



A perfect Manzanillo day
photo by John Chalmers

Around Mexico
History and Mythology
Technology
RV Travel
So Much to See
Nature's Wonders
Food and Drink
Learn Spanish
Path to Citizenship

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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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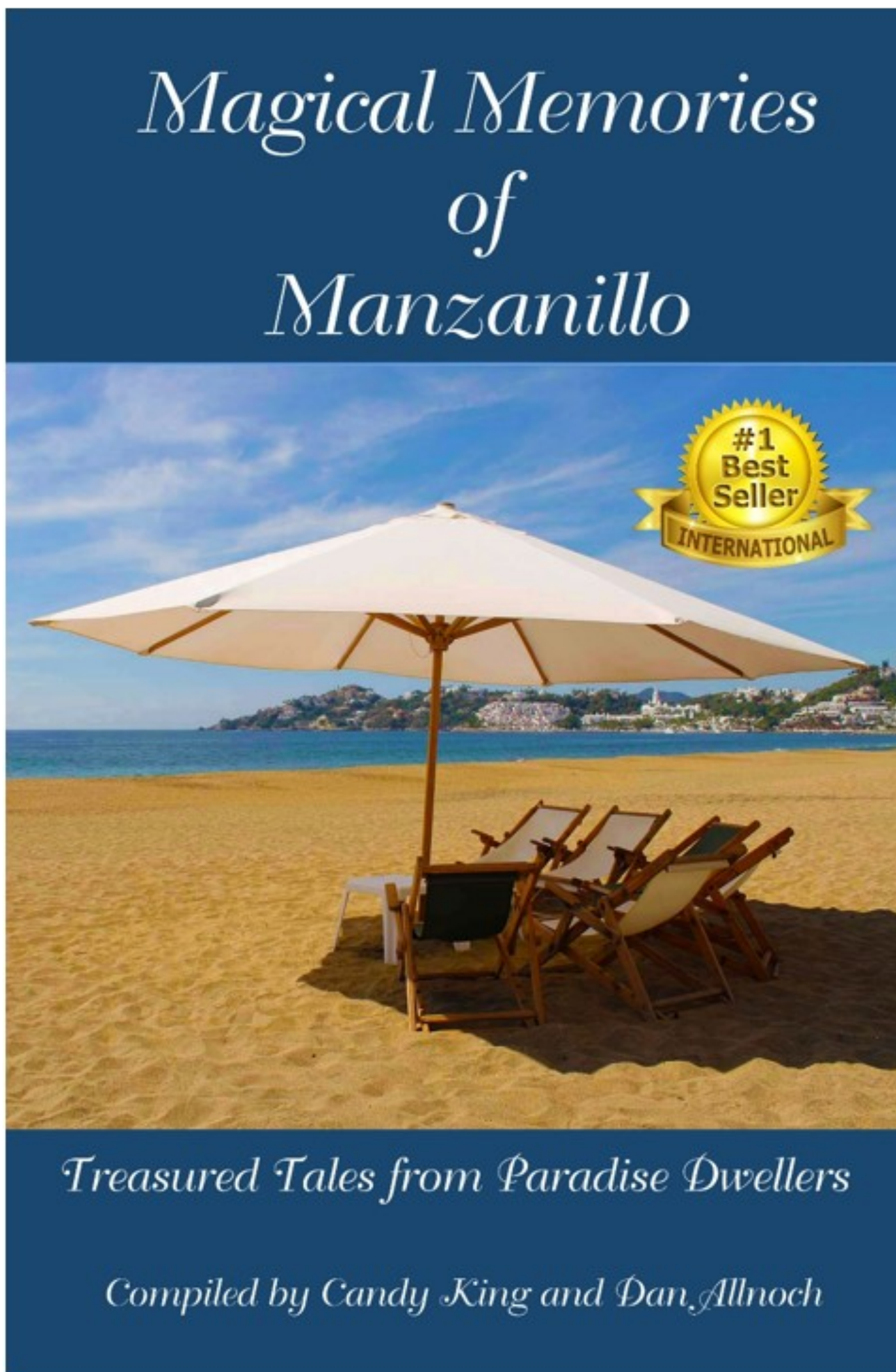
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Organic Cobblestones of México

Story & Photos
by John Chalmers



Have you ever wondered where all the stones come from that are used to make the wonderful cobblestone roads of México? What you may not know is that most of the cobblestones today are not mined, not found in pits like gravel, and not collected from beaches. For over 600 years, they have been grown on trees, mainly in hillside plantations in the state of Colima.

In 1519, Spanish conquistador, Hernán Cortés (1485-1547) first came to the land we know as México, after spending time in Cuba. He led an expedition that caused the fall of the Aztec empire and brought large portions of mainland México under Spanish rule. Travelling with Cortés in his conquest was the expedition's scientist, Ricardo O'Leary Gonzales.

Of Irish/Spanish descent, O'Leary Gonzales is credited with discovery and naming of the Cobblestone Tree, known in Spanish as the *árbol de adoquines*. He was the first to use its stones in making roads in México. An early traveler, he had seen the cobblestone Appian Way built by the Romans in 312-264 BC, which may have inspired him. Parts of that road remain today.



Growing to the size of natural stone cobblestones, the organic cobblestones fall when ready for harvesting and harden like rocks.

In recognition of the discovery and application of the stones to build the first paved roads in the new world, Cortés honoured O'Leary Gonzales by bestowing the Latin name of *Organicum Lapides Olearius* upon the tree and registered the name with the Spanish Institute of Botany.

Hernán Cortés returned to Spain in 1541, but his scientist remained in the New World, cultivating huge plantations of Cobblestone Trees, which are still in use today, producing a product for the building of roads. With the success of plantations, México has a continuous supply of the stones that are used in the artistic arrangements that characterize the traditional roads of the country.

Each year, starting in January, the organic cobblestones are harvested when they drop from the trees and are then placed in the sun for hardening. Any cobblestones that fall when they are not ready, perhaps dislodged by wind, are kiln-dried to ensure they meet the hardness needed for paving.



Organic cobblestones are similar in size, shape and color of natural rock cobblestones, and are used both in making new roads and in repairing older roads.

...Organic Cobblestones of México



When harvested, any stems remaining are removed from the cobblestones, sized, and then sun-dried until hardened and ready for use.

An annual “festival of stones” is held in the small town of Pueblo de Piedras in the state of Colima, where every road in town is paved with cobblestones. In an event called the Celebración de Adoquines, residents of the town bring their hardened stones to do any repairs necessary for their roads. Potholes are repaired, patios are built, and new roads are started.

The celebration concludes with a public dinner where huge pots have been simmering all day in slow cooking of unripe cobblestones, which never hardened for use. They are cooked with rice, pork and corn in a traditional stew called *guiso de piedras* and eaten with corn tortillas. The festival and feast are always held on April 1, a day known in North America as April Fool’s Day.



Although they are heavy, organic cobblestones grow on small, but very strong branches, capable of supporting the weight.



When ripe, the cobblestones fall to the ground, landing among leaves shed by their trees and are then ready for harvesting and hardening prior to use.



Many ancient cobblestone roads survive in México and are characterized by the irregular size and shape of the stones used in building the roads.



Roads made with organic cobblestones are recognized by the similarity in size and shape of the stones, sometimes combined with manufactured stones used for walking paths.

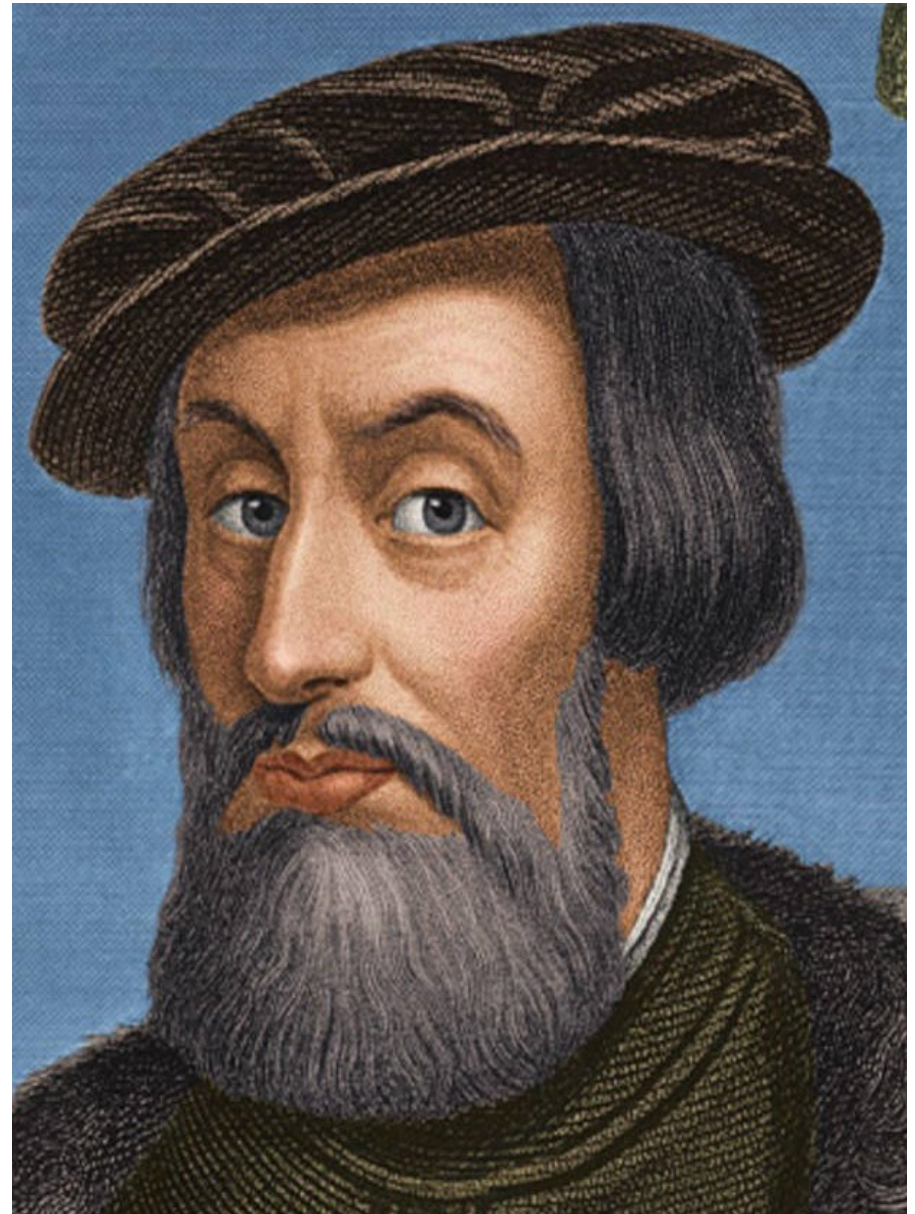
...Organic Cobblestones of México



Cultivation of organic cobblestones for the past 500 years in México has ensured ready availability of material for building roads in the traditional style that are characteristic of México.

Hernán Cortés, Spanish conquistador (1485-1547)

Spanish Conquistador who led an expedition that caused the fall of the Aztec Empire and brought large portions of what is now mainland Mexico under the rule of the King of Castile in the early 16th century. Cortés was part of the generation of Spanish explorers and conquistadors who began the first phase of the Spanish colonization of the Americas. He came to Mexico in 1519, returned to Spain in 1541.



Spanish conquistador, Hernán Cortés, brought his own scientist with him to the New World, who then began a new industry in cultivating organic cobblestones, ensuring that a steady supply of stones would be available.



Growing of cobblestones for the past 600 years in México has ensured a steady supply of the stones needed for building roads that characterize routes both ancient and modern in the country's towns and cities.



While cobblestone roads have a long history in México, they are widely used not only in ancient or small towns, but to pave roads in cities, as these urban hikers have realized in the routes they have travelled. Anyone, including the author of this article, who has tripped and fallen on a cobblestone road, can tell you what a hard landing you get. With luck, you may escape with only skinned knees and not broken bones!

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How the Oocho' Got His Tail

story by Kirby Vickery

During the days of the Creation the Oocho', better known today as the Fox that looked quite a bit different than he does today. His shape was a lot like a weasel's, and he had a weasel's tail, which was rather short and skimpy with no distinction to it at all.

One day, he was out hunting, and our story picks up where he is about to corner his favorite food. He almost had a T'u'ul (Mayan for Rabbit) exactly where he wanted him and then he was going to pounce, grab, and eat yet another still warm feast. As he hunkered down and placed his feet exactly in the right spots, the t'u'ul made a predicted turn to the left. The Fox leapt just as a cloud hid the sun.

The result was that our sneaky hero went hungry for another day because he simply missed the rabbit and took a bite out of a cactus. Trotting home, while spitting thorns, he started thinking that if everyone saw what had happened they would realize that his vision wasn't quite what it used to be and that he needed the full sun to be able to see to hunt. His life would get real short after that because all his prey would soon learn to only come out when it rained or the sky was cloudy, which, in the jungle, was most of the time.

After conjuring up a plan to hide all the clouds, he talked his friend Lik' (the wind) into helping him by telling him that he could blow harder without all that water in the air slowing everything down. After awhile, everyone saw Oocho' running here and there all over the place helping Lik' to round up all the clouds in the sky and push them all behind the moon where the sun couldn't see them and the Rain God, Chac, couldn't find them.

The Mayan Wind, Lik'



With the clouds all locked up out of sight, the Fox was going crazy catching everything in sight. He didn't notice that other animals were becoming very thirsty. The fish in the lakes and sea were starting to gasp for more water and the birds all fell silent and stopped flying because of the dryness of the air.

After just a few days, even Lik' the wind was suffering because he could no longer blow gentle breezes that refreshed the land and everyone in it. Most everyone knew that this was the end of their world.

Chac, the god of rain, had a unique and distinct appearance among his fellow gods and goddesses. He had a long face with an exceptionally long and hooked nose [looked like a nose of the elephant] which was also turned up. Under that nose, he had exposed long and sharpened fangs and a tongue that dropped beyond his neck when he had his head turned upward.

...How the Oocho' Got His Tail

The other thing he was capable of doing that no one at the time knew about was to split himself into four "assistants." They were:

Sac Xib Chac. North, White
Chas Xib Chac. East, Red
Kan Xib Chac. South, Yellow
Ek Xib Chac. West, Black



Chac, the God
of the Rain

Split apart like this, and moving quickly, it wasn't too much time before one of them found where Oocho' had hidden the winds in back of the placid Ujo' (or Moon). Because Lik' didn't care about a lot of things, he helped Chac push the clouds, and subsequently the rain, back in place just in time for the annual monsoon rains which saved all the plants and other life forms which depended on the rainfall more than monsoon deluge for their area.

After that, the sun shone over the refreshed land. Then the land flourished again and the birds and insects sang and most all the animals were able to drink in spite of getting a little wet now and then.

The fox was miffed at his friend, Wind, but didn't say anything and continued hunting even in the rain. As it happened, one day he had missed his third rabbit that he had chosen and long chased when he heard Chac and his new friend Lik' the wind walking down the path talking back and forth as friends do.

Chac was telling Lik' that he understood the Wind's desire to blow longer and harder and that he thought that it might be a good idea if he were to establish different seasons in different parts of the land which would allow Lik' to blow as hard as he liked but only in certain areas at certain times.

Lik' was thinking over this offer and concept when they stumbled over the quivering fox that had run out of places to hide. Chac immediately slammed his foot down on the Fox's tail, which smashed and broke it.

So, the poor thing was just lying there all broken and withered. Oocho' was crying out in pain when Chac told him that it served him right.

As a matter of fact, he continued, seeing that your method of hunting depends on stealth and your success on the lack of it, I am changing your tail to be long, bright and fluffy which could help or hinder you as punishment for taking our world's clouds and rain away.

With that said, he lifted up his foot and the Oocho' tail was longer, and bright red except at the tip.

...How the Ocho' Got His Tail



A Mayan Ocho'

The fox was stunned but not totally unhappy. Then Chac, the Mayan God of Rain, caused a very small but intense rain down-fall on that tail followed by a lightning strike which dried it very quickly into something that looked like it just came out from a modern hair dryer.

The fox was speechless while just staring at this new fluffy tail he found stuck to his back end. He had two thoughts.

The first thought was that he figured he could use it to distract his prey when attacking and the second was that it would be a very nice, soft, and warm thing to wrap around himself at night when the wind got cold.

[To the Manzanillo Sun readers: It's my birthday so yes, I made it up with some family help. But, it fits the genre.]

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

sponsored



LAND FOR SALE

Manzanillo, Colima

Currently part of the orchid nursery Viveplants.com

LOCATION:

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.
- It has an office and packing shed of approximately 1,794 m2.
- 5 hectares of Ataulfo mango orchard in productive age. (Currently being exported to Canada)
- The property has water rights of 186,000 m3 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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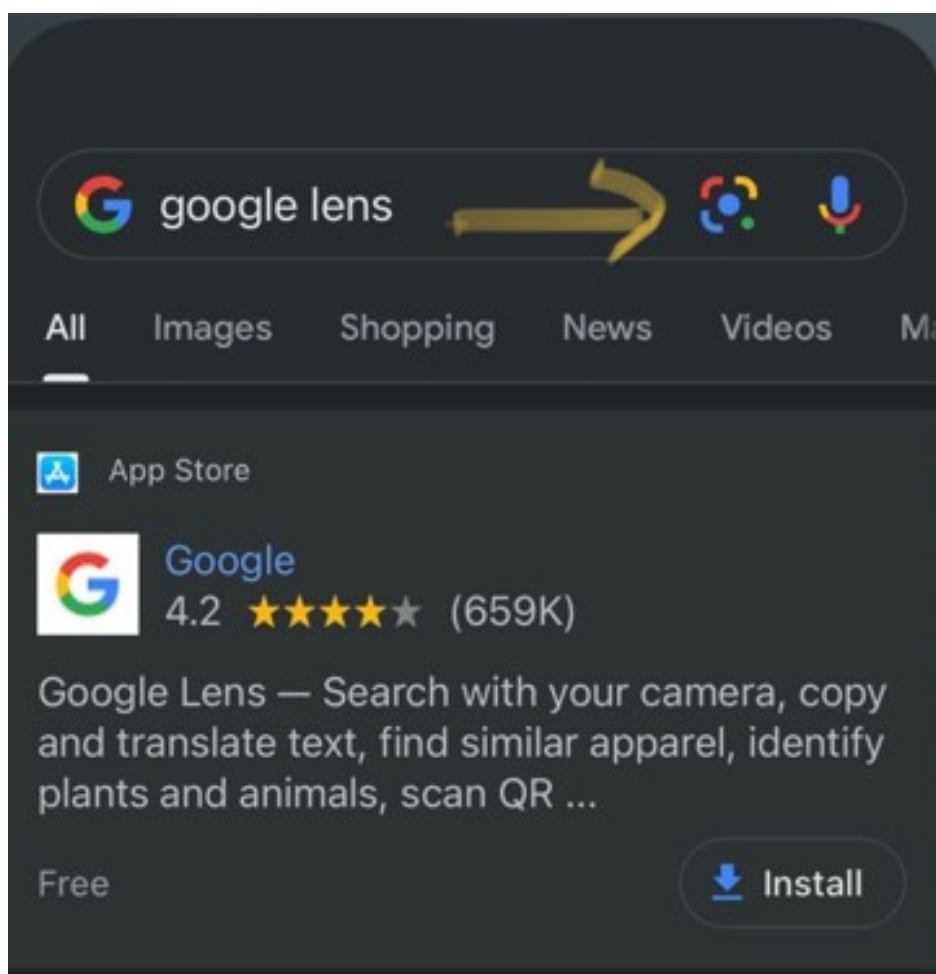
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What breed of dog it that? How do I find out?

by Señor Tech

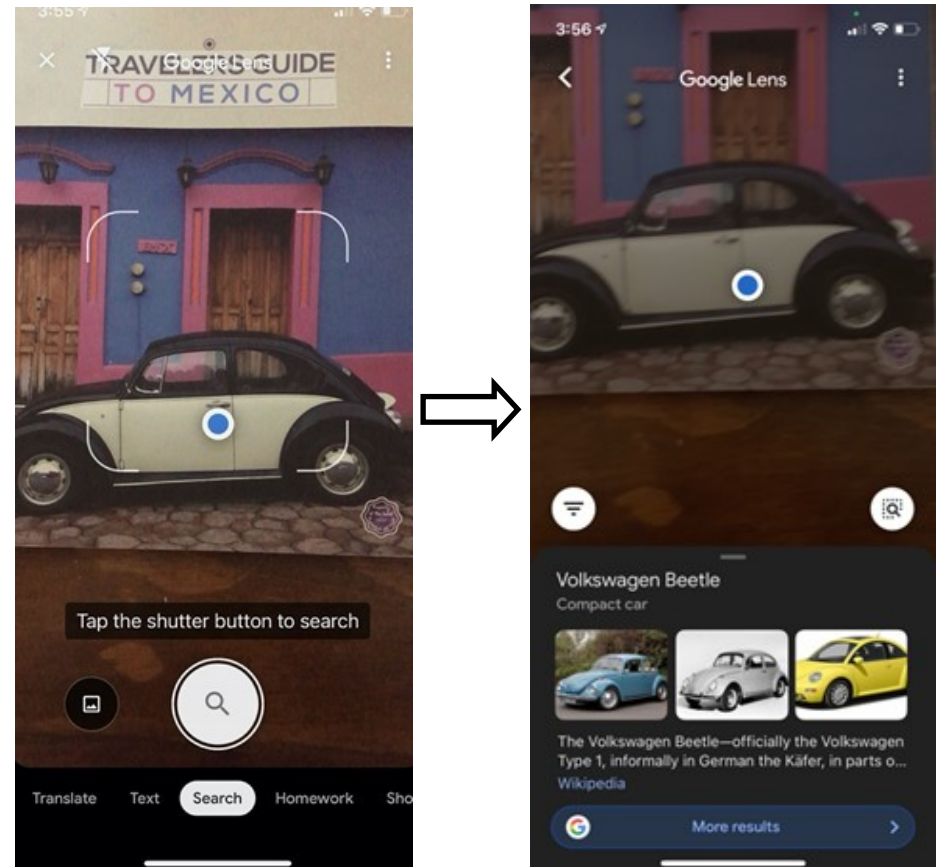
Do you remember a time when you needed to go to a library or reference book to get information? When my wife and I got our first iPhones, I would tease her and say "if only there was a way to find out", then checked Google and did a search. That was over ten years ago.



Google has a tool on their Google Browser (not Chrome) for both iOS and Android phones and tablets. It has been available for over two years and it has one big advantage over the text search. The phone's camera becomes the input device.

The Google app is available on the Apple App Store for iOS devices and Google Play App Store for Android devices. Once the app is installed, click on the icon (see the graphic on the left, the arrow points to Google lens).

Google lens opens your camera. Find an item you want identified and click the camera shutter button.



A number of links will be displayed below. You can even choose your category before you do your photo or search.

Click on one of the links that satisfies your search request and you are done. In this case, I had taken a photo of a magazine cover, but you can have it identify anything your camera is focused on.

If you are travelling (I wish) in a foreign country and a sign has information you do not understand, use Google lens. It will do the translation for you. If you see a dog and you want to know the breed, use Google lens.

Google lens is a free app. I recommend it to anyone who wants information from a search engine but may not know how to describe what they are seeing. For more information, visit [Google Lens](https://www.google.com/lens/).

If you have questions or suggestions about technology topics or issues, email me at senortech@manzanillosun.com

San Carlos - Guaymas

by Dan and Lisa Goy

Totonaka RV Park (San Carlos) & Hotel Playa de Cortés (Guaymas)

Baja Amigos RV tours have relied on both the Totonaka RV Park and the RV park located at the Hotel Playa de Cortés for many years, although they are two very different places, only 30 minutes apart in the State of Sonora.

Totonaka RV Park (GPS 27.96331 N, 111.02450 W) www.Totonakarv.com

Founded in 1983, we first stumbled onto this park on a family vacation in 2002 heading for Acapulco and Mexico City. Our family of five was traveling in a Ford "Club Chateau" with Captain Chairs and a fold down bench seat bed combination. We slept in the van, the kids in a tent. It was our first overnight stop in this Mexican adventure.

We now stay here on a regular basis both with our tours and when we travel personally. This is a large RV park in Mexican terms and well run, with 140 camping spaces with 30A RV plugs. It has most of the bells and whistles including a pool, pickle ball court, laundry, great Wi-Fi, cable, is pet friendly and offers much more. Los Arbolitos restaurant is at the entrance of the park and we have eaten there many times. This park is a very popular snowbird destination and nearly full each January and February.

The major attraction for most is no need for a vehicle permit (plus a \$400 USD deposit) to visit either San Carlos or Guaymas, but no further south. The weather is similar to Tucson, AZ, a little cooler during the day, a bit warmer at night and you are on the ocean. The monthly camping fees are also substantially less (\$300-\$400) compared to those in the US. Best of all, you are in Mexico!



Baja Amigos at the Totonaka pool

Hotel Playa de Cortés Trailer Park (GPS 21.91225 N, 110.94506 W) www.hotelesgandara.com.mx

Our first time at this location was in April 2016 as we completed our 90-day Mexican Adventure and were heading back to the US. This a wonderful spot to spend a couple of nights for a good night's sleep and some R&R. Rarely are there more than a handful of RVs here. The RV park is behind the hotel, about 50 spaces, that include full services with 30A; the bonus is access to the hotel and amenities. Hotel Playa de Cortés sits on the beautiful Bay of Bacoachibampo.



Hotel Playa de Cortés

This traditional and historic hotel was founded in 1936. In the past it has hosted famous folks such as María Félix, Ray Conniff and Liza Minelli. This is also a very popular location for wedding receptions. Almost every weekend is booked throughout the year. Our groups now stay here at the end of tour and we host a farewell dinner at the hotel restaurant, always great food! Folks have the opportunity for some pool time and to catch up on tasks with Wi-Fi. This stop is also popular for folks heading to Baja. The ferry from Guaymas travels to Santa Rosalía across the Sea of Cortés, an hour north of the Bay of Concepción.

Guaymas

Guaymas is 134 km south of the state capital of Hermosillo, and 389 kilometres (242 mi) from the US border, located on the Gulf of California and the western edge of the Sonoran Desert. The city's formal name is the Heróica Ciudad de Guaymas and this is a mostly known as an industrial port and is the principal port for the state of Sonora.

...San Carlos - Guaymas

History

Prior to Spanish arrival, the area now known as Guaymas was dominated by the Guaymas, Seri and Yaqui tribes. In 1539, two Spanish ships, the Santa Agueda and El Trinidad arrived in Guaymas Bay and were commanded by Francisco de Ulloa who called the area "the port of ports." Some small Jesuit missions in the area were founded in the 1610s and 1620s, when Jesuits founded eight mission villages with the Yaqui. The Seri strongly opposed the settlement of Europeans and resisted fiercely until 1769.

Juan María de Salvatierra and Eusebio Kino began the process to evangelize the area in 1697. In 1701, Salvatierra came to this area and established the Loreto mission somewhat inland from where Guaymas is now and the Jesuits founded another small mission on the bay which they called San José de Guaymas, headed by Manuel Díaz. The Seri repeatedly attacked the San José mission, forcing it to be abandoned and rebuilt several times, abandoned for the final time in 1759.



San Carlos (foreground) Guaymas Harbour

In 1767, Viceroy Marqués de Croix ordered a major military offensive referred to as "the Sonora Expedition". The objective was to subdue the Seri and Pima tribes. Later, the Spanish colonials built an adobe fort, with four towers, in Guaymas, initially under the command of Captain Lorenzo Cancio. No traces of the fort remain today, but the San José Mission is marked by a church located on the road leading to Empalme. Around the same time, the colonists formally mapped the Guaymas Bay and officially founded the city of Guaymas in 1769 by José Gálvez in Real de Alamos on behalf of the viceregal government. It was another 40 years before any colonists settled.

In the late 18th and early 19th century, there was supposedly only one inhabitant in Guaymas, called "Tio Pepe" (Uncle Pepe), who was said to be a drunk and a thief. At the beginning of the 19th century, the village began to be populated by farmers and ranchers who held large properties but did not have mar-



Calm waters in San Carlos

kets for their products. In 1811, commercial maritime traffic was authorized and customs was established later in 1823. Guaymas received the name San Fernando de Guaymas in 1820. Ships visited the bay intermittently. Important to understand in this era, it was safer to travel by sea than by land; Guaymas became an important stopping point for those heading north or south and the first commercial imports opened in 1827. Much of the population at this time consisted of European-Mexicans who eventually moved to a town called Belén and disappeared as a distinct group.

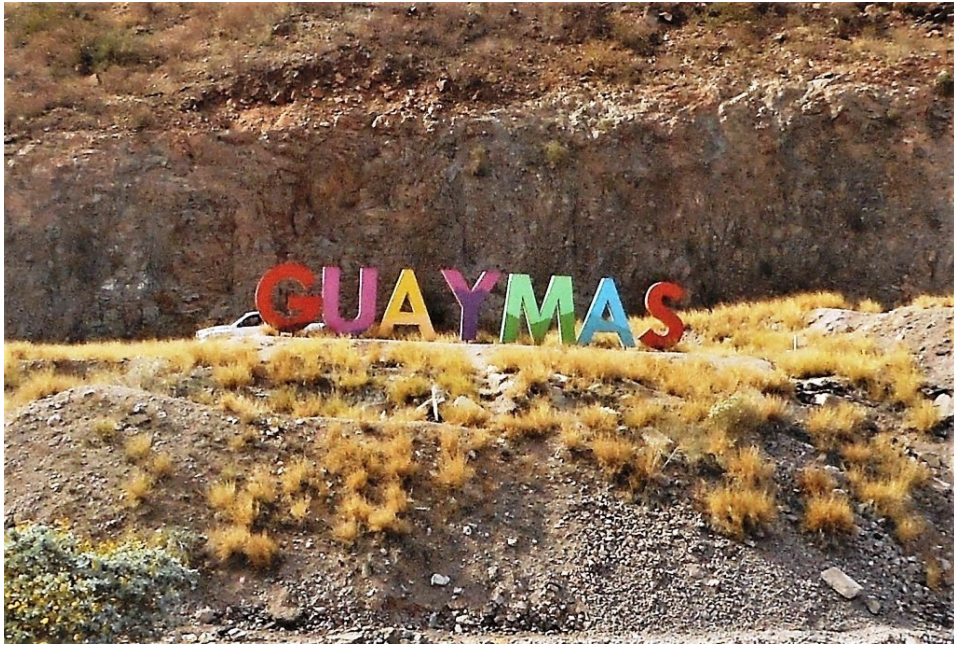
The port became a municipality in 1825 and during the Mexican-American War, American warships such as the Portsmouth, the Congress, the Dale and the Argos anchored here near the Pájaros Island and the Almagre Grande. The ships fired on the town and captured it, keeping it in US hands from 1847 to 1848. In the mid-19th century, Guaymas was the target of several filibusters, or unauthorized military expeditions from foreign nations, designed to foment rebellion.



San Carlos waterfront

One was done by the crew of the English sailing vessel "Challenge" and a French ship named La Belle commanded by **Count Gastón Raousett-Boulbón**, who intended to take over all of Sonora.

...San Carlos - Guaymas



The French attacked the city on 13 July 1854, but the port was successfully defended by José María Yáñez and a firing squad executed the Count. The national government elevated the town to city status as a reward for this action in 1859 and decades later, in 1935, gave Guaymas the title of **“heroic city”** for the same action. The municipality's formal name of Guaymas de Zaragoza was authorized in 1862 and, in 1865, French ships arrived to attack Republican forces, which were forced to retreat. The French occupied the city until 1866.

By 1890, the city had 10,000 residents and was somewhat prosperous. The carnival tradition it established then continues to this day. On October 4-5, 1911, Guaymas was struck by a major hurricane and accompanying storm surge, which killed some 500 people in the city and environs.

During the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the first ever aerial bombardment of a naval target occurred just off the coast of Guaymas. In 1913, five military ships belonging to Federal forces appeared in the bay, and General Álvaro Obregón of the rebel army ordered the bombing of these ships using the aircraft “Sonora.” The first modern port facilities were built in 1925 for the Mexican navy.

In 1942, a commercial pier and warehouse were built at La Ardilla. Guaymas’ importance as a port grew in the 1950s and, in 1961, a pier for the national oil company PEMEX was built. A naval ship repair station, called the Varadero Nacional, and silos for the export of grain, called the Almacenes Nacional de Depósito, were built in 1964.

Ferry connection with the city of Santa Rosalía, Baja California Sur, was established in 1972. In the 1980s, a number of private construction projects further enlarged the port, including those built by the Compañía Mexicana de Cobre, Cementos Tolteca and Compañía Mexicana de Ácido Sulfúrico.

Due to changes in Mexican maritime law, a private company under contract to the government, Administración Portuaria Integral de Guaymas, took over port operations in 1995.

Guaymas Today

Guaymas is basically an industrial and shrimp-fishing port which has conserved a number of historical attractions. Buildings in the historic center have a mix of Neoclassical and Moorish facades, however many are in disrepair. The city has two main plazas, one called 13 de Julio, which is nicknamed the “plaza de los flojos” (lazy men's plaza) for the large number of people who relax there.



Puerto de Guaymas

The other major plaza is the Plaza de los Tres Presidentes with statues of Plutarco Elías Calles, Adolfo de la Huerta and Abelardo L. Rodríguez all of whom are from near Guaymas. Other landmarks include the old Bank of Sonora building with its Neoclassical facade, the old jailhouse built in 1900, the Casa de las Conchas (House of Shells), which has a large collection on display and for sale, and the Casa de la Cultura (Cultural Center), which offers classes and workshops in various arts.

Carnival of Guaymas

Guaymas holds one of Mexico's major carnival celebrations. It is one of the oldest carnivals in the country. The annual event begins on the Thursday before Ash Wednesday and ends at the stroke of midnight of the beginning of Lent. Events are held in several locations with a number of events, such as the yearly parade, extending over multiple days. It begins with the Quema del Malhumor or Hoguera, when an effigy of something or someone who has displeased the public is burned.



...San Carlos - Guaymas

Each year, the effigy represents something different. In past years, the effigy has represented the figures of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Vicente Fox, George H. W. Bush, Mexico's value added tax and lack of water.

In 2009, the effigy was of singer Julio Preciado for his poor interpretation of Mexico's national anthem at the recent Serie del Caribe baseball tournament. Other major events include concerts by regionally and nationally known artists, a multi-day parade with floats and the election of the King and Queen of the Carnival.

The history of Carnival in Guaymas begins after the Reform War and French Intervention in Mexico, when Guaymas and the rest of the country experienced a period of peace and economic development. The success of Guaymas' port attracted a number of European immigrants and visitors.



San Carlos view of the harbour

They brought the idea of organizing a Carnival similar to those celebrated in Europe. Guaymas' first carnival is recorded in a book called *El Viejo Guaymas* (Old Guaymas) written by Alfonso Iberri. It was one of the first to take place in Mexico.

In 1888, the first Carnival Queen was María Zuber and the first King was Alfredo Díaz Velasco. The King and Queen were paraded on the streets of Guaymas in a coach, followed by coaches carrying their entourage. The event ended with a grand ball that night.

San Carlos

San Carlos is a beachfront subdivision within the port city of Guaymas, constructed specifically for tourists to promote tourism. Noted for clear waters and shallow bays San Carlos has grown to nearly 7,000 residents, and includes numerous RV parks, resorts and stores. There are also many Americans and Canadians who live in San Carlos during the winter as the summer months are very hot and humid, much like in Texas. San

Carlos is about a six-hour drive from the United States along Mexican interstate Highway 15. San Carlos boasts a very large and active diving community and is the sailing capital of Sonora with a large yacht club.

History of San Carlos

The community of San Carlos was founded on lands that previously were a large cattle ranch known as the Baviso de Navarro. This was later subdivided in four great estates known as Rancho Los Algodones, Rancho San Carlos, Rancho El Baviso and Rancho El Represo. In the mid-1950s, Mr. Rafael T. Caballero acquired the ranches Los Algodones, San Carlos and El Baviso, contracting the services of city planners who designed the first stages of a gradual and carefully planned tourist development that in time would become one of the first and most important tourist and recreational communities in the State.

When the private investors began the initial works for this development, the State Congress of Sonora issued a declaration establishing the official incorporation of the Township of San Carlos, Nuevo Guaymas, Municipality of Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico. The decree published on 28 September 1963, had an endowment of 27.75 km² of privately owned lands located in the Southern portion of the estate Ranch El Baviso. To complement the Township Land Endowment, the State Congress increased the Legal Land Fund by adding the estates known as Rancho San Carlos and Rancho Los Algodones, both with a surface of 22.04 km², as published in the Official State Bulletin no. 23, on 21 March 1973. A total of 49.79 km² of privately owned lands constitute the territorial reserves of this development.

On 1 July 1976, the Agrarian Reform Secretariat, through the Director of Legal Affairs, declared that the privately owned lands located in the remaining lands of the estates El Baviso and San Carlos, have no agrarian legal claims upon them, and consequently the proprietors are free to lien, to encumber, to contribute to societies, to merge, to cede on trusteeship and to freely dispose of these lands. In that same official notice, it is recognized that the proprietors of these four estates voluntarily ceded to the Federal Government part of their lands for the creation of the new center of population and for the formation of the **Ejido 13 July**, affecting the northern and the western portions of the estates of San Carlos, El Baviso, Los Algodones and El Represo. In 1980, the Agrarian Reform Secretariat, the Secretary of Human Settlements and Public Works, and the Secretary of Tourism, altogether issued a declaration of **High-Priority Tourist Zoning**; in favor of the estates El Baviso, San Carlos and Los Algodones, owned by Grupo Caballero.

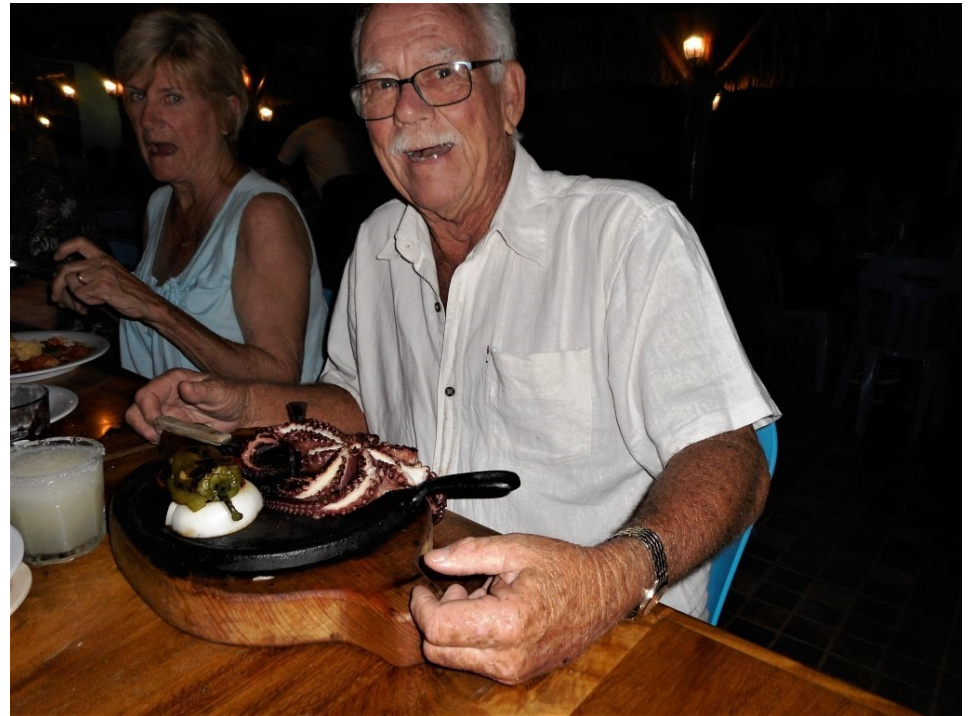
Submitted by
Dan and Lisa Goy
Baja Amigos RV
Caravan Tours
www.BajaAmigos.net

... more pics follow

...San Carlos - Guaymas



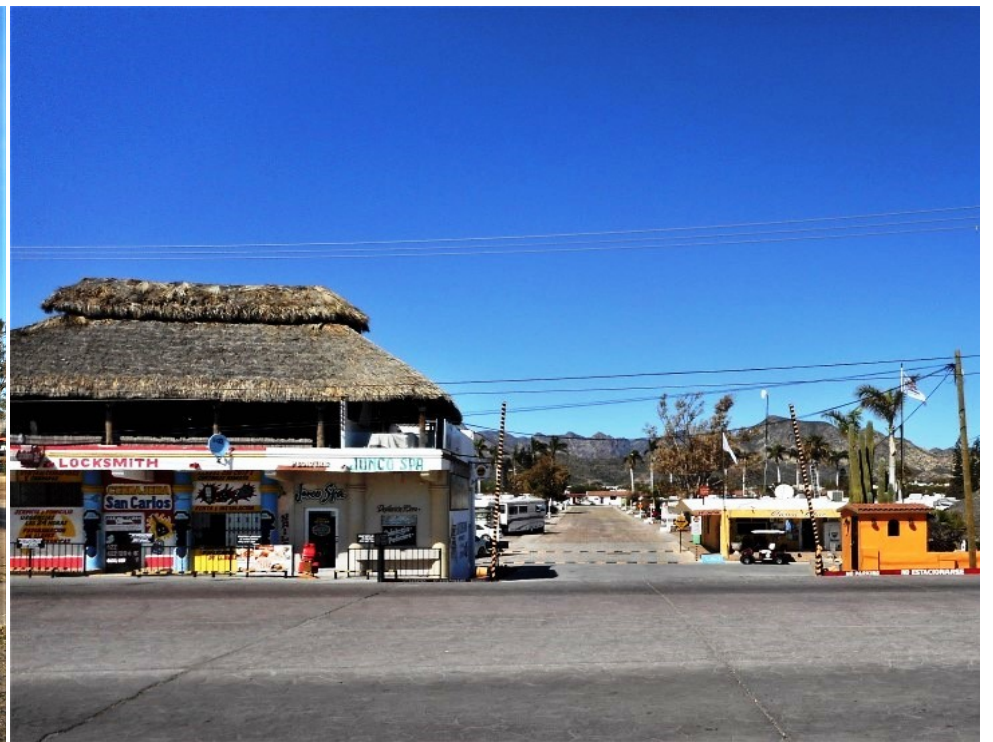
Baja Amigos group dinner at Los Arbolitos



Gary enjoys his octopus at Los Arbolitos



Parked at Totonaka RV Park



Totonaka RV Park entrance



Totonaka RV Park entrance signage



1946 antique trailer at Totonaka

...San Carlos - Guaymas



Totonaka RV Park with the mountains in the background



The gang prior to departing Totonaka RV Park



The rigs at Totonaka RV Park

...San Carlos - Guaymas



Beachfront, Hotel Playa de Cortés



The gals on watch, Hotel Playa de Cortés



Bride and groom, Hotel Playa de Cortés



Wedding reception flowers at Hotel Playa de Cortés



Happy hour at the Hotel Playa de Cortés



Departing Hotel Playa de Cortés



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Costalegre

Jalisco

places the editors have been and recommend you visit



Travel south from Puerto Vallarta on Mexico's Pacific coast to the central coastal area of the country and you'll discover Costalegre.

Miles upon miles of palm trees line the land just inside the coastal shores. Jungle covered mountains plunge into the Pacific coast, or fall short to reveal golden sand beaches, begging to be discovered and walked upon by tired feet.

The Costalegre is not a singular point on the map; like Italy's Amalfi coast, it's a stretch of land - 150 miles long between Puerto Vallarta and Manzanillo - featuring picturesque ocean-side towns and villages, magical coves and remarkable views of a seemingly endless ocean horizon. Costalegre offers highly exclusive travel and luxury experiences within all-inclusive resort hotels that feature privacy and seclusion surrounded by a stunningly beautiful tropical paradise. Celebrities often come here to get away from prying eyes and camera lenses.

Today, this region is extremely accessible – by air (Puerto Vallarta or Manzanillo airports) and by road (Highway 200 on Mexico's Pacific Coast) - and has become a favorite holiday destination for foreigners and Mexicans alike looking for highly exclusive, extra-special travel experiences.

This section will highlight key attractions in the area, and the hotels, restaurants and facilities listed will refer to services in the area along this 150 mile stretch of coastal paradise.

If you're looking for something really special, away from the crowds within a resort experience that is totally different and removed from the 'traditional' resort experience, treat yourself to Mexico's Costalegre. Your budget will need to stretch a bit farther than if you had opted for another area in Mexico, but you will not regret one moment of your visit here.

The places of Costalegre

- ⇒ Barra de Navidad
- ⇒ Melaque
- ⇒ La Manzanilla
- ⇒ Colimilla
- ⇒ Isla Navidad
- ⇒ Tenacatita
- ⇒ Boca de Iguanas
- ⇒ Cabo Corrientes
- ⇒ Costa Careyes
- ⇒ Rancho Cuixmala
- ⇒ Costa Majahuas
- ⇒ Yelapa
- ⇒ Mayto
- ⇒ Boca de Tomatlán
- ⇒ and more!

Story and image source: find the original article and many more about Costalegre and other destinations on the Mexperience site



by Tommy Clarkson

Hybrid Glory Bower Vine *Clerodendrum x speciosum*

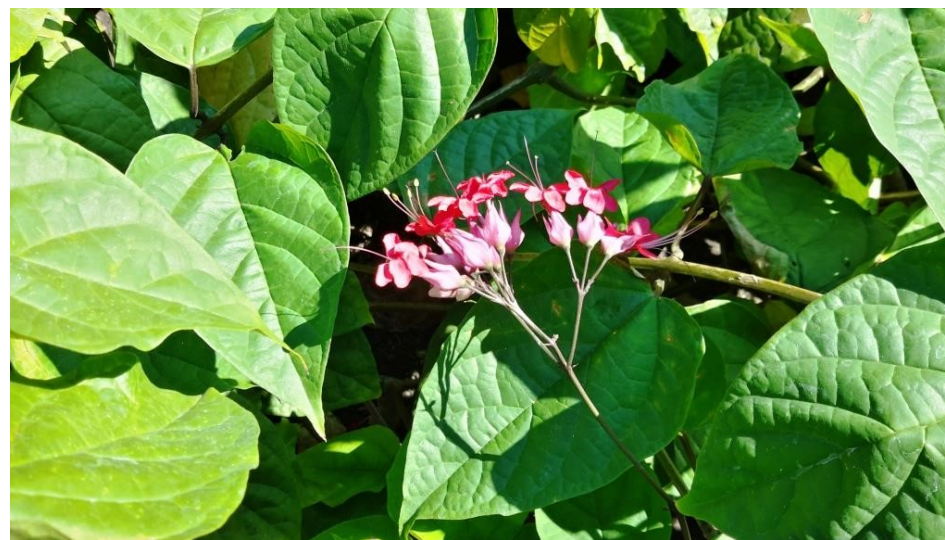
Family: *Lamiaceae*

Also known as: *Clerodendrom Vine*

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

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

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



Delightful contrast, isn't it?

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

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

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

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

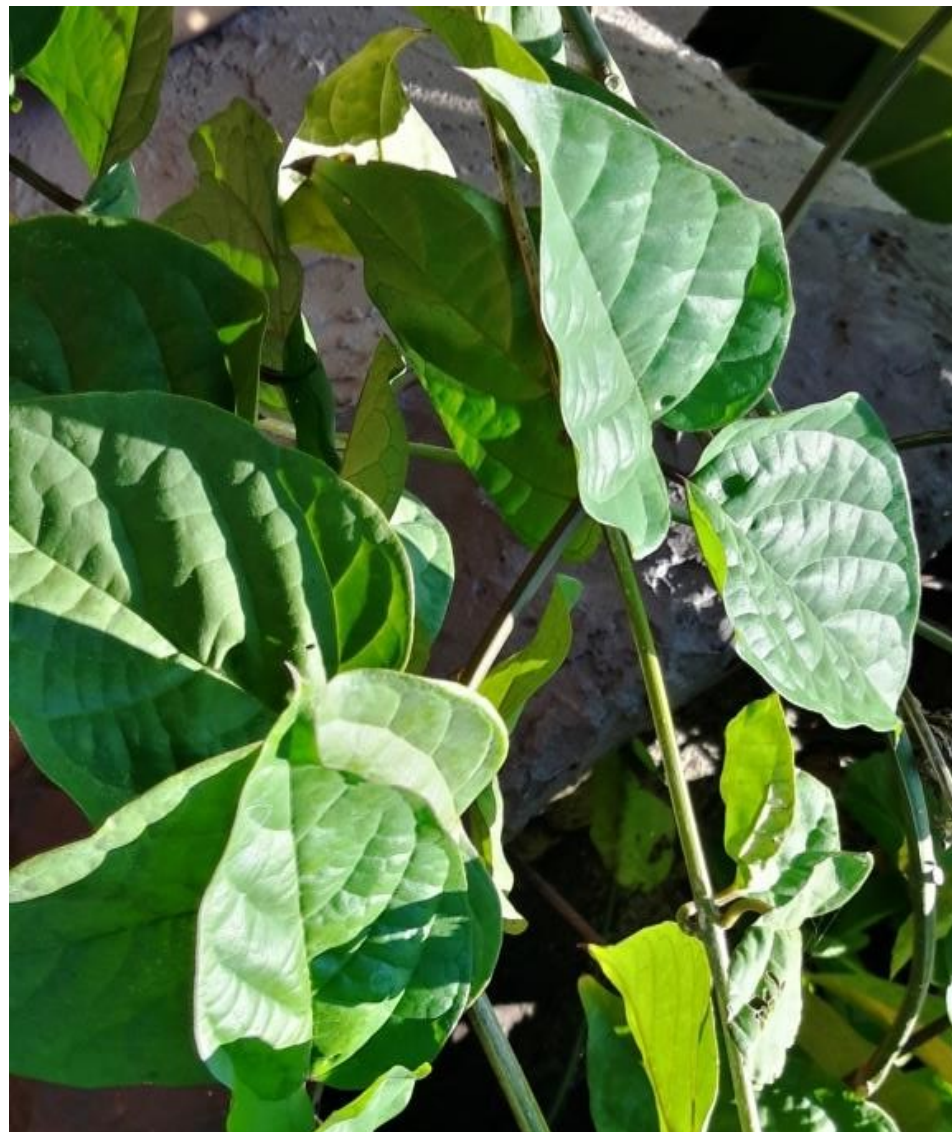
...Hybrid Glory Bower Vine



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com

Aguachile - A Colima Favourite



This fabulous, easy-to-achieve aguachile (posted on Cooks Without Borders) comes to us care of Olivia Lopez, the talented chef de cuisine at Billy Can Can in Dallas, Texas. "You'll find an aguachile like this," says Lopez, "in almost every restaurant in Colima." That's the state in Mexico where she grew up, in a town called Tecomán, on the Pacific coast between Puerto Vallarta and Zihuatenejo. This particular recipe is the one Lopez' friend Nayely makes back home in Tecomán. It's achieved by steeping butterflied shrimp briefly in lime juice with a touch of Worcestershire sauce ("Yes, they use that in Mexico," says Lopez), then puréeing the steeping liquid with avocado, cilantro and serrano chile. The result is an emerald-green sauce with beautiful body. Back into it the shrimp go, and the aguachile is garnished with red onion, cucumber and more avocado, and served with tostadas.

INGREDIENTS

- ✓ 1 cup freshly squeezed lime juice (from about 7 to 8 juicy limes)
- ✓ 1 1/2 teaspoon salt
- ✓ 3/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ✓ 1 pound 16/20 shrimp, peeled, deveined and either butterflied (see instruction following the recipe) or sliced in half lengthwise
- ✓ 1 medium avocado, plus additional diced or sliced avocado for garnish
- ✓ 1 medium bunch cilantro, roughly chopped, about 3 ounces (including some of the stems)
- ✓ 2 serranos, seeded and roughly chopped
- ✓ 1 Persian cucumber or 1/3 hothouse cucumber, cut in half or quarters vertically, then sliced 1/4 inch thick
- ✓ 1/4 medium red onion, sliced thin
- ✓ Tostadas (small fried corn tortilla rounds) or tortilla chips for serving, if desired

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, combine the lime juice, salt and Worcestershire sauce. Add the shrimp, pushing them down so they are entirely submerged in the liquid. Let them marinate in the lime juice mixture for 10 minutes (no longer, or they'll be too "cooked" by the acid).
2. Strain the juice mixture into the jar of a blender, setting the shrimp aside, covered, in the refrigerator. Add the flesh of the avocado to the jar, along with the cilantro and about half the chopped serrano. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding serrano and salt to taste as necessary.
3. Add the sauce to the bowl containing the shrimp and toss well to combine.
4. Transfer the aguachile to a serving dish and garnish with the reserved avocado, the cucumber and the red onion.
5. Serve immediately, with tostadas or tortilla chips, if you like.

To Butterfly Shrimp

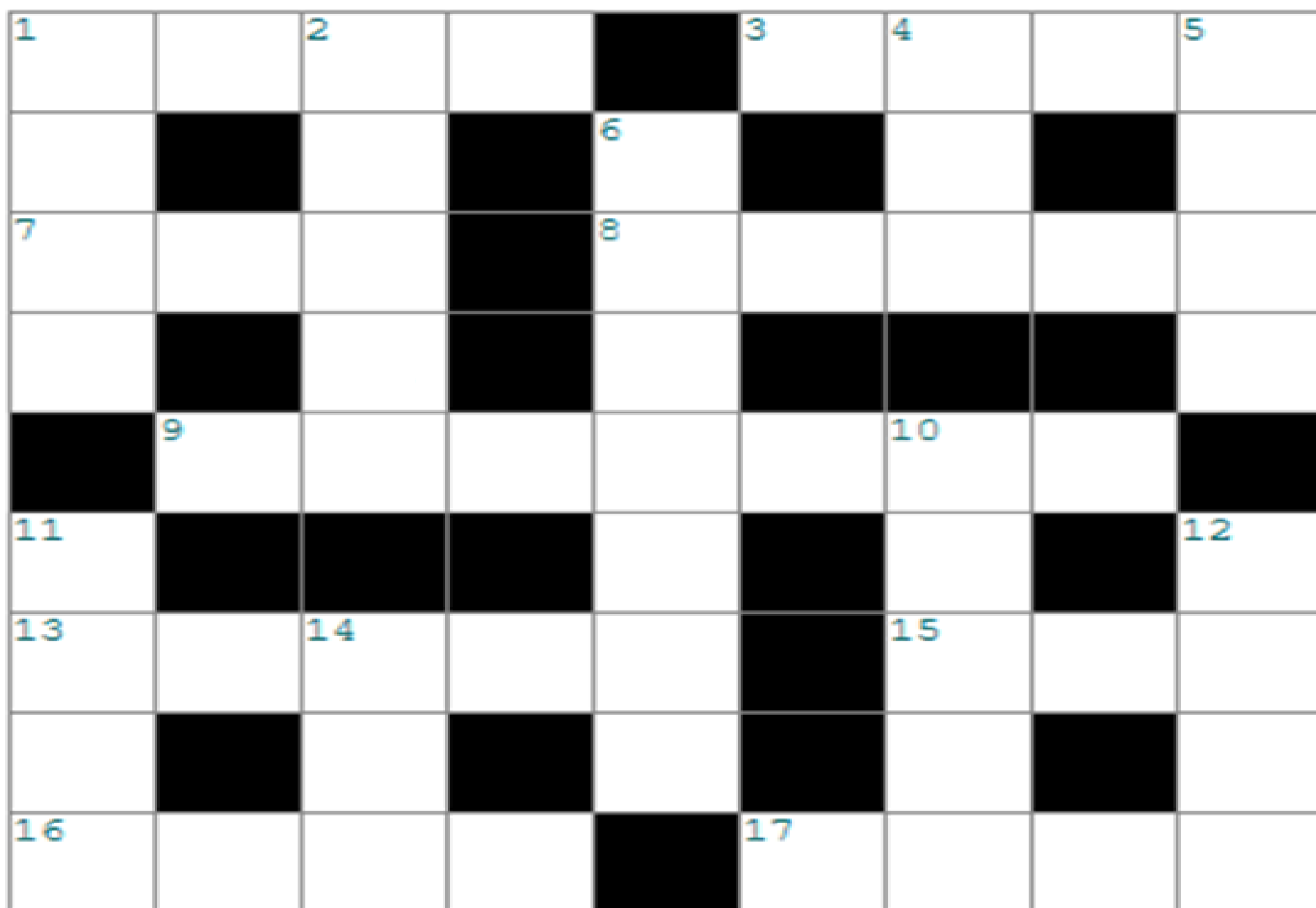
1. Use a small, sharp knife to slice the shrimp open along its back, but not cutting all the way through. This makes it easy to devein, as well.
2. If it's too time consuming or you're using larger shrimp, cut each one all the way through into two pieces.

Source [Cooks Without Borders](#)

Photos and article by Olivia Lopez

Crossword

solution posted in next month's edition



Across

- 1 some; something
- 3 (he) smokes
- 7 bear
- 8 (he) travels
- 9 pains
- 13 (she) runs
- 15 river
- 16 wave, undulation
- 17 (I) create

Down

- 1 love
- 2 balloon
- 4 grape
- 5 to tie
- 6 airplanes
- 10 mistake
- 11 eight
- 12 wolf
- 14 net, mesh of string, cord or rope

Last month's crossword solution:



lexisrex.com

The National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico

from the Path to Citizenship series
article and images from Wikimedia

The National Symphony Orchestra (is the most important symphony orchestra in Mexico. With its origins traced back as 1881, it is the second-oldest symphony orchestra in the American continent along with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra does not have a permanent venue but performs regularly in the Grand Hall of the Palace of Fine Arts (Palacio de Bellas Artes) in Mexico City.

Not to be confused with the Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de México (OSEM) or Symphony Orchestra of the State of Mexico, founded in 1971, the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, as a branch of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, was created by presidential decree of Miguel Alemán on 18 July 1947, under the name of National Conservatory Symphony Orchestra.

Before that, however, there was a predecessor orchestra known as the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico (September 2, 1928 - March 8, 1949), a nonprofit organization founded and conducted by Mexican composer, conductor, teacher, journalist and visionary arts leader Carlos Chávez. On 1 August 1947, Chávez appointed Blas Galindo as the new director of the National Conservatory, official seat of the new orchestra. Chávez reports that the National Symphony Orchestra gave its first official performance on 30 October 1947 at the Palace of Fine Arts, under the baton of Eduardo Hernández Moncada, its first music and artistic director.

Another decree on April 25, 1949, changed the name of the ensemble to National Symphony Orchestra (Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional or OSN); first, to emphasize its professional character - it had the best musicians in the country - and to avoid confusing it with a student ensemble, despite Chávez's having from the very beginning considered the orchestra a national symphony, linked in some aspects to the most important music education institution, the National Conservatory; and second, Chávez wanted to highlight that "a National Symphony, by definition, is a State institution," and the government had recognized the need to support an institution of public interest.

History of the Orchestra

The social context that Mexico was living during the beginnings of the 20th century made the task of creating an orchestra

difficult, so there were several attempts to form a national symphony orchestra.

First period

The orchestra has its roots back in 1881, when Alfredo Bablot, director of the Music Conservatory (founded July 1, 1866) initiated the Conservatory Orchestra. When Bablot died, he was replaced by Carlos J. Meneses. In 1902 the orchestra had little support from the government of Porfirio Díaz, but it suspended its activities in 1913, two years after Díaz's fall, because of the general instability in the country during the Mexican Revolution.

Second and third period

After Gen. Venustiano Carranza took over the national government's seat back to Mexico City in 1915, the orchestra took the name of National Symphony, and depended from the Bellas Artes bureau, and its director during this period was Jesús Acuña, followed by composer Manuel M. Ponce but he declined and the orchestra suspended the concert seasons. Later, composer Julián Carrillo, who was a very important figure in music history worldwide, was appointed as the Music Conservatory director, and took up the project for an orchestra again, and depended from the Conservatory, but because of lack of financial support from the government, the orchestra again finished its activities in 1924.

In 1928, the Mexican Symphony Orchestra was created, but the name changed shortly to Symphony Orchestra of Mexico (Orquesta Sinfónica de México). This orchestra is more related to the current orchestra. Carlos Chávez was appointed as its first conductor, but it lacked of any financial support, besides that the orchestra wasn't being well administrated by the city's musician syndicate of that time. While Chávez conducted the orchestra, it meaning a flourishing period for the orchestral music in the country.

A private patronage was established and the orchestra could give its first concert. The date was September 2, 1928, and the place, the Iris Theatre. With 103 musicians on stage, the program included Debussy's Ibéria Suite, Tello's Sonata Tragica, Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor with Vilma Erenyi as soloist, and Strauss's Don Juan.

...National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico

Although the orchestra received financial support from the government, this was considered as a private one, not official, like it is constituted today. This is the most important point to consider the nature of this musical organization at the present time.

Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas, who was second in charge as assistant conductor, left the orchestra in 1935 to be the principal conductor of a newly created and short-lived National Symphony Orchestra that depended from the National Music Conservatory, but it closed in 1937 when Revueltas resigned.

Creation of the INBA and establishment of the current orchestra

On November 23, 1946, president Miguel Alemán proposed the creation of the National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature (Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura), known by the acronym INBA, and was formally opened on 1 January 1947, as a branch of the Secretaría de Educación Pública, (SEP) (Secretariat of Public Education). The first head of the INBA was Carlos Chávez, who created a new orchestra for the Conservatory (thus because the conservatory depended on the INBA administration).



Palacio de Bellas Artes, México, DF
photo originally posted to Flickr by Carolina López, found on Wikimedia

On January 19, 1949, Chávez resigned his job as conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, to spend more of his time composing and directing the INBA, but the orchestra didn't disappear, because Chávez succeeded in making the government recognize a national ensemble (working on this issue, since he was appointed as head of the INBA), so the actual organization known as National Symphony Orchestra of México was established, and Eduardo Hernández Moncada was designated its first conductor in 1947, José Pablo Moncayo replaced him in 1949.

The orchestra from its creation to the present day

Moncayo was succeeded in 1954 by Luis Herrera de la Fuente, who led the orchestra until 1972. During this period, the orchestra had very important tours nationwide and worldwide, especially in Europe.

In 1973, Chávez returned to conduct the orchestra but resigned in the first month due to internal conflicts with the orchestra members. This resulted in the formation of a new artistic administration by some of the musicians and representatives from the INBA.

Under this arrangement there was no principal conductor; instead, the orchestra had host conductors for its seasons and a Mexican assistant director for off-season affairs.

After several years of this arrangement, the orchestra accepted to have a conductor again in 1979, appointing Sergio Cárdenas, who served until 1984. After him served Jose Guadalupe Flores from 1985 to 1986, followed by Francisco Savín from 1986 to 1988, and from 1989 to 1990 Luis Herrera de la Fuente returned. Participation in national festivals, music workshops, conferences, band concerts and chamber-music concerts were offered by the orchestra during these years.

In May 1990, Enrique Arturo Diemecke was appointed as new conductor. He revived the tradition of touring promoted by Herrera de la Fuente during his first term, traveling to festivals in Portugal and Spain in 1992 and touring within Mexico and United States in 1999 and 2002. During his direction, the orchestra encouraged soundtrack concerts that consisted of playing music from films like the Mexican "Redes", music by Aaron Copland or West Side Story from Leonard Bernstein and several others.

Didactic concerts for kids, concerts with worldwide renowned soloists like Jorge Federico Osorio, Frederica von Stade and violin virtuoso Itzhak Perlman were held by the orchestra in these years, and in 2002 the orchestra was nominated for Latin Grammy award for Best Classical Album. In 2003 the orchestra celebrated its 75th Anniversary with a concert in Mexico's National Auditorium performing the Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (Choral), Op. 125 with an almost sold out locations. In November 2006, after 16 years of continuous works, Diemecke left the orchestra.

The orchestra's current musical director, Carlos Miguel Prieto, named at the end of 2007, has launched the orchestra on a new era, aiming to place it on a par with the world's leading ensembles. In early 2008 he led it on its first European tour in years, culminating with an acclaimed concert at Amsterdam's renowned Concertgebouw Hall. Also in 2008 the orchestra celebrated its 80th Anniversary.