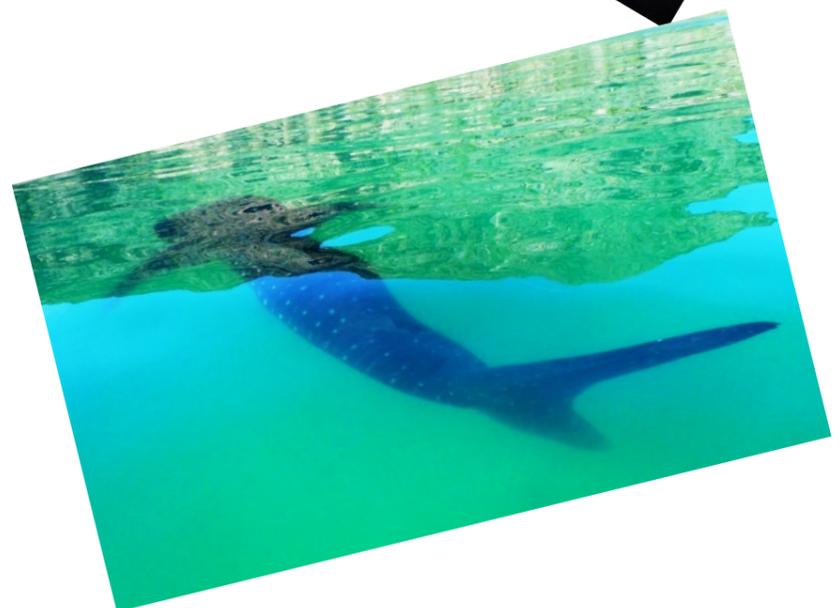
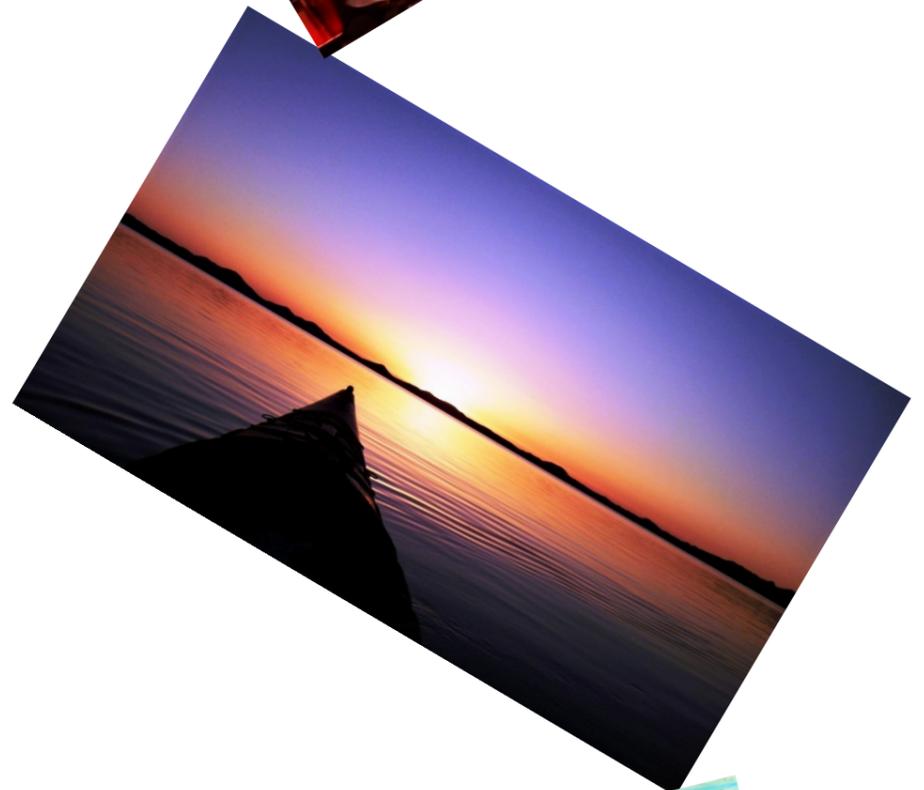
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E-MAGAZINE

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

Article submissions:

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

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For the first time, the CALA performing arts center was used as a television stage for a Casa Hogar performance.

One type of organization that has suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is non-profit charitable operations that have cancelled vital fundraising special events. They are essential to generating income needed to keep an operation going. In the Manzanillo area, one such event that was cancelled in 2021 was the gala dinner evening that supports Casa Hogar Los Angelitos (CHLA).

Founded by Nancy Nystrom in 1996, with care for seven children, CHLA now provides a home for some 75 girls and boys ranging from three years old to their early twenties. They have come to the embrace of Casa Hogar as orphans or from a difficult home environment that did not provide the care that children need.

CHLA provides a loving home with medical care and educational opportunity. One measure of the great success of CHLA is that seven young people who have grown up there are now college graduates, with another five now in university. CHLA also offers a superlative Expressive Arts program that enriches the lives of its young participants with music and dance that are part of their Mexican heritage and culture.

For many years, a gala dinner event with silent and live auction components has raised funds for Casa Hogar to maintain its facilities and care for its residents. As well, donations from supporters and sponsors contribute to funding that allows CHLA to operate. The annual dinner event, attended by some 300 people each year, always concluded with an outstanding program of music and dance presented by the young people who live at Casa Hogar. This year, however, due to COVID-19, that sterling event was cancelled.

With fewer people spending time in México this winter who would have attended a benefit dinner that raises 30% of funding for annual operations, alternatives were considered. "I was aware that other organizations had been doing virtual events and felt we could do that," says Nancy. "I believed we could put a team together with our staff and directors and do something spectacular. It hasn't been easy, with no prior experience, but if you put forth your best effort and don't give up, you can always find a way for success."

So the pandemic did not stop the show! The resilience of Casa Hogar and its young people to cope with a difficult situation was shown by staging a marvellous performance at the Centro de Artes Los Angelitos (CALA).

...Coping with COVID at Casa Hogar

This time, there was no dinner and no audience! Instead, the performance was recorded on video to show online via the internet on January 28.

Even without the applause of an appreciative audience, the musicians and dancers presented a stunning, precise, polished and professional program that showcased culture and color of México. The quality of performance is a great credit to the talent and dedication of the participants, and to the high level of training they receive from their instructors.

On the big stage of CALA, and recorded by three video cameras, the non-stop show more than an hour long moved swiftly and flawlessly from one number to another. Beginning with its first number by the players wearing spectacular costumes that portrayed Aztec history, to the dances by beautiful girls in swirling skirts and handsome young men with clashing machetes, all in traditional costumes, the performance was seamless in its presentation.

In every number, whether a song by a soloist or a dance with 20 people on stage, the performance was outstanding. As well as cast members from Casa Hogar, other members were from the community, having an opportunity to perform on the stage at CALA, which serves the broader Manzanillo area.

For its online program of January 28, the virtual show began with an interview with Nancy Nystrom and Kevin Skeens of The Children's Foundation, which is the parent organization of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos. That was followed by a live auction of eight special items of travel experience. One such item was a 5 day/4 night guided tour to the historic city of Morelia and a sanctuary of Monarch butterflies, donated by Mex-ECO Tours ([www.mex-ecotours.com](http://www.mex-ecotours.com)).

The main event was the dynamic Ballet Folklórico performance of music and traditional regional dances of México. The love of their country was seen on the smiling face of every participant.

Dr. Guiber Núñez, a physician who is also the director general of the CHLA program, has stated that, "Casa Hogar Los Angelitos, with love day by day, builds to change the lives of many children and young people, transforming difficult situations of broken hearts and dreams into strong hearts and spectacular dreams with unconditional love for México."

To add your support to the wonderful work of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos, and provide a good life for children in need, visit the web site of the parent organization, The Children's Foundation, at [www.tcfcares.org](http://www.tcfcares.org). There you will find information about Casa Hogar and how you can donate.

You will see a button at the top of the page to DONATE NOW and lend your support to the very worthy cause that provides education, a loving home and an amazing Expressive Arts program. Your contribution is needed, and is an investment in the future of young people.

The complete performance, including the interview with Nancy Nystrom, can now be seen on YouTube [at this link](#).

At the conclusion of the performance, in his closing remarks, Dr. Núñez stated, "Our philosophy is to help form children who are resilient and strong, children who can face adversities in life with strength, and move forward to live a life victorious with happiness and success."



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... more pics follow

...Coping with COVID at Casa Hogar



The performance began with the entrance of participants representing ancient Aztec culture, accompanied by the beat of drums as the dancers marched in.



On stage was an Aztec temple and bursts of flame from a torch at each side of the stage added to the special effects of the opening number to begin the show.



Ceremonial Aztec rites in spectacular costumes, preceded the lively and dramatic dance of the show's first performance.



The entire performance was recorded with three video cameras, watched onscreen by the control center at the back of the CALA facility.



Young boys in the cast performed the Dance of the Old Ones in traditional garb and masks. Silhouetted figures at the right are the "dancing dogs," symbol of Colima state.



The fast-moving dances by young men with clashing machetes are proof of the training, skill and precision of the young men, with no room for error.

...Coping with COVID at Casa Hogar



Traditional dances of the show are from various regions of México and learning them by the young people of Casa Hogar keeps history alive of the country they love.



Costumes meet guidelines representing the regions that dances represent, and are both purchased and made in house, with modifications and repairs done at Casa Hogar.



Synchronized steps, swirling skirts and brilliant smiles are all part of the show!



As well as the vigorous dance numbers, music in the program included polished delivery by soloists, whose singing was a credit to their talents and training.

...Coping with COVID at Casa Hogar



Seen from any angle, the splendid dresses worn by the girls were works of art!



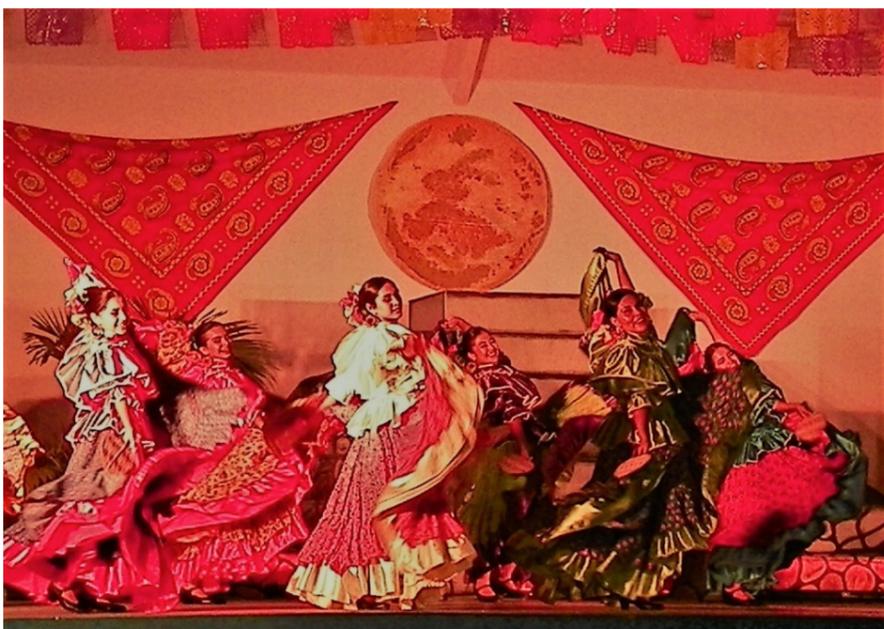
The enthusiasm and enjoyment of the dancers by all performers was clearly evident.



The speed and skill of the boys handling the machetes is a result of practice and talent in blurring action of the dance.



Teamwork and precision footsteps and movement, along with beautiful costumes contribute to eye-pleasing spectacle.



Grants and contributions are used for the Expressive Arts program of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos, which offers instruction and training in music and dance. CHLA operating funds are not used to support the Ballet Folklórico presentations; donations make it possible.

...Coping with COVID at Casa Hogar



Even without the audience that the performers are used to having, the cast presented a show that was equal in every way to all the presentations they have ever done.



Staging the show for recording and presentation presented new challenges for something Casa Hogar has not done before, but technical aspects using cameras, computers, microphones and versatile stage lighting all contributed to the production.



Grace and beauty were seen in the costumes and performance of every member of the cast, and not one member missed a step.



Both recorded music for some numbers and live music for others by talented young musicians contributed to the total success of the show.

...Coping with COVID at Casa Hogar



At the conclusion of the program, cast and children of Casa Hogar Los Angelitos were presented on stage for the online show finale, just as done in performances with an audience.



Dr. Guiber Núñez, at left, director general of the CHLA program, had every reason to smile and be proud of his young charges. Author John Chalmers was thrilled to see and shoot the show.

## The Twins' Ball Game

story by Kirby Vickery

In ancient times, when there were no clocks and time passed slowly and nothing mattered because life was slow and comfortable. The people's duties in this time were few and not time consuming and so they would look for recreational activities.

Jun aj Pu and Ix B'alam Kej, the sacred twins who founded the universe, loved to play "The Game." Thump! Thump! Thump, went the ball as it bounced off their knees, shoulders, hips and thighs as well as the walls of the ball court. Thump it went when they gave it a header aimed for the loop against the wall.

Meanwhile in the Underground, the Lords of Evil heard all this thump! thump! thumping of the ball and yearned for a quieter time. Many, many years earlier they had defeated the twins' father in that very same game.

"Someone is playing above us on Mother Earth," they said. "It must be the twins, Jun aj Pu and Ix B'alam Kej. In order to get some peace and quiet, we'll challenge them to a game, just as we did their fathers." And so they sent a louse with the message to come down at once to the kingdom of the Lords of the Underworld to play ball.

All at once, as if by magic, the louse fell onto the lap of the twins' grandmother in the land of the light. "Grandmother," the louse said. "I come from the Lords of the Underworld with a message for Jun aj Pu and Ix B'alam Kej. They must appear within a week to play ball against them."

The grandmother replied, "But how can I tell them? Their court is very far away and I can barely walk?"

The Hero Twins



"Don't worry," the louse answered. "I'll go and tell them myself." And the louse flew off toward the field where the twins were playing. But, please realize, he was a tiny louse and he could only fly ten yards an hour. "I'll never get there in time," he thought, as his bravado was slowly giving way to reality.

Just then he bumped into an old friend [in those days], a toad, who said, "Where are you going, louse, so eagerly and so quickly, even for you?"

"I have to get to the ball court with a message for the twins from the underworld gods. But, at my speed, I'll never get there," he explained, all aflutter while trying to catch his breath.

"Don't worry," his friend answered. "I'll give you a hand." And gulp! Out flashed his long tongue and he swallowed the louse and started to run. You see, back then, toads had four very normal legs. Still, after an hour, he had only gone a hundred or so yards and the ball court was still very far away. "I'll never get there in time," he thought.

Just then he bumped into a huge snake. As you may have guessed, in those days, toads and snakes were good friends, and they'd spent the afternoons chatting away.

...Mayan Holidays

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" the snake asked.

"I have a message for Jun aj Pu and Ix B'alam Kej" said the toad, "but no matter how fast I run, it's not fast enough."



A Mayan louse on the attack

"Please don't worry," the snake replied. "I'll help you. And, with a quick hiss and lunge, gulp! He swallowed the toad. And then, true to his word, he began to quickly slither away while making a racket like the wind blowing through the leaves. He was crossing a field when an eagle flying in the sky spotted him.

"I wonder where the snake is going so quickly?" he asked himself. He shot down to the field like an arrow and landed right in front of the snake. "What's wrong, snake? What's your hurry?"

"I have an urgent message for the twins, who are playing ball, but at this speed, I won't get there in time!" cried the snake.

"Don't worry," the eagle told him. "I'll help you out. With that, he swallowed that serpent! And the snake, rattles and all, ended up in the eagle's belly.

The eagle rose into the air and was soon flying over the field where the boys were playing.

The twins, who were great hunters, saw the eagle and weren't going to let their chance escape. Bock! Bock! Bock! They shot him down with their blowguns with a dart to his eye.

"Oh, my eye!" the eagle cried. "I have a message for you two idiots." He said to the twins. "But if you don't heal my eye, I won't give it to you."

Curious to hear what he had to say, the twins magically healed the eagle's eye. "Now give us the message."

"I have it here in my belly," he said. And, he coughed up the snake.

The twins asked the snake, "Tell us what the message is!" they demanded.

"I have it here in my belly," The snake said. And he coughed up the toad.



A Mayan toad

The twins looked at the slimy mess on the grass with a very unhappy toad in the middle of it. "What's the message, they repeated?"

But the toad couldn't speak because the louse was stuck between his teeth. He could only make gnashing, and burping sounds.

...Mayan Holidays

The twins got angry, because they thought he was making fun of them. And without caring, they threw a rock at the toad and broke his legs. Which is why toads hop along the ground today.

The blow forced the toad to spit out the louse who finally gave the twins the message: "The Lords of the Underworld are waiting for you in their kingdom under Mother Earth to play 'The Game'."

An eagle eating a snake



And so, the twins went to play ball with the Lords of the Underworld. From then on, it was established that toads eat insects, snakes eat toads and eagles eat snakes.

That's how things happened in those ancient times.

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# LAND FOR SALE

Manzanillo, Colima

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Located in Ejido La Central, municipality of Manzanillo. Only at 950 meters distance from Federal Highway No. 200, Manzanillo-Cihuatlán.

Only 8 km away from Santiago Bay.  
Coordinates: 5H28 + 3W

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Total area of 7,084 hectares.
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- 5 hectares of Ataulfo mango orchard in productive age. (Currently being exported to Canada)
- The property has water rights of 186,000 m<sup>3</sup> per year, from a deep well located on adjacent land.
- It has a non-ejidal property title (deed).
- It has good access to internet, electricity and septic tank.

## SPECIAL FEATURES:

In the last decade the municipality of Manzanillo has experienced an accelerated urban growth driven mainly by the port activity. The Ejido La Central valley, where this property is located, represents the main future option to continue this urban growth. This guarantees a good capital gain in the value of this property in the medium term, which could also be used to build a countryside development, since it is located next to the orchid nursery and has a beautiful view of the hills "El toro" y "La vaca".

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**Value: \$20,000,000 (Pesos MXN)**



## Sea of Cortés

by Dan and Lisa Goy

This magical body of water is also known as the Gulf of California and Vermilion Sea, in Spanish "Golfo de California", "Mar de Cortés" and "Mar Bermejo", all of which belongs to Mexico. Our introduction to the Sea of Cortés was in 1985 on our first Mexican adventure.

Within a few days of venturing into Baja, our first coastal stay was in Bahía de los Ángeles, where we fell in love with Mexico and Baja - hook, line and sinker. From there, we made it all the way down to Cabo San Lucas and stayed on the beach until our ferry arrived that took us to Puerto Vallarta in Jalisco.

Since then, we have returned to Baja over 30 times, most of which has been spent camping on the Sea of Cortés in both Baja California and Baja California Sur. In addition, we have had the opportunity to enjoy the Sea of Cortés mainland shore in Sonora and Sinaloa.

Sadly, the last seaside campground, Brisa del Mar, in Los Cabos, closed in 2006, and there are few RV spaces left anywhere in Cabo San Lucas, San José del Cabo or anywhere in between. We are pleased to report many camping spots still exist south of La Paz including Cabo Pulmo, Bahía Los Frailes, La Venta, Los Barriles and Playa Tecolote, some with services. Many are dry camping sites.

Farther north, there are plenty of locations available in Bahía Concepción, south of Mulegé and also 30 minutes north at San Lucas Cove. There are still a few, some more elusive than others, in the Loreto and Puerto Escondido area. Bahía de los Ángeles remains one of our favourite spots, especially for fishing.

For us, swimming, snorkeling, kayaking and paddle boarding has always been routine at these stops, when the winds are calm and the water warm. Many of these locations are on our Baja RV tour itineraries, which now includes Bahía San Luis Gonzaga since Hwy 5 was completed and paved from Hwy 1.

### History

The Sea of Cortés, named after the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés, is the 700-mile-long body of water embraced by mainland Mexico and Baja California. Some of the first charts, drawn in the early 1500s, depicted Baja as an island. This was disproven in 1539 by Francisco de Ulloa, who was sent by Hernán Cortés to explore the area.

Cortés had heard persistent rumors that there was an island ruled by Amazon women with weapons made of gold and that the surrounding waters were paved with endless beds of pearls. Ulloa named the sea after his benefactor.

The Pacific Plate once moved northwest off Mexico's west coast and the Sea of Cortés did not exist. Over several million years, the plate movement slowly rotated counter clockwise and produced incredible stresses upon western Mexico. This, eventually, moved the fault line eastward, slowly ripping off Baja California.

The peninsula lifted along the west side of the newly forming gulf. There is a dramatic view of this escarpment of mountains above the town of Loreto. Farther north, we know this fault as San Andreas. You do not have to look much further than some unique plant species found only on Baja, adjacent to the mainland in Sonora. In time, Baja and western California is heading out to the Pacific.



Kayaking in Bahía San Lucas - El Arco in the distance

...Sea of Cortés



Baja Amigos tour camping on Playa Tecolote at sunrise

### Known for fishing worldwide

Sea of Cortés is legendary for its commercial catch, even though it no longer has a major freshwater input of nutrients from the Colorado River that was significantly damned in the US almost a hundred years ago. How can that be, you ask? The answer lies within its unique oceanography.

In the south, the ocean filled the growing basin to create the youngest gulf in the world. It now has a remarkable depth of over 2 miles at its mouth. Much of its width is over 80 miles across. This basin holds an incredible amount of water. Tides from the rise and fall of the Pacific Ocean pour in and rush out in a massive movement. The water mixes to a depth of 1,500 feet and causes a continuous clockwise current of 0.67 mph around the gulf in winter and a counter clockwise current in summer.

The northern end has a 32-foot tidal range, the third largest in North America. Wind-induced currents also cause major movements of water during the winter. The wind drives the water at 3% of the wind speed and transfers as much as 40% of its energy.

When water moves away from an island or coastline, it is replaced by water from below in a process called upwelling, most evident in the channel between Bahía de los Ángeles and Isla Ángel de la Guarda. All this water moving around in the gulf brings up not only deeper water, but large amounts of nutrients as well. All you need is an energy source of plentiful sunlight and 'voila,' productivity enough to grow a crop of phytoplankton that might turn the water red.

The Sea of Cortés has been called the Vermilion Sea. **Biologically speaking, the Sea of Cortés is the richest body of water**

on our entire planet. This diverse sea supports more than 900 varieties of fish and more than 2,000 species of marine invertebrates and is home to species that exist only within its waters.

The sea is abundant with game fish, both small and large, and an extraordinary amount of world record fish have been taken in these waters. Several species of whales regularly visit the sea and the Whale Shark, which is the world's largest fish, is quite common as far north as our beloved Bahía de los Ángeles.

The soup of phytoplankton feeds invertebrates that are gobbled up by more than 800 kinds of vertebrates including fish, blue and fin whales. The fish are consumed by people, birds, dolphins, porpoises, sea lions, sperm whales, humpbacks, and Bryde's whales to mention just a few.

There are also over 550 fin whales that are residents in the Sea of Cortés all year. It's also one of the best places in the world to see blue whales in February and March, best from Loreto.

### Islands

The gulf contains 37 major islands – the two largest being Isla Ángel de la Guarda and Isla Tiburón. Many have their own stories. Native people were active here and traveled by rafts made of aquatic bulrushes called tules. Archaeological sites are common on a number of the islands.

Beach at Cabo Pulmo



...Sea of Cortés

Stone flakes, piles of discarded shells and signs of habitation provide evidence of early people found here long before European contact. Few islands have a reliable source of water, however, so they haven't felt the heavy hand of modern man.

Biologists working on how plants and animals become established where they are find the perfect laboratory within these islands.

There is enough variation in island histories, ages, locations and topography to test and form theories about island biogeography.

Most of the islands are found on the west side of the gulf. In fact, many of the islands of the gulf are the result of volcanic eruptions that occurred during the early history of Baja California. The islands of Islas Marías, Islas San Francisco, and Isla Partida are thought to be the result of such eruptions. The formations of the islands, however, are not dependent on each other. They were each formed as a result of an individual structural occurrence.

Several islands, including Isla Coronado, are home to volcanoes. The gulf has more than 900 islets and islands that together total about 420 hectares. All of them, as a whole, were enacted as "Area Reserve and Migratory Bird Refuge and Wildlife" on August 2, 1978. In June 2000, the islands were designated a flora and fauna protection area.

In addition to this effort by the Mexican government, for its importance and recognition worldwide, all islands in the gulf are also part of the international program "Man and Biosphere" (MAB) and are part of the World Reserve Network UNESCO Biosphere as Special Biosphere Reserve. Because of the vast expanse covered by this federal protected area, conservation and management is carried out through a system of four regional directorates (one per area bordering the Gulf of California state).

The work of direct and indirect conservation done in the islands is governed by a single management program, published in 2000, which is complemented by local and specific management programs. The Directorate of Protection Area Wildlife California Gulf Islands in Baja California is responsible for 56 islands located off the coast of the state. These are grouped into four archipelagos: San Luis Gonzaga or Enchanted, Guardian Angel, Bahía de los Angeles and San Lorenzo.

These are some of the reasons why people who love whales, dolphins, seabirds and desert environments take vacations by land or small cruise ship to visit this unpopulated and exciting sea next to the Baja California Peninsula in Mexico.

What are yours?

*Submitted by*  
 Dan and Lisa Goy  
 Baja Amigos RV  
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John & Catherine Gonzales

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...Sea of Cortés



Airstream RV caravan at Bahía de los Ángeles



Baja Amigos tour at Playa Requesón



Beach at former Brisa del Mar RV Park



Beach camping at Juncalito



Beach camping at Playa Tecolote

...Sea of Cortés



Camping on Gonzaga Bay



Playa Santispac y Bahía Concepción

...Sea of Cortés



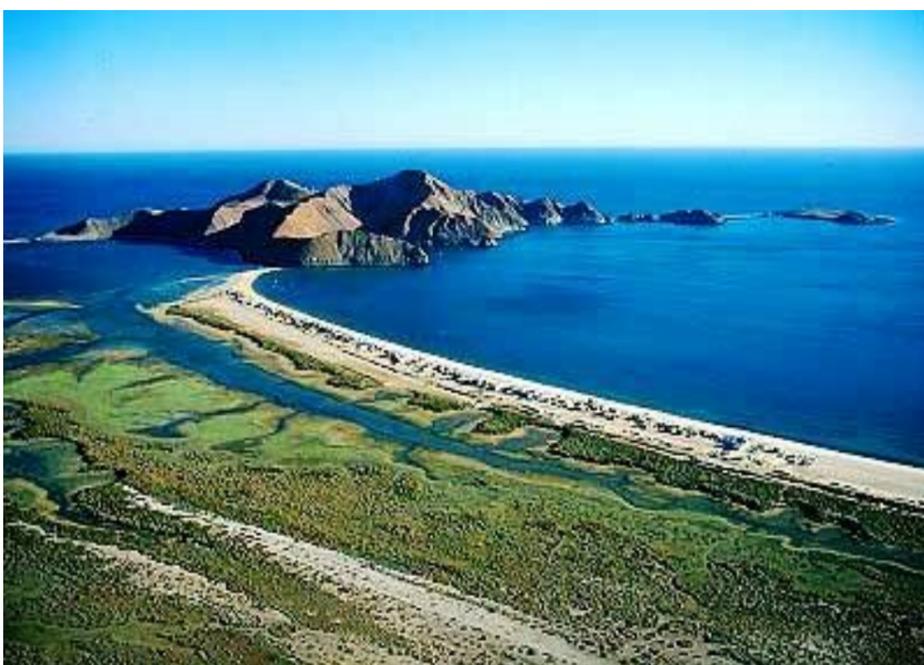
Entering Bahía de los Ángeles



Camping at Los Frailes



El Requesón  
Bahía Concepción



Gonzaga Bay



Good fishing at Loreto Marine Reserve

...Sea of Cortés



Happy hour on  
Playa Médano  
Cabo San Lucas



Isla Espíritu Santo



Island lunch  
Bahía Concepción



Playa Tecolote



Past beachside camping  
Santa María

...Sea of Cortés



Juncalito overlook - Isla Carmen in the distance



La Ventana kite boarder



Ken and Kirsty on the shipwreck beach where the Goys camped in 1985



Lisa on the stand up paddle Playa Tecolote



Kite boarder on Tecolote

...Sea of Cortés



Loreto harbour pelicans



Overlook, Land's End  
where Sea of Cortés meets Pacific Ocean



Los Barriles



Looking over Bahía de los Ángeles from Mike's Mountain



Palapa camping at Cabo Pulmo



Kayaking at sunrise on Bahía Concepción

...Sea of Cortés



Playa Santispac  
Bahía Concepción



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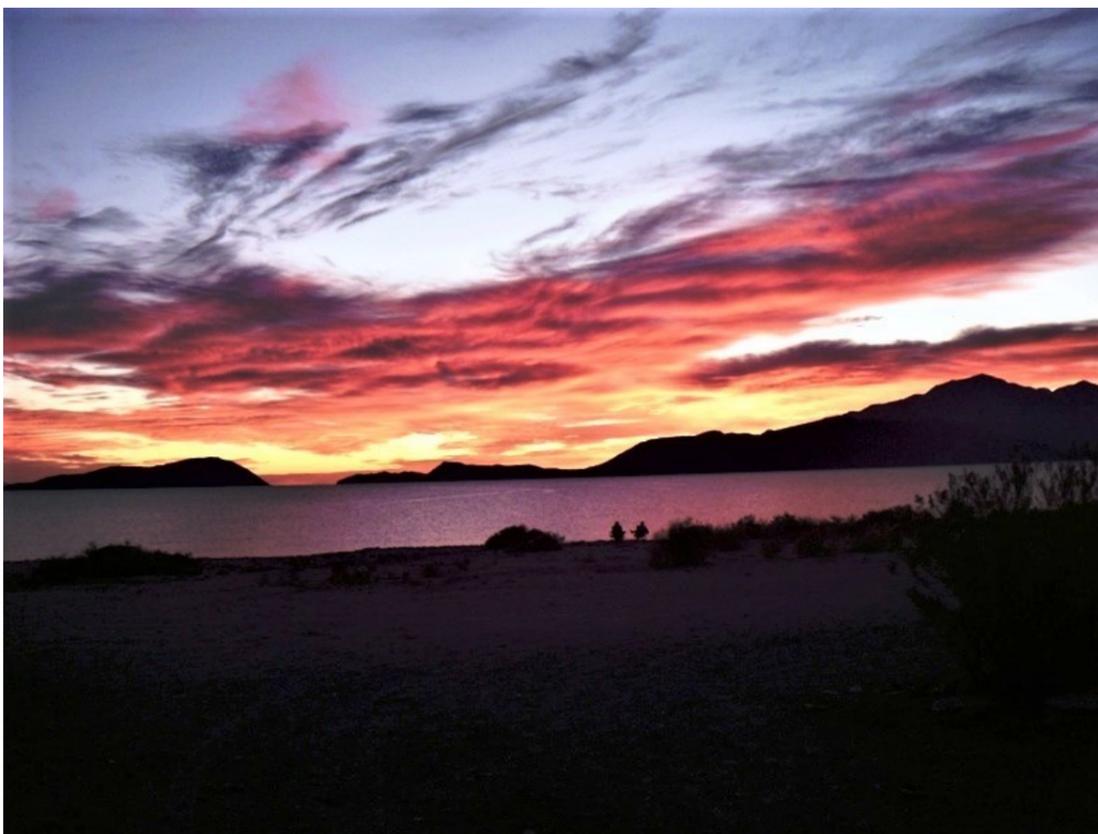


Sunrise on LA Bay

...Sea of Cortés



Sunrise at Playa Requesón



Sunrise, seaside, LA Bay



Sea lions near Pichilingue

...Sea of Cortés



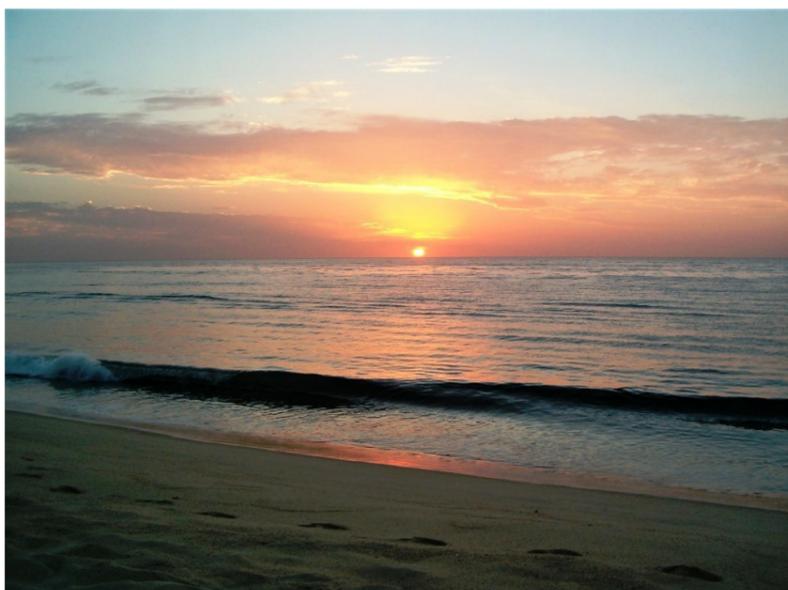
Stand up paddle, Santispac



Whale shark off  
Playa Coyote  
Bahía Concepción



View of Cabo Pulmo



Sunrise on the beach  
Brisa del Mar RV Park



Cabo Swimming with sea lions  
Isla la Partida



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by Tommy Clarkson

### Identifying Palm Species

With well over 2,400 different species of palm trees known to exist, it's no wonder that some folks become a bit confused when trying to determine the type they see or seek. But, in endeavoring to do so, it will help if you keep in mind that there are four basic differences you should consider when trying to identify palm varieties.

(By the way, from the very outset, I wish to thank the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations which – in addition to my numerous "stand by authority" botanical books - was a major contributor of information accumulated for this article.)

Those four, somewhat easily noted, differences between palm species are as follows:

#### Trunk Type

There are five basic trunk variations: solitary, clustering, aerial branching, subterranean branching and climbing. However, it is important to keep in mind that the first two types are not mutually exclusive. And to confuse the issue a bit more, in some cases, a species may exhibit a proclivity to be both solitary and clustering sort!

> The solitary trunk growth habit is one of the two most common among palm species and these are among the most generally cultivated for ornamental and economic purposes. However, there is a substantive difference in both the height

and diameter of solitary palms. (For example, the Potato-chip Palm (*Chamaedorea tuerckheimii*) has a stem not even as large as a pencil and may not even reach a foot (30 cm) in height. At the other end of the spectrum is the Andean Wax Palm (*Ceroxylon alpinum*) which can grow as tall as 197 feet (60.05 meters). Often seen examples of solitary palms are the Coconut, Christmas (Manila), Cuban Royale, Bismark, Latan, Mexican, Desert and Chinese Fan Palms and Foxtail Palms. (Yes, all grow here in Ola Brisa Gardens!)

- > Growing from a common root system, the clustering - or multiple-stemmed - palms are the second most common types generally seen. They spread via suckers (basal offshoots) at, or below, ground level. The more dense variants form themselves into thicket-like bunches. Two easily recognizable examples of these are the small, slow growing (often used indoors) Parlor Palm (*Chamaedorea elegans*) or the larger, attractive Butterfly Palm (*Dypsis lutescens*).
- > More unusual are palms of the aerial branching type. Generally speaking, these are only found naturally in palms of the *Hyphaene* and *Dypsis*, *Rattan Calamus*, *Korthalsia* and *Laccosperma* genera. (As an interesting aside, damage caused by insects or a physical act such as lightning can cause aerial branching in solitary palms – yet, no human technique has yet been determined to induce this.)
- > About 600 species of palms in 15 genera are climbing palms. The source of virtually all commercial rattan, the genus *Calamus* (comprised of 350 different species and the largest genus in the palm family) is a great example of this type. The majority of climbing palms are also of the clumping nature.
- > Lastly, there are those that do subterranean branching. This kind occurs in two ways: through dichotomous branching as found in the Nipa Palm (*Nypa fruticans*) or lateral branching like does the Salak Palm (*Salacca zalacca*).

#### Leaf (Frond) Composition

Endeavoring to apply the old "keep it simple stupid" rule, there are four basic palm frond types. By far and away, the most prevalent of these are the pinnate and palmate.

...Identifying Palm Species

All four are as follows:

- > Pinnate are the most commonly found type. These are divided into leaflets attached to the rachis of the frond (central leaf axis). Some say that these fronds look similar to a feather. These fronds vary from species to species a great deal. Pinnate leaves exhibit an extreme size-range, varying from (including the petiole) well under three feet (.91 meter) in length, such as in species of *Chamaedorea* genera which are also around three feet long whereas those of the *Raphia regalis* (no common name) can reach 82 feet (24.99 meters). In the "interesting stuff to know" category, all five of the palms of significant economic impact have pinnate leaves. These are the coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), African Oil (*Elaeis guineensis*), Date (*Phoenix dactylifera*), Betel Nut (*Areca catechu*) and Pejibaye (*Bactris gasipaes*).
- > Palmate leaves are also known as fan palms. These fronds have circular or semi-circular leaf parts (lamina) divided into segments that radiate out from where they attach to the petiole. They may be no larger than the human hand in some species such as the Lady Palms (*Rhapis* spp.) or up to nearly sixteen and a half feet (5.03 meters) across as in the Talipot (*Corypha umbraculifera*). Economically, perhaps the most important palmate palm is the Palmyra (*Borassus flabellifer*).
- > Bipinnate means what it sounds like - twice divided. Often, the leaflets (pinnules) of these resemble a fishtail. Generally speaking, it's somewhat of a rarity and, it seems, limited to *Caryota* varieties. Depending upon the species, these fronds can grow up to over thirteen feet (3.96 meters) long and nearly ten feet (3.05 meters) wide.
- > Entire leaves (not a very original name/description!) are similar in structure to pinnate leaves, but are simple and undivided. Presently, there are only five palm genera known with leaves such as these. The largest and most beautiful - with its diamond-shaped leaves - is the Silver Joey Palm (*Johannesteijsmannia magnifica*).

**Self-cleaning or Not**

By simple visual perusal, it should be somewhat obvious which palm trees are self-cleaning. Their trunks are relatively smooth with small scarred indications where the fronds have fallen off naturally.

Obvious examples - that most of us have seen of such palms - are the Cuban Royale (*Roystonea regia*), Majestic Palm (*Ravenea rivularis*), Alexander Palm (*Archontophoenix alexandrae*), Carpentaria Palm (*Carpentaria acuminata*), Betel Nut Palm (*Areca catechu*), Butterfly Palm (*Dypsis lutescens*), Foxtail Palm (*Wodyetia bifurcata*) and all of the Fishtail Palms (*Caryota* spp.).

**Armed or Unarmed Petioles**

The last major characteristic in helping identify palms is whether or not their petioles are armed. For those, like me, with short memories, a petiole is the "stalk attaching the leaf blade to the stem."

If the petiole is armed, you probably are already well aware of that fact! It takes but one impaling of your forearm on the armed petiole of a Medjool Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), a ripped laceration of your hand sustained from a Desert Fan Palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) or the piercing stab of the aptly named Needle Palm Tree (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*) to make you keenly cognizant of that bit of information.

Well, there you have the basics. Now, go forth into the jungle and identify those palms!

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## Cuernavaca

places the editors have been and recommend you visit



The famous German naturalist, humanist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt baptized Cuernavaca, in state of Morelos, as "La Ciudad de la Eterna Primavera" (the city of eternal spring). The nickname was so right that today it is mentioned every time the capital of the state of Morelos is alluded to.

However, the place was originally called Cuauhnáhuac, which in Nahuatl means "next to the tree", but the Spanish speakers couldn't pronounce it accurately so they eventually transformed the name into Cuernavaca.

About 85 kilometers (50 miles) away from Mexico City, it's the favorite weekend destination for Mexican capital inhabitants due to its all-year temperate climate as well as for its vegetation and many water parks. The city has grown such that urbanization has spread to the neighboring municipalities.

Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror, considered Cuernavaca a heavenly place, full of flowers, and commissioned to build in this city a palace which survives to the present day. The city has thus become an important historical destination full of colonial and preHispanic treasures.

The charming Historical Center of "Cuerna", as the city is affectionately named, has the charm of a province, with its colonial buildings, fountains, parks and ravines.

In downtown, you can find the Cathedral, the Palacio de Cortés (Cortés Palace) which houses the Museo de Cuauhnahuac (Museum of Cuauhnahuac), the Jardín Borda, the Government Palace, the Jardín Juárez, the Parque Ecológico Chapultepec (Chapultepec ecological park), the Amanalco ravine, the Capitel del Calvario and the Robert Brady Museum, among other attractions.

Those who wish to go much further back in time can visit the Zona Arqueológica de Teopanzolco (archaeological site of Teopanzolco), whose main pyramid is dedicated to Tláloc and Huitzilopochtli.

A weekend is never enough to visit Cuerna! That's why we all try to always return to its eternal spring.

Find the original article and many more about Turismo de México and Cuernavaca [at this link](#)



by Tommy Clarkson

### Mexican Heather *Cuphea hyssopifolia*

**Family** *Lythraceae*

**Also known as** False Heather, Mexican False Heather, Hawaiian Heather, Artificial Heather, Elfin Plant, Elfin Shrub, Elfin Herb, Clammy Cuphea or Corail

For whatever reason – other than it does sorta' resemble it at first glance – I always think of the alfalfa fields of my Kansas youth when I come upon False Heather. (*Related thereto, if there is any way possible, I strongly encourage that you find whatever possible reason to avoid stacking bales of hay - made from alfalfa – high up in a breezeless barn loft in the heat of a Midwest August!*)

However, whereas it (*Medicago sativa*) is a herbaceous perennial and the foremost forage legume in the United States, our subject plant (*Cuphea hyssopifolia*) is a plant life form of an altogether different nature and use. In that category of plants that this is not, it also isn't in the Heather family, *Ericaceae*.

My - all too often - circuitous, rambling thought process notwithstanding, according to the folks at the Missouri Botanical Garden (*a pretty savvy lot, I must say*) its "genus name comes from the Greek word *kyphos* meaning curved or humped in probable reference to the shape of its seed capsules." The species epithet *hyssopifolia* refers to the shape of the leaves which are like those of the herb Hyssop.

Of the genus *Cuphea*, there are more than 250 various species and as may be suspected from the name of these, this perennial originated in Mexico and Guatemala. Besides this species, there are three others that gardeners have come to appreciate: Tropical Waxweed (*Cuphea aspera*), Columbian Waxweed (*Cuphea carthagenensis*) and Stiffhair Waxweed (*Cuphea strigulosa*). (*Yes, this may be on the test!*)



It's flowers are small, purple and picky about when they wish to be seen!

From a pure and simple, plant recognition point, Mexican Heather is a compact, bushy, evergreen shrub, growing from a bit below eighteen to over twenty-seven and a half inches (45-70 cm) in height and two to three feet (60.96-91.44 cm) wide.

While, from a distance, appearing to look somewhat similar to the (earlier alluded to) alfalfa leaves and blooms, they are actually small, lance-shaped, a bit leathery and dark green. Appearances can be deceiving.

While it looks rather delicate, it is, in fact, fairly sturdy. It requires very little maintenance thus making it a great option for first time gardeners.

...Mexican Heather



I always think of the alfalfa fields of my Kansas youth when I come upon False Heather

Borne in horizontal sprays, they give a fine-textured appearance. From out of these are small clusters of light purple, pink, red or white flowers of only .39 of an inch (1 cm) across. (Actually, the False White Heather is the cultivar, *Cuphea hyssopifolia* 'Alba'. (And yes, all of them attract hummingbirds, bees and butterflies.) Atop a rather compact bush, these profuse, continuously blooming flowers lend it effective employment as an edging or container plant as well as used in pots or baskets.

The berry-like fruit capsules of Mexican Heather are dehiscent (this means it will split along a built-in line of weakness in a plant structure so as to release its contents) and leathery, oblong-ovoid, up to .14 of an inch (3.5 mm) long, containing numerous reddish-brown seeds up to one to one and a half mm in diameter...and that is probably way more than you ever sought to know about them!

If you decide to grow your Mexican Heather from a seed, they should start germinating in one to two weeks. Let the seedlings grow for about six to eight weeks before transplanting them. If your plant is containerized outside, and you wish to move it inside, place it in shade for two weeks before moving it indoors.

As to its drinking preferences, though from Mexico, it seeks not tequila! Simply water when the soil surface feels dry to the touch. It wants to be in well-draining, sandy/loamy soil in either full sun or partial shade - though too much of the former could bleach its foliage. Food? Fertilize it with a balanced, water soluble fertilizer (10-10-10) every four months. It can be propagated either by seed or by taking smaller pieces from young stems and rooting them in moist soil.



This perennial originated in Mexico and Guatemala

While, generally, dense and compact, they occasionally might look a bit rangy. If so, cut it back by a third of its height which will encourage tighter growth. It is best propagated by soft-wood cuttings. They are also a bit susceptible to spider mites and flea beetles and could be badly trodden down by marauding, rogue elephant herds, should that be a problem in your area!

For many, Mexican heather is excellent landscape consideration!

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

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## Pellizcadas - A Colima Favourite

### Ingredients

- ✓ 2 cups prepared blue corn masa
- ✓ 1 cup charred tomato and chile salsa, or use store-bought
- ✓ 1/2 cup (4 oz.) crumbled queso fresco
- ✓ Coarsely torn fresh chipilín, cilantro, watercress, or radish leaves, for serving
- ✓ Lime wedges, for serving

### Instructions

1. Divide the masa into 8 equal balls (about 2 ounces each). Using your hands, press and shape each into a 4-inch-wide round, about twice the thickness of a tortilla.

2. Using a wide spatula, lift the tortillas out of the pan and flip them over onto the plate so the toasted side is facing up. Pinch the tortillas all around the edges to form a ridge like a pie crust; pinch some small ridges atop the center of the masa as well to form little ponds to hold the salsa. Fill each pellizcada with 2 tablespoons of salsa, then sprinkle each evenly with 1 tablespoon of queso fresco.

3. Return the pellizcadas to the griddle or pan in batches to heat thoroughly and soften the cheese slightly. Remove to a plate, finish each with some of the coarsely torn greens and a squeeze of lime juice and serve immediately.

### Masa

To become masa, dried corn must first be nixtamalized - that is, simmered in an alkaline solution to hull and tenderize the kernels for grinding. Nixtamalization is mostly hands off, but soaking takes 8 hours, so plan accordingly. Masa should feel like thick mashed potatoes, moist but not sticky. In case it's too wet, add a little instant corn masa flour (masa harina), like Maseca brand, to fresh masa.

See the recipe and complete instructions on making masa at [Saveur](#).

Source [Saveur](#), photo and article by Christina Holmes



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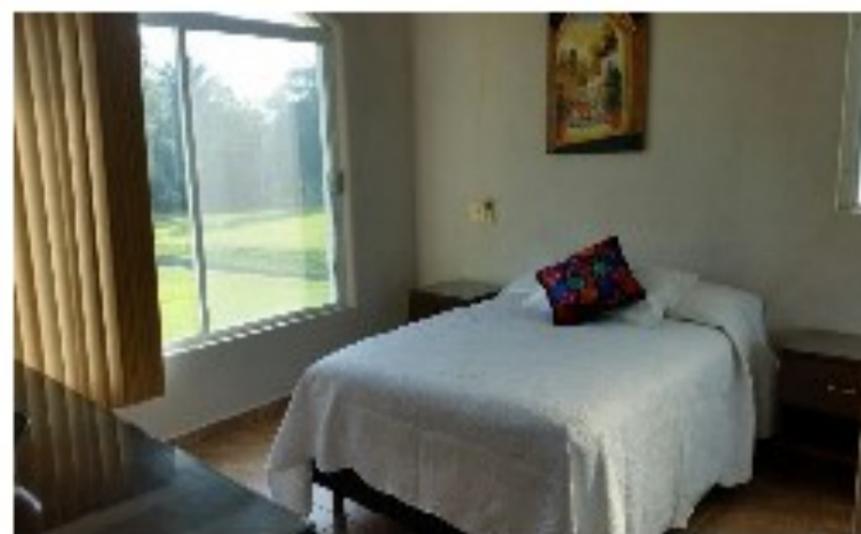
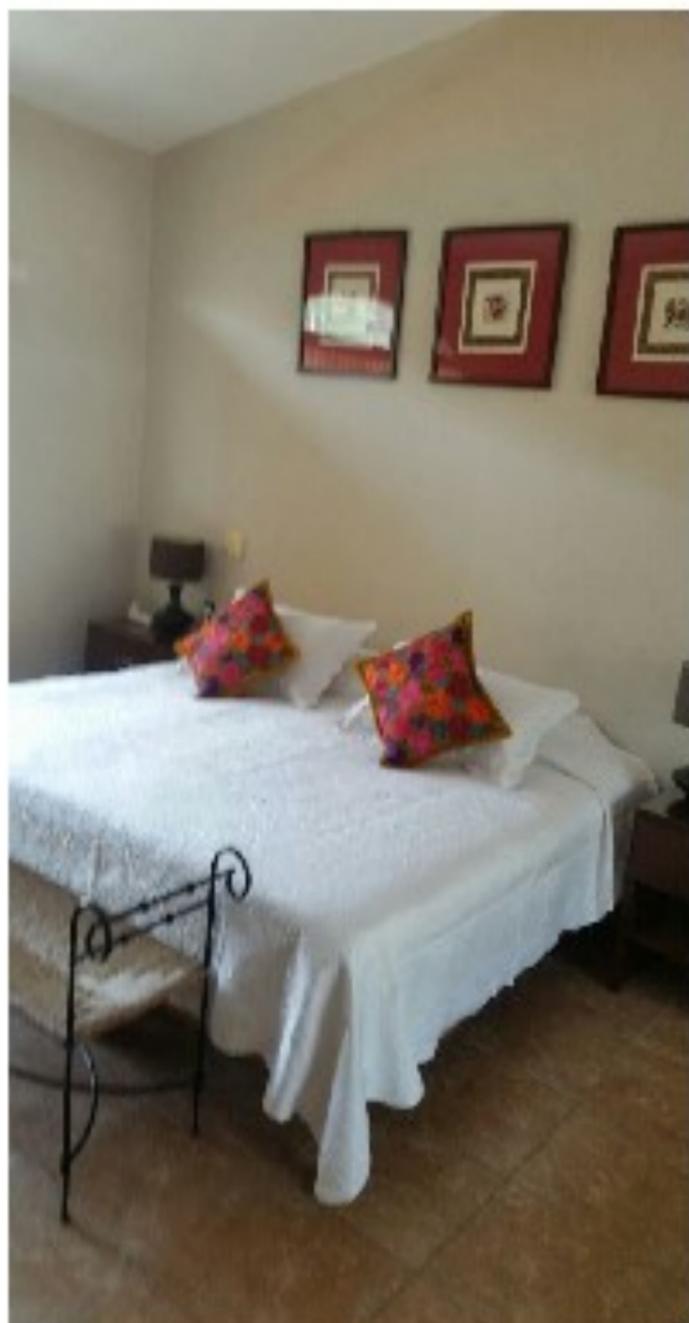
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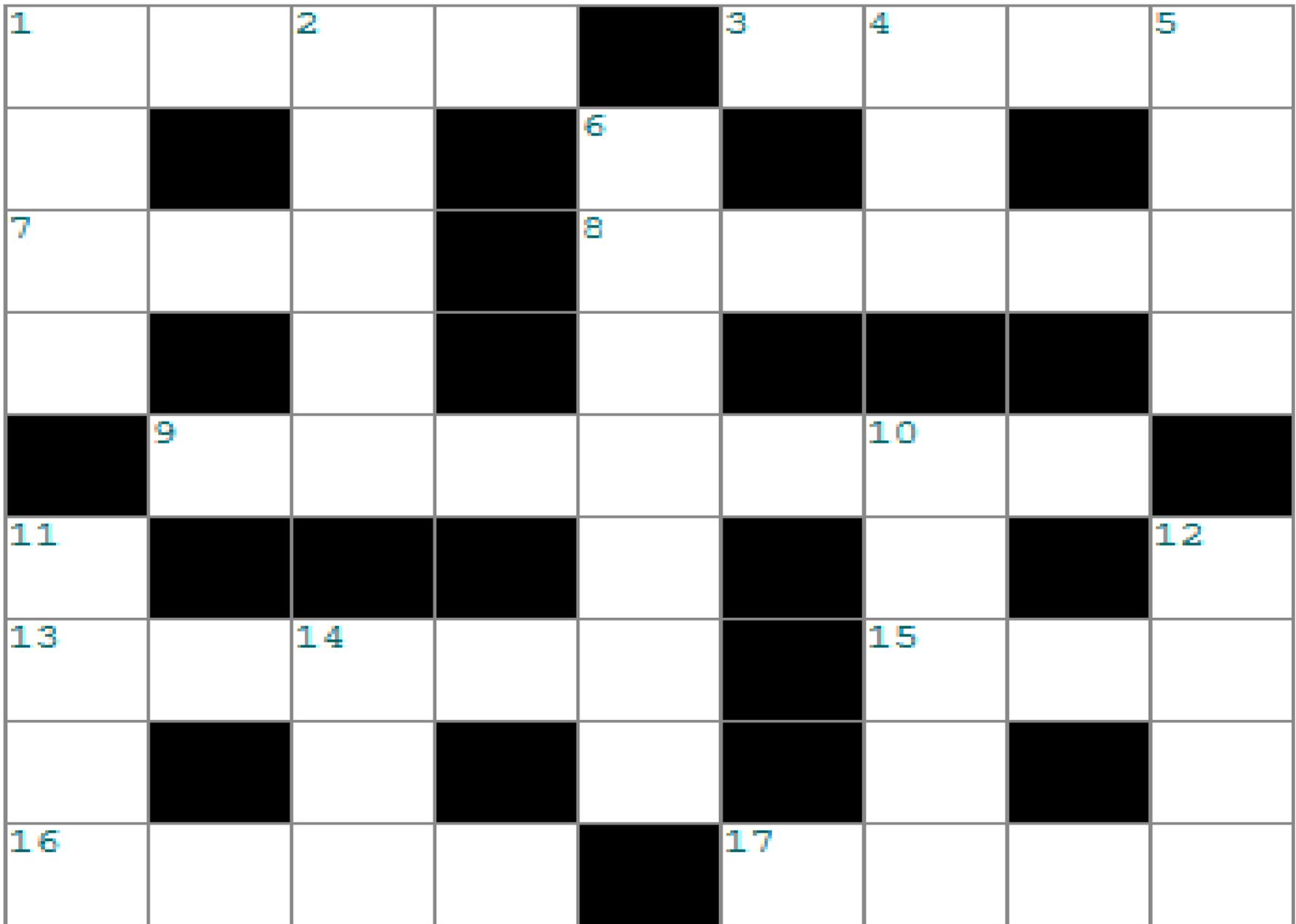
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Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 (he) touches
- 3 step, foot movement
- 7 (you/tú) give
- 8 (he or she) adds
- 9 (you/vosotros) talk
- 13 (they) marry
- 15 to give
- 16 pot, vessel used for cooking food
- 17 (I) cough

Down

- 1 all, throughout some time, e.g. all night; everything
- 2 basket
- 4 handle
- 5 to smell
- 6 whale
- 10 Indian
- 11 eight
- 12 (I) burn
- 14 sun

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

### The Mexican Railroad

from the Path to Citizenship series  
article and images from Wikimedia

The Mexican Railway (Ferrocarril Mexicano) (reporting mark FCM) was one of the primary pre-nationalization railways of Mexico. Incorporated in London in September 1864 as the Imperial Mexican Railway (Ferrocarril Imperial Mexicano) to complete an earlier project, it was renamed in July 1867 after the Second French Empire withdrew from Mexico. The main line from Mexico City to Veracruz was dedicated on January 1, 1873 by President Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada; branches connected Ometusco to Pachuca and Apizaco to Puebla. The 103 kilometers (64 mi) between Esperanza and Paso del Macho were electrically operated beginning in the 1920s.

The Mexican Railway remained independent of the government-owned Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México (National Railways of Mexico) until the government gained control in June 1946 and merged the property in March 1959. Following privatization in the 1990s, Ferrosur acquired the lines of the former Mexican Railway.

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

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

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

From a small start, the railway network expanded significantly, linking many parts of the country previously isolated. The Inter-



oceanic Railway linked Mexico City to the port of Veracruz; the Monterrey and Mexican Railroad linked that northern city with the Gulf Coast port of Tampico; the Southern Pacific of Mexico linked west coast cities from Guaymas to Mazatlan; the Sonora Railway linked Nogales to the port of Guaymas; and the Mexican Central Railroad went north to the U.S. border at El Paso, Texas.

The British invested £7.4 million in railways during the decade of the 1880s, jumping to £53.4 million in 1910s. The decade total of new investment in mining went from £1.3 million in 1880s to £11.6 million in 1910s. Investments in land and other properties rose from near zero in 1880s to £19.7 million in 1910s. The totals reached £135 million, almost as much as the United States.

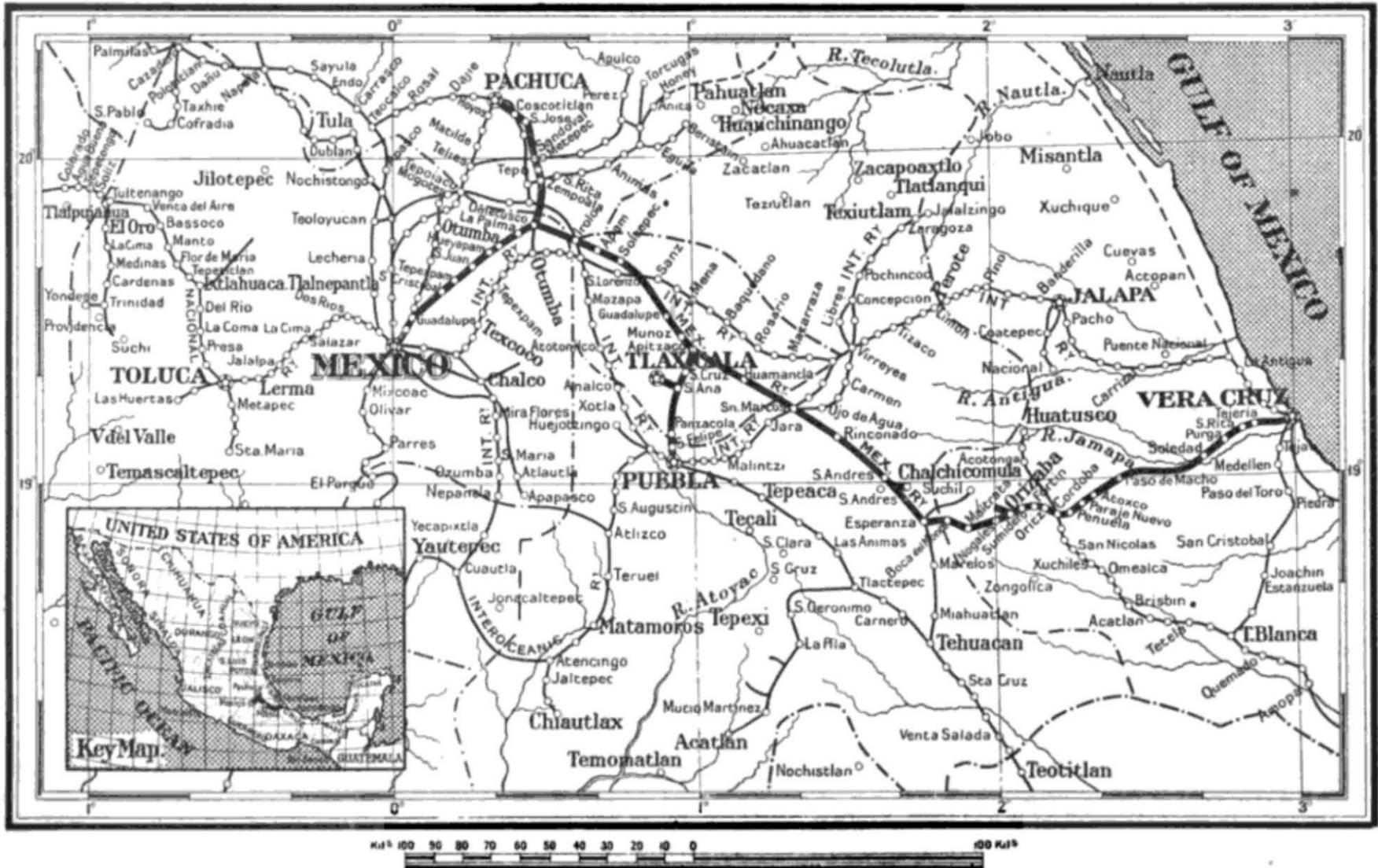
Growing nationalistic fervor in Mexico led the Díaz administration to bring the bulk of the nation's railroads under national control through a plan drafted by his Minister of Finance, José Yves Limantour. The plan, implemented in 1909, created a new government corporation, Ferrocarriles Nacionales de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

### Nationalization

The rail system deteriorated greatly from neglect during the period of the Mexican Revolution. Following the Revolution, the entirety of the Mexican rail system was nationalized between 1929 and 1937. In 1987, the government merged its five regional railroads into FNM. During the later period of national ownership, FNM suffered significant financial difficulties, running an operating deficit of \$552 million (37 percent of its op-

...The Mexican Railroad

## MEXICAN RAILWAY.



erating budget) in 1991. Competition from trucking and shipping decreased railroad's share of the total freight market to about 9 percent, or about half of rail's share a decade earlier.

### Privatization

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

In 1996, Kansas City Southern (KCS), in a joint venture with Transportación Marítima Mexicana (TMM), bought the Northeast Railroad concession that linked Mexico City, Monterrey, the Pacific port at Lázaro Cárdenas and the border crossing at Laredo.

The company was initially called Transportación Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM), but was renamed Kansas City Southern de México (KCSM), in 2005, when KCS bought out TMM's interests. KCS's systems in the United States and Mexico jointly form end-to-end rail system linking the heartlands of Mexico and the United States.

The Northwest Railroad concession, connecting Mexico City and Guadalajara with the Pacific port of Manzanillo and various crossings along the United States border was sold to a joint venture between Grupo México and Union Pacific Railroad, in 1998, during the presidency of Dr. Ernesto Zedillo (who later occupied the position of Director of the Board of Union Pacific). The company operates as Ferrocarril Mexicano or Ferromex. Ferromex's freight volumes have increased; it hauled a record 22,365 million tonne-km in the first 6 months of 2010. Also, Ferrosur, the railroad serving Mexico City and cities/ports southeast of Mexico City, hauled their own record 3,565 million tonne-kilometers.

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

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